

@poetics

The UB Poetics Discussion Group

Archive of Electronic Correspondence

January 1998

1059 messages · Thu 1 Jan 1998 – Sat 31 Jan 1998

An electronic mailing-list archive

University at Buffalo, State University of New York

A reading edition. For each post the author's name, the subject, and the message are foregrounded, and the date is kept but subdued. Machine headers, encoded attachments, and the repeated listserv routing that once framed every message have been cleared away; email addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and similar personal contact details have been redacted.

Editor's Introduction

Kristen M. Fabians

One thousand and fifty-eight letters, the largest month in this archive, and the word Lewinsky does not occur in any of them. The story broke on the twenty-first and ran the year and ended in an impeachment, and the room mentions Clinton nine times, mostly in passing, and Starr four. I have stopped being surprised by this and started being interested in it, because what the list was doing instead, all January, was answering a question it had been asked on New Year's Day by somebody who had never posted before.

Bobbie West de-lurked on the first — blame Bromige, she said, he told her to stop lurking — and put a question a friend had put to her: *"What is the purpose of poetry?"* So how would you answer that? she asked, signing off as testing her new de-lurking device. Thirty-five letters. Judy Roitman opened tentatively, in fragments: *"Beauty? Expressive? As purpose/means?"* Hugh Steinberg offered a purpose — *"So that the world is not lost"*. Gwyn McVay proposed the best words in the best disorder. Somebody half-remembered a line of Cage's and admitted he had been asked for the citation and could not produce it, which by now is this room's signature move.

And then, on the second, JforJames typed a sentence with a slip in it. *"Poetry presupposes its own purpore"*, he wrote, meaning purpose, and the room fell on the typo like gulls. Bob Grumman got there first: *"Purpure--purer than purpose!"*, and told him not to back out of it. David Israel took it further into the nonsense — *"the purr of the puss = the purpose?"* — and further still the next day. The question was never answered. What happened instead is that the room found a mistake more interesting than the word it replaced, and kept it, and played with it for two days, and let the question go.

On the ninth Gwyn McVay gave them the name for what they had done, without appearing to notice that she was doing it. There is a word for song mishearings, she wrote: mondegreen. A girl heard a Scottish ballad as *They hae slain the Earl of Morey / And Lady Mondegreen*, and carried about with her ever after *"a vivid, touching picture of the two doomed noble lovers"* dying in each other's arms, until somebody told her the line was and laid him on the green. Eighteen letters came back with everybody's. Susan Schultz's mother heard *"I got a chicken to ride"*. Somebody heard Guantanamo as Guantanamero for years. McVay asked whether riding poultry was not exactly what they were all engaged in.

Here is what nobody said. The girl was Sylvia Wright; the essay is The Death of Lady Mondegreen; it ran in Harper's in November of 1954, not, as McVay has it, in a newspaper in the thirties. And Wright's point — the reason she needed a word at all — was that the mondegreen is better than the original. She knew the true line. She refused it. She would not leave the Earl to die alone. So: a woman asked this list on the first of January what poetry was for; the room answered with a typo it liked better than the word; and on the ninth another woman, misremembering the story of a mishearing, told them what a mishearing is worth. I have set the two threads together because they are one thread, and because nobody noticed that the question had been answered.

— *K. M. F.*

Contents

Every entry links to its message. 1059 in all.

1 JAN 1998

1. Alan Myouka Sondheim — "saying 'girl'"
2. Maria Damon — Re: testing..1,2,3,
3. Maria Damon — Re: testing..1,2,3,
4. david bromige — new years eve poem
5. Ctfarmr — what purpose
6. Miekal And — wonder wonder
7. Bob Grumman — Re: what purpose
8. Judy Roitman — Re: what purpose
9. Bob Grumman — Re: what purpose
10. Lawrence Upton. — Re: what purpose
11. Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks — Re: what purpose
12. david bromige — purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry
13. david bromige — tony lopez's bouncing mail
14. Daniel Zimmerman — Re: what purpose
15. Daniel Zimmerman — Re: what purpose
16. Daniel Zimmerman — 'scuse me
17. robert drake — Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry

2 JAN 1998

18. David R. Israel — Re: what purpose
19. Pete Landers — Re: what purpose
20. George Bowering — Re: wonder wonder
21. Stephen Cope — Fibonacc Lit,
22. Hugh Steinberg — Re: what purpose
23. Bob Grumman — Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry
24. Henry Gould — Re: what purpose
25. sylvester pollet — Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry
26. Maria Damon — Re: what purpose
27. Maria Damon — lopez loops
28. sylvester pollet — Re: what purpose
29. Bob Grumman — Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry
30. robert drake — Re: what purpose
31. henry g — Re: what purpose
32. Gwyn McVay — Re: what purpose
33. JforJames — Re: what purpose
34. Jordan Davis — Re: what purpose
35. JforJames — Re: what purpose
36. Jack Spandrift — Re: what purpose
37. Jack Spandrift — COrrrection
38. Judy Roitman — Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry
39. Steve Evans — ILS Special Offer
40. Lawrence Upton. — Re: what purpose
41. Steve Evans — ILS Correction
42. Maria Damon — Re: what purpose
43. Maria Damon — Re: what purpose
44. robert drake — B&A announces Interrobang, paying hypertext quarterly
45. Maria Damon — Re: what purpose
46. Bob Grumman — Re: what purpose
47. Eric Blarnes — Re: purpure
48. Miekal And — & other raves & others behave
49. Poetics List — Eshleman's Antiphonal Swing [sale announcement]

- 50. Mark Weiss — (no subject)
- 51. Nuyopoman — Mouthy Mondays
- 52. Matt Meighan — purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry
- 53. Gwyn McVay — /Symmetry/ & other raves
- 54. Harold Rhenisch — Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry

3 JAN 1998

- 55. David R. Israel — Re: what purpose
- 56. David R. Israel — Re: what purpose
- 57. IMBURGIA — querry
- 58. Bob Grumman — Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry
- 59. Robert J Tiess — POETFEST
- 60. jarnot — juliana spahr & harryette mullen in nyc
- 61. Douglas — Re: Richard Elman's death
- 62. Ctfarmr — Re: what purpose
- 63. JforJames — Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry

4 JAN 1998

- 64. Bob Grumman — Re: what purpose
- 65. aerialede — Re: what purpose
- 66. dbkk — January Readings at SPT
- 67. Mark Wallace — the poetry in purpose?
- 68. David Gitin — Cage reference
- 69. ShaunAnne Tangney Humanities 8-13-1997 — Re: request for submissions
- 70. ShaunAnne Tangney Humanities 8-13-1997 — oops--
- 71. aerialede — Re: Cage reference

5 JAN 1998

- 72. Sawako Nakayasu — Re: what purpose
- 73. Charles Weigl — Re: Cage reference
- 74. Miekal And — poetry webring
- 75. Miekal And — word processor htmlability
- 76. Maria Damon — Re: what purpose
- 77. Maria Damon — Re: what purpose
- 78. Maria Damon — fwd from XCP
- 79. Maria Damon — Re: what purpose
- 80. Mark Prejsnar — Good questions without answers
- 81. Henry Gould — Re: Good questions without answers
- 82. Alan Myouka Sondheim — Re: Good questions without answers
- 83. Miekal And — Re: poetry webring
- 84. Judy Roitman — Re: Good questions without answers
- 85. Miekal And — dynamic html & the future of the text/text
- 86. Judy Roitman — Re: Good questions without answers
- 87. Miekal And — afred querry, "pataphysician
- 88. Alan Myouka Sondheim — Re: Good questions without answers
- 89. Alan Myouka Sondheim — Disassembling Love: Byting the Program of Secrecy
- 90. Herb Levy — Re: querry
- 91. George Thompson — Re: citation (ginsberg)
- 92. Sylvester Pollet — Re: word processor htmlability
- 93. louis stroffolino — citation (ginsberg)
- 94. William Marsh — Re: poetry webring
- 95. William Marsh — Re: word processor htmlability
- 96. Cadaly — Re: poetry webring
- 97. George Bowering — Re: Good questions without answers
- 98. George Bowering — Re: querry
- 99. George Bowering — Re: citation (ginsberg)
- 100. Eryque Gleason — Re: word processing for the web

- 101. Brian Carpenter — Re: citation (ginsberg)
- 102. henry — Re: citation (ginsberg)
- 103. Lawrence Upton. — Re: word processor htmlability
- 104. William Burmeister Prod — Misc. Proj
- 105. William Marsh — Re: Misc. Proj
- 106. George Thompson — Re: citation (ginsberg)
- 107. rsillima — SPD address, etc.
- 108. Cadaly — Re: poetry webring
- 109. Don Byrd — Re: word processing for the web
- 110. Don Byrd — Re: dynamic html & the future of the text/text

6 JAN 1998

- 111. David Israel — po's porp
- 112. Loss Pequen~o Glazier — Re: Film on Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age
- 113. Loss Pequen~o Glazier — Re: poetry webring
- 114. Miekal And — Re: poetry webring
- 115. Jordan Davis — Last Minute Reading Notice
- 116. Mark Prejsnar — Misc. Probs.
- 117. William Burmeister Prod — Re: Misc. Probs.
- 118. Jack Foley — Re: citation (ginsberg) -Reply
- 119. Douglas Barbour — Re: purpose
- 120. Alan Myouka Sondheim — Re: Last Minute Reading Notice
- 121. William Marsh — promotion: web site, chaps
- 122. Cadaly — Re: poetry webring
- 123. bertha — Some answers, I think, maybe, possibly, who knows?
- 124. Charles Bernstein — My Trip West
- 125. Henry Gould — Re: Some answers, I think, maybe, possibly, who knows?
- 126. KENT JOHNSON — help requested
- 127. Harold Rhenisch — National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 128. Henry — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 129. Henry Gould — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program

7 JAN 1998

- 130. William Slaughter — MUDLARK ANNOUNCEMENT
- 131. henry — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 132. Don Byrd — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 133. Sawako Nakayasu — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 134. Don Byrd — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 135. Henry Gould — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 136. Eryque Gleason — (no subject)
- 137. Alan Myouka Sondheim — Tea Ceremony Races (fwd)
- 138. Elizabeth Hatmaker — Re: ... no subject ...
- 139. Eryque Gleason — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 140. Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks — Re: Teaching poetry to high school students (Sawako Nakayasu p...
- 141. henry — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 142. Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks — Re: teaching high school TV watchin' kids
- 143. William Burmeister Prod — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 144. Matthew Stadler — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 145. Matthew Stadler — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 146. Cadaly — Re: teaching high school TV watchin' kids
- 147. Elizabeth Hatmaker — Re: teaching high school TV watchin' kids
- 148. Don Byrd — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 149. Eryque Gleason — Re: Teaching poetry to high school students (Sawako Nakayasu post)
- 150. Gwyn McVay — Re: Teaching poetry to high school students (Sawako Nakayasu post)
- 151. William Marsh — teaching h.s. kids
- 152. sylvester pollet — Laughlin Session MLA 1998 (fwd)

- 153. Thomas Bell — Re: htmlability and poetry webring
- 154. Robin Morris — Re: teaching high school TV watchin' kids
- 155. dw — Olson and Subjectivity
- 156. Brian Carpenter — Re: teaching high school TV watchin' kids
- 157. Henry Gould — reading in Providence
- 158. Maria Damon — Re: ... no subject ...
- 159. Maria Damon — Re: teaching high school TV watchin' kids
- 160. Maria Damon — Re: Teaching poetry to high school students (Sawako Nakayasu post)
- 161. rsillima — Duncan
- 162. William Marsh — Re: htmlability and poetry webring
- 163. dbkk — Hard Press

8 JAN 1998

- 164. Sawako Nakayasu — teaching high school kids
- 165. Miekal And — teaching the difficult bobogali
- 166. rsillima — (no subject)
- 167. hg — honig redux
- 168. Michael Magee — Re: teaching the difficult
- 169. David R. Israel — Re: teaching h.s. kids
- 170. David R. Israel — Re: Tea Ceremony Races / Idoru - W.Gibson
- 171. Marcella Durand — Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program
- 172. Mark Prejsnar — Re: teaching the difficult
- 173. Chris Piuma — Re: teaching h.s. kids
- 174. Heather Starr — Re: Olson and Subjectivity
- 175. Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks — Re: teaching h.s. kids
- 176. Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks — Re: Sillimans Wake
- 177. William Marsh — song lyricists (was teaching h.s....)
- 178. Eryque Gleason — Re: Tea Ceremony Races / Idoru - W.Gibson
- 179. Gwyn McVay — Re: song lyricists (was teaching h.s....)
- 180. William Burmeister Prod — Re: reading in Providence
- 181. henry — Re: reading in Providence
- 182. Jacques Debrot — Re: Sillimans Wake
- 183. Safdie Joseph — Re: song lyricists (was teaching h.s....)
- 184. Mark Wallace — new Tom Mandel from Zasterle books
- 185. William Burmeister Prod — Re: reading in Providence
- 186. Henry G — Re: Sillimans Wake
- 187. Daniel Zimmerman — Re: reading in Providence
- 188. Gwyn McVay — psychepoedelics
- 189. Herb Levy — Re: Sillimans Wake
- 190. henry — Re: reading in Providence
- 191. David Golumbia — Re: psychepoedelics
- 192. SSSCHAEFER — Various Invitations
- 193. louis stroffolino — Re: song lyricists (was teaching h.s....)
- 194. louis stroffolino — Re: psychepoedelics
- 195. Jacques Debrot — Re [2]: Sillimans Wake
- 196. Eric Blarnes — Re: reading in Providence
- 197. Safdie Joseph — Re: song lyricists (was teaching h.s....)
- 198. William Burmeister Prod — Re: Sillimans Wake
- 199. William Burmeister Prod — Re: reading in Providence
- 200. George Thompson — Re: reading in Providence
- 201. Schuchat Simon — Re: Tea Ceremony Races / Idoru - W.Gibson
- 202. dbkk — The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English
- 203. groberts — Re: Sillimans Wake
- 204. Gwyn McVay — "You think you're funny - but you're Gould"

9 JAN 1998

- 205. Thomas Bell — Re: teaching h.s. kids

- 206. david bromige — george bowering proven correct!
- 207. LAURA MORIARTY — new non: Vitiello, Schneider, bios&links
- 208. Steve Carll — 14 X 14: Antonym Contributors' Reading
- 209. George Bowering — Re: george bowering proven correct!
- 210. Louis Cabri — PhillyTalks #3
- 211. Hugh Steinberg — Re: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English
- 212. Miekal And — russian contacts: segay/nikonova
- 213. Michael Magee — Re: dylan
- 214. Henry Gould — Re: Sillimans Wake
- 215. Chris Piuma — Re: teaching h.s. kids
- 216. Miekal And — Plugin World
- 217. David Kellogg — Re: dylan
- 218. Miekal And — purpose of poetry
- 219. Kristen Gallagher — Re: PhillyTalks #3
- 220. Alan Myouka Sondheim — (no subject)
- 221. Robert Hale — Re: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English
- 222. Gwyn McVay — And Lady Mondegreen
- 223. henry g — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 224. david bromige — re : george bowering proven correct
- 225. Safdie Joseph — Re: PhillyTalks #3
- 226. DANIEL L. COLLIER — Contemporary Russian Poets
- 227. Mark W Scroggins — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 228. Maria Damon — Re: george bowering proven correct!
- 229. Harold Rhenisch — Re: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English
- 230. Tom Orange — Ockeghem's Wake
- 231. Maria Damon — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 232. Susan Schultz — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 233. d powell — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 234. Gwyn McVay — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 235. d powell — Re: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into Engli
- 236. Harold Rhenisch — Hans Castorp ain't
- 237. William Marsh — Stipe
- 238. David Gitin — Hans Castorp
- 239. William Burmeister Prod — Re: Stipe
- 240. Mark W Scroggins — Re: Stipe
- 241. J. Tate — Re: Stipe
- 242. William Burmeister Prod — Re: Stipe
- 243. Hugh Steinberg — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 244. Hednry Gould — Re: Stipe
- 245. John Cayley — New Reality Site
- 246. Brent Long — Re: dylan
- 247. d powell — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 248. Chris Piuma — Re: Stipe
- 249. J. Tate — Re: Stipe
- 250. Karen and Trevor — Stipe--What's the Frequency?
- 251. Susan Schultz — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 252. Jordan Davis — Re: Stipe

10 JAN 1998

- 253. Schuchat Simon — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 254. Alan Myouka Sondheim — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 255. David Gitin — Thanks to Simon Schuchat
- 256. George Bowering — Re: mishearings
- 257. George Bowering — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 258. Alan Myouka Sondheim — last post on diseases as a result of misinterpretation
- 259. rsillima — Dead ants are blowin' in the wind

- 260. Rachel Loden — Re: Stipe--What's the Frequency?
- 261. robert drake — forward--re: "hoaxes"
- 262. rsillima — Shameless self-promotion
- 263. B. Taylor — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 264. J. Tate — Re: Stipe--What's the Frequency?
- 265. J. Tate — Re: Stipe--What's the Frequency?
- 266. Chris Piuma — Re: Stipe--What's the Frequency?
- 267. Don Byrd — Re: Dead ants are blowin' in the wind
- 268. David Gitin — translation
- 269. rodrigo — Re: and lady mondegreen
- 270. Robin Morris — Re: Dead ants are blowin' in the wind
- 271. Robin Morris — Re: dylan
- 272. Steven Clay — A Secret Location on the Lower East Side
- 273. louis stroffolino — Re: Dead ants are blowin' in the wind
- 274. Mark Weiss — translation

11 JAN 1998

- 275. Pierre Joris — Re: translation
- 276. Gwyn McVay — because one must
- 277. Miekal And — hypertext hotel
- 278. William Marsh — Re: translation
- 279. Rachel Levitsky — P. Ganick's address
- 280. henry gould — dylan your
- 281. Mark Weiss — Re: translation

12 JAN 1998

- 282. George Bowering — Re: translation
- 283. Craig Douglas Dworkin — Bay Area Readings/Visual Poetics
- 284. Rachel Loden — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 285. Elizabeth Hatmaker — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 286. Mark Prejsnar — Re: Stipe--What's the Frequency?
- 287. Lawrence Upton. — Melanie
- 288. Susan Wheeler — Mondegreen - Digests 1/9 --
- 289. louis stroffolino — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 290. louis stroffolino — Re: your move
- 291. Christopher W. Alexander — Re: Stipe--What's the Frequency?
- 292. David Kellogg — Mondegreens
- 293. Miekal And — Whose Visual Poetics?
- 294. David Benedetti — Re: Lady Mondegreen
- 295. Tom Mandel — the new Dylan album
- 296. groberts — Re: Lady Mondegreen
- 297. Mark Weiss — Re: Lady Mondegreen
- 298. Bob Grumman — Re: Bay Area Readings/Visual Poetics
- 299. Hugh Steinberg — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 300. William Marsh — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 301. George Thompson — Re: Lady Mondegreen
- 302. Robin Morris — Re: Lady Mondegreen

13 JAN 1998

- 303. Carrie Etter — Barbara Guest's "Winter Horses"
- 304. Tenney Nathanson — Re: Lady Mondegreen
- 305. david bromige — tom mandel cheering section
- 306. David Gitin — Re: tom mandel cheering section
- 307. George Bowering — Re: Lady Mondegreen
- 308. dbkk — Under the Influence
- 309. Stephen Cope — NEW WRITING SERIES
- 310. Bob Grumman — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

- 311. Robert Archambeau — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 312. Miekal And — Whose Visual Poetics? Bern Porter's in 1959
- 313. Miekal And — Whose Visual Poetics? El Lissitzky's in 1923
- 314. Lawrence Upton. — Re: your move
- 315. Lawrence Upton. — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 316. Miekal And — tight shoes & reckoning with the unknowable
- 317. Hank Lazer — Re: tom mandel cheering section
- 318. dw — O.ARS & Visual Poetry
- 319. Robert Hale — Re: Dylan
- 320. Safdie Joseph — Re: Dylan
- 321. William Marsh — Re: Dylan
- 322. Eryque Gleason — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 323. Marjorie Perloff — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Bern Porter's in 1959
- 324. Aldon Nielsen — Re: And Lady Mondegreen
- 325. Mark Weiss — Re: Dylan
- 326. pritchpa — Re: Dylan
- 327. Don Byrd — Dylan
- 328. David Zauhar — Re: Dylan
- 329. Miekal And — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Bern Porter's in 1959
- 330. acgold01 — Panel chairs for 20C. Lit. Conference
- 331. r.drake — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 332. Henry Gould — dylan or
- 333. Eryque Gleason — leaving off the g
- 334. Mark Prejsnar — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 335. Don Byrd — Re: Dylan
- 336. Maria Damon — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Bern Porter's in 1959
- 337. Maria Damon — Re: Dylan
- 338. Joshua N Schuster — Re: Dylan
- 339. robert drake — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 340. Schuchat Simon — Re: Dylan
- 341. George Bowering — Re: dylan or

14 JAN 1998

- 342. Bob Grumman — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Bern Porter's in 1959
- 343. Tom Orange — leaving off the g
- 344. joel lewis — f.y.i.
- 345. John Tranter — Rimbaud in Africa, reviewed
- 346. Laurie Schneider/Crag Hill — Visual Poetics
- 347. Thomas Bell — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?
- 348. Herb Levy — A mundane query
- 349. rsillima — Yo soy un hombre sincero
- 350. hen — Re: dylan or
- 351. Susan Wheeler — Digest
- 352. Mark Wallace — FRAME
- 353. rsillima — The narrative of understanding
- 354. Mark Prejsnar — Frame etc.
- 355. Eryque Gleason — Re: leaving off the g
- 356. dee morris — shameless self-promotion + Spicer's "No / one listens"
- 357. Mark Prejsnar — Re: The narrative of understanding
- 358. David Kellogg — Re: FRAME
- 359. Miekal And — Whose Visual Poetics? Marjorie Perloff's in 1998
- 360. Douglas Barbour — Re: Don Byrd's query
- 361. robert drake — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 362. Jacques Debrot — Re: FRAME
- 363. Miekal And — Whose Visual Poetics? Miekal And's in 1984
- 364. Matthew Hart — Re: Yo soy un hombre sincero

- 365. Eryque Gleason — Re: Visual Poetics
- 366. Jacques Debrot — Re: Frame
- 367. Jordan Davis — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 368. aerialeedge — Re: shameless self-promotion + Spicer's "No / one listens"
- 369. Robert Hale — FRAME & AERIAL
- 370. William Marsh — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?
- 371. Bob Grumman — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 372. Joshua N Schuster — unpacking someone else's library
- 373. Brian McHale — Re: Dylan
- 374. r.drake — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 375. louis stroffolino — Re: dylan or
- 376. Gwyn McVay — Hale, Fuller on FRAME
- 377. henry — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?
- 378. William Burmeister Prod — Byrd/Pritchett query: _Loose Sugar_
- 379. Kali Tal — Poets & Musicians Sound Out Against Police Brutality
- 380. Mark Prejsnar — new Tom Beckett
- 381. Michael Magee — Re: unpacking someone else's library
- 382. eric blarnes — Re: Hale, Fuller on FRAME
- 383. Bob Grumman — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?
- 384. Bob Grumman — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?
- 385. Bob Grumman — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?
- 386. Susan E. Dunn — vizpo, langpo & the zimmerman conference
- 387. Jordan Davis — duping someone else's mix tape
- 388. Miekal And —
- 389. d powell — Re: Dylan, since you brought it up
- 390. Lawrence Upton. — Re: Strange,Ron, how we got to be the old guys
- 391. William Burmeister Prod — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?
- 392. David Kellogg — Re: Strange,Ron, how we got to be the old guys
- 393. pritchpa — Re: Byrd/Pritchett query: _Loose Sugar_
- 394. William Burmeister Prod — Re: vizpo, langpo & the zimmerman conference
- 395. KENT JOHNSON — Barrett, William, Jordan, Ron, Mark, Lyn, Michael, Allen, Joan,
- 396. david bromige — (antilangpo?) stunned. very stunned. (ringo)
- 397. Harold Rhenisch — Visual Poetics? Dylan?
- 398. Don Byrd — Strange,Ron, how we got to be the old guys
- 399. david bromige — strange. very strange.
- 400. Bob Grumman — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?
- 401. Bob Grumman — Re: vizpo, langpo & the zimmerman conference
- 402. Bob Grumman — Re: vizpo, langpo & the zimmerman conference
- 403. David Kellogg — Re: Barrett, William, Jordan, Ron, Mark, Lyn, Michael, Allen, Joan,

15 JAN 1998

- 404. louis stroffolino — Re: LOOSE SUGAR 2nite in my tea
- 405. Tom Mandel — from another era....
- 406. Thomas Bell — Re: vizpo, langpo & a fit of nostalgia
- 407. david bromige — kent's memory
- 408. Miekal And — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Abraham Lincoln Gillespie (1895-1950)
- 409. henry gould — Re: Strange,Ron, how we got to be the old guys
- 410. Alan Myouka Sondheim — Re: Strange,Ron, how we got to be the old guys
- 411. Bob Grumman — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 412. Bob Grumman — Re: Visual Poetics
- 413. KENT JOHNSON — Re: kent's memory
- 414. Jordan Davis — Rubber takes a beating
- 415. Miekal And — Whose Visual Poetics? Post Millenium Netizens
- 416. Tom Mandel — forging and feel?
- 417. Michael Coffey — schuster/dylan -Reply
- 418. Miekal And — [Fwd: Re: Whose Visual Poetics?..... What is.....?]

- 419. Tom Mandel — dylan vs. poetry
- 420. Tom Mandel — schuster/dylan
- 421. KENT JOHNSON — Evil Foster/Postmodern Culture
- 422. Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks — Re: dylan vs. poetry
- 423. KENT JOHNSON — Evil Sourmash
- 424. david bromige — kent not drunk last night
- 425. Carl Lynden Peters — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? : bill bissett
- 426. Miekal And — Re: So tell Bromide and me what we should fear
- 427. DANIEL L. COLLIER — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 428. Michael Magee — Re: Evil Foster/Postmodern Culture
- 429. Jack Spandrift — Re: schuster/dylan -Reply
- 430. Safdie Joseph — Post Postmodernism
- 431. Cadaly — Visual Poetry at LACMA
- 432. LAURA MORIARTY — Saturday readings
- 433. Bob Grumman — Re: Whose Vispo?
- 434. Aldon Nielsen — Re: Dylan
- 435. Henry Gould — Re: Post Postmodernism
- 436. David Zauhar — Re: schuster/dylan -Reply
- 437. hen — Re: schuster/dylan -Reply
- 438. Aldon Nielsen — Re: C.L.R. James
- 439. MAYHEW — History of Modern Poetry
- 440. Aldon Nielsen — film etc.
- 441. Robin Morris — Re: schuster/dylan -Reply
- 442. Cadaly — Re: Jong
- 443. Michael Coffey — Re: schuster/dylan -Reply -Reply
- 444. David Zauhar — Re: schuster/dylan -Reply
- 445. Bob Grumman — Re: Freedom of Speech
- 446. rsillima — The Strangeness of Kinders
- 447. CharSSmith — Re: PhillyTalks #3
- 448. Susan Schultz — Re: schuster/dylan -Reply
- 449. Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher — Re: dylan vs. poetry
- 450. Heather Starr — Re: (antilangpo?) stunned. very stunned. (ringo)
- 451. Don Byrd — Re: dylan vs. poetry
- 452. Jack Spandrift — Re: schuster/dylan -Reply -Reply
- 453. Don Byrd — So tell Bromige and me what we should hear
- 454. Rachel Loden — FYI (baby poet maudit alert)
- 455. Henry Gould — Re: dylan vs. poetry
- 456. Steve Shoemaker — Re: dylan vs. poetry

16 JAN 1998

- 457. George Bowering — Re: (antilangpo?) stunned. very stunned. (ringo)
- 458. Louis Cabri — histories
- 459. david bromige — dullard brutes of langpo
- 460. Miekal And — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? The Intergalactic Hypertext Time Machine
- 461. Susan Wheeler — Digest -- Coffey/Marcus/Dylan
- 462. Jordan Davis — Re: FYI (baby poet maudit alert)
- 463. Mark Prejsnar — Re: Freedom of Speech
- 464. Alan Myouka Sondheim — Christine Tamblyn
- 465. Michael Magee — Re: dullard brutes of langpo
- 466. Mark Prejsnar — Re: schuster/dylan -Reply
- 467. Mark Prejsnar — Re: FYI (baby poet maudit alert)
- 468. Mark Prejsnar — Re: dullard brutes of langpo
- 469. Elizabeth Hatmaker — Re: dylan vs. poetry
- 470. Bob Grumman — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 471. William Shakespeare — Re: dullard brutes of langpo
- 472. Bob Grumman — Re: (antilangpo?) stunned. very stunned. (ringo)

- 473. DANIEL L. COLLIER — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 474. Douglas Barbour — Re: talking about poetry rather than 'just' Dylan
- 475. Fred Muratori — Re: schuster/dylan -Reply
- 476. Fred Muratori — Langpocomics
- 477. d powell — Re: dylan vs. poetry
- 478. d powell — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 479. Harold Rhenisch — Expression/Self-Expression
- 480. hen — Re: dullard brutes of langpo
- 481. Matthew Stadler — Re: FYI (baby poet maudit alert)
- 482. Eryque Gleason — Re: (antilangpo?) stunned. very ...
- 483. david bromige — [REDACTED] deliberately omitted
- 484. d powell — Re: Saturday readings
- 485. Thomas Bell — Re: FYI (baby poet maudit alert)
- 486. Thomas Bell — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 487. david bromige — dylan/poetry
- 488. DANIEL L. COLLIER — Re: dylan vs. poetry
- 489. William Burmeister Prod — Re: dylan vs. poetry
- 490. KENT JOHNSON — Some questions for Don Byrd
- 491. Bob Grumman — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 492. David Benedetti — Re: Dylan not vs. poetry
- 493. Bob Grumman — Re: Expression/Self-Expression
- 494. Christina Fairbank Chirot — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
- 495. d powell — Re: what is bad poetry?
- 496. Christina Fairbank Chirot — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? (fwd)
- 497. Miekal And — address?
- 498. Jimi — Re: dylan vs. poetry
- 499. Jimi — Re: Dylan not vs. poetry
- 500. david bromige — bad poetry
- 501. david bromige — funny poets
- 502. Rachel Loden — Re: FYI (baby poet maudit alert)
- 503. Maz881 — barratt's beauty
- 504. Saffie Joseph — Re: dullard brutes of langpo
- 505. William Marsh — Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?
- 506. Bob Grumman — Defining Visual Poetry
- 507. Harold Rhenisch — Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

17 JAN 1998

- 508. Joe Ahearn — Re: Dylan not vs. poetry
- 509. Don Byrd — Re: Some questions for Don Byrd
- 510. Schuchat Simon — milieu etc
- 511. Jordan Davis — Some problems in discourse
- 512. Douglas Barbour — Re: Byrd on Clarke etc
- 513. groberts — squib miscellany
- 514. Daniel Zimmerman — Re: Lady Mondegreen
- 515. pollet — icestorm poetics
- 516. MillettiC — Juliana Spahr
- 517. Don Byrd — Re: Garbled Citations

18 JAN 1998

- 518. Harold Rhenisch — Re: Expression/Self-Expression
- 519. MARK LEAHY — readerly consumption
- 520. Michael Magee — Re: Dylan not vs. poetry
- 521. Miekal And — [Fwd: Re: RHIZOME_RAW: Live on the Poetics List: Whose Visual Poetics?]
- 522. Tom Mandel — A miscellany, or I can't keep up.
- 523. Tom Mandel — Joe on Barry
- 524. Tom Mandel — pointless at best
- 525. Tom Mandel — Oy and more on language poetry

- 526. Steven Marks — talking about poetry; and time
- 527. Tom Mandel — Ah, human weakness
- 528. Franklin Bruno — Chester Hennix, what was read in '97
- 529. Bob Grumman — Re: Expression/Self-Expression
- 530. Laurie Schneider/Crag Hill — Has anyone else read Strabismus?
- 531. Miekal And — povispo? squibble misc
- 532. Don Byrd — Re: Chester Hennix, what was read in '97
- 533. Don Byrd — Re: Chester Hennix,

19 JAN 1998

- 534. nico vassilakis — NEW HARRY SMITH Book
- 535. David R. Israel — Hughes & Plath
- 536. Bob Grumman — Re: povispo? squibble misc
- 537. Harold Rhenisch — Re: Expression/Self-Expression
- 538. Rachel Loden — Hughes v Plath
- 539. Miekal And — Ice Fishing in Wisconsin School of Poetry
- 540. Jacques Debrot — Re: Burning Deck
- 541. Michael Magee — Re: Hughes & Plath
- 542. Harold Rhenisch — Re: Ice Fishing in Wisconsin School of Poetry
- 543. Jacques Debrot — Oy . . . Langpo
- 544. Michael Magee — Re: Oy . . . Langpo
- 545. Douglas Barbour — Re: Mandel's online thinking
- 546. Miekal And — Whose Visual Poetics? Global mimesis
- 547. Miekal And — [Fwd:] THE III INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF VISUAL >POETRY
- 548. KENT JOHNSON — The Catskill School of Poetry
- 549. Dale Smith — Langpods
- 550. Marcella Durand — Re: Expression/Self-Expression
- 551. groberts — Re: Ice Fishing in Wisconsin School of Poetry
- 552. Michael Magee — Re: Langpods
- 553. Jacques Debrot — Re: Langpods
- 554. d powell — Re: Langpods
- 555. William Marsh — Movement:movement
- 556. David Zauhar — Re: Ice Fishing in Wisconsin School of Poetry
- 557. Gwyn McVay — 2 counterexamples
- 558. Jo Ann Blevins — Lisa Jarnot
- 559. Jordan Davis — Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves
- 560. Charles Bernstein — msg from Paul Zukofsky
- 561. KENT JOHNSON — Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves
- 562. Michael Magee — Re: Langpods
- 563. Hank Lazer — Re: Dylan, Visual Poetics, & Jake Berry
- 564. Dale Smith — Re: Langpods
- 565. Harold Rhenisch — Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves
- 566. David Kellogg — Re: Langpods/Word to your Mother
- 567. Daniel Zimmerman — Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves
- 568. d powell — Re: Bad Poetry
- 569. pritchpa — Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves
- 570. Henry Gould — Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves
- 571. Maria Damon — reading thread
- 572. Maria Damon — mla reports?
- 573. Bob Grumman — Re: Dylan, Visual Poetics, & Jake Berry
- 574. Dale Smith — Langpods & the "Material Text"
- 575. J. Kusai — Re: Langpods & the "Material Text"
- 576. Pierre Joris — Re: The Catskill School of Poetry

20 JAN 1998

- 577. George Bowering — Re: Lisa Jarnot
- 578. dbkk — List member in the news

- 579. Dean A. Brink — Re: Hughes v Plath
- 580. Steve Evans — The New (was Oy . . . Langpo)
- 581. George Bowering — Re: Ice Fishing in Wisconsin School of Poetry
- 582. david bromige — dullard brutes
- 583. david bromige — The New (& how to help it along)
- 584. cris cheek — Re: The New (was Oy . . . Langpo)
- 585. david bromige — p s to The New, etc
- 586. Pierre Joris — The News
- 587. rsillima — Ol' langpod here
- 588. Harold Rhenisch — Re: The New (& how to help it along)
- 589. Jacques Debrot — Re: DIASTEXT, etc.
- 590. Henry — Re: p s to The New, etc
- 591. Susan Wheeler — Re: POETICS Digest - 18 Jan 1998 to 19 Jan 1998
- 592. robert drake — Re: The New (was Oy . . . Langpo)
- 593. Maria Damon — Re: The New (was Oy . . . Langpo)
- 594. Maria Damon — it's *creeley* you dope
- 595. Gwyn McVay — Re: Langpods & the "Material Text"
- 596. Miekal And — Re: Uh...New?
- 597. KENT JOHNSON — Missing "e"'s
- 598. Miekal And — kenning
- 599. Mark Prejsnar — Re: [REDACTED] deliberately omitted
- 600. Suzanne Burns — Re: Hughes & Plath
- 601. Suzanne Burns — Re: Hughes v Plath
- 602. Dale Smith — Uh...New?
- 603. pritchpa — Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves
- 604. Fred Muratori — Re: Hughes & Plath
- 605. David R. Israel — found poem
- 606. Mark Prejsnar — Re: Has anyone else read Strabismus?
- 607. KENT JOHNSON — Re: Hughes & Plath
- 608. William Marsh — Re: Missing "e"'s
- 609. p. durgin — ad. req. -- Jarnot
- 610. Chris Sawyer — Re: The New (was Oy . . . Langpo)
- 611. JBCM2 — Re: Uh...New?
- 612. Don Byrd — Re: The New (& how to help it along)
- 613. pritchpa — FW: The Catskill School of Poetry
- 614. Aldon Nielsen — Re: Digest -- Coffey/Marcus/Dylan/etc
- 615. pritchpa — Re: Hughes & Plath
- 616. Aldon Nielsen — Re: dylan vs. poetry
- 617. Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher — Re: Uh...New?
- 618. d powell — Re: Missing "e"'s
- 619. Suzanne Burns — Re: Hughes & Plath
- 620. Aldon Nielsen — Re: List member in the news
- 621. Gary Sullivan — Some "New" Poets
- 622. Suzanne Burns — Re: Hughes & Plath
- 623. Tom Orange — Oy . . . (post)langpo
- 624. James Brook — reclaiming sf / shaping sf release parties
- 625. Maz881 — Re: Langpods & the "Material Text"
- 626. Gwyn McVay — Re: Missing "e"'s
- 627. p. durgin — Re: kenning
- 628. William Burmeister Prod — Re: dylan vs. poetry
- 629. William Burmeister Prod — Re: kenning
- 630. William Burmeister Prod — Re: Oy . . . (post)langpo
- 631. CharSSmith — Re: Oy . . . (post)langpo
- 632. david bromige — The New (& how to help it along)
- 633. Safdie Joseph — Re: Oy and more on language poetry
- 634. Pierre Joris — Re: Oy . . . (post)langpo

635. J. Kuszai — running smack

21 JAN 1998

- 636. John Tranter — nasty animals
- 637. Franklin Bruno — a squint at strabismus
- 638. rsillima — Various
- 639. Miekal And — Best New Poet Club
- 640. Annie Finch — Spenser, Jarnot, Hightower
- 641. Michael Magee — Re: nasty animals
- 642. Miekal And — Surveillance
- 643. Fred Muratori — Re: Missing "e"'s
- 644. Rachel Loden — Re: Some "New" Poets
- 645. Fred Muratori — Re: Missing "e"'s
- 646. sylvester pollet — Concrete New Yorker?
- 647. Dale Smith — Detail and Concept
- 648. Mark Wallace — "actually new"
- 649. Miekal And — Re: you poets! (yard sales)
- 650. KENT JOHNSON — Jim Hightower
- 651. Graham W Foust — wanna be
- 652. J. Kuszai — vine ripened
- 653. David Kellogg — Re: "actually new"
- 654. Tom Mandel — yard sales
- 655. Ben Carrelis — a new poet
- 656. DANIEL L. COLLIER — Re: Ice Fishing in Wisconsin School of Poetry
- 657. Miekal And — Re: Best New Poet Club
- 658. Gary Sullivan — Re: Some "New" Poets
- 659. cris cheek — Re: scoured grapes
- 660. david bromige — you poets! (yard sales)
- 661. david bromige — wanna be (kudos for foust)
- 662. d powell — Re: The New (& how to help it along)
- 663. louis stroffolino — Re: Missing "e"'s
- 664. d powell — Re: Some "New" Poets
- 665. Henry Gould — Re: Spenser, Jarnot, Hightower
- 666. Dale M Smith — Re: scoured grapes
- 667. Jordan Davis — Who Katy Lederer is
- 668. Don Cheney — Re: you poets! (yard sales)
- 669. sylvester pollet — Re: Best New Poet Club
- 670. Dale M Smith — wanna be (kudos for foust)
- 671. berthia — Catskill poets
- 672. Gary Sullivan — Re: Who Katy Lederer is
- 673. david bromige — dale smith reading Langpo--forwarded, because misaddressed originally.
Ther...
- 674. Jordan Davis — Meow (carrying on in public)
- 675. KENT JOHNSON — Hurrahs all around
- 676. k. lederer — Re: Who Katy Lederer is
- 677. Pam Brown — THE newest
- 678. Ben Carrelis — Re: THE newest
- 679. Henry Gould — generation underwear
- 680. Henry Gould — very quick 2nd thought
- 681. R. Gancie — sex sex sex gross and levitt's sokalled reasoned discourse
- 682. robert drake — Re: jam (packed)... headcount=200+ (fwd)
- 683. Pam Brown — Re: THE newest

22 JAN 1998

- 684. John Tranter — Lisa Jarnot poems available in Jacket
- 685. david bromige — KATHA POLLIT, POINT OF INTEREST
- 686. Don Byrd — Mark Wallace and the Question of the New

- 687. Miekal And — A Pothole Named Copernicus
- 688. Miekal And — [Fwd: Re: fly problem]
- 689. KENT JOHNSON — Re: Beneath me
- 690. KENT JOHNSON — Re: generation underwear
- 691. Tom Mandel — Beneath me
- 692. Gary Sullivan — Re: Meow (carrying on in public)
- 693. Tom Mandel — Marty Ehrlich
- 694. KENT JOHNSON — Re: Marty Ehrlich
- 695. Dale M Smith — What evil lurks
- 696. KENT JOHNSON — Re: Infamous spellings
- 697. MAYHEW — Infamous spellings
- 698. Gwyn McVay — Re: Hurrahs all around
- 699. David Gitin — Re: Marty Ehrlich (for Don Byrd and Tom Mandel)
- 700. Miekal And — [Fwd: RHIZOME_RAW: Live on the Poetics List: Whose Visual Poetics?]
- 701. Bob Grumman — The Perloff Vizpo Seminar
- 702. Jordan Davis — Clonetinian era
- 703. Miekal And — stacy doris address?
- 704. Gary Sullivan — Re: Surveillance
- 705. Gwyn McVay — Re: The Perloff Vizpo Seminar
- 706. Don Byrd — Re: Marty Ehrlich
- 707. Mark Weiss — (no subject)
- 708. Jacques Debrot — Re: "actually new"
- 709. Aldon Nielsen — Re: Ron Ron
- 710. Aldon Nielsen — Re: scoured grapes
- 711. david bromige — tom mandel on a par with yard sales
- 712. Bob Grumman — Re: The Perloff Vizpo Seminar
- 713. Aldon Nielsen — Los Angeles Reading
- 714. Jacques Debrot — Re: French disease
- 715. John Cayley — DIASTEXT, etc.
- 716. Miekal And — Re: bill bissett reads at SFU Monday, Jan. 26; Special Collections displays
wo...
- 717. Don Byrd — Re: Marty Ehrlich
- 718. Steve Evans — the new don ron don the new don ron
- 719. Jordan Davis — hooey
- 720. Dale M Smith — Re: scoured grapes
- 721. KENT JOHNSON — The lost tampon
- 722. cris cheek — Re: scoured grapes
- 723. Mark Weiss — Re: the new don ron don the new don ron
- 724. Charles Watts — bill bissett reads at SFU Monday, Jan. 26; Special Collections displays
wor...
- 725. Robert Zamsky — Re: The lost tampon
- 726. Tenney Nathanson — Re: Who Katy Lederer is
- 727. Graham W Foust — the age of wire and string
- 728. Thomas Bell — Re: tail wags dog?
- 729. Steven Marks — Review of Age of Wire and String

23 JAN 1998

- 730. groberts — To the Historian of My New Poet
- 731. George Bowering — Re: Infamous spellings
- 732. Don Byrd — Re: the new don ron don the new don ron
- 733. henry gould — Re: the new don ron don the new don ron
- 734. Tom Mandel — bourbon
- 735. Mark Prejsnar — Re: French disease
- 736. Mark Prejsnar — Re: the new don ron don the new don ron
- 737. Henry Gould — Re: the new don ron don the new don ron
- 738. David Zauhar — Re: the new don ron don the new don ron

- 739. Mark Prejsnar — Re: the new don ron don the new don ron
- 740. Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher — Re: the new don ron don the new don ron
- 741. Bob Grumman — Re: tail wags dog?
- 742. d powell — Re: The lost tampon
- 743. hen — Re: the new don ron don the new don ron
- 744. Robert J Tiess — Book-length Poetry Publishers
- 745. Gary Sullivan — Response to Don's Post
- 746. Christina Fairbank Chiro — Re: Wave length
- 747. KENT JOHNSON — Re: Wave length
- 748. k. lederer — Re: The new as per young and old... loneliness... Dale Smith
- 749. Henry Gould — Re: Wave length
- 750. KENT JOHNSON — Plagiarism
- 751. KENT JOHNSON — Length, without wave
- 752. Jacques Debrot — Re: Weiners, Ceravolo, et al
- 753. Safdie Joseph — Re: The new; Dale; langpo; tradition
- 754. KENT JOHNSON — Bernstein's Viz Po
- 755. Bob Grumman — Re: vizzipo seman R
- 756. R M Daley — barthesian glory
- 757. William R. Howe — Re: vizzipo seman R
- 758. RaeA100900 — address for Charles B.
- 759. Herb Levy — Re: Nancarrow/Oppen?
- 760. Herb Levy — Re: Bernstein's Viz Po
- 761. Henry Gould — fri. night Poetry Wars
- 762. Schuchat Simon — Re: Weiners, Ceravolo, et al
- 763. Bob Grumman — Re: Bernstein's Viz Po
- 764. David Gitin — Re: Nancarrow/Oppen?
- 765. David R. Israel — (Fwd) postmodernism & Jenny Jones

24 JAN 1998

- 766. robert drake — Re: fri. night Poetry Wars
- 767. J. Kuszai — noise channel surf boy stink bomb
- 768. groberts — Digging my own grave
- 769. Miekal And — < noise channel> goat boy compost typography
- 770. louis stroffolino — Re: "actually new"
- 771. Bob Grumman — Re: The Perloff Seminar
- 772. Karen Kelley — (no subject)
- 773. KENT JOHNSON — The Key Club [or: The Museum]
- 774. J. Kuszai — My Bob Grumman
- 775. Henry — Re: fri. night Poetry Wars
- 776. Nuyopoman — Wieners as PerfPo
- 777. Joe Ahearn — Re: fri. night Poetry Wars

25 JAN 1998

- 778. robert drake — Re: Wieners as PerfPo
- 779. Kevin Varrone — Philly Readings
- 780. Jordan Davis — Allied Colloids
- 781. david bromige — pre-emptive hiccup
- 782. david bromige — p s
- 783. david bromige — how grants shape books
- 784. david bromige — p s
- 785. Miekal And — Re: texas poetry listserv
- 786. berthia — Re: how grants shape books
- 787. KENT JOHNSON — Gladstone here
- 788. KENT JOHNSON — Re: texas poetry listserv
- 789. Tim Wood — texas poetry listserv
- 790. KENT JOHNSON — Re: texas poetry listserv
- 791. Bob Grumman — Re: the Perloff Seminar

- 792. Tim Wood — Re: texas poetry listserv
- 793. robert drake — Re: noise channel surf boy stink bomb
- 794. robert drake — news that stays news...
- 795. Tim Wood — Re: texas poetry listserv
- 796. Bob Grumman — Re: noise channel surf boy stink bomb
- 797. Steve Evans — Re: news that stays news...
- 798. RaeA100900 — Gone for awhile...
- 799. Steven Marks — citation help
- 800. Jack Spandrift — Re: texas poetry listserv
- 801. Harold Rhenisch — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 802. henry — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 803. Tim Wood — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 804. Carl Lynden Peters — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 805. Harold Rhenisch — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 806. George Bowering — Re: Whitman and presidents
- 807. Beth Joselow — Re: POETICS Digest - 22 Jan 1998 to 23 Jan 1998

26 JAN 1998

- 808. Mark Prejsnar — interpret not!
- 809. Dale M Smith — Re: scoured grapes
- 810. Mark Prejsnar — Hurrahpo
- 811. Susan Wheeler — Hiatus
- 812. William R. Howe — vizzipo schtuff
- 813. Mark Prejsnar — art built on political critique
- 814. Dale M Smith — Hey Katy
- 815. henry — Re: art built on political critique
- 816. Maria Damon — Re: Wieners as PerfPo
- 817. Maria Damon — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 818. R M Daley — Re: Hey Katy
- 819. Robert Archambeau — NDR #5/Creeley, Howe, More
- 820. Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 821. Mark Prejsnar — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 822. KENT JOHNSON — The ten gallon hat
- 823. Dale M Smith — Re: Hey Katy
- 824. Charles Watts — Re: bill bissett reads at SFU Monday,
- 825. Charles Watts — Re: bill bissett
- 826. LAURA MORIARTY — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 827. LAURA MORIARTY — reading, interview,
- 828. Richard Long — More Creeley Work
- 829. Harold Rhenisch — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 830. d powell — Re: citation help
- 831. Miekal And — Back to back
- 832. Alan Myouka Sondheim — PRIMORDIAL
- 833. hen — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 834. Bob Grumman — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 835. RaeA100900 — Back
- 836. JBCM2 — Re: fri. night Poetry Wars
- 837. Miekal And — what night is it at vizago's vertipo
- 838. Daniel Zimmerman — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 839. Aviva99999 — HUBRISTIC, SIMPLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF VIZPO NEEDS COUNTERING
- 840. Aviva99999 — Susan Howe's Vizzipo post...
- 841. Henry Gould — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 842. Henry Gould — Re: Back
- 843. JBCM2 — Re: found poem
- 844. Scott Pound — Re: vizzipo schtuff

27 JAN 1998

- 845. Thomas Bell — Carson review
- 846. Thomas Bell — fri night po wars.the new.vizpo.langpo again.
- 847. Thomas Bell — Part II, fri.night po's etc
- 848. Marjorie Perloff — Re: The Perloff Seminiar
- 849. Miekal And — [Fwd: IM98 update2]
- 850. rsillima — Popularity of the novel debunked
- 851. Henry Gould — Re: vizzzipo schtuff
- 852. Maria Damon — Re: the Perloff Seminar
- 853. David Clippinger — gustaf sobin
- 854. Dale M Smith — Popularity of the novel debunked
- 855. MAYHEW — the whole world's neglect
- 856. Bob Grumman — Re: The Perloff Seminiar
- 857. Henry Gould — Re: Perloff debate
- 858. Bob Grumman — Re: HUBRISTIC, SIMPLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF VIZPO NEEDS
COUNTERING
- 859. J. Kuszai — CALL FOR WORK
- 860. Eric Blarnes — the key
- 861. Maria Damon — Re: vizzzipo schtuff
- 862. Maria Damon — Re: vizzzipo schtuff
- 863. Robert Hale — No Robots
- 864. Dale M Smith — the whole world's neglect
- 865. pritchpa — Re: Perloff debate
- 866. Charles Watts — Re: bill bissett reads at SFU Monday,
- 867. Miekal And — Nitpick Pearl Off
- 868. henry — Re: Perloff debate
- 869. groberts — Re: vizzzipo schtuff
- 870. William Marsh — Re: Part II, fri.night po's etc
- 871. k. lederer — Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo
- 872. Douglas — Re: The Perloff Seminiar
- 873. Dale M Smith — the key
- 874. Joseph Conte — Jed Rasula
- 875. Miekal And — Re: The Perloff Seminar
- 876. Henry Gould — Re: vizzzipo schtuff
- 877. Miekal And — The World's Largest Popcorn Ball
- 878. KENT JOHNSON — Pores of genre
- 879. Scott Pound — Re: HUBRISTIC, SIMPLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF VIZPO NEEDS
COUNTERING
- 880. Maz881 — Re: vizzzipo schtuff
- 881. Maz881 — Re: HUBRISTIC, SIMPLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF VIZPO NEEDS COUNTERING
- 882. d powell — Re: the whole world's neglect
- 883. pritchpa — Re: Perloff debate
- 884. Aldon Nielsen — Re: The Perloff Seminar
- 885. Miekal And — Nibprick Perl Oft
- 886. d powell — Another Mondegreen that comes to mind
- 887. d powell — Re: The Perloff Seminar
- 888. Thomas Bell — Part III, fri. po wars, digr on www vs. print
- 889. Thomas Bell — Part IV fry nite po wars
- 890. Daniel Zimmerman — Re: The Perloff Seminar

28 JAN 1998

- 891. Thomas Bell — Re: vizzzipo schtuff
- 892. Thomas Bell — Re: Part II, fri.night po's etc
- 893. Karen Kelley — Allen/Alan
- 894. Harold Rhenisch — Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo
- 895. George Bowering — Re: Perloff debate
- 896. Marcella Durand — Re: Allen/Alan

- 897. henry gould — Re: vizzipo schtuff
- 898. Henry Gould — (no subject)
- 899. dw — Re: a sound and vision nexus
- 900. Maria Damon — Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo
- 901. Jacques Debrot — Re: Material/Physical
- 902. Maria Damon — (no subject)
- 903. groberts — Re: a sound and vision nexus
- 904. Dale M Smith — Contracting the Populace
- 905. William R. Howe — a sound and vision nexus
- 906. J. Kuszai — I am chicken banana
- 907. louis stroffolino — Re: Material/Physical
- 908. Alan Myouka Sondheim — Nikuko, Mistake
- 909. Henry Gould — (no subject)
- 910. MAYHEW — A few unrelated points
- 911. Dale M Smith — Bombs, Away
- 912. Gary Sullivan — Response to Maria's Question
- 913. Henry Gould — Re: A few unrelated points
- 914. acgold01 — Nielsen's Neglected Syllabi
- 915. david bromige — The xtian right co-opting Aliens
- 916. Maria Damon — (no subject)
- 917. Maria Damon — Re: Nikuko, Mistake
- 918. Henry Gould — pumping poetry
- 919. Christopher W. Alexander — while you were @ lunch...
- 920. Thomas Bell — Part Vfri night po wars vizpoetc
- 921. Thomas Bell — Re: computer access and political poetry
- 922. LAURA MORIARTY — Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo
- 923. k. lederer — Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo
- 924. Bob Grumman — Re: a sound and vision nexus
- 925. Joseph Conte — Re: POETICS Digest - 26 Jan 1998 to 27 Jan 1998
- 926. David Benedetti — agreement
- 927. pritchpa — (no subject)
- 928. MAYHEW — pumping poetry
- 929. Steve Evans — All silences unintended
- 930. Mark Prejsnar — Re: Bombs, Away
- 931. k. lederer — Re: Explosive Magazine #4 is available
- 932. Christopher W. Alexander — While you were out...
- 933. Scott Pound — Re: Material/Physical
- 934. Christopher Reiner — The Gentle Instructor
- 935. Bob Grumman — Re: HUBRISTIC, SIMPLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF VIZPO NEEDS
COUNTERING
- 936. dbkk — next week at Small Press Traffic
- 937. Keith Tuma — Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo
- 938. Harold Rhenisch — disagreement
- 939. Thomas Bell — Re: Material/Physical
- 940. William Burmeister Prod — Re: Perloff debate
- 941. Henry Gould — (no subject)
- 942. Henry Gould — Re: pumping poetry
- 943. Karen and Trevor — Fourteen Hills Fall/Winter 1997

29 JAN 1998

- 944. david bromige — hypocrisy in the young, originality in the old
- 945. Juliana Spahr — maria's questions
- 946. Henry Gould — no subject - the subject
- 947. Maria Damon — Re: Response to Maria's Question
- 948. Maria Damon — Re: next week at Small Press Traffic
- 949. Maria Damon — Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo

- 950. rsillima — Old Poets Home
- 951. William Marsh — Re: Part III, fri. po wars, digr on www vs. print
- 952. dbkk — the older gals
- 953. William Marsh — Re: Explosive Magazine #4 is available
- 954. William Marsh — Re: Material/Physical
- 955. Christopher Reiner — Gentle Instructor
- 956. Joseph Conte — Re: Grumman re-contextualizes
- 957. Miekal And — Re: Grumman re-contextualizes
- 958. David Israel — non-viz
- 959. k. lederer — Re: The Key Club, Apologies to Tuma--
- 960. s. kaipa — Re: As-Am poetics
- 961. k. lederer — Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo
- 962. KENT JOHNSON — Silliman's rib
- 963. Henry Gould — Re: Old Poets Home
- 964. Aldon Nielsen — younger and used ta be younger poets
- 965. Dean A. Brink — Re: As-Am poetics
- 966. Dean A. Brink — Re: As-Am poetics
- 967. Aldon Nielsen — Re: Silliman's rib

30 JAN 1998

- 968. Steve Shoemaker — reasons, raisins & prunes
- 969. Matthew Hart — Re: Old Poets Home
- 970. k. lederer — Re: younger and used ta be younger poets
- 971. Pierre Joris — Re: Silliman's rib
- 972. Pierre Joris — Re: Silliman's rib
- 973. David Israel — Re: As-Am poetics
- 974. Pierre Joris — Re: references, please
- 975. Bob Grotjohn — Re: As-Am poetics
- 976. Tom Mandel — references, please
- 977. Gwyn McVay — Re: Material/Physical
- 978. Nada Gordon — driven
- 979. Nada Gordon — Copies of AYA still available
- 980. Mark Prejsnar — the revolution will be poeticized
- 981. MAYHEW — pumping poetry
- 982. Bob Grotjohn — Re: As-Am poetics
- 983. Joseph Conte — CAP-L
- 984. Tim Yu — Re: As-Am poetics
- 985. pritchpa — Re: maria's questions
- 986. KENT JOHNSON — A World to Win
- 987. David Zauhar — Re: references, please (D. Levi Strauss
- 988. aerialede — a posting to poetics
- 989. dbkk — Missing generation
- 990. henry gould — Re: pumping poetry
- 991. aerialede — Bridge Street Reading Feb 1
- 992. Maria Damon — Re: Grumman re-contextualizes
- 993. Maria Damon — (no subject)
- 994. Maria Damon — Re: pumping poetry
- 995. Harold Rhenisch — Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo
- 996. Catherine Daly — young poets, etc.
- 997. Gary Sullivan — Re: Response to Maria's Question
- 998. k. lederer — Re: Apologies, wish list
- 999. k. lederer — Re: Missing generation
- 1000. Henry Gould — Re: a posting to poetics
- 1001. KENT JOHNSON — The Pump
- 1002. charssmith — Re: Copies of AYA still available
- 1003. henry — Re: pumping poetry

- 1004. R. Gancie — Modernist Antidote Urgently Needed
- 1005. Harold Rhenisch — World Union of Independent Critics
- 1006. Harold Rhenisch — absurd reviews
- 1007. k. lederer — Re: a posting to poetics
- 1008. Charles Watts — Re: As-Am poetics
- 1009. William Marsh — Re: the revolution will be poeticized
- 1010. Jack Spandrift — A Parable about a Pair a Bulls
- 1011. Keston Sutherland — Re: a posting to poetics
- 1012. p. durgin — Re: a posting to poetics
- 1013. k. lederer — Re: Great poem, great poet
- 1014. louis stroffolino — Re: Missing generation
- 1015. robert drake — Call for hypertexts (forward)
- 1016. pritchpa — Re: pumping poetry
- 1017. charssmith — Re: references, please
- 1018. pritchpa — (no subject)
- 1019. KENT JOHNSON — Ojo al toro con tres cuernos
- 1020. David Israel — Re: A Parable about a Pair a Bulls
- 1021. david bromige — carlo's post
- 1022. Robert Hale — One Million Poems or a Thousand Lines a Day
- 1023. Marcella Durand — Re: As-Am poetics
- 1024. LAURA MORIARTY — old/young academic/non etc
- 1025. Don Byrd — Re: pumping poetry
- 1026. R. Gancie — potry
- 1027. henry gould — Re: pumping poetry
- 1028. Don Byrd — Re: absurd reviews
- 1029. Nada Gordon — AYA address
- 1030. Nada Gordon — Re: Copies of AYA still available
- 1031. Henry Gould — posting to poetics

31 JAN 1998

- 1032. Jordan Davis — make it good
- 1033. Louis Cabri — phphph
- 1034. Susan Clark — addresses
- 1035. Thomas Bell — Re: Old Poets Home
- 1036. Thomas Bell — Part V elements of a visual poetics
- 1037. Tom Mandel — levi
- 1038. Tom Mandel — Dan Davidson
- 1039. Tom Mandel — Gordon as acolyte!
- 1040. R M Daley — Re: Missing generation
- 1041. Rachel Loden — missing generation
- 1042. Alan Myouka Sondheim — Re: Great poem, great poet
- 1043. nikuko — I, Nikuko, am Listening to Buffalo Daughter
- 1044. Miekal And — Re: As-Am poetics
- 1045. Keston Sutherland — snip
- 1046. k. lederer — Re: snip
- 1047. Keston Sutherland — pet
- 1048. Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks — "Antipath"
- 1049. Henry Gould — Re: Ojo al toro con tres cuernos
- 1050. Henry Gould — Indie Critics
- 1051. Joe Brennan — Re: missing generation
- 1052. Joe Brennan — Re: missing generation
- 1053. Joe Brennan — Re: missing generation/missing what?
- 1054. jarnot — Denise Levertov/Poetry Project Newsletter
- 1055. jarnot — Robert Duncan materials
- 1056. Gwyn McVay — Re: As-Am poetics
- 1057. Graham W Foust — distance carrier

- 1058. Tim Wood — Re: The ten gallon hat
- 1059. Karen Kelley — Re: Missing generation

1. Alan Myouka Sondheim

"saying 'girl'"

Thu 1 Jan 1998

=

"saying 'girl'"

saying "something" about writing, writing the "something" which turns _in a manner of speaking_ into something, which you might hear sounding out the antecedent of the word to your virtual self, although not the obdurate quality of the grain of the voice certainly, but "something" that you had processed, constituted (without image or sound, without text or reference) by virtue of a _textual disposition_ as a result of cultural capital (for example), not to mention processing something which might be interpreted through the signifier "something" dependent on its interpretation in the first and last place ... saying "girl" about writing, writing the "girl" which turns _in a manner of speaking_ into girl, which you might hear sounding out the antecedent of the word to your virtual self, although not the obdurate quality of the grain of the voice certainly, but "girl" that you had processed, constituted (without image or sound, without text or reference) by virtue of a _textual disposition_ as a result of cultural capital (for example), not to mention processing girl which might be interpreted through the signifier "girl" dependent on its interpretation in the first and last place ... saying "children of the apocalypse" about writing, writing the "children of the apocalypse" which turns _in a manner of speaking_ into children of the apocalypse, which you might hear sounding out the antecedent of the word to your virtual self, although not the obdurate quality of the grain of the voice certainly, but "children of the apocalypse" that you had processed, constituted (without image or sound, without text or reference) by virtue of a _textual disposition_ as a result of cultural capital (for example), not to mention processing children of the apocalypse which might be interpreted through the signifier "children of the apocalypse" dependent on its interpretation in the first and last place ...

[↑ Contents](#)

2. Maria Damon

Re: testing..1,2,3,

Thu 1 Jan 1998

At 12:18 PM -0500 12/31/97, Mark Prejsnar wrote:

>Is it just that everyone out there has a life (horrid thought..)

>

>Or has the List shut down in some catastrophic way (or was it all just a

>dream?)? Or is it all just a technical problem on my end (which is like a
>dream, only more complicated)?

>

>Haven't seen a post in over 24 hours..

>

>Mark P.

ah, the freedom of having been listless for 24 hrs...--happy 1998 everyone

[↑ Contents](#)

3. **Maria Damon**

Re: testing..1,2,3,

Thu 1 Jan 1998

pat, i don;t have an answer abt the fibonacci poems, but cd i get that threading
pattern from yr mother? thanks a million. md

At 3:28 PM -0600 12/31/97, pritchpa wrote:

>Sounds lonely, Mark - but it's just as lonely here in Boulder. Like

>those post-apocalypse movies where stranded islets of humanity cluster

>around their ham radios, sounding their pathetic refrain, Hello is

>anyone out there? amid long stretches of unnerving static.

>

>But since you posted, I'll ask - has the newest ish of Misc. Proj. gone

>out yet?

>

>And a more general query for Ron Silliman or anyone else: in which book

>of Ron's can I find the poem based on the Fibonacci series? Is it called

>"Fibonacci Series"? Or something else? You see, my mother handwove me a

>rayon chenille opera-length scarf this Xmas and the thread pattern is

>based on the Fibonacci series. It's quite the most beautiful thing, both

>to look at and wear. I shall wear it out tonight, ignorant of its

>intricacy, yet delighting in it all the same.

>

>Calling all stations, but not expecting an answer -

>Patrick Pritchett

> -----

>From: Mark Prejsnar

>To: [REDACTED]

>Subject: testing..1,2,3,

>Date: Wednesday, December 31, 1997 11:18AM

>

>Is it just that everyone out there has a life (horrid thought..)

>

>Or has the List shut down in some catastrophic way (or was it all just a
>dream?)? Or is it all just a technical problem on my end (which is like

>a

>dream, only more complicated)?

>

>Haven't seen a post in over 24 hours..

>

>Mark P.

[↑ Contents](#)

4. **david bromige**

new years eve poem

Thu 1 Jan 1998

NEW YEARS EVE

[This is a real-time piece, if you read it fast. You should arrive at the inbuilt markers on time, except at the end, which should run about 20 seconds over. One moral purpose of this piece, which I read at the "First Night" celebrations in Santa Rosa last night, failed miserably, as a subsequent reader went on and on for 11 minutes. Poets!]

I have five minutes to read in. That's not very long, although it is 300 seconds. Memory has to come into it. You have to remember how long a second is. We're going to welcome 1998 to all 4 time zones. You count back from ten on New Years Eve and you do it in a crowd. You count back from 100 going under anesthetic and you do it alone. But you usually don't get any further than 97. The story of how a second got to be as long as it is is most interesting, but I'm afraid we won't have time for that right now. Let's just say that a second occurs more often than a blue moon. Yet one second is long enough to see you standing alone. Is one not surprisingly enough never in the second as it moves, where "is" means attentive to, just that the prior seconds are still processing? So each second of the second hand is secondhand. They cluster, grapes on the vine, except one can't pick and choose. Not that I want to get stuck in the second. There are smaller units of time, and there are much larger ones, for example the minute. These everyday measures, minutes, seconds, even hours, we take so lightly, carelessly, speak of so glibly. I've probably been talking for a minute, or you have, if you're reading this and not hearing me say it at a poetry reading. Should this be being said, at a reading of poetry? That would mean this is a poem, instead of a talk on time. Or that there'd been an error of some kind. But back then about three lines of prose, I guessed that a minute had gone by, since I started making these words do what they wanted me to do with them. That's

glib, but I haven't enough time to be consistently careful, if a minute had gone by back then, probably another half a minute has gotten back to town by now, which means a minute and a half of my allotment has been used up already, or 3/10ths, almost one third. Probably by now one-third of the time has, had passed. Not that we see time pass, not customarily. Down in the boondocks, perhaps. But usually we don't see time pass, since we pass with it. It is us, isn't it? Who else could see a tree grow in the middle of the forest, cut it down, slice it open, count its rings, register its age? We nouns are really verbs. Doo-wah diddy diddy dum diddy doo, there can't be more than 3 minutes left. If I make a five-minute span equal to an average lifetime, though, I am only thirty, though, at this moment. The duration of a moment is not as fixed as that of a second or a minute. We don't make clocks that tick off the moments. Some moments appear to last forever. What is a moment? it is a brief lapse. A trice. A jiffy. An instant. In a moment something momentous might take place, although time is not a measure of space. It might be an historical era, it might be a second. Second is to come next, after the first. A heartbeat now because there was one just then. Musically, a second can be an interval, but then what ends the interval but a note, and that note might last a second. Or longer. Music orders time, by keeping pace with time it eliminates it. Is a person more in touch with time when he or she goes sideways, as it were, as I have been doing in these recent sentences, or when we insist on a path or way, some passage of time in some defining encampment? Like here we are now, studying my time dribbling away. I'm sure three minutes are gone. I cannot tell a lie. I was 30 or appeared 30 only yesterday, only a minute ago actually, and now I'm 45! In the old days, I would have been dead already. Thought would have ceased. But here I am, pushing 50, still thinking, thinking, for instance, in this instant, that I'm capable of thought, why does the sun go on shining, why does the sea rush to shore. If I have only a minute and thirty seconds left, let me make use of those 90 seconds in a measured, calm, fruitful manner. Why does my heart go on beating, as it beat in '63? Who was on keyboards? What Faustian bargain had I driven? I had learned language only to piss the time away? We don't always know just how long we have, the way I do today, but we do know we have a certain length of time, though unknown, and then, no more. We don't go around ever-mindful of this, I hope, for I would find that paralyzing. Knowing exactly how long one has, on the other hand, panics me. Just a moment. What is a moment? Take a small glass, fill with orange juice. Drink it. Immediately refill glass with non-dairy creamer. Drink. A moment can mean a minute. In the movie "Hour of the Wolf," there is one minute of real time where the actors on-screen hold their deliberate silence. It feels like forever. Let me do that now.

[15 second pause]

Yes, a minute. Good. In an average lifetime, that would equal nearly 4 years. Just a minute, the teenager said from behind her door, but she didn't mean to be taken literally. Literally, a minute is defined as 1/60th of an hour. Great. "Minute" is related to "my-newt." "My-newt" means very small, and yet that minute we observed silently seemed long enough, to me. In an average lifetime we can expect billions of minutes, and this may make us careless. We may leave things to the last minute. Ten, nine. The hourglass, inverted 4 minutes ago, lets gravity trickle its sand into the overcrowded bottom half, a kind of symbol of the future, as the past rapidly empties out like a theater in which someone has lately shouted-Eight. Tock, the only answer to Tick. Seven. The stay has not arrived from the Governor. Six. If wants to be the same, the same as is. Five. Time held me green and dying, though I sang in my chains like the- Four. Where are the snows of yester-Three. Old age, what a strange thing to happen to a boy. Two. More light! One. Amstel Light. Z-z-z-I heard a fly buzz when I died--Z-z-z-z-Zorro to the rescue! I can go over my time, he says! Take as long as you want, he tells me! Tell us the story of your early childhood, the adolescent years, the troubles of early maturity, which in your case came late, tell us one of those stories of yours that begins "Shortly before I was born"! It may be our phone, but it's your 35 cents! Thank you, Z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z..... [eyes close, head drops to chest]

[↑ Contents](#)

5. Ctfarmr

Thu 1 Jan 1998

Thank you all for your valiant efforts to keep the list afloat. I guess it's my turn to jump into the pool (blame it on Bromige: he told me to stop lurking). Anyway, a friend of mine recently posed the question, "What is the purpose of poetry?" So how would you answer that?

Bobbie West
(testing her new de-lurking device)

[↑ Contents](#)

6. Miekal And *wonder wonder*

Thu 1 Jan 1998

is there a david bromidge website?

[↑ Contents](#)

7. **Bob Grumman**

Re: what purpose

Thu 1 Jan 1998

This question of Bobbie West's friend about the purpose of poetry is the easiest one I've had all year. Answer: the purpose of poetry is to achieve Beauty through the maximally-expressive use of words.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

8. **Judy Roitman**

Re: what purpose

Thu 1 Jan 1998

This question of Bobbie West's friend about the purpose of poetry is the easiest one I've had all year. Answer: the purpose of poetry is to achieve Beauty through the maximally-expressive use of words.

--Bob G.

Beauty? Expressive? As purpose/means?

Nonono.

(But note she doesn't put up her own "answer." Just shy I guess.)

----- Judy Roitman
| "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! Math, University of Kansas | mem-
ory fails Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days." [REDACTED]
| fax: [REDACTED] | Larry Eigner, 1927-1996

----- Note new area code

http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/

[↑ Contents](#)

9. **Bob Grumman**

Re: what purpose

Thu 1 Jan 1998

Ha, I knowed I'd catch ol' Judy.

Evilly, Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

10. **Lawrence Upton.**

Re: what purpose

Thu 1 Jan 1998

|What is the
|purpose of poetry?" So how would you answer that?

|

|Bobbie West

What purpose does a flower or a rock have? What purpose do we have?

Q: Why are you writing that?

A: Why not?

L

[↑ Contents](#)

11. **Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks**

Re: what purpose

Thu 1 Jan 1998

|What is the
|purpose of poetry?" So how would you answer that?

|

|Bobbie West

What purpose does a flower or a rock have? What purpose do we have?

Q: Why are you writing that?

A: Why not?

L

Nonsense. There are always purposes for everything.

The purpose of a flower is to attract bees.

The purpose of a rock is to smash bees with.

The purpose of us is to smash bees with rocks.

The purpose of poetry is to smash flowers.

Q: Why are you writing that?

A: Because flowers are full of bees.

K. S. M. H.

[↑ Contents](#)

12. **david bromige**

purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry

Thu 1 Jan 1998

Take my New years Eve poem as instance. I was irritated that more readers were being shoehorned into a finite allotment of time, and that each person's moiety was therefore to be reduced. This was at a planning luncheon. I didnt express my irritation, because there was no chance of winning the fight, so why fight? But it stayed with me, and by next day I wrote the first draft of a real-time piece on the topic of limited time. So that piece expresses my irritation, but I think it disguises what it expresses. I hope so. What is more vital to me is that the disguise plays with a variety of purposes to which we put our time. In my mind, the purpose of the piece is minatory, first and foremost, is another way of saying Carpe Diem. An ancillary purpose was to keep those reading after me (I elected to read 3rd) mindful of the 5-minute limit(I have often noted at these "monster" readings, that poets go way over their allotment. While I appreciate that poets are transgressive, I dont appreciate it when they trespass on my time, or that of others, and this is not only by reducing further our allotments, but by making us sit there for longer). This poem may have had this effect on some, but on one as I say it made no dent. I wanted the piece to dance questions about finitude and its role in creativeness. And I wanted people to appreciate what "five minutes" can be. I wanted to take back the clock. And yes, I wanted a form for my anxiety about running out of time in a larger sense. I mean thats a free-floater thats liable to attach anywhere it can. I wanted to entertain and amuse. I wanted people to like me. And I wanted to do it by getting in their faces a little. I'm sure there's more to it than this.

Bob Grumman's definition I can have no quarrel with, because it is so abstract. Au fond, who knows? it might apply to my poem, and to any poem. But at some intermediate stage of responding to Bobby West's question, this above is what I say. David

[↑ Contents](#)

13. **david bromige**

tony lopez's bouncing mail

Thu 1 Jan 1998

Could someone in england get tony on the blower and ask him to look into his e-mail server's situation? It's a minor matter, but multiply it by 512 or however many are on the Poetics List, and that seems like a situation thats worth speedy correction. Thanks. david

[↑ Contents](#)

14. **Daniel Zimmerman**

Re: what purpose

Thu 1 Jan 1998

Ctfarmr wrote:

>

> Thank you all for your valiant efforts to keep the list afloat. I guess it's
> my turn to jump into the pool (blame it on Bromige: he told me to stop
> lurking). Anyway, a friend of mine recently posed the question, "What is the
> purpose of poetry?" So how would you answer that?

>

> Bobbie West

> (testing her new de-lurking device)

Poetry adds volcanic islands to the sea along its unseen ridges. Whether it has a purpose or not, wings cross it, roost, drop white nitrogen & seeds, raise a greenness. If springs rise with their magma, its islands invite refuge, treasure-stash, settlement -- purpose. Not poetry's purpose, or even the poem's, but purpose without which poem and poetry remain vacuous except to fencebuilding finches. A poet may, like Tom Sawyer with his whitewash pot, have a purpose, but had better not name it "painting the fence." Remember, though: even Tom has to start the paint job -- & make it look more interesting than anything else in the carefree days of childhood. How long does it take the painters to get the knack, to spot the trick, to offer to paint a fence? How many paint the fence alone? To what purpose? Ever make a salt map of the sea floor, then paint in the water? It makes the islands credible, attractive, worth naming. But you paint it anyway.

Daniel Zimmerman

[↑ Contents](#)

15. **Daniel Zimmerman**

Re: what purpose

Thu 1 Jan 1998

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Daniel Zimmerman

[↑ Contents](#)

16. **Daniel Zimmerman**

'scuse me

Thu 1 Jan 1998

Sorry if you got my reply to Bobbie West twice -- I received a 'message not sent' from Tony Lopez' mail administrator, & didn't know whether that would interfere with transmission of the post to everyone else on teh list or not, so I re-posted. Then, of course, I realized that it probably affects only Tony's mail. Has anyone gotten through to him yet?

Happy New Year!

Dan Zimmerman

[↑ Contents](#)

17. **robert drake**

Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry

Thu 1 Jan 1998

david--

i think isnt there a significant difference between th question "what is the purpose of poetry?" & "what is the purpose of this particular poem" (or "what is the author's purpose behind the poem s/he wrote?")... drawing these distinctions cuz ov my own belief that "poetry" is more than sum total of a corpus ov poems, but the whole social construct of attending to some instances of language ("poems") as different in kind from other non-poetic instances... so that th original question--what is the specific purpose of _poetry_, distinguished from the purpose(s) of language in general--seems interesting to me, in ways that questions about the meaning of life dont... i dont have an answer.

luigi-bob drake

www.burningpress.org

Take my New years Eve poem as instance. I was irritated that more readers were being shoehorned into a finite allotment of time, and that each person's moiety was therefore to be reduced. This was at a planning luncheon. I didnt express my irritation, because there was no chance of winning the fight, so why fight? But it stayed with me, and by next day I wrote the first draft of a real-time piece on the topic of limited time. So that piece expresses my irritation, but I think it disguises what it expresses. I hope so. What is more vital to me is that the disguise plays with a variety of purposes to which we put our time. In my mind, the purpose of the piece is minatory, first and foremost, is another way of saying Carpe Diem. An ancillary purpose was to keep those reading after me (I elected to read 3rd) mindful of the 5-minute limit(I have often noted at these "monster" readings, that poets go way over their allotment. While I appreciate that poets are transgressive, I dont appreciate it when they trespass on my time, or that of others, and this is not only by reducing further our allotments, but by making us sit there for longer). This poem may have had this effect on some, but on one as I say it made no dent. I wanted the piece to dance questions about finitude and its role in creativeness. And I wanted people to appreciate what "five minutes" can be. I wanted to take back the clock. And yes, I wanted a form for my anxiety about running out of time in a larger sense. I mean thats a free-floater thats liable to attach anywhere it can. I wanted to entertain and amuse. I wanted people to like me. And I wanted to do it by getting in their faces a little. I'm sure there's more to it than this.

Bob Grumman's definition I can have no quarrel with, because it is so abstract. Au fond, who knows? it might apply to my poem, and to any poem. But at some intermediate stage of responding to Bobby West's question, this above is what I say. David

[↑ Contents](#)

18. David R. Israel

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

Taking up the popular Bobbie Wester (& happy January 2 to y'all, btw), --

the question, "What is the purpose of poetry?"

one good question deserves another:

what is the poetry of a purpose?

&/or little variations thereon ---

e.g. what poetry does a purpose have?

what's the poetry of purpose & how might it compare w/
the poetry of purposelessness? (cf. Zhuang-zi / Chuang-Tse)
(et seq.)

cheerio,

d.i.

•

• • • • •

.....

////////////////////////////////////

> david raphael israel <

>> washington d.c. <<

| (home)

| [REDACTED] (office)

=====

thy centuries follow each other

| perfecting a small wild flower

| (Tagore)

////////////////////^\\\\V////

[↑ Contents](#)

19. Pete Landers

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

"What is the purpose of poetry?"

Well, interesting enough a subject for a slow list. I would base the way I answer the question on the asker. If it's a fellow smarty-pants, then I'd probably make some kind of flippant answer, but if it's a friend who is seriously asking because

s/he wants to know why I write, I'd say some of the things that inspire me, but if s/he seriously wants me to answer the question as stated and no other question, then I'd refill the coffee cups and begin with defining what poetry is. By the time I finished that, assuming I didn't encounter too much resistance to my quirky definition, the answer would be obvious. I can guarantee an argument to my quirky definition, though, so my answer would probably not be accepted. For what it is worth, I view all drama (including movies and opera), all songs (including pop), all narrative (including jokes) as types of poetry. I don't use the word to mean "good" arrangements of words, I just use it to refer to any art made out of words. That's the classical definition, and it's good enough for me. So anyone who doesn't feel a need to ask what's the purpose of a sit-com or a rock song, shouldn't need to ask what is the purpose of poetry. Memory, of course.

The somewhat more flippant answer, and possibly more true is that there is no such thing as this "poetry" referred to in the question. There are only people who write poems. Each poem has its own purpose. Unlike I-b drake I don't think there is any "whole" that exceeds the sum of these poems. In fact, when most people mention this mythical beast "poetry", they usually refer to only a small subset of remembered poems.

So those are my two answers that seem to negate each other. One in which the word includes so much it can't possibly be defined except so loosely that the question is moot, and the other in which the word is dismissed as a myth. Perhaps that's because we have no rigid rules to follow when writing poems these days. Perhaps the question is seeking a set of such rules. People who want to write within rules should write formal work like movie scripts or rock songs and keep away from the more esoteric areas where writing-by-numbers is frowned on. In these areas, certain Yankee values of individualism and self-reliance are expected and any obedience to external forms is considered a weakness.

Still, at its core, writing is an act of remembering. What is the purpose of remembering?

Pete



[↑ Contents](#)

20. **George Bowering**

Re: wonder wonder

Fri 2 Jan 1998

| *is there a david bromidge website?*

Who is that?

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

21. **Stephen Cope**

Fibonacci Lit,

Fri 2 Jan 1998

The book is Silliman's LIT, but I can't recall the publisher, year, etc.

Best regards in 98,

Stephen Cope

And a more general query for Ron Silliman or anyone else: in which book of Ron's can I find the poem based on the Fibonacci series? Is it called "Fibonacci Series"? Or something else? You see, my mother handwove me a rayon chenille opera-length scarf this Xmas and the thread pattern is based on the Fibonacci series. It's quite the most beautiful thing, both to look at and wear. I shall wear it out tonight, ignorant of its intricacy, yet delighting in it all the same.

[↑ Contents](#)

22. **Hugh Steinberg**

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

Pete Landers writes:

Still, at its core, writing is an act of remembering. What is the purpose of remembering?

So that the world is not lost, and maybe that's a purpose for poetry too.

Hugh Steinberg

[↑ Contents](#)

23. **Bob Grumman**

Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry

Fri 2 Jan 1998

I agree with David Bromige that my answer to the purpose of poetry is, as stated, way too abstract to be of use. However, if one understands the terms

"beauty," "poetry" and "expression" as I do (at an even higher level of abstraction!), it's not too useless.

I don't have time now to get into George Bowering's responses, "Why beauty?" and "Why expressive?" but will say: (1) the reason I don't commit suicide is that I believe happiness is possible for me and other human beings; there is only pleasure/pain, happiness/unhappiness; beauty as I define it is a form of mainly sensual/sensory happiness, a particular form of which should be the ultimate aim of poetry, as I define it; (2) words express, that's why "expressive"; they are also sensually pleasurable in themselves auditorily and visually, which I left out in my answer because I was rushing too much as usual.

So here's my revised answer: The purpose of poetry is to achieve Beauty through the maximally-expressive and sensually-rich use of words.

--Bob G

[↑ Contents](#)

24. **Henry Gould**

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

A few days ago I watched a video called "Troublesome Creek" which was a documentary about a farm family (much like my grandparents') in Iowa trying to keep it going. The 2 images that struck me the most in this well-pictographed picture were 1) the long grass along the flat dirt roads always swaying in the wind and 2) the crowd of farmers collected in the January cold to respond by slight flicks & winks to the incredibly fast-talking auctioneer of all the family's household goods.

Words are an inside thing, a human invention, a mirror. It's a good mirror in that it grasps & captures & replays the whole outside. This is what verbal intelligence does, encapsulates what's going on. (Of course it only feels right if the outside is really in there.)

Poetry's a version of that, only it makes the mirror sing. A harmony of thought brought to equivalent expression in language. So harmonious that sometimes the outside rightfully becomes the inside or vice-versa or verse-visa.

Now what's the purpose of that?

Sing, sing, sing along...

you find yourself singing along with the "Ode to a Tin Ear".

- Cowboy Hank

p.s. I have an essay in the latest WITZ sort of tongue-in-cheeking this issue of the "telos" or purpose of poetry.

[↑ Contents](#)

25. **syvester pollet**

Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry

Fri 2 Jan 1998

So here's my revised answer: The purpose of poetry is to achieve Beauty through the maximally-expressive and sensually-rich use of words.

--Bob G

The purpose of poetry is to escape the cages of its definers. What's the porpoise of poetry? Go ask a dolphin.

[↑ Contents](#)

26. **Maria Damon**

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

At 9:57 PM +0000 1/1/98, Lawrence Upton. wrote:

>|What is the

>|purpose of poetry?" So how would you answer that?

>|

>|Bobbie West

>

>

>What purpose does a flower or a rock have? What purpose do we have?

>

>Q: Why are you writing that?

>A: Why not?

>

>L

what is the purpose of human reproduction. what is the purpose of our cerebral operations. what is the purpose of mathematics. what is the purpose of purposiveness.

[↑ Contents](#)

27. **Maria Damon**

lopez loops

Fri 2 Jan 1998

having now gotten the lopez message a few times i must say i find it quite moving, like that david bowie song about major tom ... all that to-do about one little msg searching for its destination in the global whirlwind of cyberspace... there's a wistfulness about it, an existential loneliness uttered by a system that is so mechanized that it doesn't even care that it cares...md

[↑ Contents](#)

28. **syvester pollet**

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

At 7:24 AM -0600 1/2/98, Maria Damon wrote:

>what is the purpose of human reproduction.

Make kids.

what is the purpose of our

>cerebral operations.

Figure out what's causin' em.

what is the purpose of mathematics.

Count how many you got.

what is the

>purpose of purposiveness.

Invent contraceptives.

[↑ Contents](#)

29. **Bob Grumman**

Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry

Fri 2 Jan 1998

Ooops, I forgot the conceptual in my answer to the question about the purpose of poetry, something that came up in back-channels with Judy Roitman, so I have a second revision of my answer:

The purpose of poetry is to achieve Beauty through the maximally- expressive, sensually-rich and aesthetico-conceptually-intense use of words--aesthetico-conceptual having to do with what words are or do conceptually (e.g., Aram Saroyan's "lighght" conceptualizes silence), and the abstract form, harmonies, etc., of individual poems.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

30. **robert drake**

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

Peter L writ:

>...

>The somewhat more flippant answer, and possibly more true is that there
>is no such thing as this "poetry" referred to in the question. There are
>only people who write poems. Each poem has its own purpose. Unlike l-b
>drake I don't think there is any "whole" that exceeds the sum of these
>poems. In fact, when most people mention this mythical beast "poetry",
>they usually refer to only a small subset of remembered poems.

>...

pressing a small point (but do we really disagree?)--it's exact that mythology
which interests me in th question, and mythology ov course is "real" if only (be-
cause it is) image-inary... referring to those specific or small subsets of individ-
ual poems is only different than that larger abstraction (not better/worse); and
so bromige's fine examination of his purpose in that particular poem i think
begs th larger question*... what's the purpose, culture's purpose, in privilaging
(underprivilaging?) some small subset (differently remembered by each partici-
pant in th culture) of it's utterance as "poetry"? as sed, i'm not sure ov an an-
swer, tho i suspect it's more than bob g's quantitative "maximized" measure ov
pleasurable expression...

lbd

*unless, i suppose, some aggregate examination of individual poems revealed
some common purpose--to delight & instruct, frinstance?-- but that's old news...
(that stays news?...)

[↑ Contents](#)

31. **henry g**

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

On Fri, 2 Jan 1998 09:10:44 -0500 robert drake said:

>larger question*... what's the purpose, culture's purpose, in
>privilaging (underprivilaging?) some small subset (differently
>remembered by each participant in th culture) of it's utterance
>as "poetry"? as sed, i'm not sure ov an answer, tho i suspect it's

>more than bob g's quantitative "maximized" measure ov pleasurable
>expression...
>

When you learned your 1st words from mother or father it was delight & instruction & strenuous exercise all in one. (My mother wrote down my 1st 2 words: "door" & "flower" - do I believe that?.) You've been repeating them in complicated variations ever since. Especially when you learned that the flower grows at the doorstep & blooms on the Day of the Dead. - Henry G.

[↑ Contents](#)

32. **Gwyn McVay**

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

How about: the best words in the best disorder?

Gwyn

[↑ Contents](#)

33. **JforJames**

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

Plosively: Poetry presupposes its own purpore.

Finnegan

[↑ Contents](#)

34. **Jordan Davis**

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

I thought poetry wasn't supposed to have a purpose! "I/they don't have no function." Then Mary Burger restated this idea in Laura Moriarty's *_non_* (<http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~moriarty>) and the ale fell from my hand. Thank heavens for fallback positions -- poetry is celebration! You write it when you are happy or having some other feeling you want to give other people and to have again yourself, and when you go back, the feeling is there. The rest is tenure.

Jordan, who says happy new year

[↑ Contents](#)

35. **JforJames**

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

In a message dated 98-01-02 10:07:31 EST, you write:

| *Plosively: Poetry presupposes its own purple.*

Ouch--first typo of '98: Poetry presupposes its own purpose.

Finnegan

[↑ Contents](#)

36. **Jack Spandrift**

Re: what purpose

Fri 2 Jan 1998

On Fri, 2 Jan 1998 10:34:50 -0500 Jordan Davis said:

>Thank heavens for fallback positions -- poetry is celebration! You write
>it when you are happy or having some other feeling you want to give other
>people and to have again yourself, and when you go back, the feeling is
>there. The rest is tenure.

Jor D hit it in a nutshell, I reckon, & to put the same thing in Kosmo-Classic perspective, as (who?) O. Mandelstam says someplace, "poetry is the plow bringing the deep layers of time up to the surface." - or something like that.

To illustrate, here's an early poem by that human headache, Henry Gould:

the well is always there
a decade of water
the soldiers pass by
& today the girls are among the clowns
each hiding an arm or wearing a red dance
standing around the well always there

(1971)

Hep Gnu Year, all - Jack Spandrift

[↑ Contents](#)

37. **Jack Spandrift**

CORrection

Fri 2 Jan 1998

Here's the corrected version of the early Gould poem posted earlier.

the well is always there
a decade of water
just a well
the soldiers pass by
& today the girls are among the clowns
each hiding an arm or wearing a red dance
standing around the well always there
(1971)

- when I asked him which version he approved of now, I couldn't get a straight answer. He said, "Well, it is just a well. Try it to the tune of 'Down in the Valley'." (I did, with no luck.)

The printed version can be found in his Hellcoal Press chapbook of 1972 called (yes this is the real title) "Where the Skies Are Not Cloudy All Day". There the poem includes the following quote, from Horizon Magazine (1971):

"The letters add to the elegance of a structure, even if their meaning is hid from those not familiar with the language. Here, they tell how a piece of the True Cross was discovered in 1045 and preserved in the building. The entire roof has collapsed, the interior yawning hollowly in the direction of the Soviet Union."

(It's a good question whether such "inscriptions" add to the elegance of a poem or not. I asked Gould about this too, and again he was, as Blarnes would put it, noncommittal, or "chiffery-chaffery". He said, and I quote & I quote & I quote again quote:

"This particular thing, or what? Well, I didn't write it, did I? I stole it outa some magazine, Jack. If it means something to you, then, well, you probably shouldna read it in the first place. Hey, can I borrow your hat tonight? I need to busk down in the Ken Station & raise some jimmy." [is he referring to Jimi Hendrix here?]

- don't ask me... - Jack Spandrift

[↑ Contents](#)

38. **Judy Roitman**

Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry

Fri 2 Jan 1998

I agree with David Bromige that my answer to the purpose of poetry is, as stated, way too abstract to be of use. However, if one understands the terms "beauty," "poetry" and "expression" as I do (at an even higher level of abstraction!), it's not too useless.

I don't have time now to get into George Bowering's responses, "Why beauty?" and "Why expressive?" but will say: (1) the reason I don't

commit suicide is that I believe happiness is possible for me and other human beings; there is only pleasure/pain, happiness/unhappiness; beauty as I define it is a form of mainly sensual/sensory happiness, a particular form of which should be the ultimate aim of poetry, as I define it; (2) words express, that's why "expressive"; they are also sensually pleasurable in themselves auditorily and visually, which I left out in my answer because I was rushing too much as usual.

So here's my revised answer: The purpose of poetry is to achieve Beauty through the maximally-expressive and sensually-rich use of words.

--Bob G

Ah, Beauty. Especially "beauty as I define it... mainly sensual/sensory happiness."

Poor undefined Beast on the balcony, wind in fur, teeth bared to the moonlight, champagne glass shattered on the tiles below. No doubt howling to, no doubt, no moon.

And Truth? The fill-in-the-blank part of "____ and Beauty?" Hiding in the forest, from Beauty, not Beast.

Gentle reader, how have you gendered the above?

----- Judy Roitman
| "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! Math, University of Kansas | mem-
ory fails Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days." [REDACTED]
| fax: [REDACTED] | Larry Eigner, 1927-1996

----- Note new area code

<http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/>

[↑ Contents](#)

39. **Steve Evans**

ILS Special Offer

Fri 2 Jan 1998

The Impercipient Lecture Series is moving its editorial offices from Providence to Paris effective February 1998. Orders for back issues, including a small number of full runs, will be filled through 10 January and may be placed by e-mail. Now would also be a good time to update your mailing address if it has recently changed.

1.10 Dictionary of Received Ideas by "Bouvard & Pécuchet"

1.9 Vexations by Damon Krukowski

- 1.8 The Bride of the Assembly Line by Barrett Watten
- 1.7 Five Years in the Life of Jack Spicer by Lewis Ellingham and Kevin Killian
- 1.6 No Saints in Three Acts: On Stephen Jonas by Aldon L. Nielsen
- 1.5 Imperturbable Things: On Still-Life Poetics by Beth Anderson
- 1.4* Readings & Responses to Bob Perelman's _The Marginalization of Poetry_ by Ron Silliman, Ann Lauterbach, Juliana Spahr and Steve Evans; with counter-response by Bob Perelman
- 1.3 The Ground is the Only Figure by Rosmarie Waldrop
- 1.2 Radical Dogberry & Society Sketches by Chris Stroffolino
- 1.1 The Dynamics of Literary Change by Steve Evans

* The contents of this pamphlet, stylishly reformatted for the web by John Tranter, can also be found in JACKET 2, the John Ashbery issue
<<http://www.jacket.zip.com.au/jacket02/marginalization02.html>>. A no-frills webpage for the ILS resides, through the kind offices of Loss Glazier, at the EPC <http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/presses/impercipient_lecture.html>.

Special "clearance" rates until the 10th are \$20 for a full run; \$3 for individual issues. Please make checks out to Steve Evans or Jennifer Moxley (those made out to the magazine cannot be processed). If ordering by e-mail be sure to include your street address.

~~~~~

ILS before 31 January:  
61 East Manning Street  
Providence RI 02906-4008



ILS after 1 February:  
#7 rue Quinault  
Paris 75015

[↑ Contents](#)

#### 40. **Lawrence Upton.**

##### ***Re: what purpose***

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

---

Yes! We can \*give things a purpose, put them to use, but they don't have that purpose inherently

L

|>What purpose does a flower or a rock have? What purpose do we have?

|>

|>Q: Why are you writing that?

|>A: Why not?

|>

|>L

|

|what is the purpose of human reproduction. what is the purpose of our  
|cerebral operations. what is the purpose of mathematics. what is the  
|purpose of purposiveness.

|

[↑ Contents](#)

#### 41. **Steve Evans**

##### ***ILS Correction***

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

---

I made an error in typing the street address for the ILS after 1 February: it will be #9 rue Quinault, Paris 75015.

happy new year / any time of year. (Louis Zukofsky)

[↑ Contents](#)

#### 42. **Maria Damon**

##### ***Re: what purpose***

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

---

At 10:01 AM -0500 1/2/98, JforJames wrote:

>Plosively: Poetry presupposes its own purpure.

>

>Finnegan

nice

[↑ Contents](#)

#### 43. **Maria Damon**

##### ***Re: what purpose***

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

---

At 10:47 AM -0500 1/2/98, JforJames wrote:

>In a message dated 98-01-02 10:07:31 EST, you write:

>

>>Plosively: Poetry presupposes its own purpure.

>>

>

>

>Ouch--first typo of '98: Poetry presupposes its own purpose.

>

>Finnegan

shoot; i thot this was on purr-purr.

[↑ Contents](#)

44. **robert drake**

***B&A announces Interrobang, paying hypertext quarterly***

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

perhaps this will be of interest...

*Date: Fri, 2 Jan 1998 14:23:02 -0500 (EST)*

*From: B&A New Fiction <[REDACTED]>*

*To: [REDACTED]*

*Subject: B&A announces Interrobang, paying hypertext quarterly*

*Reply-To: [REDACTED]*

*B&A New Fiction announces Interrobang: Postage for the Post-age*

*B&A New Fiction, Canada's best-selling fiction magazine, will strike new ground with the introduction of hyperfiction in every issue in its new section Interrobang: Postage for the Post-age. B&A's mandate has always been to publish new and emerging writers, and our neo-focus will now include new forms. Each issue of B&A will contain an excerpt of a single instance or reading of a hyperfiction in the print edition, with the full text linked version available on-line at our website. We are seeking short hyperfiction from any and all writers. B&A appears quarterly, and authors will be paid \$100 per story on publication. For more information visit B&A at <http://www.interlog.com/~fiction/interrobang>, or e-mail Neil Hennessy, Internet Editor, at [REDACTED]*

[↑ Contents](#)

45. **Maria Damon**

***Re: what purpose***

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

apparently my older sister's first word was "reflection," after my father repeatedly showed her the way the river (hudson) cast moving squiggles of light on the living room wall, and, of course, in connection w/ this showing, repeated the word "reflection" a number of times. this legend passed into the myth of her general intellectual superiority, which seems to have gone unnoticed by her but absorbed by me, just as the myth of \*my\* intellectual superiority seems to have

gone unnoticed by me but absorbed by her (who pointed it out to me 34 yrs after the supposed fact). i have no idea what my first words were.

At 9:16 AM -0500 1/2/98, henry g wrote:

>On Fri, 2 Jan 1998 09:10:44 -0500 robert drake said:

>>larger question\*... what's the purpose, culture's purpose, in

>>privilaging (underprivilaging?) some small subset (differently

>>remembered by each participant in th culture) of it's utterance

>>as "poetry"? as sed, i'm not sure ov an answer, tho i suspect it's

>>more than bob g's quantitative "maximized" measure ov pleasurable

>>expression...

>>

>

>When you learned your 1st words from mother or father it was delight

>& instruction & strenuous exercise all in one. (My mother wrote down

>my 1st 2 words: "door" & "flower" - do I believe that?.) You've

>been repeating them in complicated variations ever since. Especially

>when you learned that the flower grows at the doorstep & blooms on

>the Day of the Dead.

>- Henry G.

[↑ Contents](#)

#### 46. **Bob Grumman**

##### ***Re: what purpose***

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

---

Maria Damon wrote:

>

> At 10:47 AM -0500 1/2/98, JforJames wrote:

> >In a message dated 98-01-02 10:07:31 EST, you write:

> >

> >>Plosively: Poetry presupposes its own purpure.

> >>

> >

> >

> >Ouch--first typo of '98: Poetry presupposes its own purpose.

> >

> >Finnegan

>

> shoot; i thot this was on purr-purr.

Yes, it HAD to be. Purpure--purer than purpose! Don't back out of it, Finnegan!

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

47. **Eric Blarnes**

***Re: purple***

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

---

I say, ladies & gents, you might just want to have a look at my essay in Wilmot Trudgeley's compilation, RUSSO-FUTURO-PASTANOODYELCHIK : EFFORTS & CONFUSIONS (Univ. of Left Overbie Pr, 1995), titled

"The Purrfect Plupurrfect Poesia Purpurr of Aleksandr Pushkin : Meow & Eternity in Pterodactylic Backfeet" (pp. 1003-847)

It's a "groove", heh-heh!

- Eric Blarnes, O.E.D.ph.-4

[p.s. ignore Randall Stubbin's positively ignoble rebuttal (pp. 846 - 12)]

[↑ Contents](#)

48. **Miekal And**

***& other raves & others behave***

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

---

Gwyn McVay wrote:

and discovered that if you allow the "m" for "n" substitution (some > anagrammists don't), you can also make her name into "runic Zaum.

at this point the ghost of kamensky takes his cue  
marks space with sounds & cryptics only we choose to understand

[↑ Contents](#)

49. **Poetics List**

***Eshleman's Antiphonal Swing [sale announcement]***

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

---

*Date: Fri, 02 Jan 1998 12:09:08 -0500*

*From: bmcpher <[REDACTED]>*

*Subject: Re: Eshleman's Antiphonal Swing*

A Special Notice and Offer

A month ago I presented a special offer to Sulfur magazine subscribers who might wish to acquire the volume of Clayton Eshleman's selected literary essays titled Antiphonal Swing, which I brought out several years ago. You're probably aware of Eshleman's editorial and critical contributions to American poetics: his

successive editorial stewardship of Caterpillar and Sulfur magazines has had a profound influence on progressive and experimental areas of American poetry. For many years Eshleman has written incisive, provocative, even feisty essays on numerous poets and movements, as well as on the related subjects of translation, apprenticeship, and the paleolithic roots of consciousness — all of which are covered in this rather large volume. eneral one.

To bring this book within reach of almost everyone who may be interested, and because I'd like to continue to publish books like Antiphonal Swing — by Clayton as well as other writers — I am extending the Sulfur offer to the Poetics List.

The list price of this 264-page hardcover book is \$25. You may order it postpaid for \$20 (in effect you are paying \$17 for the book, a 32% discount, since we ship all orders via \$3 priority mail). If you like, we can also send the book as a gift to another address, at your instruction. This one-time offer is limited to individuals, and all orders must be postmarked by February 20, 1998. A more complete description of the book follows below, along with reviews and a mail-order form. Please don't send your order via e-mail, since our site is not yet secure for receiving charge card orders. (Note, too, that we can accept only American Express or Optima charges.)

If you have any questions or suggestions, please e-mail me: [REDACTED]

Yours,

Bruce McPherson

McPherson & Company

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Complete catalogue: (<http://www.mcphersonco.com>)

Clayton Eshleman / Antiphonal Swing:Selected Prose

Edited by Caryl Eshleman

Introduction by Paul Christensen

Thirty-four essays, interviews and prose poems by this famous poet and translator explore theories of the contextual fabric of World poetry, and describe the development of Eshleman's unique poetic vision in a penetrating reevaluation of the roots of consciousness. This important volume gathers selections from his dialogues with James Hillman as well as introductions from two of his most distinguished volumes of poetry. There is also a discussion of the narrative elements in Upper Paleolithic cave art; a provocative essay on the art of translation; and critical appraisals of such poets and artists as Gary Snyder, Leon Golub, William Bronk, Charles Olson and Allen Ginsberg.

"Organized to highlight Eshleman's progress from defining his own sphere of freedom by shedding the conventions of thought and behavior that he had been raised with, refining his sense of identity by discriminating himself from his contemporary poets, and lastly, speaking for a poetry that is ever-fresh and vital by being attuned to nature instead of confined and preordained by defending the traditional Protestant worldview. The title suggests the yin/yang dialectic involving such pairs as poetry and prose, and the erotic and the artistic, by which [Eshleman's] ideas, style, and self developed." — The Small Press Book Review

Published by McPherson & Company, Kingston, New York.

0-914232-94-0, 264 pages, 6 X 9"

Full-color jacket featuring a painting by Nora Jaffe.

"Eshleman's transformation of experiences into symbolic structures is anything but dreamlike and serene. This selection of critical prose attests not only to the geographic, cultural, chronological and stylistic breadth of Eshleman's interests but also to his passionate and at times obsessional approach to 'what matters.' <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>How, he asks, can a poet continue to believe in these dreams and make them live in his poems? The answer lies not in trying to solve the dilemma [between past and present] but in looking elsewhere, to the painted caves of southwestern France and northern Spain in whose labyrinth of half-imaginary animals he sees 'the struggle of Paleolithic people separating the animal out of their thus-to-be human heads.' These caves bring about some of Eshleman's most powerful writing, some of it autobiographical, some analytical, some luxuriously descriptive, all of it an integral part of his attempt to develop 'a vision of the "Paleolithic Imagination" and of the construction of the underworld.' <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>The very antithesis of a scholarly handbook to the 'canon-making textbooks' he so abhors, this attractively edited volume of essays should be read, pondered, and even enjoyed by anyone who cares about 'what matters.' <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>Provocative evaluations such as these are the very essence of responsible criticism." — Denver Quarterly

"Eshleman thrives on the atavistic, the traumas of existence, and the strong possibility of gaining healing knowledge from these.... His mythic voice is arguably the strongest of such voices in our time. He is not content to read in books what the terms the life worth living might consist of; he goes where he feels he can establish, by his own lived proof, the nature of human archaeology layer by layer.... He works at archaeological digs, so to speak, but most of the time attempts to transcend his findings, to propose them as evidence of a longer record: the very bloodline linking our postmodern time to its discernible genesis." — Gene Frumkin, Manoa

---

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[↑ Contents](#)

## 50. **Mark Weiss**

**(no subject)**

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

---

My good friend, the novelist and poet Richard Elman, died of lung cancer on December 29th. He was 63. He was diagnosed three months ago. The doctors had given him two years at the outside, so none of us who loved him were prepared, if preparation is ever possible. Richard acknowledged something like 24 books. There were also several ghost projects, including much of Albert Goldman's biography of Lenny Bruce, and a series of "novelizations" that he churned out for quick cash in the 70's. Film companies, for reasons of their own that I



think have to do with copyright, commission novels based on original screen-plays. The books and the films appear simultaneously. These books always sink like stones, usually for good reason. The only one Richard signed was his novelization of *Taxi Driver*. If you ever spot it on the paperback shelf in a used bookstore grab it--it's better than the movie. I think only two of Richard's books are in print: *Cathedral-Tree-Train and Other Poems* from Junction Press and *Tar Beach* from Sun&Moon. Sun&Moon is issuing *Love Handles* in the fall. The Times, which favored *Tar Beach* with one of its one paragraph reviews, loved the book, naming it one of the ten best of 1992. But it praised it, oddly, as an "elegant slice-of-life." It's anything but. This may be the only novel ever written in which all of the characters are naked, a boy loses his innocence to a sexy girl angel (in the synagogue, no less), and some of the dialogue is in Sviddish, a combination of Swedish, Swahili and Yiddish. One of Richard's earlier books, *The Menu Cypher*, was a sequel to *The Breadfruit Lotteries*, an elegant and straightforward spy story about a Columbia Lit professor who is also a CIA operative. *Lotteries* did well, so MacMillan picked up the sequel for its spy and mystery offerings. What they got begins with a glossary of food terms and their secret equivalents, followed by a chapter set in the Columbia faculty club, which turns out to be a den of spies speaking in menu cypher. This is hilarious until one of the profs is murdered. Later in the book we listen to the killer's personality dissolve in a series of unanswered telegrams. The crime novel critics were clueless, and MacMillan allowed the book to die. I don't want to suggest that Richard was in any sense self-consciously an experimental writer. He wrote. He wrote a great and formally conventional holocaust trilogy; a coming-of-age-novel, *Fredi&Shirl&the Kids*, that reads like a perverse script for a 50's sitcom; *The Poor-House State*, non-fiction, one of the best things ever written about poverty in America; *Uptight with the Rolling Stones*, a tour book; *Cocktails at Somoza's*, journalism from the Nicaraguan revolution and its aftermath; and a lot more. In one of the stories in Richard's collection *Crossing Over* the protagonist says that not writing is "like eating sawdust." Richard never ate much sawdust. Once he called me in despair, saying that he couldn't write anymore. It had been two weeks. Three days later he called and began, his voice brimming with suppressed delight, and asked, as he often did, if he could read me something (I have had all of *Love Handles* read to me on the phone, altho I've never seen a word of typescript). It was several chapters of a new novel. In almost thirty years of close friendship I never heard Richard talk about theory. What was he like? Richard and his wife Alice adopted an enormous stray English sheepdog that they named Loki. Loki's body always seemed too large for his mind to control. He was a generous-hearted dog, loyal to a fault, and given to impish pranks, but because of his ungainliness he was always breaking things. It was as if different parts of his body were responding simultaneously to the pull of different stimuli. All of which made domestic life a

little difficult. He was at times the despair of those who nonetheless loved him. Richard was enormously tall, and I'm 5'6". We must have looked like Mutt and Jeff. In the midst of a walk down to the beach near his house in Stony Brook he would suddenly burst forth in a snatch of Yiddish theater that his parents must have sung around the house that had somehow come up at that moment, or he would curl his long body down to my eye level to tell me the crazy thought that had just flashed across his brain pan, waiting for my approval as he not so much laughed as chuffed or snuffled, or, if it was a more formal shtick, he would look at me out of the corner of his eye and send out short bursts of questioning laughter, punctuated by expectant silence: "Hunh?...Hunh?..." How do I convey to strangers what I loved about the man? He was the soul of generosity. Without affectation and without regard for the usual categories he treated everyone the same, so that my son mourns him as a friend, not as his father's friend. As a poet, although he had read everything, Richard was something of a naif; "Cathedral-Tree-Train" is nonetheless, despite its ineptitudes, one of the best serial poems of recent years. Richard died in the company of the three women he loved, his wife Alice and his daughters Margaret and Lila. As he lay unconscious in the hospital, perhaps beyond hearing, they read his poems to him. I wish I could have been there with them.

Mark Weiss

[↑ Contents](#)

## 51. **Nuyopoman** ***Mouthy Mondays***

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

---

MOUTH MONDAYS start January 5 at Fez (under Time Cafe), 380 Lafayette St (Great Jones). Sponsored by Mouth Almighty Records, the series will run Jan-Feb. Each week begins with a Slam (doors open 7, Slam at 7:30) -- this Monday features Todd Colby, who raised nave at Poetry Project Benefit last night.

Feature is at 9 -- on the 5th that would be Mouth Almightyians Sekou Sundiata, The Last Poets, Maggie Estep, Beau Sia, Emily XYZ, Saul Williams, Rah Goddess, and Mike Ladd.

[↑ Contents](#)

## 52. **Matt Meighan** ***purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry***

*Fri 2 Jan 1998*

---

Bobbie West, testing her new de-lurking device, wrote

| "What is the purpose of poetry?"

-- meaning the Poet's purpose, the Poem's purpose, or the purpose of Poetry itself?

e.g., david bromige, referring to his wonderful New Year's Eve poem, wrote

*Take my New years Eve poem as instance. . . I wanted the piece to dance questions about finitude and its role in creativeness. And I wanted people to appreciate what "five minutes" can be. I wanted to take back the clock. And yes, I wanted a form for my anxiety about running out of time in a larger sense. [and more . . .]*

which speaks about the \*poet's\* purposes. Those could be anything from wanton manipulation for personal gain ("I Like Ike") to exploration or aggrandizement of the self to bringing something to light or anything else human beings may intend. Or could be non-purpose, simply to sing like the birdies sing, the song emerging because it does

but then any poem may have its own intentions, unknown to, Other than, even at odds with, the poet's. The poet's purpose may thwart the poem's, or succumb to it, or the two may dance, each feeding the pulse of the other, or sing in symbiosis like a tree along a stream

and Poetry, as continuous stream of energy making forms flow from the unseen into the world and back out again like any living or non-living Thing, Poetry in other words as a God, no doubt has its own intentions. what does (not, this poet or this poem), what does Poetry \*itself\* intend? (like James Hillman writes, What does Love want? Not this woman or that man but what does Love \*itself\* want???)

Poetry's intentions like the intentions of any God are no doubt a Mystery. We serve a Goddess we can never truly know, existing as we do within her body. Maybe She wants to remind us of something, something we never quite recall except in moments that leave us remembering, at best, only that we remembered. To re-member us or wake us to some possibility or even draw us forward to something not yet ever known

maybe a long study of history to see what She has done, or a close look around us to see what She does would let us say something about her purpose -- \*if\* we can assume more congruence between her intentions and her effects than we mere mortals enjoy. Maybe we could glimpse it in the aftermath of composition. Perhaps such studies could be acts of veneration. Maybe we could say in faith, She must know what She's doing. Maybe we could confess (as the twelve steps of PA remind us), We are in the throes of a Power greater than ourselves.

maybe porpoise rises, cries out, sinks back into depths, papoose carries the sleeping future, papyrus, maybe a paper on the papacy. Maybe the perfect pose, maybe prophecy

who knows?

- Matthew Meighan

[↑ Contents](#)

53. **Gwyn McVay**  
**/Symmetry/ & other raves**

Fri 2 Jan 1998

---

Lacking Laura Moriarty's address for backchannel, but may as well say it out loud: her collection /Symmetry/, an MLA-bookfair acquisition, is smacking me upside the head in a very good way, much as Jennifer Moxley's /Imagination Verses/ has done.

I wanted one of everything at the Small Press Distribution booth, as at S&M, but would have gone over my airline weight limit and been forced to leave behind a limb or some such. I did also manage to get a copy of Unica Zurn's writings--the panel on her by Pierre Joris & others was amazing-- and discovered that if you allow the "m" for "n" substitution (some anagrammists don't), you can also make her name into "runic Zaum."

Gwyn obviously too much time on her hands McVay

[↑ Contents](#)

54. **Harold Rhenisch**  
**Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry**

Fri 2 Jan 1998

---

| *The purpose of poetry is to achieve Beauty  
through the maximally-expressive and sensually-rich use of words.*

Geez, Bob, how do you define Beauty? This seems to me to be either definition by footnotes or definition in need of definition, which cd. keep us talking for weeks, which is a poem. That is to say that yr. defn. is a poem, but as "maximally-expressive" and "sensually-rich" are not maximally-expressive or sensually-rich, this poem of yours has broken its own definition and is wandering somewhere, with its own porpoise.

For Faludy, poetry kept him alive in the work camps.

For many educators, poetry teaches rhetoric.

For some, unintentionally, poetry prevents a poetic revolution in thought; the teaching of poetry badly can be used to prevent poetry.

Non-Dolphin-friendly Tuna.

| *How about: the best words in the best disorder?<*

Or the best disorder in the best words.

| *Ouch--first typo of '98: Poetry presupposes its own purpure.<*

That settles it. That's the one. Finnegan, you have a charmed keyboard.

While you're on a roll, what is the purpure of Beauty?

--Harold Rhenisch

[↑ Contents](#)

55. **David R. Israel**

***Re: what purpose***

*Sat 3 Jan 1998*

---

ah --

from pupure to pospose -

the purr of the puss = the purpose?

d.i.

*Date: Fri, 2 Jan 1998 10:47:27 EST*

*From: JforJames <[REDACTED]>*

*In a message dated 98-01-02 10:07:31 EST, you write:*

*Plosively: Poetry presupposes its own purpure.*

*Ouch--first typo of '98: Poetry presupposes its own purpose.*

*Finnegan*

[↑ Contents](#)

56. **David R. Israel**

***Re: what purpose***

*Sat 3 Jan 1998*

---

Maria,

this reminds of the idea I think I've heard bandied about (though I'm rather vague on details or even if I have the idea sorta right) that if one draws up an astrology chart of the moment of death, this can point to / be interpreted in terms of / prove of relevans vis-a-vis (or some such) the next-most rebirth.

So (the new musing): the last words - as topic - interesting - re: 1st words . . .

as in "what is the question?" etc. --

d.i.

| *From: Maria Damon <[REDACTED]>*

*apparently my older sister's first word was "reflection," after my father repeatedly showed her the way the river (hudson) cast moving squiggles of light on the living room wall, and, of course, in connection w/ this showing, repeated the word "reflection" a number of times. this legend passed into the myth of her general intellectual superiority, which seems to have gone unnoticed by her but absorbed by me, just as the myth of \*my\* intellectual superiority seems to have gone unnoticed by me but absorbed by her (who pointed it out to me 34 yrs after the supposed fact). i have no idea what my first words were.*

[↑ Contents](#)

57. **IMBURGIA**

*querry*

*Sat 3 Jan 1998*

---

Would you have the SPD e-mail add? thanks in advance

[↑ Contents](#)

58. **Bob Grumman**

*Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry*

*Sat 3 Jan 1998*

---

Harold R wants to know what Beauty is, the dummy, but I got Big Things to do today (and maybe the rest of 1998) so I can't fully say right now. But here's where I start: there's mind and matter, inside and outside; matter is what mind is conscious of, mind is what is conscious of matter; a third property of the universe is affect--how the mind feels about what it is conscious of--and that reduces to pleasure/pain, good/bad. If there's anything I've left out, lemme know.

As for Beauty, it is one form of pleasure--mostly sensual/sensory pleasure but with complications. I haven't straightened it all out, but tend to break pleasure down to Beauty, the Moral Good (or personal/social pleasure), Truth (conceptual pleasure) and Health (all those pleasures having to do with merely surviving).

To get more detailed about Beauty, I conceive it as that which is neither too familiar nor too unfamiliar (and I even mathematize it, although the mathematization is not based on anything empirical). What's too familiar or too unfamiliar varies with the person involved, the context and all kinds of other problems but seems to me not that hard to disentangle in any given case. My primary example would be the Beauty of a musical melody: the best ones jar at first, then become wonderful, then become boring. Yeah, it all sounds simple-minded and maybe is. But there is are for now while I go does my Big Things of the day.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

59. **Robert J Tiess**

**POETFEST**

Sat 3 Jan 1998

---

P O E T F E S T

Poetfest is an ongoing series of free poetry anthologies I publish on the web for the wide world of poetry-lovers.

The new Winter 98 Poetfest Anthology is now online at  
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/7101/poetfest.htm>

All readers and poets are encouraged to share in the international Poetfest experience and contribute to the next collection (Seasons), due out in April 1998. Guidelines are available at the link above.

A joyful, blessed new year to all my fellow poets, writers, and colleagues.

Robert J. Tiess



[↑ Contents](#)

60. **jarnot**

**juliana spahr & harryette mullen in nyc**

Sat 3 Jan 1998

---

for those in the new york city area:

January 7th 8:00 pm

at the Poetry Project: Juliana Spahr & Harryette Mullen

the poetry project is located at 10th street and 2nd avenue on the lower east side.

[↑ Contents](#)

61. **Douglas**

**Re: Richard Elman's death**

Sat 3 Jan 1998

---

I truly appreciate Mark Weiss's personal statements on Richard Elman.

Richard was a brilliant writer, with an ability to write in many styles and forms. He was at his best, it seems to me, in the wonderful novel TAR BEACH, which combines a beautiful recreation of the past (the characters are atop a synagogue for a summer tan) and an almost visionary sense of new possibility, a sense of future which could be freed from the apparatus of the past--whether it be love, hate or just disappointment. His next book LOVE HANDLES is centered on a character who is a complete failure, on one level, but in his child-like innocence, has the potential to be (as is truly) someone great.

In honor of Richard's memory, Sun & Moon will offer slightly damaged copies of TAR BEACH at \$3.00 each.

Richard was also a poet, and this comes strongly across in this remarkable book.

Douglas Messerli

[to order, E-mail me at [REDACTED] with your name and address; we will ship and bill]

Mark Weiss wrote:

>

> My good friend, the novelist and poet Richard Elman, died of lung cancer on  
> December 29th. He was 63. He was diagnosed three months ago. The doctors  
> had given him two years at the outside, so none of us who loved him were  
> prepared, if preparation is ever possible.

> Richard acknowledged something like 24 books. There were also several  
ghost

> projects, including much of Albert Goldman's biography of Lenny Bruce, and  
> a series of "novelizations" that he churned out for quick cash in the 70's.

> Film companies, for reasons of their own that I think have to do with  
> copyright, commission novels based on original screenplays. The books and  
> the films appear simultaneously. These books always sink like stones,  
> usually for good reason. The only one Richard signed was his novelization  
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> bookstore grab it--it's better than the movie.

> I think only two of Richard's books are in print: \_Cathedral-Tree-Train\_ and  
> \_Other Poems\_ from Junction Press and \_Tar Beach\_ from Sun&Moon.

Sun&Moon is

> issuing \_Love Handles\_ in the fall.

> The Times, which favored \_Tar Beach\_ with one of its one paragraph reviews,  
> loved the book, naming it one of the ten best of 1992. But it praised it,  
> oddly, as an "elegant slice-of-life." It's anything but. This may be the  
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> some of the dialogue is in Sviddish, a combination of Swedish, Swahili and  
> Yiddish.

> One of Richard's earlier books, *The Menu Cypher*, was a sequel to *The Breadfruit Lotteries*, an elegant and straightforward spy story about a  
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> I don't want to suggest that Richard was in any sense self-consciously an  
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> holocaust trilogy; a coming-of-age-novel, *Fredi&Shirl&the Kids*, that  
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> *Uptight with the Rolling Stones*, a tour book; *Cocktails at Somoza's*,  
> journalism from the Nicaraguan revolution and its aftermath; and a lot more.

> In one of the stories in Richard's collection *Crossing Over* the  
> protagonist says that not writing is "like eating sawdust." Richard never  
> ate much sawdust. Once he called me in despair, saying that he couldn't  
> write anymore. It had been two weeks. Three days later he called and began,  
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> he could read me something (I have had all of *Love Handles* read to me on  
> the phone, altho I've never seen a word of typescript). It was several  
> chapters of a new novel.

> In almost thirty years of close friendship I never heard Richard talk about  
> theory.

> What was he like? Richard and his wife Alice adopted an enormous stray  
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> breaking things. It was as if different parts of his body were responding  
> simultaneously to the pull of different stimuli. All of which made domestic  
> life a little difficult. He was at times the despair of those who  
> nonetheless loved him.

> Richard was enormously tall, and I'm 5'6". We must have looked like Mutt  
> and Jeff. In the midst of a walk down to the beach near his house in Stony  
> Brook he would suddenly burst forth in a snatch of Yiddish theater that his  
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> crazy thought that had just flashed across his brain pan, waiting for my  
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> more formal shtick, he would look at me out of the corner of his eye and  
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> silence: "Hunh?...Hunh?..."  
> How do I convey to strangers what I loved about the man? He was the soul of  
> generosity. Without affectation and without regard for the usual categories  
> he treated everyone the same, so that my son mourns him as a friend, not as  
> his father's friend.  
> As a poet, although he had read everything, Richard was something of a  
> naif; "Cathedral-Tree-Train" is nonetheless, despite its ineptitudes, one  
> of the best serial poems of recent years.  
> Richard died in the company of the three women he loved, his wife Alice and  
> his daughters Margaret and Lila. As he lay unconscious in the hospital,  
> perhaps beyond hearing, they read his poems to him. I wish I could have  
> been there with them.  
>  
> Mark Weiss

[↑ Contents](#)

62. **Ctfarmr**

***Re: what purpose***

*Sat 3 Jan 1998*

---

A lot of great responses to this question. And since I've been asked for my own answer, here's the one I gave my friend: The purpose of poetry is to create new pathways in the brain, to stimulate the synapses to keep our minds flexible and our species adaptable. Not that I think this answer is any better than any of the others -- in fact I agree with all of them so far! It's just the one I tell myself when guilt strikes me for spending time writing instead of saving lepers or something.

Happy New Year.

Bobbie West

[↑ Contents](#)

63. **JforJames**

***Re: purpose in poetry, purpose of poetry***

*Sat 3 Jan 1998*

---

In a message dated 98-01-03 01:52:08 EST, you write:

>  
>>Ouch--first typo of '98: Poetry presupposes its own purple.<  
>  
>That settles it. That's the one. Finnegan, you have a charmed keyboard.  
>  
>While you're on a roll, what is the purple of Beauty?  
>  
>--Harold Rhenisch  
>  
My subconscious has always been smarter than me.  
Finnegan

[↑ Contents](#)

64. **Bob Grumman**

***Re: what purpose***

*Sun 4 Jan 1998*

---

I agree completely with Bobbie West's defense of poetry as something that "create(s) new pathways in the brain, to stimulate the synapses to keep our minds flexible and our species adaptable"--with the reservation that this is a biological value of poetry, not its ultimate value, which is to make us happy via words regardless of what it does for our brains. (And I would speak of "value" rather than "purpose" as I don't believe there's such a thing as purpose, except in the everyday limited sense of doing A to get B.)

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

65. **aerialedge**

***Re: what purpose***

*Sun 4 Jan 1998*

---

Coming late to this thread but to mention Deleuze/Guattari in \_What is Philosophy?\_ postulate that the purpose of art is to create new experience, the purpose of philosophy to create new concepts, & of science to create new functions. This newness would follow from need, usefulness, rather than from a cliched fetishization of the new.

I remember Cage saying, but have been called on the citation-- "The purpose of art is to add to the enjoyment of life."

I'm not entirely convinced of any of this but they're some of the more interesting ways of approaching this question I've encountered.

Rod Smith

[↑ Contents](#)

66. **dbkk**

***January Readings at SPT***

*Sun 4 Jan 1998*

---

FIVE POETS ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK TO SMALL PRESS TRAFFIC

Saturday, January 10, 7:30 p.m.

Charles Bernstein

Lisa Jarnot

From Borscht Belt vaudeville to his embrace by the trendy theorists of Paris, Charles Bernstein's career has had more ups and downs than Jerry Lewis. But with undimmed flash and generosity his poetry speaks with greater force than ever, and it is always an event in our lives as participants in culture to see him read, for his work, always intriguing, at its best reaches the exhilarating glass-green rush and sublimity of Niagara Falls. He is the author of 20 books of poetry (including the newest, *Republics of Reality: Poems 1975-1995*, from Sun & Moon), and two influential books of essays: *A Poetics* (Harvard University Press, 1992) and *Content's Dream: Essays 1975-1984* (Sun & Moon Press, 1986, 1994). Bernstein is David Gray Professor of Poetry and Letters at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Lisa Jarnot's first book *Some Other Kind of Mission* (Burning Deck Press, 1996) made a big splash when it was hurled, like Olympic discus, into the gentle pond of contemporary poetry. Kerplunk! Basho frog! But clever scouts, reading her work in fugitive pieces, and hearing her read aloud, had already touted her as one of the finest young poets in America. She is the editor of the *Poetry Project Newsletter*, and a co-editor of *An Anthology of New (American) Writing*, forthcoming from Talisman House in early 1998. Her work has been published in *Grand Street*, *Lingo*, and *The World*. She's here in San Francisco doing some important work on the life and cosmos of our own Olympian, the late poet Robert Duncan.

New College Theater

777 Valencia Street, San Francisco

\$5

-----

Friday, January 16, 7:30 p.m.

Robert Fitterman

Kim Rosenfield

This is a special event that has long been on Small Press Traffic<sup>1</sup>'s wish list (along with, you know, a new computer and so forth). People think of Robert Fitterman as a kind of <sup>3</sup>Language<sup>2</sup> poet, but he might just be the ultimate heir to the great Objectivists instead, for his epic <sup>3</sup>Metropolis<sup>2</sup> project marries the music, scope, and power of Zukofsky to the historico-narrative-documentary of Charles Reznikoff. Robert Fitterman is the author of five books of poetry, recently including *\_Ameresque\_* (Buck Downs Books). The first book of his long poem, *\_Metropolis (1-15)\_*, is forthcoming with Sun & Moon Press. He is the editor/publisher of *\_Object\_* magazine and chapbooks. He is also the co-author, with Rodrigo Rey Rosa, of the film script *<sup>3</sup>What Sebastian Dreamt.*<sup>2</sup>

Originally from Southern California, Kim Rosenfield comes to us from New York where she writes some of the oddest and loveliest poems I know. Her concern for display and spectacle, her Baudrillardian, ecstatic sweep of language and physicality, balance on the one hand urgency and drama and on the other, the cold finish of stainless steel, the animatronics of Disney and Brigitte Nielsen. Rosenfield is the author of three chapbooks: *\_Some Of Us\_* (Ouija Madness Press), *\_Rx & Cool Clean Chemistry\_* (Leave Books), and *\_A Self-Guided Walk\_* (Object/p o e t s c o o p). Her poetry has appeared in several journals including *\_Black Bread, Chain, Big Allis, Object, Mirage #4/Period(ical),\_* and *\_Torque.\_* She is a clinical social worker at New York University.

New College Theater  
777 Valencia Street, San Francisco  
\$5

-----

Monday, January 26, 7:30 p.m.  
In conjunction with the San Francisco Art Institute  
John Ashbery

We all think we know about John Ashbery, but the new 1998 version promises more than a few surprises. As we know he's written sixteen books of poetry, including *\_Some Trees, The Tennis Court Oath, Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror, Flow Chart,\_* and the most recent, *\_Can You Hear, Bird\_*--as well as a volume of art criticism, *\_Reported Sightings.\_* As we know he has won the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award and the National Book Award; been named a Guggenheim Fellow and a MacArthur Fellow; is a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. We all know that he hasn't read here in San Francisco since 1990 and we're happy to join the Art Institute in sponsoring this reading. But it's what we *\_don't\_* know that intrigues us and never more so than on the 26th, at which date and time JA will preside over the mystic and ambiguous conjunction of Saturn and Venus.

San Francisco Art Institute Auditorium  
800 Chestnut Street, San Francisco  
\$6

[↑ Contents](#)

## 67. **Mark Wallace** *the poetry in purpose?*

Sun 4 Jan 1998

Instead of worrying about the purpose of poetry, shouldn't we be wondering whether there's any poetry in purpose? Why should poetry have to defend itself to purpose, rather than the other way around? Poetry has occasioned moments of amazement in my life; purpose has never meant me anything but harm.

Mark Wallace

```
/-----\ |
||      || GWU:
|| http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~mdw      || EPC:
|| http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/wallace      ||
```

[↑ Contents](#)

## 68. **David Gitin** *Cage reference*

Sun 4 Jan 1998

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

charset="iso-8859-1"

What I recall John saying, quoting A. Coomoraswamy (from THE =  
TRANSFORMATION OF NATURE IN ART), is the purpose of art is to 'quiet the  
= mind and render it susceptible to divine influence.'

charset="iso-8859-1"

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http-equiv=3DContent-Type>

<META content=3D'"MSHTML 4.71.1712.3"' name=3DGENERATOR>

</HEAD>

<BODY bgColor=3D#ffffff>

<DIV><FONT color=3D#000000 size=3D2>What I recall John saying, quoting  
=  
A.=20  
Coomoraswamy (from THE TRANSFORMATION OF NATURE IN ART), is the  
purpose =  
of art=20  
is to 'quiet the mind and render it susceptible to divine=20  
influence.'</FONT></DIV></BODY></HTML>

[↑ Contents](#)

69. **ShaunAnne Tangney Humanities 8-13-1997**

***Re: request for submissions***

*Sun 4 Jan 1998*

---

to whom it may concern:

i submitted an article ("Labor and Prayer: Making poets, Making Poetry") to  
\_Fourteen Hills\_ at the last call for submissions, and have heard nothing in re-  
turn. if someone could please let me know if my article is under review, or has  
been rejected, i would greatly appreciate it.

thank you,  
shaunanne tangney  
minot state university

[↑ Contents](#)

70. **ShaunAnne Tangney Humanities 8-13-1997**

***oops--***

*Sun 4 Jan 1998*

---

so sorry to have sent that last to the list--sheesh! what a dope! --shaunanne

[↑ Contents](#)

71. **aerialedge**

***Re: Cage reference***

*Sun 4 Jan 1998*

---

. . . he said so many thing ya know. . .

>What I recall John saying, quoting A. Coomoraswamy >(from THE  
TRANSFORMATION  
OF NATURE IN ART), is the >purpose of art is to 'quiet the mind and render it  
susceptible to divine influence.'

[↑ Contents](#)

72. **Sawako Nakayasu**

**Re: what purpose**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

Hey! I've been gone for a week and my "lurking" status on this list has been disrupted by being referred to as "a friend of Bobbie West" which feels altogether strange, so here I am...coming out, if you will. I hooked up with this list right about the time my professor insisted that I write my own "poetics," which I anguished over until he changed the question to "what are poets for?"...much easier to handle.

Your responses to the question were quite enjoyable; thank you. Here's my bit:

Jerry had it right;  
Technicians of the Sacred.

Poets are the real historians, as well as its opposite. As well as all occupations in between. Like cartographer. Or a videographer of a documentary about language as it time-travels.

What can "history books" tell about our existence? (not enough)

In another sentence, I could say that a poet is the choreographer of an improvisational language, which implicates all participating words and people in memory, history, and imagination.

*Thank you all for your valiant efforts to keep the list afloat. I guess >it's my turn to jump into the pool (blame it on Bromige: he told me to stop lurking). Anyway, a friend of mine recently posed the question, "What >is the purpose of poetry?" So how would you answer that?*

*Bobbie West  
(testing her new de-lurking device)*

Also: (completely unrelated)

How to guess the gender of Japanese first-names:

Male names often end in -hiko, -ro, -o, or a number, as in -ichi. The first three name endings mean (basically) male, strong, a fine man, etc.

Female names often end in -ko. Which means child.

A few names, like Kaoru or Sakae, are unisex.

The rest, you just have to know or ask.

Sawako

[↑ Contents](#)



73. **Charles Weigl**

**Re: Cage reference**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

i thought cage said the purpose of art "is to quiet divine influence and make it susceptible to cheap bourbon." but then i always misread.

*David Gitin wrote:*

*What I recall John saying, quoting A. Coomoraswamy (from THE TRANSFORMATION OF NATURE IN ART), is the purpose of art is to 'quiet the mind and render it susceptible to divine influence.'*

[↑ Contents](#)

74. **Miekal And**

**poetry webring**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

does anyone out there belong to the poetry webring and or know how to join & Im also wondering folks impressions of the ring & whether they think it brings interested visitors to their sites

miekal

[↑ Contents](#)

75. **Miekal And**

**word processor htmlability**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

as long as Im in the mode of wondering,

has anyone run into wordprocessors or page layout programs that can save as an html document. I had something for quark at one point but was never able to get it to work. in particular Im interested in turning formatted poems into html documents without all the fiddling....

miekal

whose fiddled far too much in his life

[↑ Contents](#)

76. **Maria Damon**

**Re: what purpose**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

yes, i like bobbie's def too; but i also find that once one gets used to a certain "sound," feel, technique, etc., that purpose is less pronounced. i've thus found it

useful to explore other means of experience ("unusual" physical movement as well as conventional "exercise", trying to draw, singing) as well.

At 6:33 AM -0500 1/4/98, Bob Grumman wrote:

>I agree completely with Bobbie West's defense of poetry as something  
>that "create(s) new pathways in the brain, to stimulate the synapses to  
>keep our minds flexible and our species adaptable"--with the reservation  
>that this is a biological value of poetry, not its ultimate value, which  
>is to make us happy via words regardless of what it does for our  
>brains. (And I would speak of "value" rather than "purpose" as I don't  
>believe there's such a thing as purpose, except in the everyday limited  
>sense of doing A to get B.)

>

>

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

77. **Maria Damon**

***Re: what purpose***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

---

ooh, this is cool too

At 1:14 PM -0500 1/4/98, [REDACTED] wrote:

>Coming late to this thread but to mention Deleuze/Guattari in \_What is  
>Philosophy?\_ postulate that the purpose of art is to create new experience,  
>the purpose of philosophy to create new concepts, & of science to create new  
>functions. This newness would follow from need, usefulness, rather than from  
>a cliched fetishization of the new.

>

>I remember Cage saying, but have been called on the citation-- "The purpose  
>of art is to add to the enjoyment of life."

>

>I'm not entirely convinced of any of this but they're some of the more  
>interesting ways of approaching this question I've encountered.

>

>Rod Smith

[↑ Contents](#)

78. **Maria Damon**

***fwd from XCP***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

---

From: [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

Bcc: Maria Damon <[REDACTED]>

Date: Sun, 4 Jan 1998 16:54:13 -0500

Subject: Mpls. Reading

\_Xcp: Cross-Cultural Poetics\_ is sponsoring a reading by Allison Adelle Hedge Coke, author of \_Dog Road Woman\_, an autobiographical sketch of a contemporary mixed-blood life. It is her debut book, out from Coffee House Press.

For those interested & in the area, the reading will be held at the College of St. Catherine-Mpls., Room 100 (Old Main, basement) on Wednesday, January 7th, 3:00pm. CSC-Mpls. is located at 601 25th Avenue South (just off the US 94 Riverside exit). Please call [REDACTED] or e-mail me at the address above for more info.

[↑ Contents](#)

79. **Maria Damon**

***Re: what purpose***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

---

amiri baraka has a nice poem, a series of rhetorical questions if i recall, about the "purpose" of poetry. one question is "do you have a mother?" etc . having only heard it once, and not read it, i don't have a reference for you.

At 11:49 PM -0800 1/4/98, Sawako Nakayasu wrote:

>Hey! I've been gone for a week and my "lurking" status on this list has  
>been disrupted by being referred to as "a friend of Bobbie West" which  
>feels altogether strange, so here I am...coming out, if you will. I  
>hooked up with this list right about the time my professor insisted that  
>I write my own "poetics," which I anguished over until he changed the  
>question to "what are poets for?"...much easier to handle.

>

>Your responses to the question were quite enjoyable; thank you.

>Here's my bit:

>

>Jerry had it right;

>Technicians of the Sacred.

>

>Poets are the real historians, as well as its opposite. As well as all  
>occupations in between. Like cartographer. Or a videographer of a  
>documentary about language as it time-travels.

>

>What can "history books" tell about our existence? (not enough)

>

>In another sentence, I could say that a poet is the choreographer of an

>improvisational language, which implicates all participating words and  
>people in memory, history, and imagination.  
>  
>  
>>Thank you all for your valiant efforts to keep the list afloat. I guess >it's  
>>my turn to jump into the pool (blame it on Bromige: he told me to stop  
>>lurking). Anyway, a friend of mine recently posed the question, "What  
>>>is the  
>>purpose of poetry?" So how would you answer that?  
>  
>>Bobbie West  
>>(testing her new de-lurking device)  
>  
>  
>Also: (completely unrelated)  
>  
>How to guess the gender of Japanese first-names:  
>  
>Male names often end in -hiko, -ro, -o, or a number, as in -ichi.  
>The first three name endings mean (basically) male, strong, a fine man,  
>etc.  
>  
>Female names often end in -ko. Which means child.  
>  
>A few names, like Kaoru or Sakae, are unisex.  
>The rest, you just have to know or ask.  
>  
>  
>  
>Sawako

[↑ Contents](#)

## 80. **Mark Prejsnar**

### ***Good questions without answers***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

---

Not being terribly original, I respond to Bobbie's question in a way much like the majority of other posts....Poetry has reasons which are not reasons but forms of immersion in praxis. Or, to quote (more or less accurately) two of the epigraphs given to recent issues of my magazine Misc. Proj.: "It is not the business of poetry to be anything" (Stephen Rodefer) and "The function of poetry is to waste excess energy" (Rosemarie Waldrop).

Some of the responses have been especially nice. Like a number of other people I like Mark Wallace's response and Bobbie's own formulation about creating new neural pathways...

This being said, it occurs to me that folks on listservs about music (for instance) almost never ask, What is the purpose of music? (Ditto painting, theater, etc...) That it's fairly common for the question to arise among poetry people has to do with social function and definition. (In our culture, music is felt to be self-evident, poetry to be artificial and needing justification..)

As with asking the question itself, so Bobbie's answer also presents problems more interesting and fecund than its surface meaning...Seems to me doing philosophy, engaging in education, experiencing music, dance, sculpture, etc. all create new neural pathways. (Admittedly, poetry's the most interesting way to do so! but then I would think that, wouldn't I?) So as before, the important level really is: why do we feel a need to explicate poetry's function? Most similar human activities are felt to exist as nodes of facticity..We do 'em because we do 'em.

Poetry is one of the most self-doubting of activities, in U.S. culture. That's in some respects appalling. But it also carries some positive things...To quote one of the epigraphs under consideration for the next issue of Misc. Proj.: "Doubt can move mountains. Of all things certain, doubt is the surest." (Brecht)

In any event, Bobbie's question strikes me as a great example of how productive and useful questions can be, which don't have answers...

Mark P.  
atlanta

[↑ Contents](#)

## 81. **Henry Gould**

### ***Re: Good questions without answers***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

---

On Mon, 5 Jan 1998 10:01:16 -0500 Mark Prejsnar said:

>

>Poetry is one of the most self-doubting of activities, in U.S. culture.

>That's in some respects appalling. But it also carries some positive

>things...To quote one of the epigraphs under consideration for the next

>issue of Misc. Proj.: "Doubt can move mountains. Of all things certain,

>doubt is the surest." (Brecht)

The certainty of doubt is one of its weak points.

Doubt can move mountains - faith invents them (out of emerald molehills).

- Henry "Georgie Berkeley" Gould

82. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**

***Re: Good questions without answers***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

---

poetry is primordial, the stuff of sound and sense  
it predates syntax, semantics  
you might make haiku out of protolanguage  
you might not  
you might chant the body which is where the rhythm goes  
the rhyme goes  
what calls attention to the stuff of language or  
its revolution, ability to surface  
so that you're no longer skimming prose  
living in one or another of Faulkner's characters  
who wants to anyway  
nor are you putting quotation marks "" around "everything"  
it's not the reification of language  
but the stuff of the world that emerges  
it's the vomit of the world  
some poets like shelley see both sides at once  
some poets like shelley see absolutely nothing  
because it isn't sight  
but those internal crags, beats of the heart  
it's useless, poetry is, which is its strength, that is,  
it rarely contributes to \_meaning,\_  
it doesn't have to mean anything at all,  
it's not anti-meaning either  
it burrows into the body and through the ground  
coming out in the desert maybe or the forest  
where you used to be able to hear some sort of pounding  
or scuttling in the underbrush  
so that it's, you can can, the tcp/ip of language,  
protocols ignoring the surface  
but a tcp/ip that's quite inexact, as if there were no realms  
or taxonomies, no definitive articulations  
maybe the kenning or haiku again for that matter  
stuffing language here and there so that it explodes,  
implodes, stuff - there's also the matter of the breath,  
it's been breathing, everyone knows that,  
it returns as if language were once and for all something absolutely new

in the world, gesturing around the hill as Tran Duc Thao might say, where the game is

[↑ Contents](#)

83. **Miekal And**  
***Re: poetry webring***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

---

| 4) Yes, it does bring visitors to my site.

| Catherine Daly

catherine

I

guess

Im

wondering

if surfing

this ring is

something that

is interesting

ie can anyone

navigate thru a maze

of sites & find what

is interesting to them

whether experimental or

rhymed couplets?

is the webring a way for

sites to collaborate with each other?

is there a selection process with

the ring or is open to anyone?

is there topical ways to surf thru

a series of sites--such as the nature poem tour,

the apocalyptic tour, limerick tour, palindrome tour?

Im interested in linking spidertangle wordround, an online workshop in hyper-writing, & Im looking to create ways to get alot of interactivity & am also looking for involvement with writing of all styles & all calibre.....

miekal

[↑ Contents](#)

84. **Judy Roitman**

**Re: Good questions without answers**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

*This being said, it occurs to me that folks on listservs about music (for instance) almost never ask, What is the purpose of music? (Ditto painting, theater, etc...) That it's fairly common for the question to arise among poetry people has to do with social function and definition. (In our culture, music is felt to be self-evident, poetry to be artificial and needing justification..)*

Mathematics. Mathematics is not regarded as self-evident either, but as artificial and needing justification.

What a misspent life I've led, on at least two counts. Thank God for those early piano lessons, at least those made sense.

----- Judy Roitman  
| "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! Math, University of Kansas | mem-  
ory fails Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days." [REDACTED]  
| fax: [REDACTED] | Larry Eigner, 1927-1996

----- Note new area code

-----  
<http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/>  
-----

[↑ Contents](#)

85. **Miekal And**

**dynamic html & the future of the text/text**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

Don Byrd wrote:

>  
>  
> There is a new wordprocess, called Trellix, especially designed for  
> producing on-line documents. Of course, it cannot handle any thing that html  
> isn't prepared to handled, but, so far, I am impressed. It also supports  
> hypertext organization with an on-screen map.  
>  
> I have been using a 30-day trial version (which can be downloaded  
> from [www.trellix.com](http://www.trellix.com)), but I think I will buy a copy.  
>  
> I believe that it is \$99. Unfortunately, there is no Mac version.

checked out their site, drooling from my macintosh screen, but then Ive grown accustomed to the pc/mac veil & it seems that most things that make sense in



the end become cross platform, just us mac folk have to pay more money & wait longer....

Im particularly interest to know if trellix or any other wordprocessor supports the new dynamic html, which of course answers a lot of the concerns of desktop publishers who are putting their documents on the web. where the layout is retained on the webpage despite browser & monitor size.... I also feel like chances are pretty good that this is what is needed for textuallizing the net, & would like to start creating these documents now instead of waiting for netizens everywhere to be upgraded....

[↑ Contents](#)

86. **Judy Roitman**

***Re: Good questions without answers***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

Alan Sondheim forgot about the feet. Poetry comes up through the feet, from the soles of the feet.

*poetry is primordial, the stuff of sound and sense  
it predates syntax, semantics  
you might make haiku out of protolanguage  
you might not  
you might chant the body which is where the rhythm goes  
the rhyme goes  
what calls attention to the stuff of language or  
its revolution, ability to surface  
so that you're n o longer skimming prose  
living in one or another of Faulkner's characters  
who wants to anyway  
nor are you putting quotation marks "" around "everything"  
it's not the reification of language  
but the stuff of the world that emerges  
it's the vomit of the world  
some poets like shelley see both sides at once  
some poets like shelley see absolutely nothing  
because it isn't sight  
but those internal crags, beats of the heart  
it's useless, poetry is, which is its strength, that is,  
it rarely contributes to \_meaning,\_  
it doesn't have to mean anything at all,  
it's not anti-meaning either  
it burrows into the body and through the ground  
coming out in the desert maybe or the forest  
where you used to be able to hear some sort of pounding  
or scuttling in the underbrush  
so that it's, you can can, the tcp/ip of language,*

*protocols ignoring the surface  
but a tcp/ip that's quite inexact, as if there were no realms  
or taxonomies, no definitive articulations  
maybe the kenning or haiku again for that matter  
stuffing language here and there so that it explodes,  
implodes, stuff - there's also the matter of the breath,  
it's been breathing, everyone knows that,  
it returns as if language were once and for all something absolutely new  
in the world, gesturing around the hill as Tran Duc Thao might say, where  
the game is*

----- Judy Roitman  
| "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers! Math, University of Kansas | mem-  
ory fails Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days." [REDACTED]  
| fax: [REDACTED] | Larry Eigner, 1927-1996

----- Note new area code

-----  
<http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/>  
-----

[↑ Contents](#)

87. **Miekal And**  
***afred querry, "pataphysician***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

SPD  
UFO  
help?  
  
SPY  
PSI  
  
(o)

[↑ Contents](#)

88. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**  
***Re: Good questions without answers***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

didn't forget, there's always the pounding and scuttling (re: below) anyway I  
gotta fever and am flat on my back

On Mon, 5 Jan 1998, Judy Roitman wrote:

*Alan Sondheim forgot about the feet. Poetry comes up through the feet,  
from the soles of the feet.*

poetry is primordial, the stuff of sound and sense  
it predates syntax, semantics  
you might make haiku out of protolanguage  
you might not  
you might chant the body which is where the rhythm goes  
the rhyme goes  
what calls attention to the stuff of language or  
its revolution, ability to surface  
so that you're n o longer skimming prose  
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some poets like shelley see both sides at once  
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because it isn't sight  
but those internal crags, beats of the heart  
it's useless, poetry is, which is its strength, that is,  
it rarely contributes to \_meaning,\_  
it doesn't have to mean anything at all,  
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it burrows into the body and through the ground  
coming out in the desert maybe or the forest  
where you used to be able to hear some sort of pounding  
or scuttling in the underbrush  
so that it's, you can can, the tcp/ip of language,  
protocols ignoring the surface  
but a tcp/ip that's quite inexact, as if there were no realms  
or taxonomies, no definitive articulations  
maybe the kenning or haiku again for that matter  
stuffing language here and there so that it explodes,  
implodes, stuff - there's also the matter of the breath,  
it's been breathing, everyone knows that,  
it returns as if language were once and for all something absolutely new  
in the world, gesturing around the hill as Tran Duc Thao might say, where  
the game is

-----  
Judy Roitman | "Whoppers Whoppers Whoppers!  
Math, University of Kansas | memory fails  
Lawrence, KS 66045 | these are the days."  
[REDACTED] |

fax: [REDACTED] | Larry Eigner, 1927-1996

-----  
Note new area code

-----  
<http://titania.math.ukans.edu/faculty/roitman/>  
-----

[↑ Contents](#)

## 89. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**

### ***Disassembling Love: Byting the Program of Secrecy***

Mon 5 Jan 1998

-

#### Byting the Program of Secrecy

;\*\*\*\*\* File: c.exe \*\*\*\*\*

;

```
code    SEGMENT
        ASSUME CS:code, DS:code
        ORG 100h
```

strt:

```
    OR    AX,0D0Ah
    OR    CL,[BX+68h]
    AND    [BX+DI+74h],CH
    AND    [BX+DI+73h],CH
    AND    [BP+DI+6Fh],DH
    AND    [BP+SI+65h],AH
    POPA
    JNZ    J00189
    IMUL   [BP+75h],AH
    INSB
    AND    [BX+SI+65h],CH
    JB     J00183
    AND    [BX+DI+6Eh],CH
    AND    [BP+75h],AL
    IMUL   [DI+6Fh],DH
    IMUL   [BX+DI+21h],AH
    AND    [BX+20h],CL
    DEC    AX
    OUTSW
    IMUL   [DI+73h],DH
```

```
POPA
IMUL  [BX+DI],AH
AND   [BX+65h],DL
JZ    J0015A
INSW
DB (65h)
AND   [BX+69h],DH
JZ    J001A9
AND   [BX+DI+6Fh],BH
JNZ   J001B8
OR    AX,6C0Ah
POPA
JZ    J001B4
DB (65h)
JB    J00170
AND   [BX+DI+66h],CL
AND   [BX+DI+6Fh],BH
JNZ   J00177
POPA
JB    J001BF
J0015A: AND  [DI+79h],CH
        AND  [BX+68h],AH
        OUTSW
        JNB  J001D7
        SUB  AL,20h
        JNS  J001D6
        JNZ  J00189
        JA   J001D4
        INSB
        INSB
        AND  [BX+SI+61h],CH
J00170: JNZ  J001E0
        JZ   J00194
        INSW
        DB (65h)
        SUB  AL,20h
        DEC  DI
        AND  [SI+73h],DH
        JNZ  J001EC
        POPA
        INSW
```

```
IMUL [BX+DI],AH
OR    AX,000Ah

code  ENDS
      END strt
```

---

[↑ Contents](#)

90. **Herb Levy**

**Re: querry**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

| Would you have the SPD e-mail add? thanks in advance

Hi Dave,

Try this:

< [REDACTED] >

Hope you had a good holiday.

Bests,

Herb

Herb Levy

[REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

91. **George Thompson**

**Re: citation (ginsberg)**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

I think he used it for the first time in \*Improvised Poetics\*, from the seventies, but I forget the exact date. I remember annoying Dianne Di Prima, with whom I read it, when I commented that "last thought, best thought" worked better for me.

George Thompson

*One of the most famous (and therefore maligned--whether justly or not is a question i'm not getting into at present) quotes by Ginsberg is "first thought best thought"--- can anybody tell me WHEN that quote was first uttered. it has lost its temporal "haulers", but some people need their citation references. I wonder if it was before Dylan wrote "each is first an' none is best"--*  
Chris Stroffolino

[↑ Contents](#)

92. **Sylvester Pollet**

**Re: word processor htmlability**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

At 12:28 PM +0000 1/5/98, Miekal And wrote:

>as long as Im in the mode of wondering,

>

>has anyone run into wordprocessors or page layout programs that can save

>as an html document. I had something for quark at one point but was

>never able to get it to work. in particular Im interested in turning

>formatted poems into html documents without all the fiddling....

>

>miekal

>

>whose fiddled far too much in his life

Meikal--I'm sure this isn't what you mean, but with a Mac, Claris Home Page does almost all the html for you, though you can still get into the code if you want or need to. S.

[↑ Contents](#)

93. **louis stroffolino**

**citation (ginsberg)**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

One of the most famous (and therefore maligned--whether justly or not is a question i'm not getting into at present) quotes by Ginsberg is "first thought best thought"--- can anybody tell me WHEN that quote was first uttered. it has lost its temporal "haulers", but some people need their citation references. I wonder if it was before Dylan wrote "each is first an' none is best"-- Chris Strof-folino

[↑ Contents](#)

94. **William Marsh**

**Re: poetry webring**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

At 12:25 PM 1/5/98 +0000, you wrote:

>does anyone out there belong to the poetry webring and or know how to

>join & Im also wondering folks impressions of the ring & whether they

>think it brings interested visitors to their sites

>

>miekal

>

miekal

you've probably seen this already, but the main page for the webring has a link to instructions on how to join / i haven't joined myself, for one because i'm not exactly clear on how i'd have to adapt my page with "ring links", or if i'd even want to do that, and two because i haven't traveled it enough to feel comfortable joining / if you find out more about it, or eventually join, please let me know / or let me know in the meantime what you think of the venture in general

best,

bill marsh

[↑ Contents](#)

## 95. **William Marsh**

### ***Re: word processor htmlability***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

---

At 12:28 PM 1/5/98 +0000, you wrote:

>as long as Im in the mode of wondering,

>

>has anyone run into wordprocessors or page layout programs that can save

>as an html document. I had something for quark at one point but was

>never able to get it to work. in particular Im interested in turning

>formatted poems into html documents without all the fiddling....

>

>miekal

>

>whose fiddled far too much in his life

>

in the mode of replying,

MS Word 7.0 allows you to save in html, although i admit i haven't used this feature too much / is that what you're thinking of? / i'm also interested in finding ways of shortcutting the fiddling / "page" layout in html is problematic for me and i'm wondering if there are programs out there that do more of the work for me / i haven't looked at Frontpage 98 yet, but perhaps that helps with layout functions, like spacing, tabbing, droplines, etc.

best,

bill

[↑ Contents](#)



96. **Cadaly**

**Re: poetry webring**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

1) I belong to the webring.

2) Each site is supposed to have a link to the "joining" page and you can just follow those. The process is documented on the site.

<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/2141/poetry/poetweb.html>

3) I believe that NO poetry is purple italic, center justified, yet you will find a lot of "stuff" like that on the ring. However, the ring is very large, and there are also many poetry organizations on it.

4) Yes, it does bring visitors to my site.

Catherine Daly

[↑ Contents](#)

97. **George Bowering**

**Re: Good questions without answers**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

Up here in Canada, the purpose of poetry is to get your name published, so that the Canada Council will recognize you, and then you can get free air travel to lots of wonderful places to do readings and so on.

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

98. **George Bowering**

**Re: querry**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

| Would you have the SPD e-mail add? thanks in advance

Noi, but I have a UFO e-mail subtract.

Will that help?

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

99. **George Bowering**  
**Re: citation (ginsberg)**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

First time I ever heard him say it, attributing it to an Indian religio, was at the 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference.

*One of the most famous (and therefore maligned--whether justly or not is a question i'm not getting into at present) quotes by Ginsberg is "first thought best thought"--- can anybody tell me WHEN that quote was first uttered. it has lost its temporal "haulers", but some people need their citation references. I wonder if it was before Dylan wrote "each is first an' none is best"--*  
Chris Stroffolino

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

100. **Eryque Gleason**  
**Re: word processing for the web**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

i've started fiddling with this stuff more lately, and i think i've found out that the current state of html does not really support formatted text the way word processors do. i think the difference is that word processors and page layout tools operate with the page in mind, rather than a screen. browser windows vary in size and shape too much for fixed-format text to work very well.

that said, almost all the major word processors will export to html, but i've yet to see one that will take care of all the tabs, etc. about the best way to take care of the tabs is to set the font to either times or courier (most of the time browsers are set to default to either of these two) and insert spaces until the

spacing is about right. there's an html tag you can use to specify which font a browser uses, assuming that the reader has that font on their computer.

i just returned home in last night's ice with a fresh copy of adobe pagemill, which is supposed to give better control over the formatting. i'll know more after i work with it a while.

best,  
eryque

On Mon, 5 Jan 1998, William Marsh wrote:

*At 12:28 PM 1/5/98 +0000, you wrote:  
as long as Im in the mode of wondering,*

*has anyone run into wordprocessors or page layout programs that can save as an html document. I had something for quark at one point but was never able to get it to work. in particular Im interested in turning formatted poems into html documents without all the fiddling....*

*miekal*

*whose fiddled far too much in his life*

*in the mode of replying,*

*MS Word 7.0 allows you to save in html, although i admit i haven't used this feature too much / is that what you're thinking of? / i'm also interested in finding ways of shortcutting the fiddling / "page" layout in html is problematic for me and i'm wondering if there are programs out there that do more of the work for me / i haven't looked at Frontpage 98 yet, but perhaps that helps with layout functions, like spacing, tabbing, droplines, etc.*

*best,  
bill*

[↑ Contents](#)

101. **Brian Carpenter**

**Re: citation (ginsberg)**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

On Mon, 5 Jan 1998, louis stroffolino wrote:

*One of the most famous (and therefore maligned--whether justly or not is a question i'm not getting into at present) quotes by Ginsberg is "first thought best thought"---*

*can anybody tell me WHEN that quote was first uttered. it has lost its temporal "haulers", but some people need their citation references. I wonder if it was before Dylan wrote "each is first an' none is best"--*  
*Chris Stroffolino*

I don't have a citation, but as to when it was first uttered, I was always under the impression that this was a dictum which Ginsberg picked up from Kerouac. Although, even if that's so, I wd guess there's not any Kerouac citation to that effect. Cd be wrong though.

BC

[↑ Contents](#)

102. **henry**

***Re: citation (ginsberg)***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

---

On Mon, 5 Jan 1998 14:36:16 -0400 George Thompson said:

>I think he used it for the first time in \*Improvised Poetics\*, from the  
>seventies, but I forget the exact date. I remember annoying Dianne Di  
>Prima, with whom I read it, when I commented that "last thought, best  
>thought" worked better for me.  
>  
>George Thompson

I thought he nicked it from one of his gurus. Zen.

Here's my spin on it: "First thought best thought...uh...now what was it again?"

- Jack Spandrift

[↑ Contents](#)

103. **Lawrence Upton.**

***Re: word processor htmlability***

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

---

MS word for IBM works fine - dont know if that is the case with mac version

L

-----Original Message-----

From: Miekal And <[REDACTED]>

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Date: 05 January 1998 18:20

Subject: word processor htmlability

|as long as Im in the mode of wondering,  
|  
|has anyone run into wordprocessors or page layout programs that can save  
|as an html document. I had something for quark at one point but was  
|never able to get it to work. in particular Im interested in turning  
|formatted poems into html documents without all the fiddling....  
|  
|miekal  
|  
|whose fiddled far too much in his life  
|

[↑ Contents](#)

104. **William Burmeister Prod**

**Misc. Proj**

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

---

Speaking of Misc. Proj, has anyone received the current issue yet? Is it available?

Best,

William Burmeister

[↑ Contents](#)

105. **William Marsh**

**Re: Misc. Proj**

*Mon 5 Jan 1998*

---

At 03:34 PM 1/5/98 -0500, you wrote:

>Speaking of Misc. Proj, has anyone received the current issue yet? Is it  
>available?

>

>

>Best,

>

>William Burmeister

>

yes, #4 is available (i got it last week) / i'm sure Mark. Prej. is out there somewhere listening?

best,

bill marsh

[↑ Contents](#)

106. **George Thompson**

**Re: citation (ginsberg)**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

Well, I guess I should have said that \*the first time I saw it in print\* was in \*Im-provised Poetics\*.

I also took for granted that AG got it from Trungpa, the guru of Naropa, and a Tibetan Rinpoche.

As early as 1963? Amazing!

GT

[↑ Contents](#)

107. **rsillima**

**SPD address, etc.**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

SPD's new catalog says, and I quote:

"send your e-mail to [REDACTED]"

Re the Ginsberg quote: I believe I first heard it in connection with Wichita Vor-tex Sutra, which would place it in the late 1960s. It's certainly implicit in Ker-ouac's Essentials of Spontaneous Prose, but of course JK never had a complete thought exactly, so could never state this in so few words.

Nice to see Don Byrd posting after too long a silence!

Ron Silliman

[↑ Contents](#)

108. **Cadaly**

**Re: poetry webring**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

There is an attempt to index this webring in different ways. There are almost 3,000 sites in the ring. When I joined it was open to everyone.

There are at least three other general poetry webrings that I've heard about. There are subsidiary webrings that have themes, styles, etc. The Poetry We-bring ring is not put together according to a design or theme other than poetry. In other words, the code/link produces a random or next site.

Catherine

[↑ Contents](#)

109. **Don Byrd**

**Re: word processing for the web**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

There is a new wordprocess, called Trellex, especially designed for producing on-line documents. Of course, it cannot handle any thing that html isn't prepared to handled, but, so far, I am impressed. It also supports hypertext organization with an on-screen map.

I have been using a 30-day trial version (which can be downloaded from [www.trellex.com](http://www.trellex.com)), but I think I will buy a copy.

I believe that it is \$99. Unfortunately, there is no Mac version.

--

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd ([REDACTED], [REDACTED])  
Department of English  
State University of New York  
Albany, NY 12222  
[REDACTED] (work); [REDACTED] (dome); [REDACTED] (fax)  
The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

110. **Don Byrd**

**Re: dynamic html & the future of the text/text**

Mon 5 Jan 1998

---

Miekal And wrote:

*Don Byrd wrote:*

*There is a new wordprocess, called Trellex, especially designed for producing on-line documents.*

*checked out their site, drooling from my macintosh screen, but then Ive grown accustomed to the pc/mac veil & it seems that most things that make sense in the end become cross platform, just us mac folk have to pay more money & wait longer....*

The slickest way to handle dhtml that I know of is Macromedia Dreamweaver. It's interface is something like Director (has a time line, etc.) and it integrates with the Homesite editor. Unlike some of the other Web editors, it doesn't limit you access to the code, so you can switch to Homesite which is a powerful html editor... Let's you muck directly with the code all you want, but takes care alot of the bothersome stuff for you. (The Mac version

works with BBedit, I believe it is called). It is on sale for \$299 (including the editor). And there is an academic version for about \$140, for any one who has an academic connection. The demo is fully operational, but good for only 30 days.

While I am on the subject. The Little Magazine is gearing up to do another cd-rom. We are looking for work that takes both writing and multimedia seriously.

*Im particularly interest to know if trellix or any other wordprocessor supports the new dynamic html, which of course answers a lot of the concerns of desktop publishers who are putting their documents on the web. where the layout is retained on the webpage despite browser & monitor size.... I also feel like chances are pretty good that this is what is needed for textuallizing the net, & would like to start creating these documents now instead of waiting for netizens everywhere to be upgraded....*

--

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd ([REDACTED], [REDACTED])  
Department of English  
State University of New York  
Albany, NY 12222  
[REDACTED] (work); [REDACTED] (dome); [REDACTED] (fax)  
The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

## 111. **David Israel**

***po's porp***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

Mark P wrote

<<In any event, Bobbie's question strikes me as a great example of how productive and useful questions can be, which don't have answers...>>

then there's that old fave:

what, praytell, is the purpose of asking questions?

(& what, praytell, is the purpose of having a purpose?)

d.i.

ps: rec'd got this quatrain (rubai) over the cybertransom (Jelaluddin Rumi's) --

////



Oh reason, go away.  
There is no wise one here.  
Even if you become small like a hair,  
There is no place for you.  
It is morning now.  
Whatever candle you burn  
Would be shamed in front of sunshine.

Crazy As We Are  
Selected Rubais from Divan-i Kebir  
Trans. Dr. Nevit O. Ergin

[↑ Contents](#)

### 112. **Loss Pequen~o Glazier**

#### ***Re: Film on Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

Of interest perhaps ...

*Into the Future: On the Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age*  
A FILM BY TERRY SANDERS  
NARRATED BY ROBERT MACNEIL  
AMERICAN FILM FOUNDATION, 1997  
AIRING JANUARY 13 ON PBS  
(check local listings for any variations on air time)

*The above film is reviewed in the January 1998 issue of  
Scientific American, page 110  
Alternatively, the article can be viewed at*

<http://www.sciam.com/0198issue/0198review2.html>

*For information on this program from the Public Broadcasting System see*

<http://www.pbs.org/whatson/1998/01/descriptions/INFU.html>

[↑ Contents](#)

### 113. **Loss Pequen~o Glazier**

#### ***Re: poetry webring***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

Doesn't anyone find it a little disconcerting that a large percentage of the sites accessed from such a ring may be no more than merely personal? Does one want to promote one's community in such a context?

At 05:45 PM 1/5/98 EST, you wrote:

>There is an attempt to index this webring in different ways. There are almost  
>3,000 sites in the ring. When I joined it was open to everyone.

>

>There are at least three other general poetry webrings that I've heard about.

>There are subsidiary webrings that have themes, styles, etc. The Poetry

>Webring ring is not put together according to a design or theme other than

>poetry. In other words, the code/link produces a random or next site.

>

>Catherine

>

>

[↑ Contents](#)

114. **Miekal And**  
***Re: poetry webring***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

Loss Pequeno Glazier wrote:

>

> Doesn't anyone find it a little disconcerting that a large percentage of the  
> sites accessed from such a ring may be no more than merely personal? Does  
> one want to promote one's community in such a context?

well for the hell of it I joined the spidertangle wordround hyperwriting workshop into the webring. in the ring queue Im between 2 pages that have titles like "watercolor thoughts" & blue mood or something like that, which for something like this particular site, where Im interested in aspects of online writing & hypertext far more than quality of writing, I think it'll work out ok.

but.... I was quite confounded when they sent me a list of catagories to choose from for their topical navigators..... (I choose inner mind expression) (ahem)

<Pick from this list a category:

Gothic

Romantic

Nonsense/Humor

Young Adult

Despair/Sorrow

Different Language

Inspirational

Group Site

Literature for Purchase

Rebellious

African/Native American  
Poet Studies/Profiles  
LIFE'S UPS AND DOWNS  
Inner Mind Expression/Philosophical  
Political/civil unrest  
Just Poetry/Prose  
Zines/Contests  
Gay/Alternate lifestyles

and... I guess my question is can Miekal surf this ring & find sites unknown to him that he will want to spend time at....I noticed jim andrews visual poetry site in a list a head of spidertangle, so I suspect that since there are 2100 sites Im bound to happen on something if I put an effort into it....

miekal

[↑ Contents](#)

115. **Jordan Davis**  
***Last Minute Reading Notice***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

In the scurry of the end of the year, the first thing to go is publicity. Which is to say, I'm reading tonight at the Rising Cafe in Park Slope (186 Fifth Ave, Bklyn) at 7:30. I hope you'll come hide from the trees with me. Susan Hoover and Phyllis Wat are sharing the bill, and the ticket is only US\$3. Viva the shining beak -- Jordan Davis

[↑ Contents](#)

116. **Mark Prejsnar**  
***Misc. Probs.***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

Dear Subscribers and friends and countrypersons:

Of course many of you have gotten Misc.Proj. #4....My apologies to those still waiting; you should have it within a few days.

My dog ate my homework; in addition (this is really true) my computer melted down \*and\* there were some errors at the print-shop I used. These things added to the normal disorder of life (or of my life anyway) has slowed things down slightly....

This hasn't really happened before with Misc. Proj., and I don't believe it'll happen again...sorry, sorry

William Burmeister, yours got mailed (with a lot of others) yesterday or the day before; quite a few are going out as we speak (or, as I type..)

mp

[↑ Contents](#)

---

117. **William Burmeister Prod**

***Re: Misc. Probs.***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

Dear Subscribers and friends and countrypersons:

Of course many of you have gotten Misc.Proj. #4....My apologies to those still waiting; you should have it within a few days.

My dog ate my homework; in addition (this is really true) my computer melted down \*and\* there were some errors at the print-shop I used. These things added to the normal disorder of life (or of my life anyway) has slowed things down slightly....

This hasn't really happened before with Misc. Proj., and I don't believe it'll happen again...sorry, sorry

William Burmeister, yours got mailed (with a lot of others) yesterday or the day before; quite a few are going out as we speak (or, as I type..)

mp

Good news! I was wondering whether the postal mail sort thingamajig had devoured my check there or no. Thanks.

William Burmeister

[↑ Contents](#)

---

118. **Jack Foley**

***Re: citation (ginsberg) -Reply***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

I believe Kerouac coined the phrase, once he hit upon his "spontaneous prose" for the legendary first draft of On the Road. But since his concept of spontaneous prose derived from Neal Cassidy's letters, it's just as likely -- given the free sharing of ideas amongst the Ur-Beats -- that Kerouac picked up the phrase from Ginsberg. The best place to check for Ginsberg's first use of "first thought best thought" would be his Notebooks of the '50's. He might use it in the City Lights "Howl" pamphlet. But I'm almost certain he uses it in Donald Allen's New American Poetry, which came out around 1960.

>>> George Thompson <[REDACTED]> 01/05/98 01:36pm >>>

I think he used it for the first time in \*Improvised Poetics\*, from the seventies, but I forget the exact date. I remember annoying Dianne Di Prima, with whom I read it, when I commented that "last thought, best thought" worked better for me.

George Thompson

*One of the most famous (and therefore maligned--whether justly or not is a question i'm not getting into at present) quotes by Ginsberg is "first thought best thought"--- can anybody tell me WHEN that quote was first uttered. it has lost its temporal "haulers", but some people need their citation references. I wonder if it was before Dylan wrote "each is first an' none is best"-- Chris Stroffolino*

[↑ Contents](#)

## 119. Douglas Barbour

### **Re: purpose**

Tue 6 Jan 1998

bp Nichol began Book 4 of \_The Martyrology' thus:

purpose is a porpoise

then dives into the seas of language for the rest of the poem (Book 4, of course, but perhaps also all the other books he completed).

No short answer will do?

The poems make their own statements on this matter?

The matter is/becomes such statements?

All come to their own answers in just such a way?

I've enjoyed each version so far...

=====  
=====

Douglas Barbour  
Department of English  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5  
[REDACTED] FAX: [REDACTED]  
H: [REDACTED]

~~~~~  
~~~~~

Whose song is this anyway?  
Is it a song being sung  
on the narrow road to the North?

Phyllis Webb

[↑ Contents](#)

120. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**

***Re: Last Minute Reading Notice***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

Please write a full report - I've known Susan for years... And I love the Rising Cafe - I live just a few blocks away (when I'm in NY).

Alan

On Tue, 6 Jan 1998, Jordan Davis wrote:

*In the scurry of the end of the year, the first thing to go is publicity.  
Which is to say, I'm reading tonight at the Rising Cafe in Park Slope (186  
Fifth Ave, Bklyn) at 7:30. I hope you'll come hide from the trees with me.  
Susan Hoover and Phyllis Wat are sharing the bill, and the ticket is only  
US\$3. Viva the shining beak -- Jordan Davis*

[↑ Contents](#)

121. **William Marsh**

***promotion: web site, chaps***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

Greetings Poetics folks:

i'd like to invite all of you to visit my new website:

<http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh>

this version has several new works (hypertext poetries, essays), updated links to other similar-interest sites (many by list members), plus details about Paper-BrainPress

regarding the latter, two new chaps available: *\_b/c\_* and *\_nvrnmnts\_* / first in a series from a new micropress venture in which i hope to feature several other new writers in months to come / get more details and online versions of these texts at: <http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh/PBrain/pbrain.html>

chaps are available for \$3 each or both for \$5 (postage and sincere thank you's included, checks payable to Wm Marsh) / book exchanges also welcome

any feedback on the website or ideas for collaboration would be much welcomed

all best,

bill marsh | 1860 Pacific Beach Drive #4 [REDACTED] | San Diego, CA 92109

[↑ Contents](#)

122. **Cadaly**

***Re: poetry webring***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

No. Really, web publishing is self publishing (or a recent outgrowth of it).

It is disconcerting that magazines are turning to it for their only public outlet.

Free information is information with an agenda. Personal sites' agendas are obvious (and fairly innocuous). This is one major reason I have no objection to personal sites (hey, I have one).

<<Does one want to promote one's community in such a context?>>

I find a wacky tension in this question between personal, public, community, and promotion.

Greeting card messages, song lyrics, and nursery rhymes are the models of most web poetry. These models are the poetry that most people have -- a denominator -- and you are seeing it on the web because the "audience" of the internet pushes content (personal poetry) in response to content it pulls (perceived poetry).

Perhaps a useful comparison is web = broadcast, where the controls influencing audience membership are different from those of non-broadcast media. What's the most popular non-fiction broadcast? The talk / call in show, which also offers interaction / audience-defined content.

The webring poetry "community" if you call it that (it's just a bunch of linked sites -- I certainly don't know the other people involved -- perhaps "demographic" is a better term) is different from that of this list. I would argue that all poetry on the internet contextualizes poetry on the internet, and that it is naive to believe that there is a group that can select or reject the purple-colored gothic font group.

Regards,  
Catherine Daly  
[REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

123. **bertha**

***Some answers, I think, maybe, possibly, who knows?***

Tue 6 Jan 1998

---

It is ironic that poets feel the need to define poetry, to defend it. I agree with your comments re purpose. But I think the reason we feel obligated to define and defend poetry is that poetry comes from such an unusual place, at least in our time. I write, edit, and teach poetry and I find it interesting and irritating that students who understand that to play music or to compose it must involve study and learning ( the same goes for math, English, history, art, ad nau-seum) do not "get it" about poetry .

We have created a bizarre culture that says, "Because the poems I write have arisen from such a deep place within me (a religious experience, if you will), I accept no changes, no criticism." So poetry has become this fascinating and repulsive animal in many instances -- an animal that feels but has very little, or no, intellect. Somehow, the joy in taking all those words and crafting them into something elegant and beautiful, as a cabinetmaker would his raw wood, has been relegated to the trash bin, at least in the very public sector, i.e., open readings, Slams, etc. If we lose pleasure in technique, we are left with nothing but "clanging cymbals."

Bertha Rogers

[↑ Contents](#)

124. **Charles Bernstein**

***My Trip West***

Tue 6 Jan 1998

---

Dodie Bellamy kindly posted the information on my reading, with Lisa Jarnot, on Jan. 10, at Small Press Traffic at New College Cultural Center in San Francisco.

I will be doing two other readings on the trip:

Jan. 13, Stanford University, Humanities Center annex, 6pm

Jan. 14, University of Oregon, Eugene, Genlinger Alumni Lounge, 4:30

[↑ Contents](#)

125. **Henry Gould**

***Re: Some answers, I think, maybe, possibly, who knows?***

Tue 6 Jan 1998

---

Say you have a country which began as a counter-culture: plain Puritans vs. ornate society, raw wilderness vs. refined civilization. You might eventuate in near-diametrically opposed positions on what technique should be, since



technique is predicated on the result you're aiming for. Never mind that the diametrically-opposed positions are dogmatic cartoons of what a longtime devotion to making poems might mean.

There's a strange Moebius strip situation in place, in which (1) a certain art form (poetry) demands & deserves disciplined (even academic!) absorption; (2) nevertheless the merely academic expressions of any art form are a sort of whittled-down closed circle, a caricature of the form's true possibilities; and (3) there being no "place" in the cultural economy for poetry as there is for prose, painting or music, the academy is the fall-back position. (You there, Villon? Rabalais?)

But hey, poetry's gotta work out its own problems (the play's the thing). Maybe this ain't a real dilemma (maybe it's just more boring Henryak-yak, O List!). But whatever is happening on that Moebius strip - formalism, experiment, napping-on-laurels, and (mostly) teaching - it only has a faint echo, it seems, in "culture at large" - the publishing pyramid & the fame game & the slam hams & the INTERNET... hey.

I think MFA programs should incorporate general lit studies along with a requirement to interact on a creative performance level with the town-beyond-gown world. Call it the poetry greenhouse project or something. It's a mule-drivin' world, you fey MFA's! Giddy-up! Plus the tenure track should start in 4th grade elementary! Stomp them dactyls! [--okay, we'll do whatever you say, Henry. We'll call it the National Henry-in-the-Schools Program, or Hee-Haw for short.]

- Henry Gould [is that you, Spandrift?]

[↑ Contents](#)

## 126. **KENT JOHNSON**

### ***help requested***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

Trying to locate an e-mail address for John Whittier Treat at the University of Washington. Please back-channel. Thanks!

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

## 127. **Harold Rhenisch**

### ***National Henry-in-the-Schools Program***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

Henry Gould wrote:

>>I think MFA programs should incorporate general lit studies along with a requirement to interact on a creative performance level with the town-beyond-gown world.<<

Why general lit studies, Henry? Why not something in particular? I'm tired of generality in poetry. If there's a problem with the students being homogenized, then let them choose what they want to do, but push them out of generality.

Yessir, I've been in bookstores, I've seen what they do there. You get all these categories of writing, like "Cars" and "SF" and "Womens Studies" and "Gardening" and "Fiction" and "Eastern Religions" and "History" and on and on and on, and then you get "Poetry".

In fact, "Poetry" should have the same sections as the others (its own "Cars" and "SF" and "Eastern Religions" and "History" sections, or whatever is deemed appropriate, "Langpo, Boredpo, Navelpo, Sir!:realpo!, or whatever", or it could be shelved with the others. Some of the best poetry I have was pulled from the "Novels" stacks in bookstores in Germany. Interesting, that this house-sharing goes hand-in-hand with a lot of experimentation with form, a lot of commerce between poetry and prose.

As for a creative performance level, isn't that, in part, advertising? I mean, leaving aside the political/economic distress of advertising, just the form of it? Isn't that in part HTML? Animation? Sound? Isn't that in part painting things on walls? I don't mean to limit it to that, because I don't know what you had in mind. But, let's get beyond creative performance and say: doing stuff in the world, using the world as a page, not just a handful of literary traditions.

You're right: performance. As in: even reading is a performance, even writing. Otherwise the stuff is learned by rote, which is to say: not learned.

| *Call it the poetry greenhouse project or something.*<<

You mean like: forced tulips and those big white lilies you get at Easter, and butter lettuce and tomatoes and cucumbers sealed in really long 20 mil condoms, and flats full of purple-leaved marigolds in the spring 'cause there ain't no nutrients in that darn peat/perlite mix?

>>It's a mule-drivin' world, you fey MFA's! Giddy-up!  
Plus the tenure track should start in 4th grade elementary!  
Stomp them dactyls!<<

Yes, let's stomp. You want to give some idea of the curriculum for this 4th Grade tenure? I'd like to hear it. Really. What do you have in mind? You're onto something here.

>>[--okay, we'll do whatever you say, Henry. We'll call it the National Henry-in-the-Schools Program, or Hee-Haw for short.]<<

Who's paying?

I assume we could solve that peat/perlite problem with mule manure.

cheers,

Harold Rhenisch

[↑ Contents](#)

128. **Henry**

***Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

Thank you, Harold, for dashing in where angels fear to tread & responding in a friendly way to yet another Henry slosh of excess blab. I need a teaching job, folks - get me one & I'll let the list rest. Come back, multifarious poetics list! No one writes to the colonel.

Now to your questions. Yes, "creative performance" was enough to shut down every self-respecting synapse out there. But I like greenhouses. I WAS thinking of a "forced growth" situation. Like, not virtual reality or literary elephant hunting snobbism ("Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, and disregard of all the rules." - George Orwell), i.e. the name-glue game. Instead: a course requirement for an MFA degree would be to design either 1) your own physical reading/performance in a public venue of your own devising, off-campus (subject to a tough-grading prof), or 2) an elementary or high school reading/teaching project. Group projects would be allowed. What this would encourage would be a steady stream of experimental situations and encounters not tied to the usual hierarchies of finesse. Another requirement would be the misnomered "general lit", & what I meant was what I suppose most MFA degress require, some non-WRITING courses: some immersion in the literary background & scholarship.

Once again Henry leaps in ignorance to the fore - correct me, MFA team!

Now as to tenure track from 4th grade: this was simply a very obscure way of saying the feedback loop from study to public performance should stretch down to the youngsters. I'm talking about solidifying a "place" for poetry, like the one music, art, prose, & drama have, in the larger culture, by a greenhouse process of grafting MFA work more directly into the outside world.

How horrible this must sound to you stretched grad students who only want a breathing space from DEMANDS like this in order to WRITE for a year or two. & I don't know what the answer is there. Can you help out here, Blarnes? No. Blarnes is snuffling into his tweed, sound asleep beside a horizontal cup of Old Skidoo.

& to tell the truth, it's all in vain. For in one resounding "CHONGGGGG" the Lord smoteth ye social engineers atoppeth each his pate & ye social engineers were therein in their midst henceforth summoned to read unto themselves in the original Italian Giambattista Vico & to weep salt tears for ye blind & philistine arrogance. Yea, like unto Goliath were they every one, yet Dave the little Poet from San Jose sling-shotteth each every-eth one with his newfoundeth stanza, the Dave Stave - & it was a stunner unto to behold.

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

## 129. **Henry Gould**

### ***Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program***

*Tue 6 Jan 1998*

---

Harold Rhenisch, not Henry Gould, deserves credit for Don Byrd's quotes. I think humanists like Vico, & people like Peirce & Dewey, could go a long way toward recasting poetry as a form of reflexive knowledge, in a way that somebody could integrate into a writing curriculum. I point in that direction in some essays about to come out in Mudlark.

But I'd have to disagree that the alphabet is a slushy medium for formal creativity. Milton didn't recast anything but was simply one of the late practitioners of the pretty much lost art of "numbers", or numerical symbolism in verse - these "numbers" in Milton & Spenser are an elegant grid for the most intricate & refined creative amalgams & syntheses of feeling & information. Anyone for example who has read Omry Ronen's long book about only 2 of Mandelstam's fairly short odes (*An Approach to Mandelstam*), in which he goes in depth into the Russian tradition of these same techniques (carried much further toward the present) - showing how a single word or short phrase fans out into dozens of meaning-layers - will know what I mean. (Although Mandelstam DID say poets should "envy crystallography"!) These things weren't lost on the moderns but got jolted into discontinuity, stress & ambiguity.

For the Moby Dick Encyclopedia I'd like to do the entry on "Harmonicas - How to Break Them In By Holding them Out the Car Window While Driving With Your Other Hand". That's all I know much about and I'll do it in the form of a flat-pickin' epic. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

130. **William Slaughter**  
**MUDLARK ANNOUNCEMENT**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

Announcing a new MUDLARK poster:  
MILLENNIAL GRAIN ELEVATOR by Henry Gould.

2 essays, 2 poems, and notes to the poems  
signal a different worldview and a different poetics  
as the 20th century turns a corner.

(See also ISLAND ROAD,  
Gould's "Shakespearean bacon" sonnet sequence,  
published as MUDLARK NO. 6 last year.)

William Slaughter

---

MUDLARK

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URL: <http://www.unf.edu/mudlark>

[↑ Contents](#)

131. **henry**  
**Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

On Wed, 7 Jan 1998 00:01:21 -0800 Don Byrd said:

>

> To be sure, the alphabet generates infinite strings of meaning (Ronen's  
>book could have gone on indefinitely), but the "layers" are vague analogies  
and

>there is no necessity in that visualization. Alphabetic writing is formally  
>quite primitive compared, say, to topology.

Well, even Mandelstam my hero might have agreed with you. But the details  
which accumulate in a map might be likened to the sounds & meanings which  
accumulate (as in an energy generator of some kind) inside these simple  
lines, squiggles and curlicues. And the reality they outline might be  
just as real & necessary - though less amenable to 2-dimensional layout  
and folding with Rest Stops and Exits Before Tolls clearly marked.

(I know you're not talking about Lattice Theory Mirroring here - or I  
mean I'M not talking about it... or I mean YOUR'E...'...'...)

>

> Now, harmonicas. There is a worthy theme. I have been thinking of  
>writing about vacuum tubes and the pre-solid state days of electronics.

They correlate somewhere around Sonny Boy Williamson, I reckon [pp.  
6,660,066, MOBY DICK vol. 2]

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

132. **Don Byrd**

**Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

It has been my fantasy of many years that the poets are (or should be) writing a new encyclopedia for which *\_Moby Dick\_* (a poem, of course) is the entry on whales, and it is the task to provide comparable takes on everything else A to Z.

Henry Gould is right on track here:

*Yessir, I've been in bookstores, I've seen what they do there. You get all these categories of writing, like "Cars" and "SF" and "Womens Studies" and "Gardening" and "Fiction" and "Eastern Religions" and "History" and on and on and on, and then you get "Poetry".*

*In fact, "Poetry" should have the same sections as the others (its own "Cars" and "SF" and "Eastern Religions" and "History" sections, or whatever is deemed appropriate....*

If poets would take the responsibility for *\_knowing\_* something (not the generality "Gardening" but put growing herbs or roses; not "History" but the Whisky Rebellion or the settlement of Santa Fe), we wouldn't have these dreary discussions of the purpose of poetry.

After, say, Milton or thereabouts, poetry got recast as a formal activity, but the alphabet is a very slushy formal medium, and mathematics emerged as the discipline of formal creativity. Poetry became overwhelmingly a medium for expressing private sentiment (see the Poetry Webring as evidence).

The web makes a collaborative encyclopedia altogether feasible. The nearest thing I know is the Cybernetica Project (<http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/DEFAULT.html>). (The Project, of course, profits from over three centuries of stunning mathematics and logic.)

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd (██████, ██████)

Department of English

State University of New York

Albany, NY 12222

██████████ (work); ██████████ (dome); ██████████ (fax)

The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

133. **Sawako Nakayasu**

**Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

I teach at a tiny private high school in San Diego--and am in the process of trying to talk my way into teaching a poetry class. I have a few ideas of my own, but I'd love some input on what kinds of poems (and teaching techniques) I might use to induce some excitement about the subject when dealing with teenagers, many of whom are serious TV addicts. Anyone have experience with this?

[↑ Contents](#)

134. **Don Byrd**

**Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

Henry Gould wrote:

*Anyone for example who has read Omry Ronen's long book about only 2 of Mandelstam's fairly short odes ( *An Approach to Mandelstam* ), in which he goes in depth into the Russian tradition of these same techniques (carried much further toward the present) - showing how a single word or short phrase fans out into dozens of meaning-layers - will know what I mean.*

To be sure, the alphabet generates infinite strings of meaning (Ronen's book could have gone on indefinitely), but the "layers" are vague analogies and there is no necessity in that visualization. Alphabetic writing is formally quite primitive compared, say, to topology.

Now, harmonicas. There is a worthy theme. I have been thinking of writing about vacuum tubes and the pre-solid state days of electronics.

Hope, I deleted the right "xxx wrote:" this time.

Don

--

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd (██████████, ██████████)

Department of English

State University of New York  
Albany, NY 12222

██████████ (work); ██████████ (dome); ██████████ (fax)

The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

135. **Henry Gould**

**Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

On Wed, 7 Jan 1998 10:44:46 -0800 Don Byrd said:

>

> The knowledge of the blues harp--this is real culture--and worthy of

>our

>most serious attention. Sadly, most of what remains known about great American

>music has been academized, like poetry, and is now purveyed by places like the

>Berklee School of Music, where people learn all of the chops, missing only the

>music

>(which of course can only be supplied by the life of a community).

I couldn't agree more. I learned most of what I know about poetry from playing the harmonica, the most basic lesson of which is: tone is everything, & don't overplay your notes. (Sometimes I forget not to grandstand. & I'll never play like the greats. "And the sound of the little typewriter sonatina / Is only a shadow of those great sonatas." (Mandelstam, "1 January") - Henry Gould

another harmonica lesson: great organ sounds doth come from itty-bitty instruments. Hear that, guys & gals? & remember: Wallace Stevens, or Big Daddy as he was known in Hartford blues joints, almost called his collected poems THE WHOLE OF HARMONICA. [ain't that right, Blarnes?]

[↑ Contents](#)

136. **Eryque Gleason**

**(no subject)**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

i always thought that studying stein and seuss at the same time was a hell of a lot of fun. for the kids that want more "adventure", ed dorn's "gunslinger" is hilarious, playful, has cowboys and a talking horse and a genuine saloon...

eryque



On Tue, 6 Jan 1998, Sawako Nakayasu wrote:

*I teach at a tiny private high school in San Diego--and am in the process of trying to talk my way into teaching a poetry class. I have a few ideas of my own, but I'd love some input on what kinds of poems (and teaching techniques) I might use to induce some excitement about the subject when dealing with teenagers, many of whom are serious TV addicts. Anyone have experience with this?*

[↑ Contents](#)

137. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**  
***Tea Ceremony Races (fwd)***

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

-

This is unbelievable - at least for anyone who loves \_ma,\_ space, and the deliberate manifestation of Zen in all forms of Japanese life.

Fukuoka hosted the first National Tea Ceremony Races yesterday; there were 45 contestants from 31 prefectures. The winner, Ichiro Azato, completed the full ceremony in 16 seconds, including bringing the matcha (ritual tea) to the required 2 centimeters of froth.

It was amazing; there was considerable "chanting" as well, but I have no idea what it meant. And it was incredible, watching Azato's right hand grasp the bamboo whisk, entering the tea with a "perfect frenzy" as far as I could tell.

For those who don't know, the usual ceremony can last up to three hours.

The contest was held on the grounds of the Hakozaki Shrine - We walked up an hour early, and joined the crowd of 1000 or so. There were bleachers! (Later we found that it was broadcast LIVE on NHK Channel 6.)

Alan - there are times I \_really\_ have culture shock here!

[↑ Contents](#)

138. **Elizabeth Hatmaker**  
***Re: ... no subject ...***

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

RE: teaching high school TV watchin' kids

I taught for a few years at a mid-sized state university and find the TV thing just as common there. Your post doesn't suggest how you feel about TV as something students might write about. Possibly this could be discussed as a class--what does the modern poet write about? How can he/she avoid the media if

they were so inclined? Is TV a "better" medium than poetry for getting across what they want to get across? How are attitudes about poetry and TV similar/disimilar? Oddly, most of my students, though they knew a lot about TV, thought that the medium was "stupid" and a "waste of time" and did not want to write poetry about TV. So, of course, I made them do it.

Maybe work back and forth between the mediums-- write poetry about different things in TV, then write TV sitcoms about poems (possibly an interesting way for them to interpret poems). I recall vaguely a book of sestinas (I think) about "Perry Mason"--poet's last name is Cummins (I may be way off) I, myself, have written a series of poem based on "Night Gallery." And, of course, "Gunslinger" is very cool.

elizabeth hatmaker

[↑ Contents](#)

139. **Eryque Gleason**

**Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

*I couldn't agree more. I learned most of what I know about poetry from playing the harmonica, the most basic lesson of which is: tone is everything, & don't overplay your notes. (Sometimes I forget not to grandstand.*

henry, i thought a lot of blues performance was \*about\* grandstanding, about struttin yr stuff and showing that your the baddest one around. A couple months ago i saw big time sarah in chicago perform "hoochie coochie (wo)man" and i'll be damned if she wasn't grandstanding when she got a young man sitting by the stage on his knees in front of her while she mimicked a few sex acts.

~eryque

[↑ Contents](#)

140. **Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks**

**Re: Teaching poetry to high school students (Sawako Nakayasu post)**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

*i always thought that studying stein and seuss at the same time was a hell of a lot of fun. for the kids that want more "adventure", ed dorn's "gunslinger" is hilarious, playful, has cowboys and a talking horse and a genuine saloon...*

eryque

On Tue, 6 Jan 1998, Sawako Nakayasu wrote:

*I teach at a tiny private high school in San Diego--and am in the process of trying to talk my way into teaching a poetry class. I have a few ideas of my own, but I'd love some input on what kinds of poems (and teaching techniques) I might use to induce some excitement about the subject when dealing with teenagers, many of whom are serious TV addicts. Anyone have experience with this?*

\_Gunslinger\_ for high school students? \_Private\_ high school students? Good luck. Stein and Seuss sounds like a fruitful conjunction to me, but again I worry (based on my own experience teaching "Writing About Poetry" to Stanford freshpersons) that the obtuseness of Stein or Dorn might be off-putting to considerably sheltered and privileged young adults who more than likely have been indoctrinated with ideals of success, rationality, and pragmatic communication. I've found that these kinds of students tend to want order, sense, and meaning in poetry, and that absurdity pisses them off (even in controlled doses such as in, say, Stevens' "Emperor of Ice Cream"). I worked hard over two quarters trying to get across the idea that language can do other things than relay factual or didactic information, with only limited success.

In a situation like that, I think that canonical texts--Shakespeare, Pope, Frost, etc.--really do make good primers for introducing students to the building blocks of poetry, even if your aim is later to knock those blocks down and show how language can perform radical acts of disruption, blah blah blah. More to the point, I think it may be more persuasive to show that those texts can be as disruptive, in their apparent sane docility, as poems by Stein, et al., than to hit students over the head immediately with jagged-edged chunks of "resistant" discourse.

That said, I offer these not-very-sexy suggestions for some introductory poems: Shakespeare's Sonnet 73 ("That time of year thou may'st in me behold") provides a great bundling of formal patterns and rhetorical strategies for students to unpack, and the strangeness of the early modern English is just manageable enough to get them to read closely while still promising successful deciphering (you have to make good on the offer of the cookie at the end of the chore, at least at first). Similarly, lyrics by Blake, Yeats, Dickinson, and the like are simultaneously short and compacted enough to generate some rudimentary lynx-eyed analysis without exhausting readers. After some confidence manifests itself, try something a little bulkier and less polite, like "Song of Myself," that seems to approach everyday language's random structure but really still contains tons of rhetorical order--let them wade through that and begin to see the conventions that lurk in even seemingly informal styles of discourse (but you probably shouldn't call it that). If they make it this far, it can't hurt to see what they do with more byzantine modernist, objectivist, beat, or even language

poems. In small doses, however--you don't want a mutiny on your hands. Or do you?

Cheers,

Kasey

[↑ Contents](#)

141. **henry**

**Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

On Wed, 7 Jan 1998 11:29:13 -0500 Eryque Gleason said:

>

>henry, i thought a lot of blues performance was \*about\* grandstanding,  
>about struttin yr stuff and showing that your the baddest one around. A  
>couple months ago i saw big time sarah in chicago perform "hoochie coochie  
>(wo)man" and i'll be damned if she wasn't grandstanding when she got a  
>young man sitting by the stage on his knees in front of her while she  
>mimicked a few sex acts.

well, if you can get away with it, ok. we are getting into the deep complexities of performancologistics here, clearly. My favorite harp player (actually I have a few) is Sonny Terry, a blind man who played harp upside down & has a very subtle manner & tone, while remaining up country & very green. He's like the Andrew Marvell of blues, if you will. - Henry

[↑ Contents](#)

142. **Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks**

**Re: teaching high school TV watchin' kids**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

*Maybe work back and forth between the mediums-- write poetry about different things in TV, then write TV sitcoms about poems (possibly an interesting way for them to interpret poems). I recall vaguely a book of sestinas (I think) about "Perry Mason"--poet's last name is Cummins (I may be way off) I, myself, have written a series of poem based on "Night Gallery." And, of course, "Gunslinger" is very cool.*

*elizabeth hatmaker*

And there are David Trinidad's wonderful sitcom haiku, and his "Double Trouble," which is a dazzling intervention upon "The Patty Duke Show."

[↑ Contents](#)

143. **William Burmeister Prod**

**Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

Don Byrd wrote:

*If Mandelstam "envied crystallography," poetry is  
nearer meteorology or alchemy.*

Yes. Closer to these ( most especially alchemy).

*Now, harmonicas. There is a worthy theme. I have been thinking of  
writing about vacuum tubes and the pre-solid state days of electronics.*

Speaking of alchemy, if you are going to write about the pre-solid state days of electronics, be sure to include the magic of the so-called crystal radio. This essentially primitive and simple radio receiver requires no power supply and yet is able to (weakly) pull AM band electromagnetic waves out of the air as it were. The key to this is a raw crystal of germanium (I think called "galena" a long time back), which is probed at, or picked, with a sharp pin (or something like that) until you get a signal. Interestingly enough, the circuit's ground is referred to as "earth" ground as it is attached to a stake or a pipe that goes to the soil.

Imagination is more important than knowledge

-- Albert Einstein

William Burmeister

[↑ Contents](#)

144. **Matthew Stadler**

**Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

Hi Travers,

Chuck Palahniuk

13558 NW Riverside Dr

P'land 97231

██████████

Bob Gluck

4303 20th St

SF, CA 94114

██████████

Lee Williams  
2255 NW Johnson #104  
P'land 97210



I'd love to have more writing from the likes of you. Scan the books horizon and tell me what interests you. Also, tell me if there are feature ideas you're currently excited about. Yes, let's have drinks soon, like next week sometime, M W or F?

How'd Dave's show go? More soon,

Matthew

[↑ Contents](#)

145. **Matthew Stadler**

***Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program***

*Wed 7 Jan 1998*

---

Uhm, oops. My apologies to Chuck, Bob, and Lee. Matthew S

[↑ Contents](#)

146. **Cadaly**

***Re: teaching high school TV watchin' kids***

*Wed 7 Jan 1998*

---

Uh, David Trinidad aside (like him, like his work), I don't really see much benefit here.

Maybe mention that sitcom writing is a valid career path for those without the chops to do the artist thing or for artists who need fast cash. You need to know a lot about STORY, STRUCTURE, CHARACTER, and CONTINUITY. You need to be able to write. Many sitcom writers are frustrated, but very real, poets.

Stupid time-wasting things friends of mine in bands were encouraged to do rather than write poetry: turn poems into song lyrics, set poems to music, write song lyrics rather than poems, etc. Are they still in a band? No. Can they write poetry? No. Same goes for writing poems about tv. In general, who cares?

If you're going to teach poetry, teach regular poetry. What does student tv-watching add to the process? Exposure to another medium, one that is very style conscious (generally, students will have a good sense of genre and style as it changes message).

The poet maudit tradition is always very popular. And symbolism is easy to learn.

Catherine

[↑ Contents](#)

147. **Elizabeth Hatmaker**

**Re: teaching high school TV watchin' kids**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

how are you using the term "regular poetry"? Those sitcom writers, frustrated poets that they are, would, I suspect, write regular poetry.

As for the value of techniques and exercises, lots and lots of kids don't have what it takes for sitcom writing (not maybe as easy as it might seem), songwriting, or poetry. To suggest that the techniques used to introduce them to these arts as the reason for this doesn't seem quite right. Heck, even teaching "regular" poetry, how many high school level/undergraduate poetry students continue writing it?

Isn't Gunslinger a regular poem? Or the Cummins (again, hope I have the name right) series on Perry Mason?

E. Hatmaker

[↑ Contents](#)

148. **Don Byrd**

**Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

henry wrote:

*On Wed, 7 Jan 1998 00:01:21 -0800 Don Byrd said:*

*To be sure, the alphabet generates infinite strings of meaning (Ronen's book could have gone on indefinitely), but the "layers" are vague analogies and there is no necessity in that visualization. Alphabetic writing is formally quite primitive compared, say, to topology.*

*Well, even Mandelstam my hero might have agreed with you. But the details which accumulate in a map might be likened to the sounds & meanings which accumulate (as in an energy generator of some kind) inside these simple lines, squiggles and curlicues.*

Of course, I chose poetry rather than topology to work in but formal precision is not its strength. If Mandelstam "envied crystallography," poetry is nearer meteorology or alchemy. Oral poetry is potentially of more formal

interest: compare one of Jackson Mac Low's randomly generated texts to one of his singular performances, for example. Digital media offers poetry an immense formal advantage.

The knowledge of the blues harp--this is real culture--and worthy of our most serious attention. Sadly, most of what remains known about great American music has been academized, like poetry, and is now purveyed by places like the Berklee School of Music, where people learn all of the chops, missing only the music (which of course can only be supplied by the life of a community).

Don

--

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd ([REDACTED], [REDACTED])  
Department of English  
State University of New York  
Albany, NY 12222  
[REDACTED] (work); [REDACTED] (dome); [REDACTED] (fax)  
The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

149. **Eryque Gleason**

**Re: Teaching poetry to high school students (Sawako Nakayasu post)**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

| *\_Gunslinger\_ for high school students? \_Private\_ high school students?*

well, i don't really expect any high-school teachers to get such a book past their department head or school board (though my only real misgiving about teaching this to highschool students is that the talking horse rolls a joint about every two pages). but i do think that this book is much more accessible and *\_fun\_* as an epic poem than, say, homer's works, and i think there's still more than enough there to use it to study epic poetry.

*off-putting to considerably sheltered and privileged young adults who more than likely have been indoctrinated with ideals of success, rationality, and pragmatic communication. I've found that these kinds of students tend to want order, sense, and meaning in poetry, and that absurdity pisses them off*

i think "all things in moderation" might be the best thing to have in mind here. i remember dreading the poetry units of high school english classes precisely because i knew it was going to be the same old canonical stuff we'd read since sixth or seventh grade. i found formal poetry by long dead europeans uninteresting, disconnected from anything i could relate to.



~eryque

[↑ Contents](#)

150. **Gwyn McVay**

***Re: Teaching poetry to high school students (Sawako Nakayasu post)***

*Wed 7 Jan 1998*

---

past their department head or school board (though my only real misgiving about teaching this to highschool students is that the talking horse rolls a joint about every two pages).<<<

I find that using the same method when reading the book adds considerably to its enjoyment, although, like a concert, it is still good fun straight.

Gwyn

[↑ Contents](#)

151. **William Marsh**

***teaching h.s. kids***

*Wed 7 Jan 1998*

---

perhaps point out all the word-play in tv ads (i wanted a \*bud\* light, for ex) and then show them word-play in poetry / do lots of experiments and exercises with pun, anagram, palindrome, charade, rebus, etc. to show how poetry begins with language / the lyrics of Beck and R.E.M. are rich with "stretched-sense" and might provide a good starting point for teaching risk

best,

bill marsh

At 10:42 PM 1/6/98 -0800, you wrote:

>I teach at a tiny private high school in San Diego--and am in the  
>process of trying to talk my way into teaching a poetry class. I have a  
>few ideas of my own, but I'd love some input on what kinds of poems (and  
>teaching techniques) I might use to induce some excitement about the  
>subject when dealing with teenagers, many of whom are serious TV  
>addicts. Anyone have experience with this?

>

>

-----  
William Marsh

PaperBrainPress

Voice & Range Community Arts

National University

http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh  
-----

[↑ Contents](#)

152. **syvester pollet**

**Laughlin Session MLA 1998 (fwd)**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

I'm just passing this along for Prof. Witemeyer, and remembering some of the Laughlin testimonials from this list. Sylvester

From: hugh hazen witemeyer <[REDACTED]>  
Subject: Call for Papers

*I am trying to organize a Special Session on James Laughlin for the 1998 MLA Convention in San Francisco, December 27-30. The call for papers should appear in the next MLA Newsletter. It will read as follows:*

*JAMES LAUGHLIN OF NEW DIRECTIONS. This session will consider the history of New Directions and the achievement of James Laughlin (1914-1997) as publisher of the moderns, writers' friend, and poet. Abstracts and brief vitae by 9 March; Hugh Witemeyer.*

*My address is Department of English, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131. I would be happy to answer questions about the Session by e-mail, but I would prefer to receive paper proposals in printed form via the snail mail. Please pass this announcement on to anyone you know who might be interested but does not subscribe to the listserv or belong to the MLA. Thanks.*

*Cheers and Happy New Year,  
Hugh Witemeyer*

[↑ Contents](#)

153. **Thomas Bell**

**Re: htмлability and poetry webring**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

Reposting two messages that did not get through earlier

Miekal and Bill,

I've been using Hotmetal and trellix which are fairly cheap and quite useable. I've done two poems in both of them as an experiment and come up with a different version with each. I've also posted

them for comment if you are interested: "Flower"  
in html (Hotmetal editor) is at  
<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Olympus/2562/unnindex.html>  
and im trellix is at:  
<http://www.public.usit.net/trbell/unn.htm>  
"rain" in trellix is at  
<http://www.public.usit.net/trbell/rain/rainindex.htm>  
and the html versdion is at:  
<http://www.public.usit.net/trbell/rain/rainind.htm>

*William and Miekal (and others),*

*I joined about a month ago as an experiment. Joining is no problem and the ring links are unobtrusive. I don't count hits to my page but I have had five people who "hit" books at amazon that I referenced. This means that they had some ointerest in my stuff and were persistent enough to follow my internal links and to want to know more about the books. It also means, of course, that they did not have a lot of spare monbey. I think this follow through on the part of readers is more gratifying than just numbers of hits. So, to answer your query Miekal, I would say the ring would get you a fair amount of readers, but I'm not sure how many would be interested enough to make it worthwhile. I have started some linking with work that I've seen and liked and think that might be a better way to go. BTW, William, do you have a URL to share with us?*  
*tom bell*

[↑ Contents](#)

154. **Robin Morris**

***Re: teaching high school TV watchin' kids***

*Wed 7 Jan 1998*

---

I have been coming across the term a great deal lately, and being French-impaired, am not clear on what exactly it means. Poet maudit. Definitions por favor?

Robin

At 01:03 PM 1/7/98 -0500, you wrote:

>

>The poet maudit tradition is always very popular. And symbolism is easy to  
>learn.

>

>Catherine

>

>

\* \* \* \* \*

Robin A. Morris

Home page: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ramorris>

[↑ Contents](#)

155. **dw**

### ***Olson and Subjectivity***

*Wed 7 Jan 1998*

---

PAPER PROPOSALS: Following upon the panel, "Charles Olson and Subjectivity," presented at last year's American Literature Association, Baltimore (May 1997), I seek proposals for papers on related themes. This year again, the Charles Olson Society will sponsor a session at the ALA annual conference (May 28-31) in San Diego. Last year's panel explored the reception of Olson's poetics by women, interrogating constructions of gender and sexuality in his work while seeking to evaluate the contemporary relevance of his poetics. For this year's session, I hope to find proposals that measure Olson's poetics (or his practice) against ethnic and postcolonial critiques of the ways in which mainstream cultural productions suppress or reify the "other." Proposals for papers concerning gender, sexuality, and language are also welcome. The session is open both to studies that historicize Olson's contributions to post World War II poetics and to studies that question the relevance of Olson's poetics to current practice.

Please contact me by return e-mail no later than Jan. 22, 1998 or write Don Wellman, Daniel Webster College, Nashua, NH 03063.

[↑ Contents](#)

156. **Brian Carpenter**

### ***Re: teaching high school TV watchin' kids***

*Wed 7 Jan 1998*

---

On Wed, 7 Jan 1998, Robin Morris wrote:

*I have been coming across the term a great deal lately, and being French-impaired, am not clear on what exactly it means. Poet maudit. Definitions por favor?*

*Robin*

The Doomed Poet.

BC

[↑ Contents](#)

157. **Henry Gould**  
*reading in Providence*  
Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

I just returned from the tiny Transit Bookshop in the Fox Point neighborhood of town, where in an even tinier adjacent sitting room, Edwin Honig read to an audience of about 25-30. He was in good form, despite having just come out of the hospital after acute asthma troubles (he is 77).

Good form is an understatement; he read mostly new poems which were excellent. Honig could read the phone book, or even perhaps some of my long postings to this list, & make them sound interesting; but he's a genuine lyric poet, whose long, intricate, dense-yet-light, Jamesian sentences compress and amalgamate very high-pitched emotion - laughter, desire, love, grief - very much on the edge and the surface - with a mind full of irony and humor - and an incredibly profuse expressive vocabulary of direct description.

I know this doesn't really tell you much. I told myself I should have taped it - & somebody has to get him to give more readings & do so. I've recorded him before, but he has new poems & this was the perfect milieu, I could have kicked myself for leaving the tape recorder at home. The 1st thing he said after finishing was, "I read somewhere that science can retrieve voices - what's been said - from anytime in history." People laughed & somebody said "you've been reading science fiction." But I think he knows how good he is, & how strange it felt for all of us in this little room to hear the poems drift off into silence.

How to describe it. A large old man, with a large, leonine head, oversize upper body sort of stumbling over an aging pair of legs; his poems imitating his gait, like an elephant dancing; a narrow range but within his meditative vehemence a sense of perfection - this is a rare artist doing what he knows he can do. An incredibly rich diction & descriptive eye, a mind always dwelling on the tragic/grief-stricken/desiring/ridiculous human predicaments. A very powerful intelligence spinning out these playful extensions into syntax, observation & complete & theatrical existential uncertainty. Honig won't give you any answers; the questions are always hovering there, looming ghosts - but in the presence of those ghosts he lopes into the poem's arena which is an encounter with what's in front of him & with what the sentences & rhymes are doing - and then he "thinks out loud" THROUGH this encounter, this experience, into a kind of witty or resigned resolution. Does that help? With a Shakespearean/Brooklyn diction by means of which the words take on a dancing quality, a sad-happy elephant dance. Sorry I can't be more precise.

Al & Mary Cook were in the audience; David Shroyer-Petrov, the Russian poet; Tom Epstein, slavist, Russian translator & editor of ALEA; Susan Brown, Honig's long-time collaborator on Pessoa translations; my 16-yr old son, who

said he enjoyed it (& that's a compliment). It's a very cute little bookstore on the edge of survival with low-cost paperbacks & curious lore. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

158. **Maria Damon**

***Re: ... no subject ...***

*Wed 7 Jan 1998*

---

paul beatty is a poet who uses a lot of tv references in his work. i'm not that familiar w/ tv, so i don't know how fast references become obsolete. still, some kids might enjoy his stuff. also, wnyctv had some "poetry spots" that are available at no cost (i believe) to teachers...bob holman might have more info. i've got a tape w/ 3 of them --beatty, tracie morris, and walter lew --and they're just terrific.-md

At 11:10 AM -0500 1/7/98, Elizabeth Hatmaker wrote:

>RE: teaching high school TV watchin' kids

>

>I taught for a few years at a mid-sized state university and find the TV  
>thing just as common there. Your post doesn't suggest how you feel about TV  
>as something students might write about. Possibly this could be discussed as  
>a class-- what does the modern poet write about? How can he/she avoid the  
>media if they were so inclined? Is TV a "better" medium than poetry for  
>getting across what they want to get across? How are attitudes about poetry  
>and TV similar/disimilar? Oddly, most of my students, though they knew a lot  
>about TV, thought that the medium was "stupid" and a "waste of time" and did  
>not want to write poetry about TV. So, of course, I made them do it.

>

>Maybe work back and forth between the mediums-- write poetry about different

>things in TV, then write TV sitcoms about poems (possibly an interesting way  
>for them to interpret poems). I recall vaguely a book of sestinas (I think)  
>about "Perry Mason"--poet's last name is Cummins (I may be way off) I,  
>myself, have written a series of poem based on "Night Gallery." And, of  
>course, "Gunslinger" is very cool.

>

>

>elizabeth hatmaker

[↑ Contents](#)

159. **Maria Damon**

***Re: teaching high school TV watchin' kids***

*Wed 7 Jan 1998*

---

literally, cursed poet. you know, the poet as outlaw, criminal, addict, suicide, deranged and unappreciated visionary, mendicant prophet, etc;;; coleridge, baudelaire, rimbaud, jim morrison, bob kaufman, francois villon. v popular among adolescent boys. i wanted to write a piece called "cool maudit" about stephen jonas, and still might, though the reference to cool moe dee will be obsolete by the time i ever get around to it.

At 6:53 PM -0500 1/7/98, Robin Morris wrote:

>I have been coming across the term a great deal lately, and being

>French-impaired, am not clear on what exactly it means. Poet maudit.

>Definitions por favor?

>

>Robin

>

>At 01:03 PM 1/7/98 -0500, you wrote:

>>

>>The poet maudit tradition is always very popular. And symbolism is easy to  
>>learn.

>>

>>Catherine

>>

>>

>

> \* \* \* \* \*

> Robin A. Morris

>

> Home page: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ramorris>

[↑ Contents](#)

160. **Maria Damon**

***Re: Teaching poetry to high school students (Sawako Nakayasu post)***

*Wed 7 Jan 1998*

---

At 8:49 AM -0800 1/7/98, Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks wrote:

>>i always thought that studying stein and seuss at the same time was a hell

>>of a lot of fun. for the kids that want more "adventure", ed dorn's

>>"gunslinger" is hilarious, playful, has cowboys and a talking horse and a

>>genuine saloon...

>>

>>eryque

>>

>>On Tue, 6 Jan 1998, Sawako Nakayasu wrote:

>>

>>> I teach at a tiny private high school in San Diego--and am in the  
>>> process of trying to talk my way into teaching a poetry class. I have a  
>>> few ideas of my own, but I'd love some input on what kinds of poems (and  
>>> teaching techniques) I might use to induce some excitement about the  
>>> subject when dealing with teenagers, many of whom are serious TV  
>>> addicts. Anyone have experience with this?

>>>

>

>\_Gunslinger\_ for high school students? \_Private\_ high school students?

>Good luck. Stein and Seuss sounds like a fruitful conjunction to me, but

>again I worry (based on my own experience teaching "Writing About Poetry"

>to Stanford freshpersons) that the obtuseness of Stein or Dorn might be

>off-putting to considerably sheltered and privileged young adults who more

>than likely have been indoctrinated with ideals of success, rationality,

>and pragmatic communication. I've found that these kinds of students tend

>to want order, sense, and meaning in poetry, and that absurdity pisses them

>off (even in controlled doses such as in, say, Stevens' "Emperor of Ice

>Cream"). I worked hard over two quarters trying to get across the idea

>that language can do other things than relay factual or didactic

>information, with only limited success.

>

whoa there pardner. i've had success teaching stein etc; the trick is to tell students right up front that it's \*spoized\* to be playful and nonsensical and their job is to get with that program, not to decode for some secret deep meaning. although i also do a lot of decoding with/for them, cuz i do think stein is a lot about puns. also we do a lot of reading aloud w/ stein, and talk about "non-normative" or "non-narrative" writing. just give 'em the context and watch 'em go. you could, tho, challeng what i mean by "success" in this context. if a few students get it, and get excited, that's good enough for me. mostly i just enjoy teaching stein so much that i think my enthusiasm may blind me to whether i'm "getting across."

[↑ Contents](#)



161. **rsillima**

**Duncan**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

Robert Duncan would have been 79 today. So I read the "new" interview with him in the new Chicago Review (lots of good stuff in that issue, including pieces by Alan Golding, Jed Rasula, Anne Carson, Amiri Baraka and Keith Tuma).

Impossible to imagine what the owl-eyed master of rime would have been like on something like the Poetics List. But we can be certain it woulda been something else,

Ron

[↑ Contents](#)

162. **William Marsh**

**Re: htmlability and poetry webring**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

At 03:42 PM 1/7/98 -0600, tom bell wrote:

So, to answer your query Miekal, I would say the  
>>ring would get you a fair amount of readers, but I'm not sure how many  
>>would be interested enough to make it worthwhile. I have started some  
>>linking with work that I've seen and liked and think that might be a  
>>better way to go. BTW, William, do you have a URL to share with us?  
>>tom bell

i admit feeling more interested in and exciting by what tom touches on here -- a word-of-mouth (word-of-web?) ring linking liked and like-minded sites / my URL is now available below, and i'll repeat my call from my promotional post of a few days ago: any who'd be interested in collaborating (linking pages would be the first and easiest kind of collab i'd be interested in), please let me know backchannel or to the list, as appropriate

ringing off for the day,  
bmarsh

-----  
William Marsh  
PaperBrainPress  
Voice & Range Community Arts  
National University  
  
<http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh>  
-----

[↑ Contents](#)

163. **dbkk**  
**Hard Press**

Wed 7 Jan 1998

---

X-Authentication-Warning: mail4.sirius.com: dbkk set sender to  
[REDACTED] using -f  
From: "David & Kathleen Seidel" <[REDACTED]>  
To: <[REDACTED]>  
Subject: Hard Press  
Date: Wed, 7 Jan 1998 17:03:20 -0500  
MIME-Version: 1.0  
X-Priority: 3 (Normal)  
X-MSMail-Priority: Normal  
Importance: Normal  
X-MimeOLE: Produced By Microsoft MimeOLE V4.72.2106.4  
Status: U

*I would like to welcome you to visit the newly expanded website of Hard Press, <http://hardpress.com>, a publisher of contemporary poetry, fiction and art books, and the quarterly journal Lingo.*

*The site includes substantial excerpts from all of our books; many poems, stories and articles originally published in Lingo; a comprehensive index; and a random link feature whereby one can move from any page on the site that contains literary or artistic content to any other. It's a fun way to navigate and to discover new writers.*

*Our authors include Dodie Bellamy, Jim Brodey, Tom Clark, Clark Coolidge, Lynn Crawford, Tony Fitzpatrick, Merrill Gilfillan, Michael Gizzi, Andrew Joron, Kevin Killian, Frank Lima, Gillian McCain, Bernadette Mayer, Albert Mobilio, Raphael Rubinstein, Linda Smukler, and Miriam Solan, as well as many more who have published in Lingo.*

*Best regards,*

*Kathleen Seidel  
Hard Press webmaster*

[↑ Contents](#)

164. **Sawako Nakayasu**  
**teaching high school kids**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

Thanks to everyone who gave me input & ideas. The glory of the school where I work is that it's absolutely tiny (about 50 students), and not all that

conservative. Once I get permission to teach the class, I suspect I'll have quite a lot of freedom to do what I will. One of my goals is to help students understand the relevance of poetry, or even if they could just begin to see the infinite and amazing capacities of language, I'd be pleased. I didn't necessarily mean to involve tv itself, but since it's something that they seem to think is an important part of their lives, it might be good to challenge that and make them decide what's special about it. I also like the pop songs/poetry connection, and I love the thought of Stein & Seuss. I imagine that the responses will vary among the students, so I'd want to take things from as many different angles as I have time for. I think I'd like to present poetry as a real, living part of our culture, society, etc, and try to undo the perception that it exists only within and for the small subset of people who are holed up in their rooms seeking some deeper meaning to life...or that it is just some boring strange segment of their lit books where they study alliteration, assonance, and rhyme. Thanks for your help...I'll let you know when it finally happens!

Sawako

[↑ Contents](#)

165. **Miekal And**  
*teaching the difficult bobogali*

Thu 8 Jan 1998

I think my all time favorite book for getting highschool kids excited about what language can do is Bob Cobbing's book Bill Jujube. (I dont have the book in front of me, spelling may be wrongish). It is a book of short syllable concatenations that are word music in every way. These texts work well for have a class read them outloud together, in rounds, as fast as they can, with different voices, essentially performing thru their fears. I find that is you give context & meaning a break, the one's in the class that are more uncertain get a chance to trust their own voice, their own writing & then by extention seek to understand other writing.

miekal

altho I have to admit that the thot of 6 year old reading finnegan's wake makes far more sense then the texts 6 years olds are normally "forced" to read.

--

@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@#@

Dreamtime Village website: <http://net22.com/dreamtime>

QAZINGULAZA: And/Was/Wakest website:

<http://net22.com/qazingulaza>

e-mail for DT & And/Was:

[↑ Contents](#)

166. **rsillima**  
**(no subject)**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

Kasey says...

"\_Gunslinger\_ for high school students? \_Private\_ high school students? Good luck. Stein and Seuss sounds like a fruitful conjunction to me, but again I worry (based on my own experience teaching "Writing About Poetry" to Stanford freshpersons) that the obtuseness of Stein or Dorn might be off-putting to considerably sheltered and privileged young adults who more than likely have been indoctrinated with ideals of success, rationality, and pragmatic communication. I've found that these kinds of students tend to want order, sense, and meaning in poetry, and that absurdity pisses them off (even in controlled doses such as in, say, Stevens' "Emperor of Ice Cream"). I worked hard over two quarters trying to get across the idea that language can do other things than relay factual or didactic information, with only limited success.

"In a situation like that, I think that canonical texts--Shakespeare, Pope, Frost, etc.--really do make good primers for introducing students to the building blocks of poetry, even if your aim is later to knock those blocks down and show how language can perform radical acts of disruption, blah blah blah. More to the point, I think it may be more persuasive to show that those texts can be as disruptive, in their apparent sane docility, as poems by Stein, et al., than to hit students over the head immediately with jagged-edged chunks of "resistant" discourse."

I have two boys who don't turn six until next week who've had no trouble wading through the first 60 pages of *Finnegan's Wake*, every word. Obtuseness or difficulty or whatever is really a learned condition. As Kit Robinson once observed, the only people who ever found language poetry "difficult" were English majors at the college level. I think Dorn's use of the rhetoric of the comic would work well at least with the boys in the class.

Ron

[↑ Contents](#)

167. **hg**  
**honig redux**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

Will try to improve BRIEFLY on tired flaccid report on Honig reading.

Transit Bookshop is in Fox Point, old Portuguese waterfront neighborhood which lingers on despite seemingly permanent crippling by I-95 freeway built directly across the wharf area. Honig has long affinity with Portugal based on translations of F. Pessoa (for which he was knighted by Portuguese gov't). Transit, as in Transit St., named after Ben Franklin visited Providence & made astronomical observations of transit of Venus there.

One reason Honig is perhaps little-known in this period, besides living in provincial town, being old & retired from teaching, etc., is that his poetry offers few exterior props. There are no obvious stylistic trappings, no "scheme", no sentiment, no overt philosophy. There is love, hope, memory, fear, wonder - but any certainty or idealism is dissolved in irony & humor. Honig is an expressionist, existentialist (I can't think of a better word), word-painter; his talent for sharp observation curiously reminds me of Emily Dickinson - there is a drawing on deep wells of renaissance & metaphysical vocabulary without hint of archaism or traditionalism.

Here is one of his more abstract or formulaic poems (the only one I have handy). Imagine it being read, say, by a WC Fields crossed with Wallace Stevens.

#### LYING ON THE HALF-TRUTH

No one at the station  
meets no one one the train.  
Train starts up again,  
takes away the station.

Yesterday's  
the other-won't-  
ever-reappear  
place

bursting-brave-  
new-opening  
into the then-  
clear-day

sliding by with  
all its own  
maybe-now-  
when-of-it

chafing thought  
squelched by  
asking  
then-and-there

Did it ever happen?  
Was I in it?  
How was it to be that  
where-and-when now?

- Edwin Honig

(from Nedge #4, 1996)

[↑ Contents](#)

168. **Michael Magee**  
***Re: teaching the difficult***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

I've taught Stein to Freshman the last two years with a fair amount of success, parts of Tender Buttons, the Portrait of Picasso - I start by playing them Stein's reading of "P of P" which is beautiful and rhythmic and helps them to understand the humor of the thing - there's a real pleasure to hearing it, reading it, as I suspect there was to writing it and my kids got that. I also asked them to imagine it formally before seeing how Stein laid it out on the page, which was an innocuous way to begin talking about the relativity of form versus its necessity. Then there's just pointing to things they're familiar with: eg that "please pale hot, please cover rose" is a kind of homophonic translation of "peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold" and that it occurs in the section called "Food," a kind of cleverness which they tend to appreciate and which makes them want to look harder, and you can start talking about how we're socialized by language games such as nursery rhymes, something they all tend to understand since the poor sonsabitches grew up reciting things like "the little engine that could." Of course there'll always be a few people who think its bullshit but that's the breaks. -m.

According to

██████████: > > Kasey says... >

> "\_Gunslinger\_" for high school students? \_Private\_ high school students?  
> Good luck. Stein and Seuss sounds like a fruitful conjunction to me, but  
> again I worry (based on my own experience teaching "Writing About Poetry"  
> to Stanford freshpersons) that the obtuseness of Stein or Dorn might be  
> off-putting to considerably sheltered and privileged young adults who more  
> than likely have been indoctrinated with ideals of success, rationality,  
> and pragmatic communication. I've found that these kinds of students tend  
> to want order, sense, and meaning in poetry, and that absurdity pisses them  
> off (even in controlled doses such as in, say, Stevens' "Emperor of Ice  
> Cream"). I worked hard over two quarters trying to get across the idea  
> that language can do other things than relay factual or didactic

> information, with only limited success.  
>  
> "In a situation like that, I think that canonical texts--Shakespeare, Pope,  
> Frost, etc.--really do make good primers for introducing students to the  
> building blocks of poetry, even if your aim is later to knock those blocks  
> down and show how language can perform radical acts of disruption, blah  
> blah blah. More to the point, I think it may be more persuasive to show  
> that those texts can be as disruptive, in their apparent sane docility, as  
> poems by Stein, et al., than to hit students over the head immediately with  
> jagged-edged chunks of "resistant" discourse."  
>  
> I have two boys who don't turn six until next week who've had no trouble  
> wading through the first 60 pages of Finnegans Wake, every word. Obtuse-  
ness  
> or difficulty or whatever is really a learned condition. As Kit Robinson  
> once observed, the only people who ever found language poetry "difficult"  
> were English majors at the college level. I think Dorn's use of the rhetoric  
> of the comic would work well at least with the boys in the class.  
>  
> Ron  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

169. **David R. Israel**  
***Re: teaching h.s. kids***

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

William Marsh notes,

*rebus, etc. to show how poetry begins with language / the lyrics of  
Beck and R.E.M. are rich with "stretched-sense" and might provide a  
good starting point for teaching risk*

hmmm -- R.E.M.'s "Losing My Religion" has long been a point of fascination --  
that's me in the corner  
that's me in the spotlight losing my religion . . .

& what music;

when (mid-'60s) I was abt. 10-11 years old (at our So.Calif. Quaker school), we  
sat around on the lawn and read thru mimeos of Simon & Garfunkel lyrics, by  
way of poetry study.

I'd vote for David Byrne's sharp-ambiguous lyrics as another candidate (esp.  
note the album (ECM label) of his collaboration w/ Robert Wilson, KNEE PLAYS

(I think is the title) -- since, for one thing, those are all spoken rather than sung; -- & good stuff too) --

for that matter, blues lyrics could be a route of intro-to-po-study?

d.i.

[↑ Contents](#)

170. **David R. Israel**

***Re: Tea Ceremony Races / Idoru - W.Gibson***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Alan,

*Fukuoka hosted the first National Tea Ceremony Races yesterday; . . . The winner, Ichiro Azato, completed the full ceremony in 16 seconds, . . . For those who don't know, the usual ceremony can last up to three hours. . . .*

amazing. Okakura rolling in his grave (as it were)? BTW, maybe a year or so ago, there opened in DC a likable establishment known as TEAISM (right next to a Starbuck's, on R Street NW, near Connecticut -- at the start of the couple blocks of R Street that have long been established as the genteel art-gallery-ghetto of this city. Place boasts quite an assortment of black, green & white teas as well as pan-Asian cuisine. (The "ism" lends the right dose of theory veneer to the place-concept, presumably.)

| *Alan - there are times I \_really\_ have culture shock here!*

Speaking of this -- just finished reading William Gibson's enjoyable latest novel, IDORU (published late 1996), most of which takes place either in cyberspace or a mid-21st century Tokyo. Lotta fine Gibsonian extrapolation goin' on; uncle david gives it five stars.

Not, I think, to give too much away, the Idoru ("idol") proves to be an artificial-intelligence construct & pop star . . . -- for any who read it, a thought: the character Laney's notion of "nodes" reminds, if vaguely, of what Jung called constellation [as transitive verb] of archetypes -- though the comparison is a bit problematical --

d.i.

[↑ Contents](#)



171. **Marcella Durand**

***Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Record yourself in your own tv show. In the course of this "show," which should ideally involve car crashes & lust triangles, insert some of your favorite lines (but avoid using entire poems, unless they're very short). It doesn't matter if the poetry is abstract, difficult and experimental, since tv is essentially that way anyhow. Then declare a "movie day" and haul the school vcr up to class to play your "show." Your students will be transfixed.

-----

From: Sawako Nakayasu

Sent: Wednesday, January 07, 1998 1:42 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: National Henry-in-the-Schools Program

I teach at a tiny private high school in San Diego--and am in the process of trying to talk my way into teaching a poetry class. I have a few ideas of my own, but I'd love some input on what kinds of poems (and teaching techniques) I might use to induce some excitement about the subject when dealing with teenagers, many of whom are serious TV addicts. Anyone have experience with this?

[↑ Contents](#)

172. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Re: teaching the difficult***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

I was struck by Michael Macgee's point about playing Stein for students. I've never taught, nor even been very close to doing so, in any formal sense. But I really do think that Michael's experience with the Portrait of Picasso is an excellent signpost for how to put good poetry across to people. This may (like many a bias I have) derive from my highly formative early training in music. But good (even, just interesting) readers can have a huge impact. Stein is one of the great examples, for all the apparent dryness of her approach when you first hear it. I believe that (in very different ways: one dry yet musical, the other floridly musical, in a way that is so peculiar it takes some getting used to) Oppen and Pound are two who can become much more accessible to people if they hear the available tapes. Oppen is my personal favorite, and in my opinion about the best reader I've ever heard. The two-cassette Pound set has been, for me personally, a remarkably functional tool for thinking through issues about his technique and impact (and listening to it is a fairly astonishing experience in and of itself). One other thing occurs to me (quite relevant, in our rock & roll

culture). Both these sets of recordings, made in what could be called old age (and that's audible), are remarkable demonstrations of the power and intensity of elders.

Mark P.

[↑ Contents](#)

173. **Chris Piuma**  
***Re: teaching h.s. kids***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Wow, the obligation to respond to this one is overwhelming!

David R. Israel showed great grace and sensitivity to write on 98.01.08:

*William Marsh notes,  
rebus, etc. to show how poetry begins with language / the lyrics of  
Beck and R.E.M. are rich with "stretched-sense" and might provide a  
good starting point for teaching risk  
hmmm -- R.E.M.'s "Losing My Religion" has long been a point of  
fascination --*

*that's me in the corner  
that's me in the spotlight losing my religion . . .*

*& what music;*

Yeah, but if you go with early R.E.M., then you get really "stretched-sense" lyrics:

HARBORCOAT

They crowded up to Lenin with their noses worn off  
A handshake is worthy if it's all that you've got  
Metal shivs on wood push through our back  
There's a splinter in your eye and it reads "REACT"

They shifted the statues for harboring ghosts  
Reddened their necks, collared their clothes  
Then we danced the dance till the menace got out  
She gathered the corners and called it her gown

Please find my harborcoat, can't go outside without it  
Find my harborcoat, can't go outside without it

[etc.]

Which leaves out two things that make the text even more interesting: first, Stipe's habit of not speaking the words clearly in order to allow multiple meanings (Is it "Metal shoes on wood, pushed through our backs"? Stipe wants your

ears to guide you to the meaning that works best for you.); and second, that there is a second lyric being sung at the same time during all but the first verse. It is no accident that two of the FAQ maintainers for rec.music.rem are also big fans of this disjunctive poetry stuff...

-- Chris [Steve] Piuma, etc. Nothing is at: <http://www.brainlink.com/~cafard> [Editor of \_flim\_, Keeper of the R.E.M. Lyric Annotations FAQ, MST3K #43136] ....this message brought to you by the letters N and W and the number 36.... You deploy your favorite logical operator herein. Or not. --Ron Henry, "Whom"

[↑ Contents](#)

174. **Heather Starr**  
**Re: Olson and Subjectivity**  
*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Last year's panle explored the reception of Olson's poetics by women, interrogating  
> constructions of gender and sexuality in his work while seeking to  
> evaluate the contemporary relevance of his poetics.

I'm curious (though aware that this may be a big question): what conclusions were drawn about the constructions of gender & sexuality in Olson's work?

---

Heather Starr  
work: [REDACTED]  
home: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

175. **Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks**  
**Re: teaching h.s. kids**  
*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

*William Marsh notes,*

*rebus, etc. to show how poetry begins with language / the lyrics of Beck and R.E.M. are rich with "stretched-sense" and might provide a good starting point for teaching risk*

*hmmm -- R.E.M.'s "Losing My Religion" has long been a point of fascination --*

*that's me in the corner  
that's me in the spotlight losing my religion . . .*

& what music;

*when (mid-'60s) I was abt. 10-11 years old (at our So.Calif. Quaker school), we sat around on the lawn and read thru mimeos of Simon & Garfunkel lyrics, by way of poetry study.*

*I'd vote for David Byrne's sharp-ambiguous lyrics as another candidate (esp. note the album (ECM label) of his collaboration w/ Robert Wilson, KNEE PLAYS (I think is the title) -- since, for one thing, those are all spoken rather than sung; -- & good stuff too) --*

*for that matter, blues lyrics could be a route of intro-to-po-study?*

*d.i.*

For sheer linguistic richness and metaphysical joyriding (with a healthy dose of decapitation imagery, make of that what you will), I cast my vote for the twin John Donnes of pop, They Might Be Giants. I used their "Shoehorn with Teeth" along with Robert Johnson and The Beastie Boys for a one-day song-lyric session in my Writing About Poetry course, and got some relatively lively responses. Lively, that is, for students who uniformly cringed at Williams' "Danse Russe," whimpering about its "perversion," and who stared at Ashbery's "Farm Implements and Rutabagas in a Landscape" as though I had set a dog turd on the desk.

Back on track, They Might Be Giants are full of logical paradoxes, wordplay, and cultural (literary, political, historical, etc.) allusions, and their ostensibly light-hearted music provides a good backdrop for discussions of tonal irony. Like Beck, REM, and David Byrne, they combine an uncommonly articulate sensibility with a capacity for reshaping trash into thought-fodder. You got to check it out.

Kasey

[↑ Contents](#)

## 176. **Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks**

### ***Re: Sillimans Wake***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

*I have two boys who don't turn six until next week who've had no trouble wading through the first 60 pages of Finnegan's Wake, every word.*

Well, \_duh\_. They've probably been hearing their dad's poetry since they were zygotes, and Joyce must sound like Richard Scarry by comparison.

*Obtuseness or difficulty or whatever is really a learned condition. As Kit Robinson once observed, the only people who ever found language poetry*

"difficult" were English majors at the college level. I think Dorn's use of the >rhetoric of the comic would work well at least with the boys in the class.

Ron

You would think so, but most of these kids were trained from an early age to cover their ears and make whooping sounds when anyone mentions anything the slightest bit non-referential. To be fair, they were largely athletes and undeclared (Capitalism majors).

Earn more sessions by sleeving,

Kasey

[↑ Contents](#)

177. **William Marsh**  
**song lyricists (was teaching h.s....)**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

At 08:39 AM 1/8/98 -0500, David wrote:

>

>for that matter, blues lyrics could be a route of intro-to-po-study?

>

without a doubt, and seconds on your nomination of David Byrne ("Remain in Light" also - one of my all-time favs) / have to re-iterate my ref to Beck, tho, who more recently i think wins the "chew on this" award for lyrics: "got a devil's haircut in my mind" -- ouch! -- or "she's alone in the new pollution" / other new song lyricists out there people like?

bmarsh

-----

William Marsh

PaperBrainPress

Voice & Range Community Arts

National University



<http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh>

-----

[↑ Contents](#)

178. **Eryque Gleason**

**Re: Tea Ceremony Races / Idoru - W.Gibson**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

i think i read in wired magazine about a year ago that there was an actual pop star in japan that was allcomputer animation, the gag was to have concerts with this huge computer girl singing with the music who could be programmed to lip-sync in just about any language.

wonder if they're cousins maybe?

happy thursday!

eryque

*Not, I think, to give too much away, the Idoru ("idol") proves to be an artificial-intelligence construct & pop star . . . -- for any who read it, a thought: the character Laney's notion of "nodes" reminds, if vaguely, of what Jung called constellation [as transitive verb] of archetypes -- though the comparision is a bit problematical --*

*d.i.*

[↑ Contents](#)

179. **Gwyn McVay**

**Re: song lyricists (was teaching h.s....)**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

| other new song lyricists out there people like?

hardly new, but I remain fond of Neil Diamond's lyric:

I am, I said

To no one there

And no one heard me,

Not even the chair.

Besides the rather obvious "Waste Land" allusion in the first line, and indeed in the poem's tenor itself (1), the implications of the tremendous disaffection of someone who is so sensitive (not unlike Malte Laurids Brigge) that he \*normally\* hears emotional empathy from the furniture, and then \*ceases\* to hear it--who can imagine the agony of the speaker whose inanimate confidant retreats into its role as a mundane object? For that matter, /pace/ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, what color is Mr. Diamond's speaker's wallpaper?

(1) See also the treatment of a similar theme in "Let it Grow," poem by Robert Hunter, musical arrangement by Jerry Garcia.

P.E. Dant

[↑ Contents](#)

180. **William Burmeister Prod**

**Re: reading in Providence**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

Henry wrote:

*The 1st thing he said  
after finishing was, "I read somewhere that science can retrieve voices -  
what's been said - from anytime in history." People laughed & somebody  
said "you've been reading science fiction."*

Thanks Henry for this. Whimsical thought not at all unlike the (plausible) notion that there are original episodes of *\_I Love Lucy\_*, or FDR's Dec 8 '41 Pearl Harbor speech, floating around the galaxy still just waiting to be picked up. Then there were Arthur C. Clarke's investigations into whether walls could "remember" past images and sounds.

[↑ Contents](#)

181. **henry**

**Re: reading in Providence**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

Bill, have you tried using your crystal radio? we may be onto something here! Knock it upside the head with a needle after you plug it into the compost! I'm hearing voices....

- Henry

[↑ Contents](#)

182. **Jacques Debrot**

**Re: Sillimans Wake**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

Ron Silliman wrote:

"Obtuseness or difficulty or whatever is really a learned condition."

On the other hand, the anxiety that, for instance, my students have felt about *\*Finnegan's Wake\** (to continue the example) is not simply a "learned condition" but a reasonable response to the relationship of inequality that Joyce predicates between the reader and himself. As Bob Perelman points out in *\*The Trouble with Genius\**, the play of meaning in *\*FW\** is more "precise" than it is "free": "Many specific meanings are explosively packed into the words: a phrase may

implicate seven meanings, but these can be explicated. . . . "As burdens of reading [works such as \*FW\*] can force us into situations of permanent debt -- a freedom to read that entails submission to endless free-play where the play-ground is an already written page reconstituted by professional interpretation."

[↑ Contents](#)

183. **Safdie Joseph**

***Re: song lyricists (was teaching h.s....)***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Gwyn McVay says (in part):

- > I remain fond of Neil Diamond's lyric:
- >
- > I am, I said
- > To no one there
- > And no one heard me,
- > Not even the chair.
- >
- > Besides the rather obvious "Waste Land" allusion in the first line,
- > and
- > indeed in the poem's tenor itself (1), the implications of the
- > tremendous
- > disaffection of someone who is so sensitive (not unlike Malte Laurids
- > Brigge) that he \*normally\* hears emotional empathy from the furniture,
- > and
- > then \*ceases\* to hear it--who can imagine the agony of the speaker
- > whose
- > inanimate confidant retreats into its role as a mundane object?
- >

Then again, perhaps the speaker was just following the practice of the talking horse, as detailed in an earlier post by Ms. Dant.

On a (slightly) more serious note: has there even been a panel at the MLA that discussed the relation of psychoactive drugs to poetic practice? Possibly even more, ah, illuminating, than gender in Charles Olson -- (or Duncan!)

[↑ Contents](#)

184. **Mark Wallace**

***new Tom Mandel from Zasterle books***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

I just want to put in a plug for the new Tom Mandel book, ANCESTRAL CAVE, just out from Zasterle Press--really fine work! For me personally it ranks



up there with my two other favorite books by Tom, REALISM and PROSPECT OF RELEASE. This new one moves from scenes of personal intimacy to the broadest kinds of cultural and philosophical reflection with very impressive CASUALNESS, I almost want to say.

Zasterle has done some other quite fine books in the last year, among them Gil Ott's THE WHOLE NOTE, Allen Ginsberg's LUMINOUS DREAMS which arrived with a kind of terrible sadness, and Nick Piombino's LIGHT STREET, which is so good someone actually stole it from my office--how often does THAT happen to a book of poetry?

I'm pretty sure that Manuel Brito, who publishes Zasterle, lurks around this list somewhere. Perhaps he would be so good as to post an announcement of his recent books and how they can be purchased?

Mark Wallace

```

/-----\ |
||      ||      GWU:
||  http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~mdw      ||  EPC:
||  http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/wallace      ||

```

[↑ Contents](#)

## 185. William Burmeister Prod

## *Re: reading in Providence*

Thu 8 Jan 1998

On Jan 8, 2:10pm, henry wrote:

> Subject: Re: reading in Providence

> Bill, have you tried using your crystal radio? we may be onto something

> here! Knock it upside the head with a needle after you plug it into the

> compost! I'm hearing voices....

 $\succ$ 

> - Henry

>-- End of excerpt from henry

No, compost won't do; nothing short of Ecuadorian bat guano will do. Then and only then will you hear original Ed sullivan show Elvis dubbed in Quechua.

- William

[↑ Contents](#)

186. **Henry G**

**Re: Sillimans Wake**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

On Thu, 8 Jan 1998 14:13:44 -0500 Jacques Debrot said:

>Ron Silliman wrote:

>

>"Obtuseness or difficulty or whatever is really a learned condition."

>

>On the other hand, the anxiety that, for instance, my students have felt

>about *\*Finnegan's Wake\** (to continue the example) is not simply a "learned

>condition" but a reasonable response to the relationship of inequality that

>Joyce predicates between the reader and himself. As Bob Perelman points out

>in *\*The Trouble with Genius\**, the play of meaning in *\*FW\** is more "precise"

>than it is "free": "Many specific meanings are explosively packed into the

>words: a phrase may implicate seven meanings, but these can be explicated. .

>. . "As burdens of reading [works such as *\*FW\**] can force us into situations

>of permanent debt -- a freedom to read that entails submission to endless

>free-play where the playground is an already written page reconstituted by

>professional interpretation."

But is that the author's fault or the scholar-allegorists'? Didn't Joyce sort of recognize in advance what the "scholarship industry" was about? And is the written page what FW is about? After Honig's reading last night I'm wondering if the "economy of presentation" [fake scholarly phrase alert] of the genuine article, whatever it may be, begins with and returns to the sound of somebody reading aloud. Isn't that where the free play really starts with FW? Ash Figeen sayeath inno chimpento chippeteer Daily Numino Swoono: "Sawng, sawng, me boughcreakin whither- loggid boot -- fare thee price of the oar soils narticle, ifna snorr sternly allwist on shore."

People blame artists for having a deep agenda & encoding it for all it's worth. But dagnab it all, that's part of the FUN of it for the conny artist!! There's always the risk of losing the audience - that's part of the FUN of it too! Start of Paradiso, bk 3 of Divine Comedy, (or is it bk 2?) Dante says, "we're going into the open sea, deep waters ahead, all you little boats better go back to shore..."

Just one side of this issue... - Hank "Gatemouth Harmonica" Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

187. **Daniel Zimmerman**

***Re: reading in Providence***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

I've heard that the first tv transmission powerful enough to escape the earth-- the first thing any Other Interesting Guys Out There [OIGOTs] will tune in on is Hitler opening the '36 Olympics. After that, a rather long silence, then . . . Kulka, Fran & Ollie? [Earth is safe: that's better than a Star Wars defense system. . . unless, of course, the little green guys are cats].

Dan Zimmerman

henry wrote:

>

> Bill, have you tried using your crystal radio? we may be onto something

> here! Knock it upside the head with a needle after you plug it into the

> compost! I'm hearing voices....

>

> - Henry

[↑ Contents](#)

188. **Gwyn McVay**

***psychepoedelics***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Not at this \*past\* MLA ("Convention attendees are hereby advised not to eat the brown acid before interviews"), but somebody wrote a book:

/Poetic Vision and the Psychedelic Experience/, by R.A. Durr, Dell, 1970. Cheesy cover with wavy type, but the book is actually pretty thorough--discusses all the usual white male suspects you'd expect in a book about the ecstatic vision: the Transcendentalists, Coleridge, Blake to Whitman to Ginsberg, Shelley, and then a few non-usual suspects, like Chuang Tzu. It doesn't seem to mention the Henri Michaux parable of the tripping spider that's included in /Tent Posts/, S&M's Green Integer #4.

g. roovy

[↑ Contents](#)

189. **Herb Levy**

***Re: Sillimans Wake***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Jaques Debrot wrote:

Ron Silliman wrote:

*"Obtuseness or difficulty or whatever is really a learned condition."*

*On the other hand, the anxiety that, for instance, my students have felt about \*Finnegan's Wake\* (to continue the example) is not simply a "learned condition" but a reasonable response to the relationship of inequality that Joyce predicates between the reader and himself. As Bob Perelman points out in \*The Trouble with Genius\*, the play of meaning in \*FW\* is more "precise" than it is "free": "Many specific meanings are explosively packed into the words: a phrase may implicate seven meanings, but these can be explicated. . . . "As burdens of reading [works such as \*FW\*] can force us into situations of permanent debt -- a freedom to read that entails submission to endless free-play where the playground is an already written page reconstituted by professional interpretation."*

Yeah, but the sense that that's the way you have to deal with Joyce & Finnegans Wake IS a learned condition. The inequality between a reader and Joyce is only there if the reader thinks (or is taught) they have to figure out every nuance of every portmanteau word, understand the deep structure organizing the text, recognize all of the sigla at every appearance & then ascertain that all of the references & jokes they find in the work were all put there by Joyce to begin with. The book can be read successfully without feeling the need to solve every puzzle by readers at varying levels.

I have no experience with readers as young or unschooled as Ron's twins, in two different reading group experiences, both including academics and non-academics (some of the latter had no college literature background, & now that I think of it, one had no college at all), no one had any trouble getting what was going on just by reading it out loud.

Granted, no one "got" all of the neo-Finno-Uggaritic puns, but if one keeps reading FW past whatever it is you don't understand, you always figure out enough to get to the next muddy part.

If you can get people to treat it like a weirdly written story instead of a source of scholarly footnotes, they'll get what's going on.

The problem isn't simply that people are too dense to understand something this complex (& I don't mean to belittle the very real problem of college students not caring about any information that won't help get them a job) there's the related problem of what is considered teachable.

Especially with a text as dense & rich as Finnegans Wake, which virtually no one masters in a life time, getting folks to turn enough pages on their own to see that there's something worth going back to may be the best lesson possible.

Herb Levy

████████

[↑ Contents](#)

190. **henry**

***Re: reading in Providence***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

On Thu, 8 Jan 1998 14:59:45 -0500 William Burmeister Prod said:

>

>No, compost won't do; nothing short of Ecuadorian bat guano will do. Then and

>only then will you hear original Ed sullivan show Elvis dubbed in Quechua.

>

- Aha! Watson, quick, this way! Now listen closely: WHY did Melville have Ahab nail a doubloon from Quito, ECUADOR to the mast of the Pequod???

- No idea, Holmes.

- [shrugging his shoulders] Not important. All things being equal, I think we can fairly say Melville leaves it up to the reader. [mischievous glint in his eye] Let me know if you find anything, Doctor.

[Watson goes back to reading about rock lyrics in ROLLING STONE.]

- SPANDRIFTNONASEAOFOLD HEARTBREAKS....

[↑ Contents](#)

191. **David Columbia**

***Re: psychepoedelics***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Gwyn McVay wrote:

>

> Not at this \*past\* MLA ("Convention attendees are hereby advised not to  
> eat the brown acid before interviews")

After all these years... it's good to find out what I did wrong! I knew I shouldn't have trusted jonathan goldberg ... & what with galway kinnel's famous "mouseketeer" blotter... & the less famous joel fineman windowpane... how did i choose so badly...

--

████████

David Columbia

[↑ Contents](#)

192. **SSSCHAEFER**

***Various Invitations***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Paul Vangelisti asked me to post this invitation to the listserv.

He's putting together an issue of Ribot (an annual report of the College of Neglected Science) which will have these parameters: poets 30 and under and poets 65 and over. The issue should be fairly international. I've seen a few of the submissions from Italy and it looks like it will be a strong issue. Anyone who wants to submit and can do so before February 1, 1998 should send their work to P.O. Box 65798 Los Angeles, CA 90065. Kinda odd for a theme but also sort of interesting.

Also, I wanted to announce to all contributors to Rhizome 2, the issue should be out in early to mid February and you will receive your copies shortly thereafter.

Rhizome 2 will include work from Barbara Guest, Ray DiPalma, Bernadette Mayer, Rosmarie Waldrop, Nick Piombino, Nico Vassilakis, Noemie Maxwell, Douglas Messerli, Martha Ronk, Franklin Bruno, Dennis Phillips, Paul Vangelisti, Bruce Andrews, David Bromige, Norma Cole, Mark Wallace, Steve Carl, John Yau, Jacques Debrot and a whole host of others.

Artwork by Dennis Oppenheim and others as well as a full review/essay section including an essay on Japanese suicide notes as a genre.

Also, Rhizome will be running two newly translated Mexican fiction writers: Fabio Morabito and Jaime Villarreal. (Trans. Geoff Hargreaves)

Anyone interested in subscribing should either send a check for \$10 to Stan Schaefer, 366 S.Mentor Ave. #108, Pasadena CA 91106 or visit the LA BOOKS web site at [www.litpress.com](http://www.litpress.com).

[↑ Contents](#)

193. **louis stroffolino**

***Re: song lyricists (was teaching h.s....)***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Safdie---I don't know about drug panels, but I know the MLA has consistently rejected proposed panels for PUNK MUSIC--- once again attesting to the normative bias of culture studies being more interested in movies and sports than such.... ----- Well, I used to teach (not in a poetry class but in a composition class) alot of song lyrics, one of my fav. comparison contrasts topics was comparing tracey chapman's "talkin' about a revolution" (which by the way i think

is included in xjkennedy type anthologies) to dylan's "times they are a changing" and preferring the latter (chronologically the former) partially on the grounds that it doesn't have the pat ending of chapman's ('finally the tables are starting to turn'-----). chris

On Thu, 8 Jan 1998, Safdie Joseph wrote:

Gwyn McVay says (in part):

*I remain fond of Neil Diamond's lyric:*

*I am, I said  
To no one there  
And no one heard me,  
Not even the chair.*

*Besides the rather obvious "Waste Land" allusion in the first line, and indeed in the poem's tenor itself (1), the implications of the tremendous disaffection of someone who is so sensitive (not unlike Malte Laurids Brigge) that he \*normally\* hears emotional empathy from the furniture, and then \*ceases\* to hear it--who can imagine the agony of the speaker whose inanimate confidant retreats into its role as a mundane object?*

*Then again, perhaps the speaker was just following the practice of the talking horse, as detailed in an earlier post by Ms. Dant.*

*On a (slightly) more serious note: has there even been a panel at the MLA that discussed the relation of psychoactive drugs to poetic practice? Possibly even more, ah, illuminating, than gender in Charles Olson -- (or Duncan!)*

[↑ Contents](#)

194. **louis stroffolino**

***Re: psychepoedelics***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

David, what you say about Fineman?---c

On Thu, 8 Jan 1998, David Golumbia wrote:

Gwyn McVay wrote:

*Not at this \*past\* MLA ("Convention attendees are hereby advised not to eat the brown acid before interviews")*

*After all these years... it's good to find out what I did wrong! I knew I shouldn't have trusted jonathan goldberg ... & what with galway kinnel's famous "mouseketeer" blotter... & the less famous joel fineman windowpane... how did i choose so badly...*

--

David Golumbia

[↑ Contents](#)

195. **Jacques Debrot**  
***Re [2]: Sillimans Wake***

Thu 8 Jan 1998

Henry Gould writes:

"But is that the author's fault or the scholar-allegorists'? Didn't Joyce sort of recognize in advance what the "scholarship industry" was about?"

Actually, Joyce actively encouraged scholarly annotations of his work. For instance, he worked closely with Stuart Gilbert to produce the famous, and still widely available study *\*James Joyce's Ulysses\**. Gilbert even writes in the preface: "Finally it should be mentioned that in the course of writing this Study I read it out to Joyce, chapter by chapter, and that . . . it contains nothing . . . to which he did not give his full approbation; indeed there are several passages which I directly owe to him. Thus the long list of examples of rhetorical forms which concludes my commentary on the "Aeolus" episode was compiled at his suggestion, and we spent several industrious afternoons collaborating on it. And the opening pages of my commentary on the episode of "The Sirens" reproduce, word for word, information given me by Joyce." In fact Stuart did not try to "alleviate the rather pedantic tone of much of [his] writing [because] Joyce approved of it." -- And Stuart, of course, was far from being Joyce's only exegete.

[↑ Contents](#)



196. **Eric Blarnes**

***Re: reading in Providence***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Cheers, all. Perusing as was my wont the vagaries of "poetics" along with the whole jolly rogering crew, I scanned Mr. Gould's caustic mandarin orangerie; and it occurred to me (Spandrift is here, actually, if anyone's interested; he's giving a bit of a lecture series in St. Swidefrid's College this term - "Vico, Isaiah Berlin, Ed Dorn : Three Men in a Tub?") that the edifice of Knowledge Snobbery is cornerstoned, kneecapped, and impeded in something of a pyramidal fashion much like Moby Dick's forehead - wouldn't you say? Show your colors, lads & lasses - & wear your longjohns, Minnesotans! The classroom changes everything, as my good friend Karl Manx of the British Library was wont to say. "Breathes there a manx with tail so dead, that never to himself has said - play hooky, Cap'n!"

- as Tenny Ninete put it so well. 'Night, all!

- Eric Blarnes

[↑ Contents](#)

197. **Safdie Joseph**

***Re: song lyricists (was teaching h.s....)***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Chris wrote:

- > Safdie---I don't know about drug panels, but I know the MLA has
- > consistently rejected proposed panels for PUNK MUSIC---
- > once again attesting to the normative bias of culture studies
- > being more interested in movies and sports than such....
- >

Thanks Chris for that and the Dylan, whose new album I keep hearing is something I should check out: has anyone?

(A small point, but as this has happened before, may I make a general announcement that my first name is actually "Joe" and it's just my server that reverses things? Perhaps I shouldn't talk, as not long ago I mis-posted Dorothy Trujillo Lusk's last name to make it seem as if she were a bit too fond of alcohol, which I'm glad to report is not the case at all)

[↑ Contents](#)

198. **William Burmeister Prod**  
**Re: Sillimans Wake**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

Jaques Debrot wrote:

*Ron Silliman wrote:*

*"Obtuseness or difficulty or whatever is really a learned condition."*

*On the other hand, the anxiety that, for instance, my students have felt about \*Finnegan's Wake\* (to continue the example) is not simply a "learned condition" but a reasonable response to the relationship of inequality that Joyce predicates between the reader and himself. As Bob Perelman points out in \*The Trouble with Genius\*, the play of meaning in \*FW\* is more "precise" than it is "free": "Many specific meanings are explosively packed into the words: a phrase may implicate seven meanings, but these can be explicated. . . . "As burdens of reading [works such as \*FW\*] can force us into situations of permanent debt -- a freedom to read that entails submission to endless free-play where the playground is an already written page reconstituted by professional interpretation."*

The idea of a relationship of equality/inequality between author and reader seems problematized (for literature that is) in an information culture such as ours. (In Perelman's "a phrase may implicate seven meanings," was "seven" meant (shades of Empson?), or "several?"). In \*FW\*, the many specific meanings may be too many for Perelman, and those beyond first or second order are none too specific. The free play of meaning in \*FW\* is inextricably tied to its sound, and as Henry suggests, \*FW\* begins with and returns to sound. Finally, explication of sense becomes virtually impossible when, as Herb Levy points out, the reader in the end is left to "ascertain whether all of the references and jokes they find in the work were all put there by Joyce to begin with." It is doubtful that the play of meaning in \*FW\* is closed, that there is an exact solution as "precise" is meant to suggest. As Joyce himself said in \*FW\*, "confusion hold 'em."

[↑ Contents](#)

199. **William Burmeister Prod**  
**Re: reading in Providence**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

On Jan 8, 3:44pm, henry wrote:

> Subject: Re: reading in Providence

> On Thu, 8 Jan 1998 14:59:45 -0500 William Burmeister Prod said:

> >

> >No, compost won't do; nothing short of Ecuadorian bat guano will do. Then

and

> >only then will you hear original Ed sullivan show Elvis dubbed in Quechua.

> >

>

> - Aha! Watson, quick, this way! Now listen closely: WHY did Melville

> have Ahab nail a doubloon from Quito, ECUADOR to the mast of the Pequod???

>

> - No idea, Holmes.

>

> - [shrugging his shoulders] Not important. All things being equal,

> I think we can fairly say Melville leaves it up to the reader.

> [mischievous glint in his eye] Let me know if you find anything,

> Doctor.

>

> [Watson goes back to reading about rock lyrics in ROLLING STONE.]

>

> - SPANDRIFTNONASEAOFOLD HEARTBREAKS....

>-- End of excerpt from henry

Interesting. It seems that this has become a mini-analogue of present list thread discussions on reading/meaning. Ha! Let that be a lesson to anyone who would question reader response!

- William

[↑ Contents](#)

200. **George Thompson**

***Re: reading in Providence***

*Thu 8 Jan 1998*

---

Forwarded regrettably from someone who is not a member of the list, regrettably:

"Mock on mock on Spandrift & Blarnes  
Mock on mock on tis no one you've fooled  
You think you're funny but you're not at all  
You think you're funny -- but you're Gould"

I for one am tired of drunken poets who have nothing better to do than to mock good scholars, as if scholarship had nothing to do with poetry [read Silliman's Finnegans Wake for example]. As far as I'm concerned, one short, incisive post from Gould is worth a dozen jags from Blarnes [the other guy isn't even worth mentioning].

GT [who had nothing to do with it: just the messenger, irregretably]

[↑ Contents](#)

201. **Schuchat Simon**

**Re: Tea Ceremony Races / Idoru - W.Gibson**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

Its fairer to say that IDORU is set in present-day Japan but with the pretense of being in the near future.

On Thu, 8 Jan 1998, Eryque Gleason wrote:

*i think i read in wired magazine about a year ago that there was an actual pop star in japan that was allcomputer animation, the gag was to have concerts with this huge computer girl singing with the music who could be programmed to lip-sync in just about any language.*

*wonder if they're cousins maybe?*

*happy thursday!  
eryque*

*Not, I think, to give too much away, the Idoru ("idol") proves to be an artificial-intelligence construct & pop star . . . -- for any who read it, a thought: the character Laney's notion of "nodes" reminds, if vaguely, of what Jung called constellation [as transitive verb] of archetypes -- though the comparision is a bit problematical --*

*d.i.*

[↑ Contents](#)

202. **dbkk**

**The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

Hi P-List,

A journalist friend wrote and asked for advice on the following:

*I want to do a sidebar that goes something like: Ten Books You Can't Read: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English. This one is especially for you on the list from Spain, Israel, France, Hong Kong, and all the enthusiasts thereof. Any reflections on the art of translation are also welcome.*

Do any of you have any suggestions?

Dodie

[↑ Contents](#)

203. **groberts**

**Re: Sillimans Wake**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

Joyce's famous "defenses" of Finnegans Wake probably won't mollify or bloomify most of the impatient or the irate or the intimidated, but they do establish a not entirely disingenuous authorial license for reading successfully. Joyce claimed that the prose was "pure music" and "meant to make you laugh."

As for the deep levels and puns, the undiscoverable and uneditable typos in the book establish a limit to the "success" of the scholars of the next three hundred years.

Gary R.

[↑ Contents](#)

204. **Gwyn McVay**

**"You think you're funny - but you're Gould"**

Thu 8 Jan 1998

---

Jack Spandrift called me late last night - asked me to pass this along: don't forget Wally ("Big Daddy") Stevens' famous aphorism: "Scholarship is the poet's fart." - Ropa-dope Spandrift

[↑ Contents](#)

205. **Thomas Bell**

**Re: teaching h.s. kids**

Fri 9 Jan 1998

---

I do hate to admit my ignorance and lack of adequate background in poetry, but my curiosity overcomes me here. Is the "habit of not speaking the words clearly in order to allow multiple meanings" something the author of the lines explicitly intended? tom bell

At 10:53 AM 1/8/98 -0500, Chris Piuma wrote:

HARBORCOAT

*They crowded up to Lenin with their noses worn off  
A handshake is worthy if it's all that you've got  
Metal shivs on wood push through our back  
There's a splinter in your eye and it reads "REACT"*

*They shifted the statues for harboring ghosts  
Reddened their necks, collared their clothes  
Then we danced the dance till the menace got out  
She gathered the corners and called it her gown*

*Please find my harborcoat, can't go outside without it  
Find my harborcoat, can't go outside without it*

*[etc.]*

*Which leaves out two things that make the text even more interesting:  
first, Stipe's habit of not speaking the words clearly in order to allow  
multiple meanings (Is it "Metal shoes on wood, pushed through our backs"?  
Stipe wants your ears to guide you to the meaning that works best for  
you.); and second, that there is a second lyric being sung at the same time  
during all but the first verse.*

*It is no accident that two of the FAQ maintainers for rec.music.rem are  
also big fans of this disjunctive poetry stuff...*

--

*Chris [Steve] Piuma, etc. Nothing is at: <http://www.brainlink.com/~cafard>  
[Editor of \_flim\_, Keeper of the R.E.M. Lyric Annotations FAQ, MST3K #43136]  
...this message brought to you by the letters N and W and the number 36....  
You deploy your favorite logical operator herein. Or not. --Ron Henry, "Whom"*

[↑ Contents](#)

206. **david bromige**  
**george bowering proven correct!**

Fri 9 Jan 1998

I thought george's post of several days since (before the h.s. teaching lit thread began, when we were still answering the unanswerable question) was merely a cynical flourish ( "in canada, we write poetry to get our name in the paper, so that the canada council will fly us for free to interesting places to give readings and so forth"--I quote from memory, not his text), but the other day i read in the toronto globe & mail that george bowering had delivered a paper on michael ondaatje \_in paris\_ ! so it was all true, every brutal word! --but what i really want to know, is what does "and so forth" entail?

[↑ Contents](#)

207. **LAURA MORIARTY**

***new non: Vitiello, Schneider, bios&links***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

New non -

Jono Schneider and Chris Vitiello

and finally a version of bios of writers including some links - located at the bottom of the contents page

Will add more shortly -

Anyone on the list who is in non but not on the bios page please send a bio to me ASAP - Probably [REDACTED] is the better address to use -

I have to say that so far this unemployment is great -

The sublime non will be up in a week or so!

Laura Moriarty

[↑ Contents](#)

208. **Steve Carll**

***14 X 14: Antenym Contributors' Reading***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

((Apologies to anyone who gets this message more than once. Please feel free to forward this list to anyone who might be interested and is not on the above recipient list)))

Celebrating the publication of

\*Antenym 14\*

PART TWO OF A TWO-PART SERIES ON THE THEME: ONTOLOGICAL  
ACTIVISM

featuring readings by 14 contributors including (confirmed): Scott Bentley, Michelle T. Clinton, Norma Cole, Albert DeSilver, Kevin Fitzgerald, Lawrence Fixel, Eric Frost, John High, Glenn Ingersoll, Marina Lazzara, Brian Lucas, Peter Money, Beth Murray and Jono Schneider.

Thursday evening, January 22nd, 1998

7:30 PM SHARP                      Admission: \$5.00

Canessa Park Gallery 708 Montgomery St. (corner of Columbus), S.F.

For more information about \*Antenym\* or the reading, contact the editor, Steve Carll, by telephone at [REDACTED], by writing to 106 Fair Oaks St. #1, San Francisco, CA 94110-2951, or by e-mailing <[REDACTED]>

Bathysphere Press

"It's Deep!"

\*\*\*\*\*



Steve Carll

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/mags/antenym>

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/eazines/antenym>

In seed-

sense

the sea stars you out, innermost, forever.

--Paul Celan

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

## 209. **George Bowering**

***Re: george bowering proven correct!***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

| *--but what i really want to know, is what does "and so  
| forth" entail?*

Oh, come on, Bromige. I have personally seen you and-so-forth in three different cities.

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,

Vancouver, B.C.,

Canada V6M 1P4

fax: 

[↑ Contents](#)

## 210. **Louis Cabri**

***PhillyTalks #3***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

Jeff Derksen & Ron Silliman dialogue on opposition & contradiction in the unedited present, in PhillyTalks #3, available next week from this e-address to interested persons. #3 includes new poetry from each.

The event itself - reading and discussion - takes place Jan 21st at Kelly Writers House, 3805 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, 7 pm. All welcome.

Stay e-tuned for PhillyTalks #s 4 & 5, in Feb & March.



- Louis

[↑ Contents](#)

211. **Hugh Steinberg**

**Re: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English**

Fri 9 Jan 1998

---

Dodie writes:

*A journalist friend wrote and asked for advice on the following:*

*I want to do a sidebar that goes something like: Ten Books You Can't Read: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English. This one is especially for you on the list from Spain, Israel, France, Hong Kong, and all the enthusiasts thereof. Any reflections on the art of translation are also welcome.*

*Do any of you have any suggestions?*

There's a Turkish writer, Bilge Karasu, who is really, really great. One of his books, "Night," was translated into English, as well as a small number of other works, but the vast bulk remains in Turkish, maddeningly untranslated.

Hugh Steinberg

[↑ Contents](#)

212. **Miekal And**

**russian contacts: segay/nikonova**

Fri 9 Jan 1998

---

visual, performance, intermedia poets

that are one of the main progenitors of living zaum

I believe they have been doing work since the late 50s ...

in the old days had to get ahold of them thru someone in czechoslovakia

but think they should be alot more accessible these days.

Im sure they could introduce you to a whirlwind of russian contacts...

Serge Segay/Rea Nikonova

Sverdlova 175

353660 EYSK

USSR

[↑ Contents](#)

213. **Michael Magee**

**Re: dylan**

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

"Thanks Chris for that and the Dylan, whose new album I keep hearing is something I should check out: has anyone?"

My sister got it for me for Christmas - I think it's very good and that the talk ("best since Blood on the Tracks" etc) is not hype. It's kind of Tom Waits-ish - raw production, rhythmically interesting, lots of very effective subtle accompaniment by the musicians he assembled. It sounds like he's been listening more closely to the (real) blues and (real) folk that got him started in the first place, which ends up making things sound more fresh, not surprising I guess, since Robert Johnson is still a good deal more "alternative" than the great majority of the schlock on the "alternative" radio stations. Another plug for anyone even vaguely interested in hip-hop: Cibo Matto's *\*Viva La Woman\** - two Japanese-American women rappers playing w/ a kind of Asian-English pidgin on ten songs all based (in the great tradition of Gertrude Stein and Harryette Mullen) on food; and since we've been posting lyrics, here's a few from "Birthday Cake":

Yes, I'm cooking for my son and his wife  
It's his thirtieth birthday  
Pour berries into a bowl, add milk of two months ago  
"It's moldy...mom, isn't it?"  
I don't give a flying fuck though  
SHUT UP AND EAT, TOO BAD NO BOB APPETIT!  
SHUT UP AND EAT! YOU KNOW MY LOVE IS SWEET  
It's food nouveau, it's food nouveau  
It's the shape of love  
All this over some very funky music. -m.

[↑ Contents](#)

214. **Henry Gould**

**Re: Sillimans Wake**

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

On Thu, 8 Jan 1998 22:59:50 -0500 <[REDACTED]> said:  
>Joyce's famous "defenses" of *Finnegans Wake* probably won't mollify or  
>bloomify most of the impatient or the irate or the intimidated, but they  
>do establish a not entirely disingenuous authorial license for reading  
>successfully. Joyce claimed that the prose was "pure music" and "meant to  
>make you laugh."  
>

>As for the deep levels and puns, the undiscoverable and uneditable typos in  
>the book establish a limit to the "success" of the scholars of the next  
>three hundred years.

And seems to me Joyce threw a spanner into ALL the interpretive activity by setting the entire super-intricate UFOsey whirling 6-dimensional vibrating space canoe inside the dreaming mind of a drunken Irish barkeeper. Vico, the avatar of FW & a great humanist, argued contra Descartes et al. that history was more essential than mathematics (which is accurate only because we make up the rules) or science (because we can never know the "nature" of mysterious Creation from the inside the way we can know history - because language & history are human acts & makings). Maybe one could deduce from that the argument that to REALLY UNDERSTAND the DEEPER MEANING of all the triple-entendres of FW we would have to grow very OLD & get very DRUNK in an Irish bar. (But this is being a literalist and unimaginative - Vico himself would not approve.)

See Isaiah Berlin's excellent study of Vico in his book VICO & HERDER.

- Henry 'You think you're funny -- but you're' Gould

(George, when I come to write my "Under Ben Bulbin", you'll be on my mi-my-ind...)

- this just in from Jack Spandrift:

"You searcheth the Dream Songs, for indeed they wrote of Henry; but there you will not find Me." - The Gospel of Jack

[↑ Contents](#)

215. **Chris Piuma**  
***Re: teaching h.s. kids***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

Thomas Bell showed great grace and sensitivity to write on 98.01.09:

[R.E.M.]

> I do hate to admit my ignorance and lack of adequate background  
> in poetry, but my curiosity overcomes me here. Is the "habit  
> of not speaking the words clearly in order to allow multiple  
> meanings" something the author of the lines explicitly intended?

Yes. Although, admittedly, it's possible that Stipe came up with the technique before he noticed the effects it had -- but then, that's how these things usually work, eh?

A touchstone for him is Walker Percy's essay "Metaphor as Mistake". He says: "Anyone who really wants to figure out the words to our songs should probably

read that essay, then go back and listen. It talks about how people misinterpret something that's being said, and come up with a little phrase or word that actually defines the essence of what the original was better than the original did." It's a matter of trusting "mistakes" to do the dirty work [half the jokes in Finnegans Wake are typos] and then accepting and encouraging "mistakes".

Famous example: in the song "I Believe", he had originally written down the line "What do you do between the hours of the day", which is a fairly blah line, especially out of context. But someone misread his handwriting, and complimented him on the great image in "What do you do between the horns of the day". Stipe went with the "misreading".

So, in a song which seems to be about children who are addicted to television ("Catapult"), one line can be heard as:

Coward in a hole, open mouth.  
Cower inner hope, opium mouth.  
Cowered in a hole, Opie mouth.

&c., each reading adding to the fullness of the song. It's another form of ambiguity, one not available to written poetry (under most circumstances).

-- Chris [Steve] Piuma, etc. Nothing is at: <http://www.brainlink.com/~cafard>  
[Editor of \_flim\_, Keeper of the R.E.M. Lyric Annotations FAQ, MST3K #43136] ...this message brought to you by the letters N and W and the number 36.... You deploy your favorite logical operator herein. Or not. --Ron Henry, "Whom"

[↑ Contents](#)

## 216. **Miekal And** **Plugin World**

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

Just discovered the Talker plugin via the Mindshipmind website <http://www.essl.at/works/mindshipmind.html> (thanks to jim andrews linksite) & even tho I tire quickly of the macintosh computer voices, Im wondering if others know of sound poetry sites that use this plugin (certainly there must be a pc version as well) towards interesting ends?

& also wondering if there any sites out there that support the text/x-speech MIME type that I could post a sound poetry work at?

miekal  
....n.  
....d.

[↑ Contents](#)

217. **David Kellogg**

**Re: dylan**

Fri 9 Jan 1998

---

On Fri, 9 Jan 1998, Michael Magee wrote:

>

> My sister got it for me for Christmas - I think it's very good and that  
> the talk ("best since Blood on the Tracks" etc) is not hype. It's kind of  
> Tom Waits-ish - raw production, rhythmically interesting, lots of very  
> effective subtle accompaniment by the musicians he assembled. It sounds  
> like he's been listening more closely to the (real) blues and (real) folk  
> that got him started in the first place, which ends up making things sound  
> more fresh, not surprising I guess, since Robert Johnson is still a good  
> deal more "alternative" than the great majority of the schlock on the  
> "alternative" radio stations.

I'm with MM on this. It's a fine, fine album, from the first cut "Lovesick" ("I'm sick of love / I wish I'd never met you") to the last, 16-minute "Highlands." It \_does\_ have a Tom Waitsish feel to it, with maybe a bit of Leonard Cohen. The songs keep creating dark moods of betrayal and loss and then breaking expectations of a "silver lining" follow-up line. His endless tour has clearly taught him a lot.

Cheers,  
David

~~~~~  
~~~~~

David Kellogg                      Duke University  
[REDACTED]                      Program in Writing and Rhetoric  
[REDACTED]                      Durham, NC 27708  
FAX [REDACTED]                      <http://www.duke.edu/~kellogg/>

[↑ Contents](#)

218. **Miekal And**

**purpose of poetry**

Fri 9 Jan 1998

---

excerpted from IRS Forms & Publications Search Engine

"Some days, finding your socks can be a real challenge. But putting your finger on a certain bit of information can be an even tougher task. That's why we're here to help you uncover those cumbersome layers and get right to the heart the matter. Just enter your keyword(s) below and select the 'Search' button to begin your pursuit. Things are beginning to look brighter already."

[↑ Contents](#)

219. **Kristen Gallagher**

***Re: PhillyTalks #3***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

are you gonna be emailing the philly talks stuff instead of printing it out? am i understanding you? thats cool. can i be on the mailing list? :)

[↑ Contents](#)

220. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**

***(no subject)***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

-

Dreaming, unwell, I can no longer understand my dreams; dream-signs written in false dream-kanji clutter the dream-landscape - dream-writing becomes inert, signifier of incomprehension, and writing slips back into the world it once mediated. Dream-world or world, dream-mediation holding back the dream-real or real, now lost to dream-interpretation: they are \_here,\_ they are my dream-foreign; there is no dream-comprehension, dream-therapeutic; only broken dream-bodies with common dream-blood and dream-bones abound. You see you may take "dream" out of this in any "dream-space," but you cannot add past the inert; I am dream-suffocated in the dream-real or real; I am dream-mute, suspicious of \_all\_ dream-meaning and meaning; I do not understand my dream-face or scars on my body; I do not dream-age or age. Dreaming, unwell, I am manipulating signs \_as I speak\_ and I no longer dream-understand what my dream-face or face is saying, is desperate, unwell. Dreaming, I dream-type or type-this to you "given the hope that" some dream-sense or sense will come, but I am gone, dream-dead or dead, turned to dream-ash or ash, these are kanji, are they not, you, stone, ash, body, dream, language, ash, kanji, see?

---

[↑ Contents](#)

221. **Robert Hale**

***Re: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

As far as I know, there is a great deal of Michelet that has not been translated. Perhaps someone can site specific texts. I am thinking of his natural histories, which I have never been able to find.

At 07:28 PM 1/8/98 -0800, you wrote:

>Hi P-List,

>

>A journalist friend wrote and asked for advice on the following:

>

>> I want to do a sidebar that goes something like: Ten Books You

>>Can't Read: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English.

This

>>one is especially for you on the list from Spain, Israel, France, Hong Kong,

>>and all the enthusiasts thereof. Any reflections on the art of translation

>>are also welcome.

>

>Do any of you have any suggestions?

>

>Dodie

>

>

[↑ Contents](#)

222. **Gwyn McVay**

***And Lady Mondegreen***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

There's actually a word for song mishearings: "mondegreen," coined in the 1930s when a newspaper columnist confessed that, as a girl, she had always heard a particular ballad as:

They hae slain the Earl of Morey  
And Lady Mondegreen.

She had a vivid, touching picture of the two doomed noble lovers expiring in each other's arms, until she found out that the second line is "and laid him on the green."

There are three recent books of mondegreens out, edited by Gavin Edwards of /Details/ magazine: /Scuse Me While I Kiss This Guy/, /He's Got the Whole World In His Pants/, and /When A Man Loves A Walnut./ Michael Stipe is heavily represented in all three books.

I always heard a perfectly reasonable line from a Grateful Dead song, "get yourself a powder charge, seal that silver mine," as "get yourself a \*pound of chocolate.\*" Sadly, Garcia, sugar-rampaging diabetic, probably would have preferred the chocolate.

"Mondegreen," I think, would also make a useful word to yell to your golfing partners in describing your location.

Gwyn

[↑ Contents](#)

223. **henry g**

**Re: And Lady Mondegreen**

Fri 9 Jan 1998

---

On Fri, 9 Jan 1998 10:39:49 -0500 Gwyn McVay said:

>

>I always heard a perfectly reasonable line from a Grateful Dead song, "get  
>yourself a powder charge, seal that silver mine," as "get yourself a  
>\*pound of chocolate.\*" Sadly, Garcia, sugar-rampaging diabetic, probably  
>would have preferred the chocolate.

The Dead line is obviously an allusion to Joseph Conrad's NOSTROMO. - Henry  
"Gould"

[↑ Contents](#)

224. **david bromige**

**re : george bowering proven correct**

Fri 9 Jan 1998

---

Oh, so in this context of being flown to paris, "and so forth" only means going to museums and art galleries, testing various eateries, riding the busses and feeding squirrels in the local parks? I had supposed it included off-the-record meetings with local diplomats to increase canada's role in international markets.

[↑ Contents](#)

225. **Safdie Joseph**

**Re: PhillyTalks #3**

Fri 9 Jan 1998

---

Louis, I'm with Kristen on this -- very generous of you to e-mail this out to all those interested -- but I couldn't get to your private e-mail address even by just hitting the "reply" key -- is the problem on my end or yours?

*are you gonna be emailing the philly talks stuff instead of printing  
it  
out? am i understanding you? thats cool. can i be on the mailing  
list? :)*



[↑ Contents](#)

226. **DANIEL L. COLLIER**  
***Contemporary Russian Poets***  
*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

My wife and I are living in Moscow and we're interested in contacting contemporary Russian poets. We have a long list of names and phone numbers culled from anthologies and from friends, but we lack information on less-translated poets and on what's happening now in Russian poetry.

So, my main question... what does the collective poetics list "we" know of contemporary Russian poetry, particularly of untranslated or undertranslated poets of the past twenty years? Name names, tell of trends, etc.

For the superslavophiles, and for those who love to talk, what parallels/differences exist between American & Russian poetry of the past 20 years? Does the Language Poetry/Russian Avant Garde connection continue & how deep is/was it? Can we analogize the Russian tradition of the performing poet (poet as pop star) and the "guitar poet" (pop star as poet) with the broad range of American poetry that emphasizes the spoken word (jazz poetry, Newyoricans, slam poetry, etc.)?

And (yes, it's connected to the above, but weirdly) does anyone have contact info for Jeff McDaniel?

Thanks in advance for your input,  
Danny Collier & Lucy Jilka

██████████  
██████████

"The tramvai takes me exactly where I don't want to go." - Viktor Tsoi

[↑ Contents](#)

227. **Mark W Scroggins**  
***Re: And Lady Mondegreen***  
*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

My personal fave mishearing is a friend's "Caribou Queen" for Billy Ocean's "Caribbean Queen"--"Now our hearts stampede as one" etc. A similar phenomenon that's proved productive in my own writing is my inability to make out my handwriting in earlier drafts, producing interesting counterintuitive revisions. What the hell \_is\_ that word?

Mark Scroggins

[↑ Contents](#)

228. **Maria Damon**

***Re: george bowering proven correct!***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

whew! just when i thot it was safe to get off the list. thanks d and g

At 12:41 AM -0700 1/9/98, George Bowering wrote:

>>--but what i really want to know, is what does "and so

>>forth" entail?

>

>Oh, come on, Bromige. I have personally seen you and-so-forth in three

>different cities.

>

>

>

>

>

>George Bowering.

>

>2499 West 37th Ave.,

>Vancouver, B.C.,

>Canada V6M 1P4

>

>fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

229. **Harold Rhenisch**

***Re: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

>> I want to do a sidebar that goes something like: Ten Books You

>>Can't Read: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into English.

This

>>one is especially for you on the list from Spain, Israel, France, Hong Kong,

>>and all the enthusiasts thereof. Any reflections on the art of translation

>>are also welcome.

There's an incredible book about WW1 on the Eastern Front, written about a German Doctor in Romania. "Romanian Notebook" by Hans Castorp. It was

published in a pretty darn good English translation in the late 20s. This is a book that should be a film. Brutal. Humane. Surreal. And very much unique. One of those films where the camera pans over incredible scenes, but does not linger.

Erich Kaestner's "Notebene 49" is also a vital document, detailing his successful attempt to escape Berlin at the final collapse of the Reich by taking a film crew to Mayrhofen, high in the Austrian Tyrol, to make a propaganda film about happy peasant purity, and watching the remnants of the German army straggle (and straggle is the word) in over the high passes from Italy (rejected, by this point, as was also by this point Kaestner and his film crew, by the peasants), and then his attempts to get down to Munich, where he attempted to get work from the Americans so he did not starve. Another candidate for a film.

Any of Handke's recent novels. Here is where translation gets sticky. In books like "Die Chinesen des Schmerzes" and "Langsame Heimkehr" or "Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht" (the latter not translated yet??) Handke creates multi-dimensional texts. This reader found himself disappearing below the surface of the texts, and reappearing elsewhere, each reading a different journey, following a different thread each time, and coming out elsewhere, randomly, in Handke's obsessive subjectivity. The books are not lines of thought but blocks of it. It's like listening to Terry Riley in a way: words setting up a resonance that can be moved through. The translations lose this for me. It appears to me that the translators have chosen to translate these novels into a particular conception of 'story', beefing up the narrative line, but failing completely to capture the real story, the language and the movement through the language, and the new sense of body and world that comes from that. It is a crying shame. I have seen no books better. But not in the translations.

Similarly, translations of Rilke lose Rilke, and again because choices were made, which were not made by Rilke. Rilke left things open. Lost is the sense of clarity and passion rising out of difficult syntax. Lost is the expressionism. Gained is a certain ponderous weight and a difficulty not present in the original. Lost is the richly-modulated voice. In the first few lines of the first Duino elegy we have a vast range of passions, which even Gary Miranda's beautiful translation cannot fully carry. Rilke's first Sonnet to Orpheus can be read as Orpheus singing a temple in silence, for 'animals' to hear 'speech', or as men stumbling out of a bunker in some godawful place outside of Verdun (for instance), and becoming, again, human, while the posts of the bunker still trembled from a bombardment. An unusual reading, for sure, but it is possible in Rilke, where it is impossible in any translation I have ever seen. It's a bit like translating Plato: all that emotion, that simplicity, that clarity, must be moved into English, which operates by different syntactical rules, and so comes out as something difficult, something which, in Plato's case, we have come to recognize as philosophy, and

in Rilke's as literature. I would advise caution. Distressing that the difficulties of translation then create a conception of literature.

"Merlin" and "Parceval" by Dorst. The TV scriptwriter from Munich really outdid himself in these. If Monty Python's "Holy Grail" were written with taste, as literature, by Durrenmatt, it might have been something like these. Richly funny works, too.

Another favourite: "Die Macht der Gewohnheit" by Thomas Bernhard. This is one of the funniest plays I know. I guess the English translation might be something like "Force of Habit". Imagine: a circus troupe has decided that their art form, the circus, is just not high-brow enough, and they really want to play Schubert's Trout Quintet. Before the play begins, they spend 20 years practicing Schubert's piece, with daily rehearsals. Meanwhile, because of this effort, their circus has deteriorated beyond the point of total collapse. Then the play: the day before they finally perform the Trout Quintet. We discover that they have never, in 20 years, had an actual rehearsal, because one of them, Clown, The Lion Tamer who must play the piano, and so forth, has found some excuse not to rehearse (and they can't play their instruments anyway). On this occasion, the Lion Tamer has had his hand mauled by a lion and can only thump on the piano (just like in the music, by the way). The piece is full of slapstick and gymnastics. The Director confesses that he has come to hate The Trout Quintet, but that is beside the point: it must be performed. They are, ultimately, completely unable to perform it. Very funny. What is incredible, however, is that the play is written in verse, very repetitive verse. By the end of the play it has become abundantly clear that they have performed the Trout Quintet: the form of the poem which is the play is the Quintet. I wish I could see this thing on-stage.

best,

Harold Rhenisch



[↑ Contents](#)

230. **Tom Orange**  
***Ockeghem's Wake***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

"The importance of these and other flights of virtuosity can be easily exaggerated. They hold a fascination for everyone who enjoys puzzles, musical or otherwise....It is less important to know that Ockegham wrote canons than to realize, by listening to his music, that in the comparatively few compositions where he does use such artifices, they are artfully hidden. It is unlikely that anyone listening to the /Missa prolationum/, unless he were exceptionally attentive or

had been alerted beforehand, would realize that he was hearing a series of mensuration canons; but when the underlying scheme of the work is known, one must admire all the more the smooth melodic lines, the harmonious proportions, and the apparent ease with which the music moves despite the formidable technical problem which the composer has set himself." --Donald Jay Grout, "A History of Western Music" (Norton, 1960), 163-66.

[↑ Contents](#)

231. **Maria Damon**

***Re: And Lady Mondegreen***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

some of my faves: instead of the stones' "I'm so hot for her and she's so cold," "I'm so affable and she's so cold." instead of the beatles' "lady madonna," a friend's mother used to hear "knee-deep in donuts." another friend wd hear the beegees' "more than a woman to me" as "bald-headed woman to me."

At 10:39 AM -0500 1/9/98, Gwyn McVay wrote:

>There's actually a word for song mishearings: "mondegreen," coined in the  
>1930s when a newspaper columnist confessed that, as a girl, she had always  
>heard a particular ballad as:

>

>They hae slain the Earl of Morey

>And Lady Mondegreen.

>

>She had a vivid, touching picture of the two doomed noble lovers expiring

>in each other's arms, until she found out that the second line is "and

>laid him on the green."

>

>There are three recent books of mondegreens out, edited by Gavin Edwards

>of /Details/ magazine: /Scuse Me While I Kiss This Guy/, /He's Got the

>Whole World In His Pants/, and /When A Man Loves A Walnut./ Michael Stipe

>is heavily represented in all three books.

>

>I always heard a perfectly reasonable line from a Grateful Dead song, "get

>yourself a powder charge, seal that silver mine," as "get yourself a

>\*pound of chocolate.\*" Sadly, Garcia, sugar-rampaging diabetic, probably

>would have preferred the chocolate.

>

>"Mondegreen," I think, would also make a useful word to yell to your

>golfing partners in describing your location.

>

>Gwyn

232. **Susan Schultz**

**Re: And Lady Mondegreen**

Fri 9 Jan 1998

And my mother thought that "ticket to ride" was "I got a chicken to ride." Not bad, come to think of it. sms

On Fri, 9 Jan 1998, Maria Damon wrote:

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*"Mondegreen," I think, would also make a useful word to yell to your golfing partners in describing your location.*

*Gwyn*

---

Susan M. Schultz  
Dept. of English

1733 Donaghho Road  
University of Hawai'i-Manoa  
Honolulu, HI 96822

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/schultz>  
<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/eazines/tinfinsh>

[↑ Contents](#)

233. **d powell**

***Re: And Lady Mondegreen***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

Okay,

I thought the first line of the Beach Boys' "Help me Rhonda" was "Since she put me down there's an owl hooting in my head." And I thought the second line of the chorus in 3 Dog Night's "Joy to the World" was "all the poison squirrels." And I thought I heard voices in the background of Jimmie "JJ" Walker's cover of "Abbadabba Honeymoon" saying "The sow is mine." None of which has helped me a lick in deciphering my own handwriting.

=====

D A Powell

=====

Mark W Scroggins wrote:

>My personal fave mishearing is a friend's "Caribou Queen" for >Billy  
>Ocean's "Caribbean Queen"--"Now our hearts stampede as one" etc. >A  
>similar phenomenon that's proved productive in my own writing is >my  
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>

>Mark Scroggins

>

>-----

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>Subject: Re: And Lady Mondegreen  
>To: [REDACTED]  
>In-Reply-To: ><[REDACTED]>  
>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

234. **Gwyn McVay**  
***Re: And Lady Mondegreen***  
*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

>>And my mother thought that "ticket to ride" was "I got a chicken to ride." Not bad, come to think of it. sms

But Susan, isn't that exactly what we're engaged in here: riding poultry?

Gwyn (cf. the Riding Poultry segment on a not-too-far-back /Prairie Home Companion/)

[↑ Contents](#)

235. **d powell**  
***Re: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated Into Engli***  
*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

There's a wonderful book by a French writer--I'm blanking on his name and this probably someone everyone knows--the book is called "le Silence de la Mer" and as far as I know it's never been translated into English.



=====

=====

D A Powell 

=====

=====

Harold Rhenisch wrote:

>>> I want to do a sidebar that goes something like: Ten Books You  
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>

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>has become abundantly clear that they \_have\_ performed the Trout >Quintet:  
>the form of the poem which is the play \_is\_ the Quintet. I wish I >could see  
>this thing onstage.

>

>best,

>

>Harold Rhenisch

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>Subject: Re: The World's Best Literature As Yet Translated >Into English  
>To: [REDACTED]  
>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

236. **Harold Rhenisch**

***Hans Castorp ain't***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

God, it is the Magic Mountain.

My memory is not worth anything much today. I must have a plain weird filing system.

The guy's real name: Hans Carossa.

Geez. Carossa Carossa Carossa.

Born Dec. 15, 1878 as son of a doctor in Bad Toelz.

No mountain sanitoriums for this guy. From the jacket: During the first world war he was a doctor with the infantry on the eastern and western fronts and was wounded (this is supposed to signify something, I guess. A badge of legitimacy?). His poetic works include: The Fate of Dr. Buerger; The Transformation of a Young Man, and so on.

Well, the other names are ok, anyway.

Sorry everyone.

Harold

[↑ Contents](#)

237. **William Marsh**

***Stipe***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

while we're on the subject, can anyone tell me what he's saying (or what you think he's saying) in the chorus of that very famous song from a few years ago (Sidewinder) ...

"calling in to wake her up"

[↑ Contents](#)

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

[↑ Contents](#)

## 239. William Burmeister Prod

### Re: Stipe

Fri 9 Jan 1998

---

"Call me in Jamaica" sounds close to me. I'm still trying to figure out if I'm right about REM's "Orange Crush" and the song called (or about) "Cuyahoga."

-William B.

On Jan 9, 11:36am, William Marsh wrote:

> Subject: Stipe  
> while we're on the subject, can anyone tell me what he's saying (or what  
> you think he's saying) in the chorus of that very famous song from a few  
> years ago (Sidewinder) ...  
>  
> "calling in to wake her up"  
>  
> i've heard interpretations as wild as  
>  
> "call me in Jamaica"  
>  
> and actually got into an argument with friends over it one night!  
>  
> bill marsh

[↑ Contents](#)

## 240. Mark W Scroggins

### Re: Stipe

Fri 9 Jan 1998

---

Those guesses sound as good as any. With REM, there was a certain aesthetics of the undecipherable lyric (at least in those first five or six albums). Nobody could tell what the heck Michael Stipe was saying, so it must be brilliant, right? When they started mixing their songs so you could make out the words, much of the glamour wore off right there. Mark Scroggins

On Fri, 9 Jan 1998, J. Tate wrote:

*Yeah, I've yet to figure out the "Cuyahoga" lyrics completely. Is it  
"up underneath the riverbed"? "Winnie skinned it you and me"?*

*Jody*

*Joseph Tate  
Graduate Student*

*Department of English  
U. of Washington, Seattle*

*On Fri, 9 Jan 1998, William Burmeister Prod wrote:*

*"Call me in Jamaica" sounds close to me. I'm still trying to figure out if I'm right about REM's "Orange Crush" and the song called (or about) "Cuyahoga."*

*-William B.*

*On Jan 9, 11:36am, William Marsh wrote:*

*Subject: Stipe*

*while we're on the subject, can anyone tell me what he's saying (or what you think he's saying) in the chorus of that very famous song from a few years ago (Sidewinder) ...*

*"calling in to wake her up"*

*i've heard interpretations as wild as*

*"call me in Jamaica"*

*and actually got into an argument with friends over it one night!*

*bill marsh*

[↑ Contents](#)

241. **J. Tate**

***Re: Stipe***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

Yeah, I've yet to figure out the "Cuyahoga" lyrics completely. Is it "up underneath the riverbed"? "Winnie skinned it you and me"?

Jody

Joseph Tate

Graduate Student

Department of English

U. of Washington, Seattle

On Fri, 9 Jan 1998, William Burmeister Prod wrote:

*"Call me in Jamaica" sounds close to me. I'm still trying to figure out if I'm right about REM's "Orange Crush" and the song called (or about) "Cuyahoga."*

*-William B.*

*On Jan 9, 11:36am, William Marsh wrote:*

*Subject: Stipe*

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*"calling in to wake her up"*

*i've heard interpretations as wild as*

*"call me in Jamaica"*

*and actually got into an argument with friends over it one night!*

*bill marsh*

[↑ Contents](#)

## 242. **William Burmeister Prod**

### **Re: Stipe**

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

Yeah Mark, I'm in general agreement on rock lyrics in general (about the glamour wearing off on close examination; nothing fractal about many of them). I was always intrigued by REMs earlier songs and how they seemed to be revisionist in a manner of writing from memory. Cuyahoga for example. What I remember is:

Let's put our heads together  
to find a new country of  
Our father's, father's, father's tried  
to erase the parts they didn't like

This is where they walked (swam)  
this is where they swam  
take a picture here

...



and Jody's guesses sound real close to the missing parts. Now I need to see a recent veteran of the MLA about not writing me back.

best,

William

On Jan 9, 12:43pm, J. Tate wrote:

- > Subject: Re: Stipe
- > Yeah, I've yet to figure out the "Cuyahoga" lyrics completely. Is it
- > "up underneath the riverbed"? "Winnie skinned it you and me"?
- >
- > Jody
- >
- >
- > Joseph Tate
- > Graduate Student
- > Department of English
- > U. of Washington, Seattle
- >

*Those guesses sound as good as any. With REM, there was a certain aesthetics of the undecipherable lyric (at least in those first five or six albums). Nobody could tell what the heck Michael Stipe was saying, so it must be brilliant, right? When they started mixing their songs so you could make out the words, much of the glamour wore off right there.*  
Mark Scroggins

[↑ Contents](#)

## 243. **Hugh Steinberg**

### **Re: And Lady Mondegreen**

Fri 9 Jan 1998

Mondegreens don't just happen in songs. I still remember my ten year old brother telling me solemnly "Abstinence makes the heart Jane Fonda."

Hugh Steinberg

[↑ Contents](#)

## 244. **Hednry Gould**

### **Re: Stipe**

Fri 9 Jan 1998

*Those guesses sound as good as any. With REM, there was a certain aesthetics of the undecipherable lyric (at least in those first five or*

*six albums). Nobody could tell what the heck Michael Stipe was saying, so it must be brilliant, right? When they started mixing their songs so you could make out the words, much of the glamour wore off right there.*  
Mark Scroggins

Dante puts some "musical" lyric poets in Purgatory, singing siren songs... trying to hold back the pilgrim. We live in a verbal jungle of steaming vocables; there are these huge scented summer squish vines, with no real bark or root or pith or strength, it's all lush shell. Writing involves nakedness in the humble sense, renunciation & sorrow. "Why not leave their private sorrows to people? Is sorrow not, one asks, the only thing in the world people really possess?" - Vladimir Nabokov, PNIN (a wonderful, hilarious novel) - nothing's really funny until it's heartbreaking. avoid the bland.

how does Olson put it? something about "so many ready to lie down in Tiamat" (the singers) Olson was looking for a "middle voice" of salt-fish-laden truth.

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

## 245. **John Cayley**

### ***New Reality Site***

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

The Web Site of

Reality Street Editions

<http://www.demon.co.uk/eastfield/reality/>

has been updated and redesigned.

Please visit.

Details of new books include:

Lisa Robertson: *\*Debbie : an epic\**

(UK readings at Dartington College of Arts for 'Spelt!' 15 Jan.  
and Serpentine Gallery Bookshop, London 16 Jan.)

If you don't have this excellent book, then get it now.

Maurice Scully: *\*Steps\**

cris cheek & Sianed Jones: *\*Songs from Navigation\** (with CD)

Nicole Brossard (trans. Caroline Bergvall): *\*Typhon Dru\**

Ken Edwards: *\*Futures\** (novel)

Further inquires: XXXXXXXXXX

\*\*\* apologies for any cross-postings \*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

246. **Brent Long**

**Re: dylan**

*Fri 9 Jan 1998*

---

Anyone besides me going to see Dylan with Van Morrison this month? Can't wait-have seen Dylan four times and it has always been amazing....first time was with Taj Mahal and Albert King, last time was just him and an acoustic back-up band...and the new album IS excellent.

At 09:17 AM 1/9/98 -0500, you wrote:

>On Fri, 9 Jan 1998, Michael Magee wrote:

>>

>> My sister got it for me for Christmas - I think it's very good and that  
>> the talk ("best since Blood on the Tracks" etc) is not hype. It's kind of  
>> Tom Waits-ish - raw production, rhythmically interesting, lots of very  
>> effective subtle accompaniment by the musicians he assembled. It sounds  
>> like he's been listening more closely to the (real) blues and (real) folk  
>> that got him started in the first place, which ends up making things sound  
>> more fresh, not surprising I guess, since Robert Johnson is still a good  
>> deal more "alternative" than the great majority of the schlock on the  
>> "alternative" radio stations.

>

>I'm with MM on this. It's a fine, fine album, from the first cut  
>"Lovesick" ("I'm sick of love / I wish I'd never met you") to the last,  
>16-minute "Highlands." It \_does\_ have a Tom Waitsish feel to it, with  
>maybe a bit of Leonard Cohen. The songs keep creating dark moods of  
>betrayal and loss and then breaking expectations of a "silver lining"  
>follow-up line. His endless tour has clearly taught him a lot.

>

>Cheers,

>David

>~~~~~  
~~~~~

>David Kellogg Duke University

>██████ Program in Writing and Rhetoric

>██████ Durham, NC 27708

>FAX ██████ <http://www.duke.edu/~kellogg/>

>

>

[↑ Contents](#)

247. **d powell**

Re: And Lady Mondegreen

Fri 9 Jan 1998

And From Kevin Killian's brilliant "Bedrooms Have Windows":

"Surely good Mrs. Murphy shall follow me all of my days."

=====

=====

D A Powell

=====

=====

Hugh Steinberg wrote:

>Mondegreens don't just happen in songs. I still remember my ten >year old
>brother telling me solmenly "Abstinence makes the heart Jane >Fonda."

>

>Hugh Steinberg

>

>-----

>Return-Path: <[REDACTED]>

>Delivered-To: [REDACTED]

>Received: (qmail 3053 invoked from network); 9 Jan 1998 23:51:44 >-0000

>Received: from deliverance.acsu.buffalo.edu (128.205.7.57)

> by herring.com with SMTP; 9 Jan 1998 23:51:44 -0000

>Received: (qmail 27453 invoked from network); 9 Jan 1998 23:51:08 >-0000

>Received: from listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu (128.205.7.35)

> by deliverance.acsu.buffalo.edu with SMTP; 9 Jan 1998 23:51:08 >-0000

>Received: from LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU by

>LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU

> (LISTSERV-TCP/IP release 1.8c) with spool id 26198662 >for

> [REDACTED]; Fri, 9 Jan 1998 >18:51:04 -0500

>Received: (qmail 21754 invoked from network); 9 Jan 1998 23:51:03 >-0000

>Received: from postal.grin.net ([REDACTED]) by

> listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu with SMTP; 9 Jan 1998 >23:51:03 -0000

>Received: from [208.202.191.32] (ppp-max1-32.grin.net >[208.202.191.32])

by

> postal.grin.net (8.8.5/8.8.5) with SMTP id PAA12642 for

> <[REDACTED]>; Fri, 9 Jan 1998 >15:55:35 -0800

> (PST)

>Mime-Version: 1.0

>Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"
>Message-ID: <v01540b00b0dc4c53dfda@[208.202.191.93]>
>Date: Fri, 9 Jan 1998 15:52:56 -0600
>Reply-To: UB Poetics discussion group <[REDACTED]>
>Sender: UB Poetics discussion group <[REDACTED]>
>From: Hugh Steinberg <[REDACTED]>
>Subject: Re: And Lady Mondegreen
>To: [REDACTED]
>
>

[↑ Contents](#)

248. **Chris Piuma**

Re: Stipe

Fri 9 Jan 1998

Well, if people are interested: the online R.E.M. community's collective best guesses are located at <http://www.retroweb.com/remlyrics/index.html> -- much effort over the years, much hunting down of published fragments, and much listening to live version has helped put these together.

J. Tate showed great grace and sensitivity to write on 98.01.09:

Yeah, I've yet to figure out the "Cuyahoga" lyrics completely. Is it "up underneath the riverbed"? "Winnie skinned it you and me"?

Hey, that's an easy one: "We knee-skinned it, you and me." Hence the river becoming red.

On Jan 9, 11:36am, William Marsh wrote:

Subject: Stipe

while we're on the subject, can anyone tell me what he's saying (or what you think he's saying) in the chorus of that very famous song from a few years ago (Sidewinder) ...

"calling in to wake her up"

i've heard interpretations as wild as

"call me in Jamaica"

and actually got into an argument with friends over it one night!

This lyric's been published: "Call me when you try to wake her up."

-- Chris [Steve] Piuma, etc. Nothing is at: <http://www.brainlink.com/~cafard>
[Editor of *_flim_*, Keeper of the R.E.M. Lyric Annotations FAQ, MST3K #43136] this message brought to you by the letters N and W and the number

36.... You deploy your favorite logical operator herein. Or not. --Ron Henry,
"Whom"

[↑ Contents](#)

249. **J. Tate**

Re: Stipe

Fri 9 Jan 1998

This is right on target, On Fri, 9 Jan 1998, Mark W Scroggins wrote:

Those guesses sound as good as any. With REM, there was a certain aesthetics of the undecipherable lyric (at least in those first five or six albums). Nobody could tell what the heck Michael Stipe was saying, so it must be brilliant, right? When they started mixing their songs so you could make out the words, much of the glamour wore off right there.

With the advent of digital recording REM opted to continue recording Stipe's lyrics, for some time, on analog equipment to retain that "undecipherable"-ness. Which is opposite to the norm where most bands record instruments on analog to retain a raspy feel and vocals are normally recorded on digital for clarity.

For a while this was because Stipe's voice had a tendency to crack. being from the olde South where they started out, I've heard numerous bootlegs where Stipe's voice makes ya wince. He often even sang with his back to the crowd.

Jody

Dept of English

U. of Washington, Seattle

[↑ Contents](#)

250. **Karen and Trevor**

Stipe--What's the Frequency?

Fri 9 Jan 1998

So anyone heard about the origin for "what's the frequency Kenneth?"

[↑ Contents](#)

251. **Susan Schultz**

Re: And Lady Mondegreen

Fri 9 Jan 1998

It's the (Riding) Jackson poultry that especially intrigues and troubles me.

sms

On Fri, 9 Jan 1998, Gwyn McVay wrote:

And my mother thought that "ticket to ride" was "I got a chicken to ride." Not bad, come to think of it. sms

But Susan, isn't that exactly what we're engaged in here: riding poultry?

Gwyn (cf. the Riding Poultry segment on a not-too-far-back /Prairie Home Companion/)

Susan M. Schultz
Dept. of English
1733 Donaghho Road
University of Hawai'i-Manoa
Honolulu, HI 96822
<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/schultz>
<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/eazines/tinfinch>

[↑ Contents](#)

252. **Jordan Davis**

Re: Stipe

Fri 9 Jan 1998

Weenie skins? No, it's "we knee-skinned the riverbed, we knee-skinned it you and me." That's actually one of Gavin Edwards'. Gavin stole Larry Fagin's most excellent "Scuse me while I kiss this guy." J

On Fri, 9 Jan 1998, J. Tate wrote:

Yeah, I've yet to figure out the "Cuyahoga" lyrics completely. Is it "up underneath the riverbed"? "Winnie skinned it you and me"?

Jody

*Joseph Tate
Graduate Student
Department of English
U. of Washington, Seattle*

On Fri, 9 Jan 1998, William Burmeister Prod wrote:

"Call me in Jamaica" sounds close to me. I'm still trying to figure out if I'm right about REM's "Orange Crush" and the song called (or about) "Cuyahoga."

-William B.

On Jan 9, 11:36am, William Marsh wrote:

Subject: Stipe

while we're on the subject, can anyone tell me what he's saying (or what you think he's saying) in the chorus of that very famous song from a few years ago (Sidewinder) ...

"calling in to wake her up"

i've heard interpretations as wild as

"call me in Jamaica"

and actually got into an argument with friends over it one night!

bill marsh

[↑ Contents](#)

253. **Schuchat Simon**
Re: And Lady Mondegreen
Sat 10 Jan 1998

Gladly the cross-eyed bear

[↑ Contents](#)

254. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**
Re: And Lady Mondegreen
Sat 10 Jan 1998

freedom's just another word for nothing left to do
freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose
freedom's just another word for nothing left to choose

[↑ Contents](#)

255. **David Gitin**
Thanks to Simon Schuchat
Sat 10 Jan 1998

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

When I was playing ball in shorts once last summer, well I should mention that I have thin white legs---my daughter shouted so all the other players could hear "Are those your legs, or are you riding a chicken?"

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

258. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**

last post on diseases as a result of misinterpretation

Sat 10 Jan 1998

rewrite post as last post with additions

The Attempted* Rewrite: Diseases of Being

Dreaming, dreaming, unwell, dreaming, I can no longer understand my dreams; dream-signs written in false dream-kanji clutter the dream- landscape - dream-writing becomes inert, dreaming, signifier of incomprehension, dreaming, and writing slips back into the world it once mediated. Dream-world or world, dreaming, dream-mediation hold- ing back the dream-real or real, dreaming, now lost to dream-interpre- tation: they are _here, dreaming,_ they are my dream-foreign; there is no dream-comprehension, dreaming, dream-therapeu- tic; only broken dream-bodies with common dream-blood and dream-bones abound. You see you may take "dream" out of this in any "dream-space, dream- ing," but you cannot add past the inert; I am dream-suffocated in the dream-real or real; I am dream-mute, dreaming, suspicious of _all_ dream-meaning and meaning; I do not understand my dream-face or scars on my body; I do not dream-age or age.. Dreaming, dreaming, unwell, dreaming, I am manipulating signs _as I speak_ and I no longer dream-understand what my dream-face or face is saying, dreaming, is desperate, dreaming, unwell. Dreaming, dreaming, I dream-type or type-this to you "given the hope that" some dream-sense or sense will come, dreaming, but I am gone, dreaming, dream-dead or dead, dreaming, turned to dream-ash or ash, dreaming, these are kanji, dreaming, are they not, dreaming, you, dreaming, stone, dreaming, ash, dreaming, body, dreaming, dream, dreaming, language, dreaming, ash, dreaming, kanji, dreaming, see? See in the real, dreaming, the scene everywhere, dreaming, the seen every- where in the real. I am dying, dreaming, here. Dreaming collapses reals into dreams. Again and again as an example I can watch my body fall. Again and again I am dreamed.

(Sometimes I think if I knew who you are, it would be simpler. I would untangle. But I do not know who you are, where you are, when you are there. I do not know if you are there. I do not know if there is you. If I understood _how to properly ask the question, _ with the requisite degree of etiquette, with the requisite forms of grammar, with the in- visible forms of grammar, with the passing-forms, with the passings, then - if I understood _how to ask the question, _ already it would be a simpler untangling. I can continue to speculate, but it is from ig- norance. I have forgotten axioms, bases, which I never knew. When my mouth opens, it empties. It empties itself of speech and sensibility. When I open my body, it is a carapace filled with ornament. There are kanji I cannot read, dream-kanji, not-real kanji. Nothing readable by any conceivable reader in this or any possible world. Do you under- stand at least this much, the possibility of worlds? The relative ab- sence of such worlds, and there are no mirrors.

This is it, the writing of worlds without mirrors, and in a foreign language, and there's more, because they're impossible worlds, and where would this lead? Neither neurosis nor psychosis, but a relative _disease of the throat_ I have written about before, continually writ- ten about. A _disease of the throat_ or perhaps mind in the vocal apparatus itself - I would say that - something never leaving a trace but drawing itself in _uncanny_ ways, as if there were a face behind the nonsense, or as if nonsense were organized _in such a manner, _ through the proper forms, as to appear otherwise than itself - as if I myself were capable of such appearance, this _otherwise_ splitting me from language, slitting or cutting my throat, the blood forming mean- ingless patterns on the ground.)

*Footnote to the above: At first, I would do nothing but create the form (dream-x and x). Then it seemed that the equation seeped from the page, (virtual-x and x), shaming me. Then I forgot my name. Then I wrote and rewrote, forgetting my name. Then would I pause, this most important of all writings, where worlds are mute; can I even say this?

[↑ Contents](#)

259. **rsillima**

Dead ants are blowin' in the wind

Sat 10 Jan 1998

My subject is a popular Dylan mondegreen.

The best site on the web for mondegreens (or at least my favorite) is:

www.sfgate.com/columnists/carroll/mondegreens.shtml

There is one example in there, be warned, that ruined my ability to listen to Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds ever again:
Instead of "the girl with kaleidoscope eyes"
"the girl with colitis goes by"

On the new Dylan CD, yes, it's simply terrific. Certainly seems the best since Nashville Skyline and possibly even Blonde on Blonde.

Ron

[↑ Contents](#)

260. **Rachel Loden**

Re: Stipe--What's the Frequency?

Sat 10 Jan 1998

Karen and Trevor wrote:

>

> So anyone heard about the origin for "what's the frequency Kenneth?"

From the R.E.M. lyric annotations FAQ:

<http://www.brainlink.com/~cafard/remlafaq.txt>

"The title of the song . . . refers indirectly to the incident in Oct. 1986 in which Dan Rather . . . was attacked by two unknown men in the street in New York City wearing suits and sunglasses. The men kept asking Rather "What is the frequency?" and called him "Kenneth" while they shoved and accosted him; to date the incident has never been explained completely . . ."

I offer my own incomplete explanation in "Clueless in Paradise" (published a few years before the R.E.M. song). Am guessing there might be enough "what is the frequency" poems for a good-sized anthology by now.

Rachel L.

[↑ Contents](#)

261. **robert drake**

forward--re: "hoaxes"

Sat 10 Jan 1998

from the RHIZOME mailinglist (<http://www.rhizome.com>):

1.

Date: 1.9.98

From: rachel greene (██████████)

Subject: editor's note

just to keep RHIZOMERS up to date, last week's imposter posts (reviews of new media artists were published as if they were written by certain well-known critics), generated some outside interest. a few days ago, i was contacted by a new york times correspondent. the article about the net.art pranks is available here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/cyber/mirapaul/010898mirapaul.html>

i think the article is good -- except that what i wanted to communicate about reading these pranks as part of a particular art historical tradition isn't very clear. so, some examples of artists, besides the prankster, who have explored art as a discourse, and considered the operations of its institutions (museums, galleries, the market, criticism, publishing) are marcel broodthaers, dan graham, art & language, and joseph kosuth.

[↑ Contents](#)

262. **rsillima**

Shameless self-promotion

Sat 10 Jan 1998

On Sunday, January 18, the Walt Whitman Cultural Arts Center in Camden, NJ, will hold a giant reading entitled Regarding Whitman, poets reading their own work influenced by the good gray master. Reading starts at 2:30 p.m. and goes to whenever. There will be a maximum of 25 readers. Those already confirmed include:

Nathalie Anderson
Herman Beavers
Jennifer Bryant
Marcus Cafagna
Annette Egea
Eli Goldblatt
Sharon Goodman
John Green
Cornell Hardy
Charles Hewins
Nzadi Keita
Jena Osman
Gil Ott
Stefani Jane Parino
Vladimir Pogorelov
Vanessa Ray
Ron Silliman

Heather Thomas
Rocky Wilson

Alicia Askenase is the literary coordinator and I certainly hope she reads as well. Alicia, as some of you may recognize, is one of the editors of 6ix.

The Walt Whitman Cultural Arts Center is in
Johnson Park at 2nd and Cooper Streets
Camden, NJ

Roughly 3 minutes from the east end of the Ben Franklin Bridge from Philly as I read Alicia's directions.

For more info, call the center at [REDACTED].

Ron

[↑ Contents](#)

263. **B. Taylor**
Re: And Lady Mondegreen
Sat 10 Jan 1998

I always heard "Our Lips Are Sealed," an '80's song by the GoGos (whose diction was particularly poor) as "Aunt Cecile."

And lifelong Communist Party member Jessica Mitford heard "fine old conflict" for "final conflict" in the lyrics of the Internationale.

Brigham

[↑ Contents](#)

264. **J. Tate**
Re: Stipe--What's the Frequency?
Sat 10 Jan 1998

Isn't that what the teenagers said as they beat Dan Rather?

On Fri, 9 Jan 1998, Karen and Trevor wrote:

| *So anyone heard about the origin for "what's the frequency Kenneth?"*

Or was it another anchorman who was attacked?

Jody

U. of Washington

[↑ Contents](#)

265. **J. Tate**

Re: Stipe--What's the Frequency?

Sat 10 Jan 1998

I posted on this question, but someone had a much better response than I did.

On Fri, 9 Jan 1998, Karen and Trevor wrote:

| *So anyone heard about the origin for "what's the frequency Kenneth?"*

BUT, someone once told me that these lyrics were an allusion to a novel, but I've forgotten what novel:

What'd you say I wouldn't join?

Disgust is not the same as apathy.

Does anyone know what these lines are from?

Jody

Dept of English

U of Washington

[↑ Contents](#)

266. **Chris Piuma**

Re: Stipe--What's the Frequency?

Sat 10 Jan 1998

[Oops -- meant to send this to the list. Thanks to the person who quoted me.]

I can't believe this thread continues.

Karen and Trevor showed great grace and sensitivity to write on 98.01.09:

| *So anyone heard about the origin for "what's the frequency Kenneth?"*

From Ron Henry's excellent R.E.M. FAQ:

o C5. "What do the lyrics to 'What's the Frequency, Kenneth?' mean?"

Stipe was quoted in several interviews at the time of *Monster*'s release as saying it is written from the perspective of a person who's getting older trying to understand current youth culture.

Note that the lyric (printed inside) contains a quote from Richard Linklater, director of the film *Slacker*: "Withdrawal in disgust is not the same as apathy" -- a rebuttal of sorts to those of older generations who would claim that Generation Xers, or "slackers," are merely spoiled, lazy brats. (This line of argument would say that "slackers" have *chosen* to exclude themselves from mainstream society as a protest against its empty values.)

It has also been noted that the "shirt of violent green" mentioned in the lyric may be a reference to a Spider Robinson short story entitled "Lady Slings the Booze," which also makes use of the phrase "What's the frequency, Kenneth?"

o C6. "What is the connection between 'WTF,K?' and Dan Rather?"

The title of the song itself, it needs to be explained, refers indirectly to the incident in Oct. 1986 in which Dan Rather, anchor for C.B.S.'s network news broadcast, was attacked by two unknown men in the street in New York City wearing suits and sunglasses. The men kept asking Rather "What is the frequency?" and called him "Kenneth" while they shoved and accosted him; to date the incident has never been explained completely (though some have theorized that "Kenneth" might be Ken Schafer, an electronics expert with whom Rather had worked in connection with Soviet TV broadcasts). Since the incident, "What's the frequency?" and calling a clueless person a "ken-neth" have become a trendy youth culture catch-phrases (which is probably, why Stipe wanted to use it, rather than an interest in Rather).

Please note that the supposed reference to Rather and CBS news in the "Ignoreland" lyric was incorrect, so there is **no** tie-in that we know of between the two songs regarding the newsanchor. Mr. Rather, meanwhile, has taken the "tribute" in good spirits and has been quoted as saying he has always liked R.E.M., that he owns the Monster CD, and suggested jokingly that the band's name really stands for "Rather's Excellent Musicians," before proceeding to sing the chorus of "It's the End of the World As We Know It," during his recent Letterman appearance!

Also note in passing that the album Lolita Nation by Game Theory, released in 1987 and produced by Mitch Easter (there's another R.E.M. connection) contains a similarly titled song: "Kenneth -- What's the Frequency?"; WTF,K? is not a cover of that, of course -- the resemblance pretty much stops at the title. Other newsgroup readers here have noted that the phrase may also have popped up in the movie "The Conversation" and in Dan Clowes' comic "Eightball".

Phew! I'm so sure you all cared... Ron himself is on this list, somewhere, by the way. For more R.E.M. info, check out the main FAQ at <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/8789/remfaq.htm> .

And while you're there, check out Ron's lit e-mag, "Aught", located at <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/8789/aught.htm> , which is looking for submissions for its second issue. It's probably of more interest to most of you than the R.E.M.-related stuff.

Apologizes to those of you who really don't care about R.E.M., especially when not discussed in a Poetics context.

-- Chris [Steve] Piuma, etc. Nothing is at: <http://www.brainlink.com/~cafard>
[Editor of _flim_, Keeper of the R.E.M. Lyric Annotations FAQ, MST3K
#43136] ...this message brought to you by the letters N and W and the number
36.... You deploy your favorite logical operator herein. Or not. --Ron Henry,
"Whom"

[↑ Contents](#)

267. **Don Byrd**

Re: Dead ants are blowin' in the wind

Sat 10 Jan 1998

████████ wrote:

*On the new Dylan CD, yes, it's simply terrific. Certainly seems the best
since Nashville Skyline and possibly even Blonde on Blonde.*

Ron

When I first heard the new Dylan, I thought, "Gee, this is just a 50-something
year-old guy whining," but after listening repeatedly (for some reason I _did_
listen repeatedly), I have realized that it is wonderful whining.

Don

--

Don Byrd (██████, ██████)

Department of English

State University of New York

Albany, NY 12222

████████ (work); ██████ (home); ██████ (fax)

The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

[↑ Contents](#)

268. **David Gitin**

translation

Sat 10 Jan 1998

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

charset="iso-8859-1"

While we're engaged in mishearing, here are some translation issues. =
An American T-shirt maker in Miami printed shirts for the Spanish = market
which promoted the Pope's visit. Instead of "I saw the Pope" (el = papa), the
shirts read "I saw the potato" (la papa). When Parker = Pen marketed a

ball-point pen in Mexico, its ads were supposed to have read, "it won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you." The company thought the word "embarazar" (to impregnate) meant 'to embarrass,' so the ad read: "It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant."

And then, for those interested in semiotics: when Gerber started selling = baby food in Africa, they used the same packaging as in the US, with the = beautiful baby on the label. Later they learned that in Africa, compaies = routinely put pictures on the label of what's inside, since most people = can't read English. (Hmm, wonder what Dan G. thinks about this one).

[illegible]

<DIV>And then, for
=
those interested=20
in semiotics: when Gerber started selling baby food in Africa, they used =
the=20
same packaging as in the US, with the beautiful baby on the label. Later =
they=20
learned that in Africa, compaies routinely put pictures on the label of =
what's=20
inside, since most people can't read English. (Hmm, =
wonder=20
what Dan G. thinks about this one).</DIV></BODY></HTML>

[↑ Contents](#)

269. **rodrigo**

Re: and lady mondegreen

Sat 10 Jan 1998

Susan: there goes some "riddles" I found (reading Riding):

"And talk in talk like time vanishes.
Ringing changes on dumb supposition,
Conversation succeeds conversation,
Until there's nothing left to talk about,
Except truth, the perennial monologue,
And no talker to dispute but itself"

"And you may write as it seems,
And as it seems, it is,
A seeming stilness
Amid seeming speed."

"And once more is yesterday".

Laura Riding

rodrigo

[↑ Contents](#)

270. **Robin Morris**

Re: Dead ants are blowin' in the wind

Sat 10 Jan 1998

Personally, I'm happy if it can rate alongside _Oh Mercy_, a grossly underrated effort IMO. I'm still listening and deciding whether it does. _Time Out of Mind_ definitely has some beautiful songs, but I'm not sure I like the uni-coloredness of it.

Robin

On the new Dylan CD, yes, it's simply terrific. Certainly seems the best since Nashville Skyline and possibly even Blonde on Blonde.

Ron

* * * * *

Robin A. Morris

Home page: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ramorris>

[↑ Contents](#)

271. **Robin Morris**

Re: dylan

Sat 10 Jan 1998

Wow, where's this tour taking him? I saw him last summer with Ani DiFranco, a concert I probably would have more details to share if it hadn't been pouring rain and me without indoor seats (Tanglewood).

Robin

At 06:45 PM 1/9/98 -0500, you wrote:

>Anyone besides me going to see Dylan with Van Morrison this month? Can't
>wait-have seen Dylan four times and it has always been amazing....first
>time was with Taj Mahal and Albert King, last time was just him and an
>acoustic back-up band...and the new album IS excellent.
>

* * * * *

Robin A. Morris

Home page: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ramorris>

[↑ Contents](#)

272. **Steven Clay**

A Secret Location on the Lower East Side

Sat 10 Jan 1998

Announcing the opening reception for an exhibition at the New York Public Library

A Secret Location on the Lower East Side: Adventures in Writing 1960-1980

This show surveys the confluence of the New American Poetry with the Small Press Revolution. Over 425 books, pamphlets, magazines, letters, manuscripts, posters, paintings and one videotape documenting the American literary underground of the '60s and '70s. There will be an OPENING RECEPTION and all are welcome. 6:30-8:00 Friday, January 23, 1998, Berg Collection, 3rd floor, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave & 42nd St. (use the 42nd Street entrance). If you plan to attend please call the Office of Special Events at the library [REDACTED]. The show opens to the general public Jan 24 and runs through July 25.

About 80 presses and magazines are on display, for example: Semina, Black Mountain Review, Origin, Jargon Society, Kulchur, Yugen, Floating Bear, "C", Set, Measure, J, Open Space, Auerhahn, Oyez, White Rabbit, Fuck You: A Magazine of the Arts, Caterpillar, Trobar, Matter, Some/thing, Poems From the Floating World, Hawk's Well, Alcheringa, White Dove Review, Lines, Joglars, 0 to 9, Adventures in Poetry, Angel Hair, United Artists, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, This, Tuumba, Hills, Tottel's, City Lights, Vehicle, Evergreen Review, Umbra, Duende, Wild Dog, Maps, Something Else Press, the World, Big Sky, Roof, Big Table, Sun & Moon, La-Bas, Siamese Banana, Mag City, Dodgems and many many others. Larry Fagin's home movies from the late '60s (short film portraits of: Lewis Warsh, Ted Berrigan, Aram Saroyan, Tom Veitch, Gerard Malanga and Michael Brownstein) have been newly transferred to video with a new soundtrack added will be available for viewing.

A BOOK IS IN THE MAKING. Written and compiled by curators Rodney Phillips and Steve Clay with a preface by Jerome Rothenberg and with contributions from many including: Jackson Mac Low, Ed Sanders, Charles Bernstein, Bruce Andrews, James Sherry, Carol Berge, Bill Berkson, Gerrit Lansing, Anne Waldman, Lewis Warsh and Larry Fagin. The book will include descriptions and checklists of the presses and magazines, a catalog of the New American Poetry Collection at the Berg Collection (NYPL), over a hundred black and white photographs, a chronological literary timeline (1950-1980). The book is being co-published by Granary Books and the New York Public Library and will be out around April Fool's Day, 1998. Stay tuned.

For more information etc. contact: Steve Clay, Granary Books, 568 Broadway #403 New York, NY 10012 [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

273. **louis stroffolino**

Re: Dead ants are blowin' in the wind

Sat 10 Jan 1998

Hello Robin---it has been a long time. Anyway, yes, I agree-- though I like the new album, I don't see why it's supposed to be "better" than OH MERCY (or even GOOD AS I BEEN TO YOU or INFIDELS) which to me are just as good.....chris

On Sat, 10 Jan 1998, Robin Morris wrote:

Personally, I'm happy if it can rate alongside _Oh Mercy_, a grossly underrated effort IMO. I'm still listening and deciding whether it does. _Time Out of Mind_ definitely has some beautiful songs, but I'm not sure I like the uni-coloredness of it.

Robin

On the new Dylan CD, yes, it's simply terrific. Certainly seems the best since Nashville Skyline and possibly even Blonde on Blonde.

Ron

* * * * *

Robin A. Morris

Home page: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ramorris>

[↑ Contents](#)

274. **Mark Weiss**

translation

Sat 10 Jan 1998

I lived in Paris for a year. When I first moved into my apartment I had some workmen over to install a new electric range. It seemed to me that they were screing up the grounding, and I wanted to say something about it. To give myself some credibility I meant to tell them "je suis un vieux bricoleur," I'm an experienced do-it-yourselfer. What came out, unaccountably, was, "je suis un vieux cambrioleur." I certainly got their attention: I had told them that I was a burglar from way back. Almost a year later I was dating a Canadian woman. We

went to a restaurant that specialized in wild game. It was the sort of place where old beer mugs hang from the ceiling and clients and waiters toss wise-cracks at each other. I ordered the beaver, and I asked the waiter what cut it was. "I don't know," he said, "it's just beaver." "I was hoping," I meant to say, "that it's the tail." My girlfriend turned beet-red, and the waiter got very flustered. "We would never serve that sort of thing here!" "That's a shame. It's a delicacy in Canada," I explained. The waiter allowed as how this was news to him, but reiterated that it wasn't likely to get served in his restaurant. Through a mispronunciation and a gender error I had asked for "le cul," the asshole, instead of "la queue," the tail. The beaver, by the way, was delicious. As to song lyrics, I always thought that Dylan was singing "tastes just like a woman," and I liked it that way. Nuff said.

[↑ Contents](#)

275. **Pierre Joris**

Re: translation

Sun 11 Jan 1998

Mark -- your translation problems were even bigger than you thought:

Mark Weiss wrote:

.....

"I was hoping," I meant to say, "that it's the tail." My girlfriend turned beet-red, and the waiter got very flustered.

"We would never serve that sort of thing here!"

"That's a shame. It's a delicacy in Canada," I explained.

The waiter allowed as how this was news to him, but reiterated that it wasn't likely to get served in his restaurant.

Through a mispronunciation and a gender error I had asked for "le cul," the asshole, instead of "la queue," the tail.

"le cul" is not "asshole" but "ass" as in "a piece of ass" -- so it wasn't scatology that made your girl-friend turn beet-red. Of course, had you said "la queue" it wouldn't have been any better, as that means not only "tail" but also "prick."

non sequitur one: note how in French "le cul" is grammatically masculine and "la queue" feminine.

non sequitur two: "le castor," the beaver, was the nickname of Simone de Beauvoir — the reason being her industriousness rather than anything else.

Pierre

--

=====

pierre joris 6 madison place albany ny 12202

tel/fax [REDACTED] email: [REDACTED]
http://www.albany.edu/~joris/

"What often prevents us from giving ourselves over to
a single vice is that we have several of them."

— La Rochefoucauld

=====

[↑ Contents](#)

276. **Gwyn McVay**
because one must

Sun 11 Jan 1998

mindful of CB's rule about mentioning one's own publications:

My second chapbook, /This Natural History/, has just been born at Pecan Grove Press in Texas--a small press devoting almost its entire list to poetry and various poetries--weighing in at 31 pages and two staples, and bearing exaggerated advance praise kindly supplied by Wendy Battin, Mark Wallace, and Anselm Hollo.

Any of you who want to grab one while the grabbing is good can do so by sending \$6 plus \$1 S&H to Pecan Grove Press, Box AL, 1 Camino Santa Maria, San Antonio, Texas 78228-8608. The ISBN is 1-877603-45-7.

mercy. mercy. mercy.

Gwyn

[↑ Contents](#)

277. **Miekal And**
hypertext hotel

Sun 11 Jan 1998

does anyone have a working url for "the hypertext hotel" at brown univeristy?
is it still online?

miekal

[↑ Contents](#)

278. **William Marsh**
Re: translation

Sun 11 Jan 1998

At 10:38 AM 1/11/98 -0400, Pierre wrote:

>

>non sequitur one: note how in French "le cul" is grammatically masculine and
>"la queue" feminine.

et aussi "la bite", non? (forgive if misspelled) / for some reason i woke up this
morning recalling conversations i had years ago on just this topic (while in
Paris) / psychic anticipation of Poetics, i guess

bill marsh

William Marsh
PaperBrainPress
Voice & Range Community Arts
National University
[REDACTED]

http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh
snail: 1860 PB Dr. #4
San Diego, CA 92109

[↑ Contents](#)

279. **Rachel Levitsky**

P. Ganick's address

Sun 11 Jan 1998

Hello and Happy New Year

Does anyone know if Peter Ganick is still at [REDACTED]? I was bounce back? If
not, does anyone know of another address?

--Rachel Levitsky

[↑ Contents](#)

280. **henry gould**

dylan your

Sun 11 Jan 1998

Bob's new album, well, like most of the his other ones, seems like an uncanny
success - why? He's not a very good musician, really; never was very imagina-
tive, musically - he's one of those people whose musical talent doesn't match
their general genius - he's a poet manque, so to speak - so the performance is
always sort of a charlie chaplin affair - for Dylan performing must have always
seemed like "rock-climbing" (no pun intended) for somebody suffering from ver-
tigo. Springsteen something similar except he is a slightly different equation :
lesser poetic talent + greater showmanship = grandiosity - but still it begins

with poetry... & dribbles out into success. .. Dylan always adds that element of self-parody which makes it all work... because he came from beyond Duluth with more hunger & ambition & earliness than even Springsteen New Jersey... but for sheer musical creative energy I'll take a good Cream jam ("I'm So Glad") over ANYTHING produced in the last 30 yrs hence...where's Jack Bruce now? - Henry Gould, member of (in chronological order): Spur of the Moment (late 60s) Lucifer (later 60s) various London bands (mid 70s) Phyllis & the Phantoms (late 80s) & so on... & who could forget the Stones? they would have been very wealthy farmers if they weren't good rockers.

[↑ Contents](#)

281. **Mark Weiss**

Re: translation

Sun 11 Jan 1998

Beavers are a minefield of innuendo. When I was a kid we used to play a car game the rules of which were that you had to shout out "beaver!" if we passed a car with a bearded driver or passenger. This was designed to keep the kids occupied on long trips. Of course, there were so few bearded people back then that my father's other little game worked a lot better, which was to call out "teachers!" whenever we saw two women alone in a car. The implication was supposed to be that the women, like all teachers, were lesbians--my father never really accepted my mother's profession. When I was older the significance of "beaver" migrated south, and it became a matter of considerable speculation how any woman could admit without embarrassment to being a graduate of Beaver College, which was all-female at the time. All of this depends on context. I have ordered "queue de boeuf" in restaurants without any giggles, and of course when one is directed to stand in "la queue" while waiting for a film no one leers or pokes his friend in the ribs. I did see "penis de boeuf" offered on a chinese menu in Paris, but that's an entirely different story. I once heard a panelist on a French news show refer to a right-wing opponent as "le penis," playing on the name of the politician Le Pen; this provoked universal merriment. But often a cigar is just a cigar.

At 10:38 AM 1/11/98 -0400, you wrote:

>Mark -- your translation problems were even bigger than you thought:

>

>Mark Weiss wrote:

>

>>

>> "I was hoping," I meant to say, "that it's the tail." My girlfriend turned

>> beet-red, and the waiter got very flustered.

>> "We would never serve that sort of thing here!"

>> "That's a shame. It's a delicacy in Canada," I explained.
>> The waiter allowed as how this was news to him, but reiterated that it
>> wasn't likely to get served in his restaurant.
>> Through a mispronunciation and a gender error I had asked for "le cul," the
>> asshole, instead of "la queue," the tail.
>>
>
>"le cul" is not "asshole" but "ass" as in "a piece of ass" -- so it wasn't
>scatology that made your girl-friend turn beet-red. Of course, had you said
>"la queue" it wouldn't have been any better, as that means not only "tail"
but
>also "prick."
>
>non sequitur one: note how in French "le cul" is grammatically masculine and
>"la queue" feminine.
>
>non sequitur two: "le castor," the beaver, was the nickname of Simone de
>Beauvoir — the reason being her industriousness rather than anything else.
>
>Pierre
>
>--
>=====

>pierre joris 6 madison place albany ny 12202
>tel/fax [REDACTED] email:[REDACTED]
>http://www.albany.edu/~joris/
>-----

>"What often prevents us from giving ourselves over to
>a single vice is that we have several of them."
> — La Rochefoucauld
>=====

>
>

[↑ Contents](#)

282. **George Bowering**

Re: translation

Mon 12 Jan 1998

At 10:38 AM 1/11/98 -0400, Pierre wrote:

*non sequitur one: note how in French "le cul" is grammatically masculine and
"la queue" feminine.*

Well, of course, the one that the Quebecoise poets have often noted is "le vagine."!

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada V6M 1P4
fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

283. **Craig Douglas Dworkin**
Bay Area Readings/Visual Poetics
Mon 12 Jan 1998

Dear Listservers:

For those nearby, Charles Bernstein will be reading/performing/enacting "Unrepresentative Verse" this Tuesday, 13 January, from 6-8pm at the Stanford Bookstore, in the center of the Stanford Campus ([REDACTED] for directions and parking). This is the first reading in a series organized in conjunction with Marjorie Perloff's graduate seminar in visual poetics; to give you a chance to mark your calendars - or for those travelling West in the next few months - please note that subsequent readings will all be held at the Stanford Bookstore, Wednesdays at Noon:

21 January: Susan Howe
28 January: Kathleen Fraser
11 February: Tom Raworth and Kenneth Goldsmith
25 February: Cole Swensen and Diane Ward
4 March: Joan Retallack
11 March: Johanna Drucker

Hoping to see you there,
Craig Douglas Dworkin

[↑ Contents](#)

284. **Rachel Loden**
Re: And Lady Mondegreen
Mon 12 Jan 1998

B. Taylor wrote:

And lifelong Communist Party member Jessica Mitford heard "fine old conflict" for "final conflict" in the lyrics of the Internationale.

Just for the record, Jessica Mitford resigned from the CP in 1958 and lived almost another forty years.

But in the spirit of this thread, she once wrote to her mother, Lady Redesdale (who was interested in social chatter), that she had enjoyed having tea with Lady Bird Johnson. Her mother wrote back, "I have checked Debrett's and can find no mention of this Lady Bird-Johnson."

Rachel Loden

[↑ Contents](#)

285. **Elizabeth Hatmaker**

Re: And Lady Mondegreen

Mon 12 Jan 1998

In the song "Lay Down" by Melanie Sofka (sp?)-- the lines: it was so cold, there was no room, we bled in side each other's wounds.

A friend and I always heard "we bled inside each other's wombs"-- and were dis-taught to learn we'd been wrong.

E. Hatmaker

[↑ Contents](#)

286. **Mark Prejsnar**

Re: Stipe--What's the Frequency?

Mon 12 Jan 1998

I'm the only person I know who *knew this* when the REM album came out....I actually pay less attention to that dubious substance the mainstream media calls "the news" than lots and lots of other folks, most of the time...But for some reason I read a newspaper account of the Dan Rather attack (a couple, I think) at the time it happened. (If for a moment we credit its happening.) The accounts I saw were more lurid than what Rachel quotes: the two men supposedly knocked him down and *kicked* him a few times as he was on the ground, accompanying each kick with a shout of "What's the frequency, Kenneth?" Rather said the men were totally unknown to him. One of my all-time favorite instant urban myths (legends?)

Mark P.
atlanta

On Sat, 10 Jan 1998, Rachel Loden wrote:

Karen and Trevor wrote:

So anyone heard about the origin for "what's the frequency Kenneth?"

From the R.E.M. lyric annotations FAQ:

<http://www.brainlink.com/~cafard/remlafaq.txt>

"The title of the song . . . refers indirectly to the incident in Oct. 1986 in which Dan Rather . . . was attacked by two unknown men in the street in New York City wearing suits and sunglasses. The men kept asking Rather "What is the frequency?" and called him "Kenneth" while they shoved and accosted him; to date the incident has never been explained completely . . ."

I offer my own incomplete explanation in "Clueless in Paradise" (published a few years before the R.E.M. song). Am guessing there might be enough "what is the frequency" poems for a good-sized anthology by now.

Rachel L.

[↑ Contents](#)

287. **Lawrence Upton.**

Melanie

Mon 12 Jan 1998

|In the song "Lay Down" by Melanie Sofka (sp?)-- the lines: it was so cold, |there was no room, we bled in side each other's wounds.

Safka

I think it was _we were so close, there was no room_

and I like and shall steal _distaught_ if I may - _and were distaught to learn_

I have been distaught most of my life

DB

L

[↑ Contents](#)

288. **Susan Wheeler**

Mondegreen - Digests 1/9 --

Mon 12 Jan 1998

By the time I learned R. Kelly's line "Summer bun it drive me crazy" was actually "Summer bunnies drive me crazy" I'd sampled it in print, so now the poem ("The Dogwood and the The") trails an apologetic note.

Susan Wheeler

██████████

voice/fax ██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

289. **louis stroffolino**

Re: And Lady Mondegreen

Mon 12 Jan 1998

well you know we couldn't stay dry against the rain.....

On Mon, 12 Jan 1998, Elizabeth Hatmaker wrote:

*In the song "Lay Down" by Melanie Sofka (sp?)-- the lines: it was so cold,
there was no room, we bled in side each other's wounds.*

*A friend and I always heard "we bled inside each other's wombs"-- and were
distaught to learn we'd been wrong.*

E. Hatmaker

[↑ Contents](#)

290. **louis stroffolino**

Re: your move

Mon 12 Jan 1998

Well--maybe only a brit can answer this question, but what ever happened to roy wood...i had a dream that i met him at a party last night and that i was going to interview him. he was so huge in england 67-73 with the move, wizard and as solo artist, but in america may be known only as the man who discovered jeff lynn or who wrote that song cheap trick covered.....chris

[↑ Contents](#)

291. **Christopher W. Alexander**

Re: Stipe--What's the Frequency?

Mon 12 Jan 1998

last year, WIRED - yes, it's not the most reliable news source, and no, I'm not one of those young corporate types - did a follow-up on the attack that named the chief suspect. sorry I can't be more specific in my reference - last yr's editions are @ the bindery right now. I didna know abt. the REM

thing, and toyed with using WTF, K? as a title -
but then never did.

Chris

*I'm the only person I know who *knew this* when the REM album came out....I actually pay less attention to that dubious substance the mainstream media calls "the news" than lots and lots of other folks, most of the time...But for some reason I read a newspaper account of the Dan Rather attack (a couple, I think) at the time it happened. (If for a moment we credit its happening.) The accounts I saw were more lurid than what Rachel quotes: the two men supposedly knocked him down and *kicked* him a few times as he was on the ground, accompanying each kick with a shout of "What's the frequency, Kenneth?" Rather said the men were totally unknown to him. One of my all-time favorite instant urban myths (legends?)*

Mark P.
atlanta

..

Christopher W. Alexander etc. / nominative press collective

email: [REDACTED]

snail-mail: P.O. Box 522402 / Salt Lake City UT 84152-2402

press/zine site: <http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>

[↑ Contents](#)

292. **David Kellogg**

Mondegreens

Mon 12 Jan 1998

A fabulous web site for rock music mondegreens is
<http://www.kissthisguy.com/>, "The Archive of Misheard Lyrics." My current
favorite from this site is from Springsteen's Blinded by the Light:

Little early birdy
Gave my anus curly wurly
And asked me if I needed a ride

~~~~~  
~~~~~

David Kellogg Duke University
[REDACTED] Program in Writing and Rhetoric
[REDACTED] Durham, NC 27708
FAX [REDACTED] <http://www.duke.edu/~kellogg/>

[↑ Contents](#)

293. **Miekal And**
Whose Visual Poetics?

Mon 12 Jan 1998

Bob Grumman wrote:

>

> As a long-time participant in and follower of the American visual poetry
> scene, I have to say that I'm disappointed that Marjorie Perloff, who
> has the cultural weight to do a good deal for such under-appreciated
> visual poets as

I hafta chime in that Ive been bummed all day after reading about Marjorie Ps
visual poetry seminar & not recognizing any of the names as poets whose work
has a basis in visual poetry other than Johanna Drucker. & especially the ab-
sence of all the folks whove been digging the trenches & foxholes in the visual/
verbal front. It seems more like a series on the l+a+n+g+u+a+g+e crowd who
also happen to have created at least one visual work.

miekal

dont worry about me, I'll get over it

Dreamtime Village

<http://www.net22.com/dreamtime/index.shtml>

QAZINGULAZA: And/Was/Wakest website:

<http://net22.com/qazingulaza/index.html>

email for DT & And/Was: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

294. **David Benedetti**
Re: Lady Mondegreen

Mon 12 Jan 1998

over and over hearing "Guantanamo"

as "Juanita, once on a meadow"

or "Juanita, one ton of metal"

[↑ Contents](#)

295. **Tom Mandel**
the new Dylan album
Mon 12 Jan 1998

I'm glad some of you are responding positively to Time Out of Mind (as usual, I can't remember who in all said what all); it's interesting to discuss.

I think it's the best since Desire, but certainly *not* as Ron said since Nashville Skyline. Dylan's great, greatest, most greatestest (i.e. my favorite) album, Blood on the Tracks, from 1970 is subsequent to NS.

On the new album, my favorite cut is "40 mi out of town in heavy chains bound" or something like that (I'm nowhere near the CD - hundreds of miles away - so can't check the title I don't exactly recall). But, very worth mentioning -- in the context of Desire, which I brought up for exactly this reason -- is My Heart's in the Highlands, a dark dark number whose music is an exact copy of "Meet me in the morning" from Desire (or is that on Blood on the Tracks? -- hell, this internet stuff ain't what it's cracked up to be. I can't reach my memory any better however ubiquitously present something or other, oh yeah you, is [are?]).

Emmylou Harris's backing vocals on Desire are totally great, but my favorite cut on that disc is "Sarah" written for his long-time (but by then x) wife. I listened to that song, having been reminded of it by the estimable Doug Lang, last year for about a week straight and typed the lyrics onto my screen. Just a personal thing.

A great song from Dylan's supposedly dog days (the Xtian period in this case) is "Every Grain of Sand" -- on I think A Shot of Love. I also recommend Emmylou Harris's version of that song on her recent disc Wrecking Ball (and also on that album her version of Neil Young's song of that title). A couple of years ago, over a period of days of driving around DC via the beltway from meeting to meeting, I kept her version of the Dylan song on repeat on my car's CD player. I must have listened to it 40 times each day. It is my favorite version of a "spiritual" (which is what I think you have to call that song) by a "pop" artist after Marvin Gaye's rendition of "His Eye is on the Sparrow."

It's afternoon, I'm in a motel in Myrtle Beach (believe it or not... Hank will know what I'm doing here for a few days), somewhat sunned out and a beer or so in expectation of an evening meal among gov't. retirees I don't know. Makes a nice change to think of Bob Dylan, whom by the way I met briefly in mutual drunkenness at the University of Chicago folk festival in 1961 I think when he was on his way from Minnesota to NY to seek his fortune. Seemed a nice enough guy who almost fell from the balcony but someone caught his arm. That'd make an even more different world.

Sorry to go on...

Tom Mandel

Tom Mandel

Screen Porch * <http://screenporch.com>

4031 University Dr. Suite 200 * vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22030-3409 * fax: [REDACTED]

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

296. **groberts**

Re: Lady Mondegreen

Mon 12 Jan 1998

Well, this one is not exactly a misheard lyric and won't cause smirks and laughter, but is maybe worth sharing anyway.

A prof reading a term paper on Yeats comes across the phrase "fantasy echo" throughout, and is curious as to what the undergraduate means by it and where it comes from. The two meet to talk, the prof poses his questions, and the student replies, "But you used it yourself all semester in your lectures about the fantasy echo." At which point the prof realizes that the phrase has replaced "fin de siecle." I like the way the replacement has named itself.

Gary R.

[↑ Contents](#)

297. **Mark Weiss**

Re: Lady Mondegreen

Mon 12 Jan 1998

Tom Miller, after months in Cuba researching his book "Trading with the Enemy," began defending himself against the ubiquitous tune by changing the lyrics to "one ton of mierda."

At 01:20 PM 1/12/98 -0700, you wrote:

>over and over hearing "Guantanamero"

>

>as "Juanita, once on a meadow"

>or "Juanita, one ton of metal"

>

>

[↑ Contents](#)

298. **Bob Grumman**

Re: Bay Area Readings/Visual Poetics

Mon 12 Jan 1998

As a long-time participant in and follower of the American visual poetry scene, I have to say that I'm disappointed that Marjorie Perloff, who has the cultural weight to do a good deal for such under-appreciated visual poets as Karl Kempton, Karl Young, Crag Hill, Miekal And, Liz Was, Jonathan Brannen, G. Huth, Trudy Mercer, John Byrum, Richard Kostelanetz, Dick Higgins, Bill DiMichele, Gregory St. Thomasino, Marilyn Rosenberg, Michael Basinski, Jake Berry, Scott Helmes, Harry Polinhorn (and on and on, to speak only of those contemporary American visual poets whose names are on the tip of my tongue), chooses instead to kick off her graduate seminar in visual poetics with a reading by Charles Bernstein, who is a late-coming dabbler in the field, and needs no career boosts.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

299. **Hugh Steinberg**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Mon 12 Jan 1998

Bill Marsh writes:

bob and miekal

with subject raised, and disappointments registered (justified, by all means), maybe now would be a good time to ask either or both of you to post, if you could, some good references for history and current practice in vis-po / survey works, perhaps, to give people like me who are relatively new to it (as student, as practitioner) a good overview / paper and online / etc.

I'd like to second that request.

I'm sitting in on Perloff's seminar on visual poetics, and any suggestions, directions, discussions would be most welcome.

Hugh Steinberg

[↑ Contents](#)

300. **William Marsh**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Mon 12 Jan 1998

bob and miekal

with subject raised, and disappointments registered (justified, by all means), maybe now would be a good time to ask either or both of you to post, if you could, some good references for history and current practice in vis-po / survey works, perhaps, to give people like me who are relatively new to it (as student, as practitioner) a good overview / paper and online / etc.

thanks

bill

William Marsh
PaperBrainPress
Voice & Range Community Arts
National University
[REDACTED]

<http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh>

snail: 1860 PB Dr. #4

San Diego, CA 92109

[↑ Contents](#)

301. **George Thompson**

Re: Lady Mondegreen

Mon 12 Jan 1998

Well, since everyone else is confessing their mis-hearings, I suppose I could confess mine, my most egregious one.

Somehow, when I landed on this earth, with a loud thud a long time ago, I landed reason unknown among Roman Catholics, and I wound up for a while as a child among these Roman Catholics in Irish Boston, in churches where Latin was still the language of the liturgy.

I remember, I think, standing there among the stale damp pews and the candle lights and the nuns all in their black and white and smoky incest [sic], listening to the priests and the angelic choir boys, black and white.

What were they all saying? I wondered. And why?

Well, for the most part it all slips by me now, in my present irreligious stupor, but I do remember the closing prayers. And it goes like this:

Eight come spirit two two O...

Eat the missa est.

Well, I now know what the Latin was [et cum spiritu tuo... ite missa est...], but I probably will **never** know what they really meant as they sang that song,

But it seems to me that this very religious experience [sic] turned me surely into one who has, ever since, felt a great and permanent urge to seek out and to know, for sure, what exactly the frequency was, Kenneth, and also the code....

You never know...

GT

[↑ Contents](#)

302. **Robin Morris**

Re: Lady Mondegreen

Mon 12 Jan 1998

Oh dear, don't tell me this is an urban legend. In the recent issue of Profession (MLA pub) Sandra Gilbert claims that her late husband Elliot Gilbert received a paper from a student who kept referring to the Fantasy Eclair where Wilde and all his cronies lived. This seemed just like the kind of thing that would occur to Elliot Gilbert (I had known him at UC DAVIS). I suppose it is actually possible they both happened. I prefer the Fantasy Eclair myself.

Robin

At 05:22 PM 1/12/98 -0500, you wrote:

>Well, this one is not exactly a misheard lyric and won't cause smirks and
>laughter, but is maybe worth sharing anyway.

>

>A prof reading a term paper on Yeats comes across the phrase "fantasy echo"
>throughout, and is curious as to what the undergraduate means by it and
where

>it comes from. The two meet to talk, the prof poses his questions, and
>the student replies, "But you used it yourself all semester in your lectures
>about the fantasy echo." At which point the prof realizes that the phrase
>has replaced "fin de siecle." I like the way the replacement has named itself.

>

>Gary R.

>

>

* * * * *

Robin A. Morris



Home page: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ramorris>

[↑ Contents](#)

303. **Carrie Etter**
Barbara Guest's "Winter Horses"
Tue 13 Jan 1998

Can anyone tell me where Barbara Guest's poem "Winter Horses," collected in *_Defensive Rapture_*, was originally published?

Thanks,

Carrie Etter

[↑ Contents](#)

304. **Tenney Nathanson**
Re: Lady Mondegreen
Tue 13 Jan 1998

I heard this one a decade or so ago as a true story about Allen Grossman at Brandeis, and in the version I heard a whole lotta people in the class made the same error, compounding A.G.'s accent and their ineptitude. who knows?

At 05:22 PM 1/12/98 -0500, you wrote:

>Well, this one is not exactly a misheard lyric and won't cause smirks and
>laughter, but is maybe worth sharing anyway.

>

>A prof reading a term paper on Yeats comes across the phrase "fantasy echo"
>thoughtout, and is curious as to what the undergraduate means by it and
where

>it comes from. The two meet to talk, the prof poses his questions, and
>the student replies, "But you used it yourself all semester in your lectures
>about the fantasy echo." At which point the prof realizes that the phrase
>has replaced "fin de siecle." I like the way the replacement has named
itself.

>

>Gary R.

>

[↑ Contents](#)

305. **david bromige**
tom mandel cheering section
Tue 13 Jan 1998

I think Tom Mandel should be *_encouraged_* to go ongoing on We dont hear nearly enough of him. And I want "Hank," whoever he is, to post in and tell us just what Tom *_is_* up to there at Myrtle Beach....I mean, why cant we *_all_* know?

Tom's post is full of info I don't have the referents for--I don't know any of these Dylan albums he mentions. _Was_ there something after _Highway 61_? My Mondegreen is from (I think) "Desolation Row," "Yes I got yr letter yesterday/ About the time the Donner broke." Years later, via sheet music, I saw it was "doorknob." But in No Calif, Donner is always on your mind. And, on the Mondegreen track still, at a party the other night at Kathy Fraser's, I discovered from Kush that my wife hadn't been the only person who thought that one line from "Groovin" [quick! what group?] was "Life could be ecstasy, /You and me and Leslie." Turns out it was probably "endlessly."

[↑ Contents](#)

306. **David Gitin**

Re: tom mandel cheering section

Tue 13 Jan 1998

David Bromige, you should know the Rascals for "Groovin" as well as Dylan's "Blood on the Tracks," and yes it is good to get Tom back on-line. Inquiring minds....

[↑ Contents](#)

307. **George Bowering**

Re: Lady Mondegreen

Tue 13 Jan 1998

over and over hearing "Guantanamo"

as "Juanita, once on a meadow"
or "Juanita, one ton of metal"

I always used to belt out:

"One ton of marrow,

I've eaten one ton of marrow."

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

308. **dbkk**

Under the Influence

Tue 13 Jan 1998

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.)?

[↑ Contents](#)

309. **Stephen Cope**

NEW WRITING SERIES

Tue 13 Jan 1998

An announcement for those in the area...

NEW WRITING SERIES @ UCSD

WINTER 1998

HIROMI ITO - January, 28

A major writer of the new Japanese generation, Ito has brought non-classical themes and modes of expression into contemporary Japanese poetry. Her practice of performance goes back to sources of poetry in ancient shamanic chant.

CHARLES ALEXANDER - February 4

The founder and director of Chax Press, Charles Alexander has published two books of poetry, and has two more due out in 1998. Of his poetry, Ron Silliman writes "Alexander pushes the envelope of what is possible in writing even further, to the ends of the universe. And beyond. . ."

CAROL MOLDAW - February 11

Carol Moldaw's work has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, and she received a National Endowment for the Arts Literary Fellowship in 1994. Her first book of poems - Taken from the River - was published by Alef Books in 1993.

HARRY POLKINHORN - February 18

Harry Polkinhorn is the author and/or editor of over thirty books of poetry and art. His current work focuses on the culture of the U.S.- Mexico border region, from which a publication entitled *The Border of Things: Towards an Archaeology of Edges* is currently emerging. He is the director of San Diego State Press.

CHARLES BERNSTEIN - February 25

Charles Bernstein has published twenty books of poetry, two books of essays, four librettos, and he was a founding editor, with Bruce Andrews, of the influential journal *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E*. His awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship and the National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship.

SHIRLEY ANNE WILLIAMS - March 4

A writer of both poetry and prose, Shirley Anne Williams's publications include *Dessa Rose*, *The Peacock Poems*, and *Some One Sweet Angel Chile*. She teaches literature and writing and UCSD.

All events take place at 4:30PM at the Visual Arts Performance Space, UCSD, and are free and open to the public.

[↑ Contents](#)

310. **Bob Grumman**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Tue 13 Jan 1998

Hokay, in response to Bill Marsh's request for "some good references for history and current practice in vis-po / survey works, perhaps, to give people like (he) who are relatively new to it (as student, as practitioner) a good overview / paper and online / etc. As I previously wrote when Marjorie Perloff asked what might be of use to her in running her seminar, a good book to start with as a rough overview of what's going on in the field and, especially, who's involved in it (it even includes Charles Bernstein) is *CORE, A Symposium on Contemporary Visual Poetry*, edited by John Byrum and Crag Hill, 1993, a joint publication of Generator Press and Score Publications. It has the following useful bibliography of vispo anthologies.

BORY, JEAN-FRANCOIS, *Once Again, New Directions*, 1968.

BOWLES, JERRY G. & RUSSELL, TONY, editors, *This Book is a Movie: An Exhibition of Language Art & Visual Poetry*, Dell Publishing Co., 1971.

CURTAY, JEAN-PAUL, *Lettrism and Hypergraphics, The Unknown Avant-Garde 1945-1985*, Franklin Furnace, 1985.

DORIA, CHARLES, editor, *Russian Samizdat Art*, Willis Locker & Owens Publishing, 1986.

GRUMMAN, BOB, *Of Manywhere-at-Once*, Runaway Spoon Press, 1990.
HIGGINS, DICK, *George Herbert's Pattern Poems: In Their Tradition*, Unpublished Editions, 1977.
HIGGINS, DICK, *Pattern Poems: Guide to an Unknown Literature*, State University of New York Press, 1987.
JANECEK, GERALD, editor, *The Look of Russian Literature: A vant-Garde Visual Experiments 1900-1930*, Princeton University Press, 1984.
KOSTELANETZ, RICHARD, editor, *Text-Sound Texts*, William Morrow & Co., 1980.
KOSTELANETZ, RICHARD, editor, *Visual Literature Criticism: A New Collection*, West Coast Poetry Review, 1979.
MCCAFFERY, STEVE & NICHOL, BP, editors, *Sound Poetry: A Catalogue, Under Which Editions*, 1978.
SACKNER, MARVIN, editor, *The Beauty in Breathing*, Ruth & Marvin Sackner Archive, 1992.
SOLT, MARY ELLEN, editor, *Concrete Poetry: A World View*, Indiana University Press, 1968.
WILDMAN, EUGENE, editor, *Anthology of Concretism*, The Swallow Press, 1969.
WILLIAMS, EMMETT, editor, *Anthology of Concrete Poetry*, Something Else Press, 1967.

My own book (awaiting my getting enough money to self-publish a third edition--to update my psychofluxotical terminology) is more a discussion of poetry in general than an anthology of vispo but DOES contain a pretty good small sampling of the field.

Then there's *CONCERNING CONCRETE POETRY*, compiled by Bob Cobbing and Peter Mayer, from 1978, and now a classic.

Crag Hill and Spencer Selby's *SCORE* and Karl Kempton's magazine, *KALDRON*, the latter now online at

<http://www.thing.net/~grist/l&d/lighthom.htm>

have to my mind the best continuing coverage of visual poetry, but others, including Harry Burris's *O!!ZONE*, are doing good work. The l&d site whose URL I've just given has much else in the way of visual poetry and other kinds of otherstream and knownstream poetry. And it lists all kinds of links to other sites, as well as pertinent books and magazines.

jwcurry's *Curvd H\$Z* is the central press for Canadian visual poetry. His magazine *Industrial Sabotage* has long been a leader in the field. There's much else. Miekal And and Liz Was's *Xexoxial Press*, for instance, and my own *Runaway Spoon Press*, have for ten years or more been publishing visual poetry.

Anything else you wanna know, just ask.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

311. **Robert Archambeau**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Tue 13 Jan 1998

I'd love to hear more about the American visual poets Mikel And mentioned, but I'd also like to mention a book that I first heard about over this list and that introduced me to a number of visual poets from around the world, and that placed them in historical context -- a collection of essays edited by Johanna Drucker called *_Experimental, Visual, Concrete_* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996 or 1997). Both Perloff and Bernstein have pieces in the book, but it is very diverse and international and in no way treats visual poetry as a sideline of the language poets.

The publisher has a web site at:

www.rodopi.nl/home.htm

--

Robert Archambeau
Department of English
Lake Forest College
Lake Forest, IL 60045
<http://www.lfc.edu/~archamb/>

"There is no remedy for this "packaging" which has supplanted the old sensations"

-John Ashbery

[↑ Contents](#)

312. **Mikel And**

Whose Visual Poetics? Bern Porter's in 1959

Tue 13 Jan 1998

it is the unacknowledged paperwork of the 20th century which for me informs much of the unclassifiable realms of experimentations with the voice & the page, of which the words "visual poetry" is one tagword that can be used to contain the works of zaum, lettrism, dada, gutai, concrete, fluxus, futurism, mailart, etcism & especially the o so important people whose work has always defied classification & thus gets forgotten time after time. which hotlinks me to Bern Porter's 1959 manifesto I've Left, a wakeup call to the artworld to enter &

become the information age, very much like Vannevar Bush's visualization of the once & future internet "As we may think" is a call to information linear civilization to start defending itself with neural networks.

excerpted from I've Left:

"I am proposing something to help get out of the stagnation, instead of continuing to bewail it, and the boredom, inertia and stupidity of everything." Antonin Artaud

"Everything touched by and serving living beings must either be adapted to the fact that the user's life is organic or must corrupt the user by withdrawing his attention from this fact." Edward Hyams

I finger zero, readjust my couch in a void that sloth built, the better to do nothing.

Through inaction I act and out of negation I fabricate the debris whose weight litters the plains with the broken backs of cranes & stevedores.

The result is the same as if I did nothing: which I do daily.

Obsolenscence revolts me. The alleged modern is a repetition of the ancient decorated in chrome, styled with air-flow and color-engineered to abomination. Tradition-bound, without sense or reason and always beyond complete control, truth & simplicity, the popularly accepted give wide berth to basic naturalness and inherent possibility.

Thus, communication-wise I junk drum beats, smoke signals, semaphore, flag codes, light flashes, telegraphs, telephones, radios, television sets and all other such systems, devices and developments for my own sensory organs wherein desiring to make known my wishes I merely think them in a frequency universal and in a tongue world known and whoever wishes to hear, receive and understand does so.

The spoken, printed and tele-dramatized word becomes a particle of thought energy.

The drawn, photographed, painted and kinescope-picture becomes more of the same.

All of the devices of locomotion, subterranean, surface and aerial equally reduce.

I am at all places, in all forms, at all times.

What were books became word sequences screen projected, then free-floating vibrations which impinged upon my mind as I desired them.

What was art left museum walls to become gaseous fusions in color similarly projected, then all prevailing rhythms of radiant energy that stimulated my eye whenever I wished them.

What was poetry became equally transformed to responses for feeling.

Architecture became constructions of ether & light.

Clothing a logical extension of skin without embellishment.

Theatre a pageant of masked spectators.

Automobiles, body rockets.

Toys, fondling in the dark.

No civilized thing was left unmodified or unreverted to its natural, logical and true state.

I transformed the world and in so doing I found myself.

1959, Tasmania

transcribed from Bern Porter's *I've Left*; a manifesto and a testament of science & art, published by Something Else Press, 1971.

QAZINGULAZA: And/Was/Wakest website:

<http://net22.com/qazingulaza/index.html>

spidertangle wordround / online hyperwriting workshop

<http://net22.com/qazingulaza/wordround/index.html>

[↑ Contents](#)

313. **Miekal And**

Whose Visual Poetics? El Lissitzky's in 1923

Tue 13 Jan 1998

is a hypertext visual poetry? is a poet performing the print of a cross-section of a cabbage visual poetry? is an envelope circulated from person to person & country to country visual poetry? are font dingbats visual poetry? the convergence of hypermedia in the 20th century is technological & inextricably organic & moving at biologically recursive speeds toward a global mimesis of international sight-sound. but then these thoughts are by no means new, just as functionality in advertising has always been good business.

overheard from el lissitzky in 1923

1) Printed words are seen and not heard.

- 2) Thoughts are communicated by the appropriate words and formed letters of the alphabet.
- 3) Thoughts should be expressed with maximum economy, optically and phonetically.
- 4) A composition of text on a page is governed by the laws of typographical mechanics-it should reflect the flow and rhythm of the contents.
- 5) Illustrative material should be used to organize a page in accordance with the new visual period.
- 6) A sequence of pages, the cinematographic book.
- 7) A new book requires new means of writing, the ink well and quill are a thing of the past.
- 8) A printed book has conquered time and space. Printed pages and the infinity of books must be conquered. Electro Library.

from Merz No 4

QAZINGULAZA: And/Was/Wakeest website:

<http://net22.com/qazingulaza/index.html>

JOGLARS Crossmedia Broadcast

<http://net22.com/qazingulaza/joglars/index.html>

[↑ Contents](#)

314. **Lawrence Upton.**

Re: your move

Tue 13 Jan 1998

He became partially-trapped in a chrono-synclastic infundibulum and is even now singing oh i wish it could be xmas every day somewhere in a video lapland

L

-----Original Message-----

From: louis stroffolino <[REDACTED]>

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Date: 12 January 1998 19:15

Subject: Re: your move

|Well--maybe only a brit can answer this question, but what ever happened |to roy wood...i had a dream that i met him at a party last night and that |i was going to interview him. he was so huge in england 67-73 with the |move, wizard and as solo artist, but in america may be known only as |the man who discovered jeff lynn or who wrote that song cheap trick |covered.....chris |

[↑ Contents](#)

315. **Lawrence Upton.**
Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Tue 13 Jan 1998

From: William Marsh <[REDACTED]>
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Date: 13 January 1998 02:21
Subject: Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

I am sure they can give you such references but I cannot resist an advert here - Bob Cobbing who has been visually more years than etc and I with a somewhat shorter track record - are working on a book on vispo and their performance with lotsa examples which will be out from Writers Forum in London in the mid year

Quite a few from N America in it so one way or the other, probably the other, it'll reach N America - shall post details when available

L

[↑ Contents](#)

316. **Miekal And**
tight shoes & reckoning with the unknowable

Tue 13 Jan 1998

"I think the narrowness shoe
here is on the other foot."

dear marjorie

the alto of your posts seems defensive & confronted & methinks that you are misreading my intentions, as my stance from the beginning of publishing my work & the work of others has always been one of inclusion, the known & the celebrated next to the neverknown. even tho your roster of visual poets seems to need a shoehorn to fit into the international visual poetry movement & "seems" to be largely a language reading list, I am more concerned about rationalizing your choices because of financial limitations. I mean really, most of the 100s of visual poets whose work is important in this discussion would present their work gratefully for the cost of a bus ticket & a hot meal. or closer to home, how many visual poets within shouting distance of stanford were invited to present their works....

as for course syllabi, my contention is that the visual poetry world is specifically international & infested with sacred clowns & dada savants whose work will

never fall into a convenient category, because their work experiments with all edges of hypermedia, & what is a more appropriate reading than a survey of movements is a hyperlinked time machine that has a holographic & inclusive meme as its operating engine, kind of like reading all 30,000 volumes of the Sackner visual/verbal archive simultaneously.

so if we're in the business of trying on shoes, I highly recommend those shiny new ambidextrous stretch shoes over there in the corner. one size fits all & I'm sure there can be no complaints.

in the spirit of networking & open dialogue

miekal "one size fits all" and

QAZINGULAZA: And/Was/Wakeest website:

<http://net22.com/qazingulaza/index.html>

Zaum in the Age of Electronic Huts

<http://net22.com/qazingulaza/zaum.html>

[↑ Contents](#)

317. **Hank Lazer**

Re: tom mandel cheering section

Tue 13 Jan 1998

David,

I suspect that Tom may be doing it with cavity backs or with blades, but that's his own business.... (I use blades.)

Hank

[↑ Contents](#)

318. **dw**

O.ARS & Visual Poetry

Tue 13 Jan 1998

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

As there have been several recent postings to the list concerning visual poetry, let me direct your attention to the O.ARS home page where you will find information concerning the back list and something of a fire sale. From 1982 thru 1994 O.ARS produced anthologies of poetry, visual poetry, and other forms of experimental writing, including works by many authors familiar to this list. In particular O.ARS attempted to embrace the diverse range of visual poetries that have recently been under discussion here.

Anyone citing this posting will receive an additional 20% discount on the offers made there.

<http://www.dwc.edu/dept/hum/oars.htm>

Content-Base: "http://www.dwc.edu/dept/hum/oars.htm"

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O.ARS

Editor:

Don Wellman

 Assoc. Editors:

<I>Cola

Franzen, Irene Turner

<CENTER>

<HR WIDTH="100%">21Rockland Road // Weare NH 03281 USA // Tel. [REDACTED]</CENTER>

<CENTER>e-mail: [REDACTED]</CENTER>

Since its inception in 1981, O.ARS has been mindful of the limitations of closed systems of representation with their corresponding domains of the other. The watch word has been, following Charles Olson, to push outward, beyond the mesmerizing seas of Modernism and into a present where mirrors no longer divert the body by splitting perception into self and other, lack and perfection.

<P>The oarsman pulls away from the shore, eyes on the past as it recedes. Hence one suggestion in the name O.ARS. The period, Oh Art, a dada-esque pun. Destruction, whether of mirror, syntax, or word: TOWARD A NEW

POETIC, a way of making, a way of making a way, not absolute freedom. The oar is a winnowing fan as well as a blade cutting the current. Each issue of O.ARS presents a selection of poetry, visual poetry, experimental prose, essays, and reviews by writers for whom meaning and language are one.

<P>O.ARS 9: Frames, Fields, Meanings (1994) \$6.00 ISBN 0 942030 10 9
Contributors: Ray DiPalma, Saul Yurkievich, Rafael Alberti, Bruce Andrews, Mary Rising Higgins, Todd Baron, Bruce Campbell, Andrew Levy, Andrea Kunard, Shiela Murphy, Charles Bernstein, Syeohen Ratcliffe, John Perlman.

<P>O.ARS 8: Censorship and the Situation of Poetry (1991). \$6.00 ISBN 0 942030 09 5
Contributors: Juan Cameron (Special section), Ron Silliman, Susan Roberts, Eric Wirth, Colleen Lookingbill, Ray DiPalma, Spencer Selby, Dennis Barone, James Sherry, Edith Turner, James Gray, Karl Young.

<P>O.ARS 6/7: Voicing (1990). \$10.00 ISBN 0 942030 08 7
Contributors: Joel Oppenheimer, Julio Cort´zar, David Bromige, Larry Price, C.D. Wright, Jed Rasula, John Taggart, Ulli Freer, Alan Halsey, Thomas Meyer, William Fuller, Octavio Armand, Bruce Andrews, Stephen Ratcliffe, Margaret Randall, Sheila Murphy, Stephen-Paul Martin, Charley Shively, Steve McCaffery, Jean Day, Alicia Borinsky and others.

<P>O.ARS 3, 4, 5: Translations: Experiments in Reading \$12.00 ISBN 0 942030 03 6
Originally published in three fascicles A, B, C (1983, 1983, 1986).
From the introduction: "Translation then is a reading which writes the text again in a new language. It has always been an experiment in reading. And conversely writing has always been a reading of instances of perception."

<P>Contributors: Saúl Yurkievich (tr Cola Franzen), Henri Michaux (tr Charles Simic, et al), Alain Veinstein (tr Todd Kabza and Maria Saiz), Aimé Césaire (tr Clayton Eshleman), Joseph Guglielmi (tr Christopher Duncan), Kenzaburo Öe (tr Michiko Wilson), Friedrich Hölderlin (tr Richard Sieburth), Octavio Armand (tr Carol Maier), Tristan Tzara (tr Jerome Rothenberg), Helmut Heissenbüttel (tr Rosmarie Waldrop). Also Lori Chamberlain, Klaus Peter Dencker, Carlfriedrich Claus, Stephen Fredman, Bob Perelman, Marjorie Agosin, Juan Cameron, J.T. Barbarese, Charles Doria, Barbara Einzig, Normandi Ellis, Fanny Howe, Paul Kahn, John Perlman, Mweya Tol'ande, Karl Young, Fred Truck. Luciano Ori, Paul Zelevansky, Julien Blaine, Earl Jackson, Jr, Bruce Andrews, Sally Silvers, Jean-Paul Curtay, Henry Hills, Jackson Mac Low, and others.

 <HR WIDTH="100%">
<FONT

SIZE=+2>Coherence and Perception:
<FONT
COLOR="#990000">Experiments in writing and investigations bearing on
postmodern poetics.
 <HR WIDTH="100%">

<P>O.ARS 1: Coherence (1981).
\$10.00 ISBN 0 942030 00 1
From the introduction:
"PERCEPTION/COHERENCE. A mirror: the slash or virgule indicates a quantity
divided by a quantity...The slash indicates the value of discontinuity. It divides
as it joins."

Contributors: Andrei Codrescu, Theodore Enslin, Paul Metcalf, Gilbert Sorrentino, Michael Andre, Richard Lyons, Joe Smith, Harold Jaffe, George Chambers, Richard Kostelanetz, karl kemption, Bern Porter, Mark Melnicove, Stephen Knauth, Robert CReeley, Edmond Jabés, Jerome Rothenberg, Rosmarie Waldrop, Ron Silliman, Raymond Federman, David Antin, Barbara Einzig and others.

[illegible]

Contributors: Nathaniel Tarn, Lyn Hejinian, Charles Bernstein, Rae Armentrout, Cid Corman, Sherman Paul, Vincente Huidobro (tr Cola Franzen), Douglas Messerli, Fanny Howe, Christopher Middleton, Michel DeGuy, Ron Vance, Don Byrd, John Wellman, Alain-Arias Misson, Gil Ott, Craig Watson and others.

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Back to top

[↑ Contents](#)

Tue 13 Jan 1998

> Don Byrd ([REDACTED], [REDACTED])
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> The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)
> *****
>
>

[↑ Contents](#)

320. **Safdie Joseph**

Re: Dylan

Tue 13 Jan 1998

Don Byrd wrote:

> Isn't it curious that we have extended discussions of
> Dylan's album, but rarely, if ever, a comparable discussion of a new
> book of
> poetry. I wonder if there is a book of poetry, published in the last
> year,
> that five people on the list have read.
>

As one who innocently started the Dylan thread by asking if the album was worth picking up, I wonder about Don's "challenge" -- what might be the nominees for said book of poems? *_Imagination Verses_* by Jennifer Moxley attracted a bit of response not too far back; a reading group in Seattle recently was pretty high on Tom Raworth's new *_Selected_*; I liked Anselm's *_Aho_* quite a bit . . .

> Dylan is a serious artist, but there are others; some,
> I
> would venture to say, more crucial than Dylan.
>
But few as accessible.

> Does it takes the commercial clout of Columbia Records
> (and
> Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.) to get us a-buzz about a serious
> artist?
>
Hopefully not on this list, but let's face it . . . "no one listens to poetry"

[↑ Contents](#)

321. **William Marsh**

Re: Dylan

Tue 13 Jan 1998

At 11:18 AM 1/13/98 -0800, don byrd wrote:

> Isn't it curious that we have extended discussions of
> Dylan's album, but rarely, if ever, a comparable discussion of a new book of
> poetry. I wonder if there is a book of poetry, published in the last year,
> that five people on the list have read.

looking for matches / books read recently published in 97:

Heather Fuller, *perhaps this is a rescue fantasy* (neat book btw) Schultz and
Kinsella, *voice-overs*

on the shelf waiting:

Wallace, *Nothing Happened and Besides I Wasn't There*

Nielsen, *Stepping Razor*

William Marsh

PaperBrainPress

Voice & Range Community Arts

National University



<http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh>

snail: 1860 PB Dr. #4

San Diego, CA 92109

[↑ Contents](#)

322. **Eryque Gleason**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Tue 13 Jan 1998

thanks to whoever it was that posted the url for Light & Dust. By a random
click i found the work of Avelino de Araujo, much of which is really quite beauti-
ful. The direct link to his section is <http://www.thing.net/~grist/l&d/araujo.htm>

Some of it's a little quirky and looks like advertisement-style art, but all of it's
interesting.

eryque

[↑ Contents](#)

323. **Marjorie Perloff**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Bern Porter's in 1959

Tue 13 Jan 1998

For Miekal and others:

The syllabus for Visual Poetics has on it precisely fluxus, zaum, and later movements that interest you. Tom Phillips, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Darren Werschler-Henry, etc. The poets giving readings are poets IN THE AREA FOR OTHER READINGS whom I can get for relatively small amount. I can't get Tom Phillips or Ian Hamilton Finlay or even a Canadian poet like Darren because costs of flights. So it's a compromise and I stand by each and every poet coming as being visually interesting!

Before you jump to such conclusions, perhaps you could think about these logistics and not be so dismissive!

Marjorie Perloff

[↑ Contents](#)

324. **Aldon Nielsen**

Re: And Lady Mondegreen

Tue 13 Jan 1998

At 04:01 PM 1/10/98 +0900, you wrote:

>freedom's just another word for nothing left to do
>freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose
>freedom's just another word for nothing left to choose
>

freedom's just another word for noone left to screw

[↑ Contents](#)

325. **Mark Weiss**

Re: Dylan

Tue 13 Jan 1998

Rochelle Owens' _New and Selected Poems, 1961-1996_, which I know for a fact that more than five people on the list have read (hell, most of the blurbs are by listlings).

At 09:42 AM 1/13/98 -0800, you wrote:

>At 11:18 AM 1/13/98 -0800, don byrd wrote:

>> Isn't it curious that we have extended discussions of
>>Dylan's album, but rarely, if ever, a comparable discussion of a new book of
>>poetry. I wonder if there is a book of poetry, published in the last year,

>>that five people on the list have read.
>
>looking for matches / books read recently published in 97:
>
>Heather Fuller, *perhaps this is a rescue fantasy* (neat book btw)
>Schultz and Kinsella, *voice-overs*
>
>on the shelf waiting:
>Wallace, *Nothing Happened and Besides I Wasn't There*
>Nielsen, *Stepping Razor*
>
>-----
>William Marsh
>PaperBrainPress
>Voice & Range Community Arts
>National University
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><http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh>
>snail: 1860 PB Dr. #4
>San Diego, CA 92109
>-----
>
>

[↑ Contents](#)

326. **pritchpa**

Re: Dylan

Tue 13 Jan 1998

Important recent books for me have been:

Stepping Razor - Aldon Nielsen

il cuore: the heart - Kathleen Fraser

Prosepct of Release - Tom Mandel

I'm intrigued by Brenda Hillman's *_Loose Sugar_*, and would be interested in others' response to this work. I've only had it a couple of days, but so far am struck by the way she has opened up her work to more experimental techniques while retaining a backbone of more traditional narrative. I find the way she's gone at this more appealing - and far less pretentious - than the way Jorie Graham has.

Patrick Pritchett

From: Don Byrd
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Dylan
Date: Tuesday, January 13, 1998 1:18PM

Isn't it curious that we have extended discussions of Dylan's album, but rarely, if ever, a comparable discussion of a new book of poetry. I wonder if there is a book of poetry, published in the last year, that five people on the list have read.

[↑ Contents](#)

327. **Don Byrd**
Dylan

Tue 13 Jan 1998

Isn't it curious that we have extended discussions of Dylan's album, but rarely, if ever, a comparable discussion of a new book of poetry. I wonder if there is a book of poetry, published in the last year, that five people on the list have read.

Dylan is a serious artist, but there are others; some, I would venture to say, more crucial than Dylan.

Does it takes the commercial clout of Columbia Records (and Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.) to get us a-buzz about a serious artist?

db

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[↑ Contents](#)

328. **David Zauhar**
Re: Dylan

Tue 13 Jan 1998

On Tue, 13 Jan 1998, Safdie Joseph wrote:

Don Byrd wrote:

*Does it takes the commercial clout of Columbia Records
(and
Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.) to get us a-buzz about a serious
artist?*

*Hopefully not on this list, but let's face it . . . "no one listens to
poetry"*

. . . No

One listens to poetry

--Jack Spicer

David Zauhar

[↑ Contents](#)

329. **Miekal And**
Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Bern Porter's in 1959

Tue 13 Jan 1998

Maria Damon wrote:

>

> thanks for those gems miekal; is the book still in print, and if not (as
> i'd guess), wd xexoxial consider a reprint? your pal, md

as far as I know it is out of print, & Bern is getting up there in years, so it is a possibility, as well there is a talk about doing Bern's book about Abraham Lincoln Gillespie, who he considers one of the most overlooked experimental writers of this century (& I think Bern is one of the most overlooked (& maybe someday someone will decide that I in turn am one of the most....

& Hold onto Your Hat, a book of interviews with Bern which should have been out 6 months ago will hopefully be out by spring....

[↑ Contents](#)

330. **acgold01**
Panel chairs for 20C. Lit. Conference

Tue 13 Jan 1998

I'm looking for chairs (as in panel leaders / introducers, not seating arrangements) for various poetry and poetics sessions at the upcoming 20th.-Century Literature Conference here Feb. 26-28. Featured speakers and readers this year include Eavan Boland, Cary Nelson, Harryette Mullen, and Mark Pollizotti (Breton biographer). Chairs pay a reduced rate for the conference. Backchannel please if you're interested.

Thanks,

Alan

[↑ Contents](#)

331. **r.drake**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Tue 13 Jan 1998

folks--

for those wanting a more informed view of Dr. Perloff's syllabus, i copy below (w/out permission, but publically available at http://www-leland.stanford.edu/dept/english/courses/courses_main.htm) the reading list for th course...

Required:

Solt, Mary Ellen, CONCRETE POETRY: A WORLD VIEW (Indiana, 1969, ISBN 0253113008). Out of print but Mary Ellen Solt will make 15 copies available to us.

Herbert, George. THE ENGLISH POEMS OF GEORGE HERBERT (Everyman's Classic Library, paper, 1991). \$5.56

Pound, Ezra, SELECTED CANTOS (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988; ISBN 0811201600). \$6.36

Apollinaire, Guillaume, CALLIGRAMMES, trans. Anne Greet (California, 1991; ISBN 0520073908). \$15.96

Howe, Susan, FRAME STRUCTURES: EARLY POEMS 1974-79 (Norton, 1996, ISBN 0811213226) \$10.36

Mac Low, Jackson, REPRESENTATIVE WORKS: 1938-85 (New York: Roof Books; ISBN 0937804185) \$18.95

O'Sullivan, Maggie. OUT OF EVERYWHERE (San Francisco: SPD [Small Press Distribution] 1996, ISBN 1874400083) \$15

Wershler-Henry, Darren, NICHOLODEON: A BOOK OF LOWERGLYPHS (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1997; ISBN 1552450007) C. \$5- AUTHOR WILL PROVIDE THE BOOKS

Phillips, Tom, A HUMUMENT: A TREATED VICTORIAN NOVEL (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996.) ISBN 0500974551, \$19.96

Recommended:

Bernstein, Charles, REPUBLICS OF REALITY: 1975-95 (Sun & Moon, 1997). ISBN 1557133042. \$11.96.

- Bok, Christian, CRYSTALLOGRAPHY, Coach House, 1994, ISBN 0889104964 \$12.50
- Cage, John, EMPTY WORDS (Wesleyan, 1981, ISBN 0819560677) \$15.95
- Drucker, Johanna, THE HISTORY OF THE/MY WORLD (New York: Granary Books, 1996, ISBN 1887123067) \$35
- Fraser, Kathleen, IL CUORE--THE HEART (Wesleyan, 1997, ISBN 0819522457) \$16.95
- Raworth, Tom, TOTTERING STATE: SELECTED AND NEW POEMS 1963-83 (The Figures, 1984; available from SPD, ISBN 0935742192) \$14.50
- MacCormack, Karen, THE TONGUE MOVES TALK (Chax Press, 1997, ISBN 0925904120) \$9.60
- Retallack, AFTERRIMAGES (Wesleyan, 1997, ISBN 0819512230) \$10.36
- Swensen, Cole, NOON (Sun & Moon, 1997, ISBN 1557132879) \$8.76
- Ward, Diane, EXHIBITION (Potes & Poets, 1995, ISBN 9998069158) \$18
- Bohn, Willard, THE AESTHETICS OF VISUAL POETRY (Chicago, 1997, ISBN 1887123016) \$14.95
- Drucker, Johanna, THE CENTURY OF ARTIST'S BOOKS (Granary, 1997, ISBN 1887123016) \$19.96
- Drucker, THE VISIBLE WORD: EXPERIMENTAL TYPOGRAPHY AND MODERN ART 1909-23 (Chicago, 1996, ISBN 0226165027) \$15.95

[↑ Contents](#)

332. **Henry Gould**
dylan or

Tue 13 Jan 1998

"No one listens to poetry", unless it's backed up by guitar drums & bass, & we can't come up with a "serious artist" in poetry per se to compare with Dylan (in ability to generate talk-interest) ??

Could this have something to do with the fact that the instruments of poetry are deceptively simple, & it's hard to wade through all the talk, the talk-about, the ego-stroking scribble, the straining for effect, for grants, for whatever ??

Poetry, po-hoetry, puho-ho-hoetry!! skeesh...

Is there a fine-spun trout net, a very fine-spun prosodic trout net somewhere, that weeds out all the dross & leaves something [genuine] ?? An ear. [?] The never-published neverland of neverfaked no strains... must come from a mighty

power strained through either a mighty big or mighty narrow needle. soul
power. Motown.

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

333. **Eryque Gleason**
leaving off the g

Tue 13 Jan 1998

i'm at work without the reference i need, hopefully one of you will be able to answer this post before i send this document to the boss...

there's one particular poem in _spring and all_ that has the line "leaving off the g" or something very similar. would one of you quote the entire stanza for me?

trying to get some poetry in otherwise dry office documents....

thanks,

eryque

[↑ Contents](#)

334. **Mark Prejsnar**
Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Tue 13 Jan 1998

A little plug here...His work is also featured to fine effect in the the inaugural issue of the Atlanta poetry mag Syntactics.

Mark P.

On Tue, 13 Jan 1998, Eryque Gleason wrote:

*thanks to whoever it was that posted the url for Light & Dust. By a random click i found the work of Avelino de Araujo, much of which is really quite beautiful. The direct link to his section is
<http://www.thing.net/~grist/l&d/araujo.htm>*

Some of it's a little quirky and looks like advertisement-style art, but all of it's interesting.

eryque

[↑ Contents](#)

335. **Don Byrd**

Re: Dylan

Tue 13 Jan 1998

David Zauhar wrote:

. . . No
One listens to poetry

--Jack Spicer

Spicer also said, something like, "The Beatles destroyed poetry."

Don

--

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The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

[↑ Contents](#)

336. **Maria Damon**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Bern Porter's in 1959

Tue 13 Jan 1998

thanks for those gems miekal; is the book still in print, and if not (as i'd guess), wd xexoxial consider a reprint? your pal, md

At 11:25 AM +0000 1/13/98, Miekal And wrote:

>it is the unacknowledged paperwork of the 20th century which for me
>informs much of the unclassifiable realms of experimentations with the
>voice & the page, of which the words "visual poetry" is one tagword that
>can be used to contain the works of zaum, lettrism, dada, gutai,
>concrete, fluxus, futurism, mailart, etcism & especially the o so
>important people whose work has always defied classification & thus gets
>forgotten time after time. which hotlinks me to Bern Porter's 1959
>manifesto I've Left, a wakeup call to the artworld to enter & become
>the information age, very much like Vannevar Bush's visualization of the

>once & future internet "As we may think" is a call to information linear
>civilization to start defending itself with neural networks.
>
>
>excerpted from I've Left:
>
>
>"I am proposing something to help get out of the stagnation, instead of
>continuing to bewail it, and the boredom, inertia and stupidity of
>everything." Antonin Artaud
>
>"Everything touched by and serving living beings must either be adapted
>to the fact that the user's life is organic or must corrupt the user by
>withdrawing his attention from this fact." Edward Hyams
>
>I finger zero, readjust my couch in a void that sloth built, the better
>to do nothing.
>
>Through inaction I act and out of negation I fabricate the debris whose
>weight litters the plains with the broken backs of cranes & stevedores.
>
>The result is the same as if I did nothing: which I do daily.
>
>Obsolescence revolts me. The alleged modern is a repetition of the
>ancient decorated in chrome, styled with air-flow and color-engineered
>to abomination. Tradition-bound, without sense or reason and always
>beyond complete control, truth & simplicity, the popularly accepted give
>wide berth to basic naturalness and inherent possibility.
>
>Thus, communication-wise I junk drum beats, smoke signals, semaphore,
>flag codes, light flashes, telegraphs, telephones, radios, television
>sets and all other such systems, devices and developments for my own
>sensory organs wherein desiring to make known my wishes I merely think
>them in a frequency universal and in a tongue world known and whoever
>wishes to hear, receive and understand does so.
>
>The spoken, printed and tele-dramatized word becomes a particle of
>thought energy.
>
>The drawn, photographed, painted and kinescope-picture becomes more of
>the same.
>

>All of the devices of locomotion, subterranean, surface and aerial
>equally reduce.
>
>I am at all places, in all forms, at all times.
>
>What were books became word sequences screen projected, then
>free-floating vibrations which impinged upon my mind as I desired them.
>
>What was art left museum walls to become gaseous fusions in color
>similarly projected, then all prevailing rhythms of radiant energy that
>stimulated my eye whenever I wished them.
>
>What was poetry became equally transformed to responses for feeling.
>
>Architecture became constructions of ether & light.
>
>Clothing a logical extension of skin without embellishment.
>
>Theatre a pageant of masked spectators.
>
>Automobiles, body rockets.
>
>Toys, fondling in the dark.
>
>No civilized thing was left unmodified or unreverted to its natural,
>logical and true state.
>
>I transformed the world and in so doing I found myself.
>
>
>1959, Tasmania
>
>transcribed from Bern Porter's I've Left; a manifesto and a testament of
>science & art, published by Something Else Press, 1971.
>
>_____
>
>QAZINGULAZA: And/Was/Wakest website:
><http://net22.com/qazingulaza/index.html>
>
>spidertangle wordround / online hyperwriting workshop
><http://net22.com/qazingulaza/wordround/index.html>

[↑ Contents](#)

337. **Maria Damon**

Re: Dylan

Tue 13 Jan 1998

i've "read around in" Frame, and have read one of susan howe's book, the singularities. i imagine there are more than 5 of us on this list of whom this could be said.

At 9:05 AM -0800 1/13/98, Robert Hale wrote:

>Did anyone else besides me read Barrett Watten's FRAME? What about Susan
>Howe's book?

>

>At 11:18 AM 1/13/98 -0800, you wrote:

>> Isn't it curious that we have extended discussions of
>>Dylan's album, but rarely, if ever, a comparable discussion of a new book of
>>poetry. I wonder if there is a book of poetry, published in the last year,
>>that five people on the list have read.

>>

>> Dylan is a serious artist, but there are others; some, I
>>would venture to say, more crucial than Dylan.

>>

>> Does it takes the commercial clout of Columbia Records (and
>>Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.) to get us a-buzz about a serious artist?

>>

>> db

>>

>>

>>

>>

>> *****

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>> *****

>>

>>

[↑ Contents](#)

338. **Joshua N Schuster**

Re: Dylan

Tue 13 Jan 1998

I've got Dylan on my mind as well, as pressing as any book of poems. I disagree with most of the elders on this list by saying I think the new Dylan album is terrible. The best parts of it sound unrehearsed like The Basement Tapes, but its obvious throughout the deal that the producers crafted and shined it up into a comeback album, in the same mode as hit-pumps Clapton and McCartney. I'd say the Christian stuff, when compared with the new album, is even more radical, if only because Dylan is still inventing himself, picking up influences and identities as he did in almost every early album. But as the "adult-contemporary" humor walks in, the social-lyricism is not really there, and nostalgia seems to be too motivated, rather than what's going on in the basement a few decades before, when Dylan's looking for a history of music from the porch rather than the stage, looking like Harry Mathews did. Where's that nostalgia for the future? What else can you show me?

-Joshua Schuster

and I'm not at all excited about Watten's FRAME but am looking much forward to BAD HISTORY

[↑ Contents](#)

339. **robert drake**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Tue 13 Jan 1998

& to continue--

re: a couple of requests fr futher resources:

Harrison, Bob & Nicholas Frank, eds: *_Cortext: A Survey of Recent Visual Poetry_* (Milwaukee: Hermetic Gallery, 1995). Exhibit catalog includes intro/outro by Johanna Drucker & Karl Young; 64 pgs., \$10.

Byrum, John & Crag Hill, eds: *_Core: A Symposium on Contemporary Visual Poetry_* (Mentor OH/Mill Valley CA: Generator/Score, 1993). Responses to a questionnaire on practice answered by 62 visual poets. John was by last night to borrow my saddlestitch stapler (to put together the new issue of Generator)--he has abt 30 unbound copies of *_Core_* left, at \$15@... Both **Generator** and **Score** magazines continue to publish & focus on visual poetries.

Burris, Harry, ed: *_O!!Zone Vizpo 96_* (Houston TX: Harry Burris, 1996). 83 contributors from 20 countries; 187 pgs \$18 (\$30 to institutions). **O!!Zone**

magazine likewise continues to publish visual poetry and badly xeroxed nude photographs...

Lost and Found Times, edited by John M. Bennett (Columbus OH: Luna Bisonte Prods). Current issue is #37? abt 56 pp., \$6.00

Machine Made of Words: www.burningpress.org/gallery/gallery.html

WrEyeTings: www.burningpress.org/wreyetings/index.html

Light & Dust: www.thing.net/~grist/PAGE1.htm

Posttypographica: www.posttypographika.com/

UbuWeb: www.ubuweb.com/vp/

A Humument homepage: www.wolfenet.com/~duchamp/index.html

several folks have asked for pointers to anthologies, and i think that points up part of the problem. the richest source of visual poetry activity continues to be micropress (outside of the academy) and mailart-- these communities (partly by design, partly by poverty) don't often produce work in commodifiable products like anthologies or symposia (kudos to the couple of recent such that have appeared--but those are exceptions proving the rule...).

although i much appreciate even the existence of Marjorie's class attention to vizpo, i'm sympathetic to bob g's underlying complaint: that seemingly whole bodies of work, whole community(s) of visual poets, seem not to garner deserved attentions. bob has long been a champion and advocate of several such bodies, and i'm sure the reading list triggered some longstanding & justified frustration (L=A=N=G's might be likewise sympathetic to a perceived exclusion by a dominant aesthetic...).

JM Bennett's Lost&Found Times could usefully be examined as a locus of one particular body of work/ community of workers, which includes visual poetry as one among several tactics in its aesthetic--the continued lack of critical attentions to that work is a source of endless personal puzzlement & frustration (i won't even get into stories about the Ohio Arts Council Literature panel meetings considering his grant-proposals)..

hard for me to believe this thread, actually--as if marjorie's class somehow marks the canonization of some visual poets to the exclusion of others... please don't tell malok!

asever

luigi

[↑ Contents](#)

340. **Schuchat Simon**

Re: Dylan

Tue 13 Jan 1998

Well, I read Frame, and Imagination Verses, and Lisa Jarnot's Some Kind of Mission, and Tim Dlugos' selected, and Jim Brodey's Heart of the Breath (or was

that last year), among numerous others. Also Bill Luoma's cowboy poems come to mind.

I like the new Dylan alright, I thought that Good as I been and World Gone wrong were his best work since who knows when, and I like the only Xtian album of his I've listened to, Slow Train Coming, spiritual music being as much a part of the tradition he has always been mining as blues or rock or whatever. I am waiting for a CD with George Jackson, another of my favorite Dylan tunes, and perhaps, since at one point (I think Allen Ginsberg pointed this out) he was mining the Auden/Spender vein, a Dylan sings Cole Porter album would be amusing.

And for you gender and cultural studies etc people out there, Gail Hershatter's DANGEROUS PLEASURES (study of prostitution in Shanghai, published by U of California) is a masterpiece and worth everyone's time.

[↑ Contents](#)

341. **George Bowering**

Re: dylan or

Tue 13 Jan 1998

"No one listens to poetry", unless it's backed up by guitar drums & bass, & we can't come up with a "serious artist" in poetry per se to compare with Dylan (in ability to generate talk-interest) ??

The ability to generate talk and interest is not all that indicative of seriousness. If it were there would be fewer US magazines on the newsstands and more literary magazines.

Or to put it another way: Virgin Records stores would be bulging with Paul Bley CDs, and in one little corner there would be a few Spice Girls and Bob Dylan CDs.

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

342. **Bob Grumman**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Bern Porter's in 1959

Wed 14 Jan 1998

When I observed that I was disappointed that Marjorie Perloff had chosen Charles Bernstein for a reading to kick off her graduate seminar in visual poetics, I didn't think I was being "dismissive." I just thought it'd be nice if she picked someone who's been active in the field longer than Bernstein and who could use a career boost a lot more than he. (And there are a lot of California poets in her area, many of them equal to Finlay and Phillips, who'd certainly be available for little of no reading fee.) I didn't say anything about her seminar as a whole because I didn't know anything about it. Now that I've seen Perloff's list of required and recommended books (with only one book on it that's also on the CORE list I supplied), I AM dismissive of her seminar. Yes, it's nice that she's doing SOMETHING for visual poetry, but a shame that she's doing so little for contemporary American visual poetry.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

343. **Tom Orange**

leaving off the g

Wed 14 Jan 1998

the wcw poem in question is "VIII" (last four stanzas quoted:)

And so it comes

to motor cars--

which is the son

leaving off the g

of sunlight and grass--

Impossible

to say, impossible

to underestimate--

wind, earthquakes in

Manchuria, a

partidge

from dry leaves

(/imagination/ 110)

hoping this arrives in time to be useful...

t.

[↑ Contents](#)

344. **joel lewis**

f.y.i.

Wed 14 Jan 1998

FROM INFOBEAT:

*** Georgia gov. proposes infant music giveaway

Gov. Zell Miller proposed Tuesday the state provide the parents of every Georgia newborn - some 100,000 a year - with a classical music cassette or compact disc in order to boost the infant's intelligence later in life. Miller proposed a \$105,000 allocation for the program in a \$12.5 billion budget proposal that he presented to the General Assembly. He cited a study of the "Mozart effect," which he said showed college students' IQ scores increased after listening to a Mozart piano sonata for 10 minutes. Miller said he had asked Atlanta Symphony Conductor Yoel Levi to help select music for the recordings. See <http://www.infobeat.com/stories/cgi/story.cgi?id=6928337-100>

joel lewis

[↑ Contents](#)

345. **John Tranter**

Rimbaud in Africa, reviewed

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Some months ago a few queries were posted on the group enquiring about Charles Nicholl's excellent biography of Rimbaud (mainly on Rimbaud in Africa), titled "Somebody Else", published by Jonathan Cape in the UK.

As the editor of Jacket magazine, free on the internet at <http://www.jacket.zip.com.au/index.html>

modesty forbids my mentioning that there is a detailed review of Mr Nicholl's book, with many charming and previously obscure photographs, including a Rimbaud self-portrait, at

<http://www.jacket.zip.com.au/jacket03/rimbaud03.html>

So, as we say Down Here in the Antipodes, go for it.

Lately, as well as Nicholl's book, I've enjoyed reading Douglas Rothchild's "Match Book" (Situation Press # 13)(a giant matchbook full of poems, and yes, you can light a match on the black strip on the cover -- don't try this at home!) ... and Jennifer Moxley's "Imagination Verses" (Tender Buttons) ... and Peter Riley's "Snow has Settled [...] Bury Me Here" (Shearsman Books, Plymouth, UK.)

from

John Tranter, 39 Short Street, Balmain NSW 2041, Sydney, Australia

tel ([REDACTED]) fax ([REDACTED])

Editor, Jacket magazine: <http://www.jacket.zip.com.au>

[↑ Contents](#)

346. **Laurie Schneider/Crag Hill**

Visual Poetics

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Eryque Gleason writes about visual poetry found at the Light & Dust website:

" Some of it's a little quirky and looks like advertisement-style art, but all of it's interesting."

Advertisers picked up (co-opted!) the textual/graphic/spatial potentials found in the exploratory practice of poets from the 20's onward to the present, keeping the visual aspects while dropping the poetry. Visual poets are still waiting for the rest of the world to catch up to Madison Avenue.

Two other sources for visual poetry in the U.S. are Marvin Sackner's archive in Miami Beach (voluminous, The Poetry/Rare Books Collection at University of Buffalo (Thanks to Mike Basinski and Robert Bertholf). Backchannel if you would like snail addresses.

Best, Crag Hill

[↑ Contents](#)

347. **Thomas Bell**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Is Visual Poetry visual or verbal? The recent flurry here actually raises an important issue I think. Does visual poetry have a visual/auditory bias? Would Bernstein's work not be poetic visuals? "Cocteau has said of his drawing that it is writing untied and 'knotted up again in a different way.'" - Davenport. I find that my work can be 'verbal', 'visual' or both, but all three are different in a fundamental way. tom bell

[↑ Contents](#)

348. **Herb Levy**
A mundane query
Wed 14 Jan 1998

Is there currently a Web site for the Kootenay School? & if so what's the URL - the one at wimsey.bc.ca's been down for months now.

I did hear the new Dylan album at dinner at a friend's house about a week or two before I went down to Texas for the holidays. I don't remember the CD much, but the risotto was very good.

Herb Levy



[↑ Contents](#)

349. **rsillima**
Yo soy un hombre sincero
Wed 14 Jan 1998

Years ago, my family's relation to Guantnamero was changed irrevocably when we attended an Oakland A's game to discover another family in the bleachers that broke into song whenever the home team's great third baseman came to bat:

There's only one Carney Lansford
There's only one Car---ney Lans-ford
One Carney Lansford
There's only one Carney Lansford...

And these have been the official lyrics ever since.

Ron

[↑ Contents](#)

350. **hen**
Re: dylan or
Wed 14 Jan 1998

On Tue, 13 Jan 1998 21:53:06 -0700 George Bowering said:

>>"No one listens to poetry", unless it's backed up by guitar drums &
>>bass, & we can't come up with a "serious artist" in poetry per se
>>to compare with Dylan (in ability to generate talk-interest) ??
>

>The ability to generate talk and interest is not all that indicative of
>seriousness. If it were there would be fewer US magazines on the newsstands
>and more literary magazines.

Well, I was referring to talk-interest on this particular list, which was the challenge at hand. - Henry

[↑ Contents](#)

351. **Susan Wheeler**

Digest

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Matches re Dylan equivalent:

Stepping Razor

Imagination Verses

il cuore

The Singularities

Tim Dlugos'

Susan Wheeler

██████████

voice/fax ██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

352. **Mark Wallace**

FRAME

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Although I understand the urge, given the time remaining to any of us under the realm of capital, Watten's FRAME deserves, I think, far more than a cursory read. He's always been something of an ambivalent figure, if powerfully so, for me, at least until recently--crucially insightful, full of new poetic possibilities, and with a more accurate and consistently direct take on the material interests that shape our present world than almost anyone I can think of, yet at the same time a rather distant (should I say cold?) and perhaps even majestic presence--I learn from his work always, but do I always like it, and would he even want me to "like" it, exactly? Yes, I guess, but in the way one likes a bracing shock. I remember once visiting Thomas Jefferson's home at Monticello and being told that he woke up every morning, at 6 a.m., by rolling out of bed and sticking his feet in a bucket of ice water. Watten's work has always had something of a similar effect on me.

But while I had read a fair amount of his work, it was always in smaller pieces--a book here one year, a book here the next, as they became available. FRAME I think makes the case for a much larger reach in his practice, and for its not always immediately apparent variability. Indeed I even saw breeches in the wall of his social critique--I don't mean in terms of its shortcomings, but in terms (despite the fact that "the conditions of our displacement are functionally

exact"--I paraphrase) of where the critique is related to some of his own experiences, however much those experiences are not in any direct manner the subject of his practice. Oddly enough perhaps, or not, read again his work did not seem particularly radical in terms of syntax or the construction of the sentence--it's in terms of the relation BETWEEN sentences and a disorientation on the level of the IMAGE that he strikes me as doing what had not been done before. Less immediately materialist than Silliman, and without the playfulness of Bernstein (humor is there in Watten, but it always hurts), his work has more of a disorienting house of mirrors effect, and seems less certain of the usefulness of its own critique (in certain ways, at least) than one might expect. I was left wondering about the value of critique in a world conditioned on our own displacement--it remains for Watten perhaps the primary mode with which to engage the world and challenge the forces of alienation, but what had one gained exactly beyond the feeling that one knew where one had been lost? In short, if there is an icy majesty to the tone always, it is one that comes out of a sense of social tragedy (my word, not his own, who knows whether he'd like it) that both must and cannot be repaired. Critique from the point of a wound, caused not by the fact that one has withdrawn from the world, but that the world itself as we are given it TODAY has withdrawn from us, into a place where capitalist discipline threatens engagement, poetry, and the most basic kinds of contact.

As The Minutemen once said, maybe partying will help.

Mark Wallace

```

/-----\
||      ||      GWU:
||      http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~mdw      ||      EPC:
||      http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/wallace      ||

```

[↑ Contents](#)

353. **rsillima**

The narrative of understanding

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Josh's tres cynical remarks re the latest Dylan reminded me of an exchange I had with Ben Friedlander awhile back. I'd commented that, say 1969 and thereabouts, I'd found Clark Coolidge's work impenetrable (and had not yet learned to trust opacity as a sign in and of itself) until Barrett Watten pointed out to me the great humor in the work, a humor that, once mentioned, became immediately evident to someone who'd read lots of Jonathon Williams and Phil Whalen, two major Coolidge influences.

To paraphrase Ben, he said that that won't work if you come to Whalen after you do Coolidge, which is of course correct. But I am in this sense part of an indentifiable generation, someone who came to poetry when Creeley's *For Love* was "the current book," as was Duncan's *Opening of the Field*, etc. etc. Whalen was in those days still a "small press" poet, i.e. impossible to find before *On Bear's Head* other than in journals. The objectivists out of print entirely.

What comes before comes in unequal and sequentially disordered "lumps" of information -- I get to HD, for example, years before I do *Riding* (Jackson), thanks to Duncan. Crane and Keats are contemporaries, etc. But everything that occurs after the mid-60s generally occurs in the order in which it came into print and that becomes the skeleton of memory over time, onto which the rest gets hung.

In somewhat the same way I will always be someone who "hears" Dylan as someone who has (as he did when I first got into the music) just two albums out and everything else is thus a development. It's in that sense that I hear Josh's comments as possible only from someone whose parents (as Josh has pointed out) are my age.

I had a similar experience reading *FRAME*. Other than the title piece itself, I have everyone of the works that went into it and have a deep personal experience of having read each -- some of the early This Press books with their saddle staple binding were deeply sensuous volumes. Beautiful as their covers may be, I don't think anybody would ever accuse the squat format and too-small type-face that characterizes Sun & Moon press as "sensuous." Anyway I'm very glad those works are in print because I think everybody should read and know those poems deeply, but it was an odd experience going through them in what seemed to me an alien format.

Ron

[↑ Contents](#)

354. **Mark Prejsnar**

Frame etc.

Wed 14 Jan 1998

I like Don Byrd's point a lot....It would be fun to hear people give some reactions to recent books. I also like very much the list that was generated by the folks who jumped in with suggestions. (Only I've returned the copy of *Perhaps This is a Rescue Fantasy* I was reading to the friend I borrowed it from....So I can't glance it over and think of something substantive to say; I do remember that it's first-rate..)

In general most of the books mentioned are ones I've been reading in the past 6 months.

In general, I'm disappointed that Don's point was underlined...People mentioned books, but didn't seem to have much to say about 'em.

I've just published a review of Aldon's *Stepping Razor*. Basically, it points out that the strength of the book lies in its wide range of approaches to form; and that that formal restlessness is quite effective, and tied to a playful/intricate take on moments in our current unanchored cultural life...Also on representative moments scooped out of history and related to fragged bits of contemporary consciousness. Ahem, "Nielsen grasps the poem as a congeries of possible formal directions, which pique the mind through ear and eye; music that thinks. Furthermore it thinks in American..." I hint in the review that Aldon's work is puzzling because there are fewer direct lines of tension and connection than you might expect between his poems and his extraordinarily important critical books. They're there, but subtle. I have this vague feeling they may grow clearer as his work progresses...

Well, as I was sitting here typing this Mark W's post on Watten came through. A bit spooky, or an indication of great minds running on tracks. I did a series of notes on the bus this morning to post about *Frame*, which I've been looking at for a couple of months...Mark and I have mentioned many of the same things: the aloof coldness in Watten (that neither of us is exactly put off by, but there is some ambivalence there, from the way we both mention it). The fact that much of *Frame* is not as syntactically disjunct as one remembers from when some of these books first came out. That much of it is essentially New-sentence writing, working with tensions generated by spaces and shifts between sentence structures...but (as Mark says very accurately) "less materialist" than Ron S. I was going to say, less abruptly aware of the physical/social matrix of writing.

Like Mark I like Watten's work very much, and find it *useful* (to the ear, nerve-ends, political mind and also to my own writing). A few other jottings from the bus: Essentially Watten has a great ear and creates stuff that (at times) swings like Stein or Coolidge--admittedly it is more cerebral. For you music analogy types (hey, Mike) more Anthony Braxton than Mingus. Geometric passion. Actually I recommend reading his *Impercipient Lecture with Frame*: there is much the same (cold but real) drive toward a truth articulated in sound-forms through time and writing (that's an allusion...) And I jotted down this: Watten uses different frames and musical phrases to offend the mind and wake up the ear, and always underlying it is a fury about the political semi-conscious. That's a play on Fred Jameson and not a bad turn of phrase even if I do say so myself. It occurs to me now that many of us who have something in common with Watten (such as Mark and myself) are trying to write about "the

political semi-conscious"...The challenge being that in the realm of public culture and political struggle our entire society right now is in a state of semi-consciousness (at best). Coma?

I also hoped to take up another suggestion people threw out: to discuss Mark's own Nothing Happened (which I've been reading in conjunction with his recent chapbook In Case of Damage to Life, Limb or This Elevator). After all this other yattering I don't have time. Except to note that it's illuminating to look at both of them in light of Mark's comments about Frame--not due to direct influence, but because there are parallels in his concerns about how poetic form relates to politics and consciousness. He is getting increasingly political I feel, in an increasingly interesting way, noticeable over these books and in his work Temporary Worker Rides a Subway, bits of which are running in a kind of serial fashion in my magazine Misc. Proj. (Still working at getting the new issue out to folks...Hang in there, it'll only be a couple more days!)

Mark P.
atlanta

[↑ Contents](#)

355. **Eryque Gleason**

Re: leaving off the g

Wed 14 Jan 1998

tom, thanks for the lines. bill freind beat you by a few hours, i think my thanks to him went backchannel.

my boss is now twenty feet away reviewing th list of errors which contains those lines as interlude on page four. he's only on page two so far, this should be good.

thanks again,
eryque

On Wed, 14 Jan 1998, Tom Orange wrote:

the wcw poem in question is "VIII" (last four stanzas quoted:)

*And so it comes
to motor cars--
which is the son*

*leaving off the g
of sunlight and grass--
Impossible*

to say, impossible

*to underestimate--
wind, earthquakes in*

*Manchuria, a
partidge
from dry leaves*

(/imagination/ 110)

hoping this arrives in time to be useful...

t.

[↑ Contents](#)

356. **dee morris**

shameless self-promotion + Spicer's "No / one listens"

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Joining two recent threads, I'd like to announce a new collection of essays on the relationship between acoustical technologies and 20th century innovative poetics. The collection's 12 essays focus on earplay in texts by Joyce, Pound, H.D., Beckett, Burroughs, Baraka, Kaufman, Duncan and Brathwaite and performances by Cage, Laurie Anderson, Caribbean DJ poets and Cecil Taylor. Contributors are Loretta Collins, Jim Connor, Michael Davidson, Kate Hayles, Nate Mackey, Steve McCaffery, Alec McHoul and Toby Miller, Dee Morris, Fred Moten, Marjorie Perloff, Jed Rasula, and Garrett Stewart. But the best thing--in my humble opinion--is that there's a CD slipped in the back cover which makes it possible to hear not only F. T. Marinetti, H.D., Henri Chopin, Anthony McNeill, Brathwaite, and others, and but also Mississippi Fred McDowell, Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, and Cecil Taylor. The title is Sound States: Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies. Edited by me. Available from North Carolina University Press and (I hope) good bookstores everywhere.

Dee Morris

[↑ Contents](#)

357. **Mark Prejsnar**

Re: The narrative of understanding

Wed 14 Jan 1998

I find Ron's comments fascinating...I think we all have some experience we can remember, of how sequence in time effected our reception of a poet or a bunch of poetry....I'm not sure it usually has a significant impact on how good we think the stuff is (which I take it is partly going on in the episode of discovering Coolidge's humor, in relation to Whalen...)

Certainly this probably has happened to a lot of people: at 14 and 15 I discovered fairly derivative works that blew me away; they were part of the process of working backward to the poets/books that had influenced *them*. But a bit of my consciousness will always see the later poets as *precursors* because I encountered 'em first (and at a time when I was just discovering poetry).

Baraka's first two books (Preface to a 20 volume suicide note; and Dead Lecturer...note the morbid note that was appealing to an adolescent) I encountered before the Duncan and Olson that gave Baraka so many of his formal ideas.

and:

A poet not much known I think to our crowd, but at his best underrated: I read Thomas Merton's two best works, Geography of Lograire and Cables to the Ace before the Cantos, which they (especially Geography) are largely a response to (formally speaking).

Likewise, Dylan's Tarantula (to get back to Dylan) introduced me to stylistic pyrotecnics from a whole range of sources I only read later: Rimbaud, Burroughs, Ginsburg.

The one thing about this dynamic (it can be argued) is that one may permanently over-value the false precursors, because they helped program certain poetry-receptors in one's head. Or to change metaphors: the reader imprints on them (term in biology for a young animal becoming attached to a nurturing presence in its environment, whether its actual parent or no).

Mark P.

[↑ Contents](#)

358. **David Kellogg**

Re: FRAME

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Mark,

Thank you for the wonderful post on FRAME 1970-1990. I have been reading FRAME since it came out and have tried to organize my responses into some coherent form, but you have pulled these responses considerably ahead.

My history as a reader is different from yours, and completely opposite that of Ron's, but probably resembles that of many latecomers (latecoming dabblers, eh Bob G?) to language writing. While I read a lot of Bernstein and Silliman's work in book form, Watten's poetry was available to me in 1980s North Carolina solely through the major anthologies (In the American Tree etc.) Still amazing stuff ("Complete Thought" especially) with a specific feel that seemed different from other language writing. I was more struck by the impression of intelligence and plan, by the ambition, and by the purity of language. Basically, I could tell something extraordinary was going on, but I couldn't get what it was. (I had a similar experience with my first reading of the later poetry of Thomas Kinsella, who I have since come to think of as one of the great living poets. But I'm almost alone in that assessment.)

Back then I a better sense of Watten's criticism. Probably my first real encounter with him in this vein was as a respondent to that Bernstein lecture "Characterization" (in Content's Dream) where he tells CB to "purge your vocabulary of statements like 'French linguistics from Saussure to Derrida.'" That gave me a feel for his take-no-prisoners attitude, which I have always admired.

I did read Total Syntax around 1990, which struck me at the time as overwhelmingly intelligent but bizarre/forbidding, jargon-wise, and kind of interestingly obsessive. It did give me an inroad into Coolidge and others.

So Frame is only my second encounter with Watten's poetry in book form (after Progress, which I again encountered after everybody else). I have been reading it chronologically rather than in the order of the book, alongside the great Watten issue of Aerial. I agree with Ron about the typeface, but I have to say this is one of the major reading experiences of my adult life. I'm not sure what will come of it.

Cheers,
David

~~~~~  
~~~~~

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[↑ Contents](#)

359. **Miekal And**

Whose Visual Poetics? Marjorie Perloff's in 1998

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Overall Im struck that in many of our minds one phantasm of success is if the work youve spent a lifetime creatingproducingnetworking is being taught to others. it saddens me deeply that the radical samisdat & unclassifiable experimedia remains as marginalized as ever, awaiting some critic 50 years hence to reconstruct a useful history. there is no zaum as far as Im concerned, before Gerald Janacek's remarkable work, maybe no lettrism before the event of May 68.

One of the profound singularities of the international visual poetry movement is that it is inclusive & truly international. its globalspeak is in the the best intention's of Kruckenykh "trans-rational language" & because of that new translation of the text & the page, I can comfortably interact with artist's around the world. via mailart shows, assemblings, installations, anthologies, archives & collaborations it invites your participation as a living art form. while there is some institutional affiliations, it is largely composed of independent artistpublishernetworkers living in isolation. For instance, one of my favorites, Serge Segay & Rea Nikonova, live in rural Georgia, Russia in the Azov Mountains & up until a few years ago, I had to send mail to someone who gave it to someone to deliver it.

my reaction when reading your reading list was largely "these are people who I was unaware did visual work & I should remember to check em out". what is the context here. the context is that Im someone who has been living & breathing hypermedia poetry since I was 17, runs a press that has published the books of 40 different visual poets in 15 different countries, as well as combobulating an extensive library of my own books, cassettes, & software. (have a great video piece of me doing Kruchenykh called EUY) & youre list was news to me.

Im supposed to be writing a text on visual poetry for the upcoming SCORE & Im finding that this is the text Im trying to remember. ...how do we as artist/publishers design a/many threshold(s) to our world(s) that is/are accessible & modifiable in institutionality. my instant answer, being the html geezerwrecker that I am, is thru a catalogued & searchable internet front, a website, a domain (memexadu.com) or a virtual world, some sort of knowledge navigatable environment where anyone could navigate around/inside of for a couple hours & feel awe for the expanding internationality of visual poetry.

wish I could be there to sit in on your supposium, but I guess my track record for keeping my mouth shut is not very good. since Im too poor to buy books & am more than a 100 miles from a decent library Id love to trade books with you,

& especially learn about your views on the hyperculture world of experimental poetry.

m &

Dreamtime Village

hypermedia/permaculture rural community is sw wisconsin

<http://www.net22.com/dreamtime/index.shtml>

[↑ Contents](#)

360. **Douglas Barbour**

Re: Don Byrd's query

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Definitely *_Imagination Verses_* -- which I am very happy to have received. From the comments at the time I'd have to believe that more than five of us have read it. And Mark is right to mention Rochelle Owens' *_New and Selected Poems, 1961-1996_*, and yes, I thought a lot of Aldon Nielsen's *_Stepping Razor_*. Not to mention Joe Amato's *_Symptoms of a Finer Age_*. I haven't read the most recent David Bromige, so hang my head in shame, but I have it on the shelf. Am right now immersing myself in Sheila E. Murphy's wonderful *_Falling Love, Falling in Love, with You Syntax_*.

I won't mention the Canadian books...

Why don't we 'talk' about them? Is it easier to rave about Dylan (or, say, for me, Van Morrison [or, more importantly, because I really listen more to jazz & 'classical': the latest Jessica Williams or a finally found copy of a terrific Ben Webster re-released on CD]) because the music, the playing, as well as the lyrics, the performance that is, is there for us to engage, while I may never hear some of these poets (I do think we get that kind of enjoyment/rave response in some of the 'reviews' of live readings...

=====

Douglas Barbour

Department of English

University of Alberta

Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5

████████ FAX: ██████████

H: ██████████

~~~~~  
~~~~~

Whose song is this anyway?
Is it a song being sung
on the narrow road to the North?

Phyllis Webb

[↑ Contents](#)

361. **robert drake**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Wed 14 Jan 1998

bob--

i never intend to be snide... and tho i know you originally addressed only the reading series, the discuss on th list had amorphed into a critique of the course as a whole, based only on that reading series; so i felt the syllabus was a needed corrective....

i ov course agree w/ your thrust, as i understand: that a whole raft of important work ("our" kinds ov stuff) are by&large excluded frm serious consideration... no surprize (tho no less a travisty) when norton & vendelar dismiss it/us; and even more irking when individs whom we had hoped shared our aim of extending th canonical bounds continue to draw those territorial maps w/out a trace of our own valued continents...

so she's addressing seriously a body ov work previously excluded, that's good; so she's still not addressing a body ov work that we believe is worthy, that's bad. always too easy, fr me, to find fault w/ what someone's not doing. all in all, tho, i dont think she shd necessarily be faulted fr failing to give poet xxx a deserved career boost--i'd be critical of any project which took, as it's goal, "giving deserving poets carreer boosts"... altho TRR might as do that for some folks as a side benefit, it certainly isnt our editorial purpose; likewise its not (&, i think, ought not be) the purpose of a professor or a poetics program or a publisher--rather it ought be to desemination of important work, and of understanding of that work... and, all that being said, it might

be yr perception that the particular slant of mp's class is in fact more ov to boost the cultural capital of some particular poetic community or aesthetic... i'm not sure that's incorrect. but th arguement then would be to identify the underlying aesthetic structure she's promoting and either: (z) challange the value or importance of that particular body ov work; (x) identify other excluded works/poets who should be considered, on the basis of their sharing those concerns & producing work of equal or better value; or (y) identify other aesthetics or tendencies beyond the narrowly definded trends already being considered, identify their distinguishing characteristics, and show their value...

or maybe we shd each work on getting out our next publication...

asever

lbd

Hi, Luigi.

I'm up a little late for me.

Yeah, I felt, for some reason, like irritating a few Names. And that snide insert of yours, with Perloff's list of required and recommended books on it was beautiful! Here's what I just sent to the list:

When I observed that I was disappointed that Marjorie Perloff had chosen Charles Bernstein for a reading to kick off her graduate seminar in visual poetics, I didn't think I was being "dismissive." I just thought it'd be nice if she picked someone who's been active in the field longer than Bernstein and who could use a career boost a lot more than he. (And there are a lot of California poets in her area, many of them equal to Finlay and Phillips, who'd certainly be available for little of no reading fee.) I didn't say anything about her seminar as a whole because I didn't know anything about it. Now that I've seen Perloff's list of required and recommended books (with only one book on it that's also on the CORE list I supplied), I AM dismissive of her seminar. Yes, it's nice that she's doing SOMETHING for visual poetry, but a shame that she's doing so little for contemporary American visual poetry.

Nice list and comments you provided. I was chagrined to realize I hadn't mention John M. in my list of underappreciated visual poets--or Stephen-Paul Martin and Bill Keith. Guy Beining I left off on the grounds that maybe he's English. And there are so many Canadians.

As for the list you ask for, uhn. But if I have tomorrow off, I'll try to give you a starter list. I of course don't know everyone in the field; then there's the problem of people who may have dropped out like Kathy Ernst. As a rough idea of who I'd consider worthy of appearing in an anthology, I would say everyone who has done visual poetry (by anyone's definition but Harry Burris's) who's been published by Xexoxial, Runaway Spoon, Burning Press or Curvd H&Z, or has had poetry in Kaldron or Score or Generator.

You know, we forgot to mention Taproot as a source of reviews of visual poetry books--or did you, and I missed it.

Anyway, thanks for chipping in. I think a little controversy might clear the air. I hope so. I don't mind playing the bad guy. I really do think it's outrageous that Perloff left so many books and magazines of value off her list of recommended books. What would it have hurt her

to mention CORE, for instance, which even includes her buddies Charlie and Johanna?

All bestest, Bob

(Re-dissemination of any of the above is okay with me.)

[↑ Contents](#)

362. **Jacques Debrot**

Re: FRAME

Wed 14 Jan 1998

I found Mark Wallace's and Ron Silliman's comments about Watten to be of great interest. Recently, in preparing for an essay I was writing about Watten's poetry, I read all of his published work intensively over the period of about 2/3 weeks. So my experience of coming to Watten's books would, I suppose, be diametrically opposite to Silliman's. But what struck me then was the extraordinary correspondence between the essays and the poems -- not that the poems really fulfill the project laid out (to some extent) in the essays (Bob Perelman, for instance, is very good at pointing out the way in which, as Mark Wallace says, Watten's "critique is related" in a strange way "to . . . his own experiences" -- but that both the essays and the poems deliberately withhold, in much the same way, an immediate legibility and aesthetic pleasure. Mark Wallace writes: "Oddly enough perhaps, or not, read again his work did not seem particularly radical in terms of syntax or the construction of the sentence--it's in terms of the relation BETWEEN sentences and a disorientation on the level of the IMAGE that he strikes me as doing what had not been done before." The same thing can be said I think of the essays. Though they're not by any means written in the "composition as explanation" style that characterizes L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, there is a somewhat abstract *accretion* of verbal material in Watten's essays (an influence of Robert Smithson's?) which is a bracing preparation for the poems. (This of course is truer of the essays in *Total Syntax* than Watten's recent, more academic work, though certainly not in any absolute sense.) In any case, although I loved *Frame* I missed the essays -- an ideal presentation of Watten's work would, I think, reveal their remarkable imbrication.

[↑ Contents](#)

363. **Miekal And**

Whose Visual Poetics? Miekal And's in 1984

Wed 14 Jan 1998

LIKE MUSIC AGAINST DREAM

The visual-verbal interface a target per se delivery of perception. Collusions between all elementals, impartial sensing alphabet, symbols & images as interchangeable. The depth of affection counter to the obscurity / coded.

Exposure as common, the districts of apprehension in a mechanized perception, should they give rise to understanding, depend on sensate imagination, conditioned as it is, or which truth within our subjectivity do we trust, a choice once recorded as a decision, & understanding becomes a function of bias.

Once our attention returns to the page, a new art becomes betrayed following recognition/identification, that really familiarity replaces reactions.

I am encountering unexpected sequence. A page after page turning coinciding with retentive effort. In the course of a life time a commonality of experience "arranges" understanding.

THE ACTS THE SHEFLIFE

The fortune of seeing, of the non-idiomatic, is probably a species away from becoming the condition, our state now minutely distracted by media/media & the experience of our selfsame art is unconscious. Should the design of being change, the capacity for a truer rendering of non-idiomatic art is elevations above the posing which informs much of the recent experimental interpretation.

Miekal And 23 may 84

from "knowledge swirling man tell slow stories"
xerox sutra, 1984

'pataphysical sobriety test
<http://www.net22.com/qazingulaza/pataphysics/pataphysics.html>

[↑ Contents](#)

364. **Matthew Hart**

Re: Yo soy un hombre sincero

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Ron's Guantnamero narrative mirrors somewhat my own relationship with this tune. Coming from an English, soccer (nee football) background, I *only* knew this sing through its very popular use as a "There's only one [insert player's name/team name here]" style terrace chant. Sometimes this pattern would be altered, my favourite example being when Liverpool FC signed a defender by the name of Jimmy Carter -- hence, "There's only two Jimmy Carters, / Two Jimmy Carr-terrrs!"

On holiday in Spain some years ago I remarked to a friend, "Oh, listen, someone's made a song out of that football chant!" A chastening moment indeed. . .

Matt

According to [REDACTED]:

>

> Years ago, my family's relation to Guantnamero was changed irrevocably when

> we attended an Oakland A's game to discover another family in the bleachers

> that broke into song whenever the home team's great third baseman came to bat:

>

> There's only one Carney Lansford

> There's only one Car---ney Lans-ford

> One Carney Lansford

> There's only one Carney Lansford...

>

> And these have been the official lyrics ever since.

>

>

> Ron

>

[↑ Contents](#)

365. **Eryque Gleason**

Re: Visual Poetics

Wed 14 Jan 1998

that's actually what i was referring to. there are a few images there that contain just a couple words, and these few words are not enough to make me think of poetry.

craig wrote:

> Advertisers picked up (co-opted!) the textual/graphic/spatial potentials

> found in the exploratory practice of poets from the 20's onward to the

> present, keeping the visual aspects while dropping the poetry. Visual poets

> are still waiting for the rest of the world to catch up to Madison Avenue.

[↑ Contents](#)

366. **Jacques Debrot**

Re: Frame

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Wrote the previous post in some haste -- in the last sentence I mean of course that the poems and the essays are "remarkably imbricated."

[↑ Contents](#)

367. **Jordan Davis**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Wed 14 Jan 1998

purge your vocabulary of the word "important" --

JD

[↑ Contents](#)

368. **aerialedge**

Re: shameless self-promotion + Spicer's "No / one listens"

Wed 14 Jan 1998

The fabulous *_Sound States: Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies_* which Dee just announced will be on the next Bridge Street list (coming soon) with lots of other excitin' new books. & of course the curried favor of the discount might sway listmembers to order it from Bridge Street.

On the Dylan thread, I'm with Simon-- *World Gone Wrong* and *Good As I Been To You* which are two solo acoustic records recorded in the early nineties (all blues and folk covers) are likely the most interesting post-70s Dylan, tho the new record is certainly worthwhile, particularly for the 14 minute cut "Highlands."

On the Watten thread, pick up *Frame* & "Start anywhere."

Interesting that people would characterize the work as "cold." Watten's work always seemed to mean a kind of descriptive conceptual art, which would imply a purposeful distancing, tho it doesn't seem cold to me.

Hope we'll see *Progress & Under Erasure* back in print soon as well.

Rod

[↑ Contents](#)

369. **Robert Hale**
FRAME & AERIAL

Wed 14 Jan 1998

I approach Watten similarly to Jacques Debrot in the sense that I was really introduced to his work via FRAME. Anticipating the "critique relation" problem, I promptly ordered a copy of the AERIAL issue devoted to Watten, which works as an essential companion to FRAME.

"You are inside a building and then outside it." p.295

Often, without knowing it, you read a poem and you find yourself in an already constructed network of comprehension. The shadow in which labor, life and language conceal their truth. Less often, in full realization, you read a poem and find yourself somewhere completely different, where the shadow is of each letter in the poem, language exposed, a sentence in giant block letters across the top of a building. Communication model as neon sign blinking on and off like whatever the sun cuts in half with its light or signification without the sun (or "Sun cuts throat."). The later reading would be for Barrett Watten's FRAME. FRAME questions not literature itself, as it appears and works in the text, but what makes language possible as a force for the systematically reduced mind. Watten's real politick is not feeling or representing your pain, but rather seeing it in language and defamiliarizing it as much as possible. It is not poetry in search of a utopian socialist movement, but rather, an expulsion from the imaginary.

For Watten, to perceive while being-in-the-world is to struggle in the most political sense to the point of high organization at times. In other words, Watten organizes language in a political fashion, though not nearly as adroitly as it may sound. This writing settles on you like so many days, like so many streets that you've walked a thousand times. The play of signification often associated with L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry turns out to be a disaster haunted by history, and like history, as easily mis-read as it is imitated.

Look at the grid formed by the windows of a building you work in, these fragments we have framed against our ruins, instead of shored.. For Watten, imagination disappears with the first line of each poem to a historical framework that must configure in and out of history or be lost only to be shored or stifled. Watten's unimagination is not a lack of imagination; it is not even imagination of the lack, but rather that which is hidden by imagination and what is given alike: the neutral, the unmanifest. (Blanchot, WOD p.63).

As a book FRAME is proof that a frame is never axiomatic, but rather, "constant, altered only by our design." Oddly enough, Watten's work does bear a

axiomatic quality, his sentences read and sometimes progress like axioms in a mathematic or logical sense.

In repressive society the concepts of life, labor and language are themselves parodies of fantasies that involve a denial of objective historic forces.

"The world is structured on it's own displacement" _The XYZ of Reading_

"Dreams are our life, which we will never be able to penetrate. There can be no separation from an invisible world." _CITY FIELDS_

"An arrival in history only coincides with defeats" _CONDUIT_

"Any person is the image of what he sees" _CITY FIELDS_

[↑ Contents](#)

370. **William Marsh**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?

Wed 14 Jan 1998

At 01:13 AM 1/14/98 -0600, tom bell wrote:

>Is Visual Poetry visual or verbal? The recent flurry here actually raises
>an important issue I think. Does visual poetry have a visual/auditory bias?
>Would Bernstein's work not be poetic visuals?
> "Cocteau has said of his drawing that it is writing untied and 'knotted up
>again in a different way.'" - Davenport. I find that my work can be
'verbal',
>'visual' or both, but all three are different in a fundamental way.

a good question, and one which underscores something i think miekal and said earlier about how the "visual poetry" rubric (like all classifications) collects a diverse set of works whose boundaries, definition-wise, are frayed / aside from the obvious, that letters refer both graphically and phonemically, what do we call--if necessary--a writing that *means* both visually and verbally, or that commits to exercising in both fields--things you both read and look at? / or is that the distinction that creates the problem / the term i've come up with is "graphonemantic" but i'm sure Bob G. has something better to pull from his taxonomy grabbag?!

bill marsh

William Marsh

PaperBrainPress

Voice & Range Community Arts

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San Diego, CA 92109

[↑ Contents](#)

371. **Bob Grumman**
Re: Whose Visual Poetics?
Wed 14 Jan 1998

Yeah, Luigi, I meant SLY, not SNIDE ("And that snide insert of yours, with Perloff's list of required and recommended books on it was beautiful!") Sorry.

I mostly agree with what you said. I guess if Marjorie Perloff had called her seminar The Use of Visual Devices in Language Poetry, I wouldn't have been bothered--except that I would still be annoyed that she wasn't covering what I consider our kind of visual poetry.

I DO think people setting up seminars and the like should try to pass out career boosts if they can choose between equally qualified people, some of whom could use such a boost, some of whom don't need one.

As for your zxy, I'm not up to (z) challenging "the value or importance of that particular body (that Perloff is pushing)"--I admit I don't know enough about it to do so; and also that some of it I quite like. I go with part of (x) "identify(ing) other excluded works/poets who should be considered" and part of (y), sort of, in that I would want to say why the excluded are aesthetically worthy of consideration-- "identify their distinguishing characteristics, and show their value..."

That's what I try to do with my too infrequent essays.

Okay, that's it--except that I ought to let the list know that I'm friends with Harry Burris (I think!) and he knows that I consider his definition of visual poetry too broad (for including wholly a verbal collages) and doesn't mind.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

372. **Joshua N Schuster**
unpacking someone else's library
Wed 14 Jan 1998

Well, I agree with Ron that generational differences result in extremely different receptions of what is "new". When I read TJANTING a few years ago, it was wonderfully new to me in a way that, right now, Watten's FRAME is not. I spent some time thinking about Watten's Impercipient Lecture, rather put-off

by the so-called "take-no-prisoners" attitude, especially with respect to the motor industry that gives Detroit a constant hum. Take-no-prisoners sounds like Mr. Ford's can-do American spirit ripping-off every worker's life strength. What about Ford's anti-Semitic pamphlets, pre-dating WWII and just as idiotic as any other Nazi propaganda? The influence of Ford is bigger than Watten's pamphlet wants to address. Good thing GM head Roger Smith takes-no-prisoners, as if prisoners equals non-profitable workers. On second thought, Smith does take prisoners, as seen in ROGER & ME. To me, "take-no prisoners" and cultural poetics are complete opposite modes of understanding.

For all Watten's brio grand, he doesn't strike me as the most sensitive reader who can propose a cultural poetics. He seems to pose such a poetics in *opposition* to other current notions of poetics, as if opposition is the situation of a sensitive reader (who would be more curious and inventive than a "close reader"). Watten rips out the rug from other positions, and as exciting as that is, as much as I am convinced by his lecture, I don't want to move ahead with any sense of "I'm against this and against that." That's what many academic critics do. That's what the evil Hal Foster, for example, does. That's cynical.

I don't feel cynical at all, which may mean I have a problem. There is an abundance of wonderful writing being produced, even today, or what seems like today to me. Of course, even if I buy a book 20 years old, it is still very news to me. When I first heard about a store like SPD, I was overwhelmed. The catalogue of new books made no sense; every text was new and as far as I was concerned they all needed a blurb. So I decided to intern at SPD for a summer, and I spent most of my time just finding out what books were there, treating the store more like a library.

I'm not cynical about Dylan either, although nostalgia seems to be the word we attribute to older people that corresponds to cynicism in the youth. Those two terms are also two of the biggest cash-cows for the entertainment market place, most music and movies falling under one of the two categories.

Ron and Jeff Derkson's recent Philly Talks is new to me, especially Ron's second letter to Jeff, as much a tour-de-force in its own, briefer way as Watten's ILS. Ron asks why there has been no new movement in poetry similar to the energy and community created during the early 70's. Certainly there has been several new movements in culture, especially in film and music, but Ron does not feel much of the recent work by younger poets "is actually new." This seems a bit too cynical to me, and would surely be attacked by almost any young writer. But I'm not interesting in the poetics and politics of attack and oppose, critique and defy.

Cultural poetics cannot take place until, as Ron knows, we further understand what culture today exhibits and demands from us. But I also think that take-no-

prisoners poetics is more ripping than truly opening up. Not that everyone has to be neat and nice. There are several contemporary and important historical poets who bore me constantly. I found a beat up copy of Coolidge's SPACE first edition from 1970 and I can't make much sense of it at all and I don't find it all that funny. I need another hint or clue at reading Coolidge before I can find it interesting. Dare I say I feel the same boredom when I read Stein (What are the politics of boredom?). Oh well, but there isn't a sentence by, say, Dodie Belamy that I don't think is both very intense and intimate. One can still be a sensitive reader without being cynical, or needing to take-no-prisoners, or liking everything.

-Joshua Schuster

[↑ Contents](#)

373. **Brian McHale**

Re: Dylan

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Yes, I read "Frame." And found it thoroughly satisfying, though I struggled to grasp the context out of which the earliest parts of it were written. So that makes two of us. Brian

On 01/13/98 at 09:05:20 Robert Hale said:

>Did anyone else besides me read Barrett Watten's FRAME? What about Susan
>Howe's book?

At 11:18 AM 1/13/98 -0800, you wrote:

Isn't it curious that we have extended discussions of Dylan's album, but rarely, if ever, a comparable discussion of a new book of poetry. I wonder if there is a book of poetry, published in the last year, that five people on the list have read.

Dylan is a serious artist, but there are others; some, I would venture to say, more crucial than Dylan.

Does it takes the commercial clout of Columbia Records (and Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.) to get us a-buzz about a serious artist?

db

*Don Byrd ([REDACTED], [REDACTED])
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State University of New York*

Albany, NY 12222

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The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

[↑ Contents](#)

374. **r.drake**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Wed 14 Jan 1998

purge your vocabulary of the word "important" --
JD

jordan--

you talkin to me? my last post had 2 "important"s & 1 "importance" (nice homophones, eh?), which was maybe two many... but it also had a couple of "valuable" or "value"s, and a "useful" (as well as a "worthy" & a handful of "deserving"s).... so i'm not sure if yr suggesting a stylistic improvement in my unrigerous prose (a spelling dictionary might be th higher priority), or if yr directive to me is to avoid making value judgements about the importance/ value/use of works... i'd hate to artificially impoverish my already meager vocabulary w/out understanding why you think it's important to do so...

lbd

[↑ Contents](#)

375. **louis stroffolino**

Re: dylan or

Wed 14 Jan 1998

well it was nice to hear this 20 minute roy harper song from an album called FOLKJOKE OPUS released allegedly 1967 Or 68 on a local station here (WFMU--which allegedly all you webbies with speakers etc. can listen to). I would have thought it was some new young folkie trying to imitate honky dory period bowie and i say this not to diminish. anyway all i have is " flat baroque and breserk" but i like this better-- if anybody can send me a tape of it, i'll send my new book LIGHT AS A FETTER (situations press, 1997) which i would count one of the top 5 dear dr. byrd. chris

On Tue, 13 Jan 1998, George Bowering wrote:

"No one listens to poetry", unless it's backed up by guitar drums & bass, & we can't come up with a "serious artist" in poetry per se to compare with Dylan (in ability to generate talk-interest) ??

The ability to generate talk and interest is not all that indicative of seriousness. If it were there would be fewer US magazines on the newsstands and more literary magazines.

Or to put it another way: Virgin Records stores would be bulging with Paul Bley CDs, and in one little corner there would be a few Spice Girls and Bob Dylan CDs.

George Bowering.

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Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada V6M 1P4*

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

376. **Gwyn McVay**
Hale, Fuller on FRAME
Wed 14 Jan 1998

"You are inside a building and then outside it." p.295

Often, without knowing it, you read a poem and you find yourself in an already constructed network of comprehension.<<<

When I hit the sentence you cite, it reminded me of Buckminster Fuller's comment that "A structure is something with an inside and an outside. Period," which could itself be a precis of the Heart Sutra, one of the core texts of Mahayana Buddhism, which is really just quantum physics, but I digress spectacularly. Along with the pleasure-of-the-text of reading Watten, I find him excellent for helping me realize/remember the constructed, vs. received, nature of textual spaces as well as "real"space. I like the polysemy of the title FRAME and the way it brings in photographic/filmic presences--and reminds that those spaces are constructed as well.

Gwyn, hoping to make sense

[↑ Contents](#)

377. **henry**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?

Wed 14 Jan 1998

On Wed, 14 Jan 1998 09:54:57 -0800 William Marsh said:

>

>a good question, and one which underscores something i think miekal and
>said earlier about how the "visual poetry" rubric (like all
>classifications) collects a diverse set of works whose boundaries,
>definition-wise, are frayed / aside from the obvious, that letters refer
>both graphically and phonemically, what do we call--if necessary--a writing
>that *means* both visually and verbally, or that commits to exercising in
>both fields--things you both read and look at? / or is that the distinction
>that creates the problem / the term i've come up with is "graphonemantic"
>but i'm sure Bob G. has something better to pull from his taxonomy grabbag?!

If the boundaries are really frayed - would you include poetry that directs its
attention to actual works of visual art under this rubric? "It's all in your mind."
[Jimi Hendrix] - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

378. **William Burmeister Prod**

Byrd/Pritchett query: _Loose Sugar_

Wed 14 Jan 1998

On Jan 13, 1:10pm, pritchpa wrote:

> Subject: Re: Dylan
> Important recent books for me have been:
>
> Stepping Razor - Aldon Nielsen
> il cuore: the heart - Kathleen Fraser
> Prosepct of Release - Tom Mandel
>
> I'm intrigued by Brenda Hillman's _Loose Sugar_, and would be interested
> in others' response to this work. I've only had it a couple of days, but
> so far am struck by the way she has opened up her work to more
> experimental techniques while retaining a backbone of more traditional
> narrative. I find the way she's gone at this more appealing - and far
> less pretentious - than the way Jorie Graham has.
>
> Patrick Pritchett
> -----
> From: Don Byrd

> Isn't it curious that we have extended discussions of
> Dylan's album, but rarely, if ever, a comparable discussion of a new
> book of
> poetry. I wonder if there is a book of poetry, published in the last
> year,
> that five people on the list have read.

Loose Sugar is intriguing Hillman. Retaining, as Patrick Pritchett says, a backbone of traditional narrative, _Loose Sugar_ is a continuation of the journey Brenda Hillman began in _Death Tractates_ and _Bright Existence_, except that there is clearly an enactment of her earlier experience with the fragment that doesn't take place in the linear narrative of her earlier books. Here, form and content appear to match up well. This seems especially true in the poems of "time / space," where she recalls her Brazilian childhood effectively in fragments of found language, remembered conversation, and quotation in a manner somewhat reminiscent of the novels of Carole Maso. Perhaps she hints toward what she purposes by writing,

I have doubted my belief in sentences because
of their refusal to recall certain things
and

"To think" means: the looseness is taken away.

What strikes me is how she has incorporated, indeed reconciled modern science into her gnostic world view with its disjunction between spirit and matter. Travelling through loose matter with all the ease and speed of a neutrino, she finds a way to use the sound, if not the meaning, of the names of the twelve fundamental particles of matter in "The Particles." Is the high-energy particle a metaphor here for the quick trip of the gnostic soul through matter? Perhaps, but the short lifetime of these particles notwithstanding, Brenda Hillman's time in "problem / time " is the slow time of careful contemplation.

My favorite section of _Loose Sugar_ is the poems in the cycle called "blue codices." The brief snatches, fragments below each poem in the series are largely personal and act more as signposts than stage-by-stage narrative. They appropriately end the cycle with an ellipsis. It seem "blue codices" is a journey of the self on the way toward healing, toward change where the stops along the way, like the means, are more important than the end. The poet wonders,

And if at the end of healing there is nothing?

Finally, we read,

When I gave up hope of being complete,
the sorrow deepened.
As that went too, a mystery replaced it.

And her despair gives way to open space: to science, the mystery of the al-
chemist with which she seems perfectly satisfied.

-William Burmeister

[↑ Contents](#)

379. **Kali Tal**

Poets & Musicians Sound Out Against Police Brutality

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Forwarded from the [REDACTED] mailing list....

Poets and Musicians Sound Out Against Police Brutality

"No More Stolen Lives" is the theme for a benefit performance for the October 22nd Coalition Against Police Brutality, on Saturday, January 24, at Good Shepherd-Faith Presbyterian Church from 7 to 11 pm. The event will be hosted by poets Louis Reyes Rivera and Zizwe Ngafua. Featured artists are Amina and Amiri Baraka, Carolos Raul Dufflar & friends, CVGSheba, Sandra Maria Esteves, Jose Angel Figueroa, Ngoma Hill, Gary Johnston, Layding Kaliba, Jesus Papoleto Melendez, Tom Mitchelson, Malkia M'buzi Moore, N!k!, Tanya Tyler, Universus from the Bronxside, Welfare Poets, Atiba Wilson & Lenny Hebert, and Ted Wilson. (The church is located at 152 West 66th Street, Manhattan, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue, one block west of the 66 Street stop on the IRT #1 train.)

Asked why artists and poets should support the effort to stop police brutality, Brooklyn poet Rivera, author of "Scattered Scripture", said,

Every human being should be concerned with this issue. It's the citizen who, through his taxes, hires and pays the policeman's salary. And any citizen abused by the police demands immediate investigation and swift judgement, otherwise we suffer fascism.

The October 22nd Coalition Against Police Brutality, Repression and

the Criminalization of a Generatio National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, held in over 50 cities. It is a national network attempting to build n, has in the past two years organized the resistance against the escalating epidemic of police brutality, violence, and murder. Together with the Anthony Baez Foundation and the National Lawyers Guild, the October 22nd Coalition is involved with the Stolen Lives Project, a working document of the names and stories of people killed by law "enforcement" since 1990.

A donation of \$6.00 is requested. Books and refreshments will be available.

Louis Reyes Rivera and Steve Yip, local October 22nd Coalition activist, are available for press comment and interviews. For more information, call [REDACTED] x3920.

Cesar A. Cruz



To Comfort the Disturbed, and To Disturb the Comfortable

[↑ Contents](#)

380. **Mark Prejsnar**
new Tom Beckett

Wed 14 Jan 1998

I've just received in the mail a new Tom Beckett book, *Wagers of Synthesis*, from Zasterle.

I strongly recommend this little book if you haven't seen it. Strikes me as relevant too, because we've been discussing *Frame*, and there are certain interesting parallels. The problematic nature of language and ideas in a context where the dominant culture has emptied them of urgent referentiality. (The one radically "unreadable" section of *Wagers* is two pages that repeat "How do normal people BLANK?" about 200 times; the rest of the book is much more fun than that, but it gives a feeling of how Beckett is sometimes banging his head in a kind of witty rage against alienated and unexamined forms of usage.) I really like Beckett's ear and the way his words move. I've recently been reading a friend's copy of *Invisible Aria*, a Beckett chapbook from Burning Press (1990)--If

it is still available or you can find it I very strongly recommend that one too. Wagers is a development of the same set of concerns....

Mark P.
atlanta

[↑ Contents](#)

381. **Michael Magee**

Re: unpacking someone else's library

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Thanks Josh for this very engaging and insightful - what? - intervention I guess; I think in some way or another you're speaking for many of the yungins (not to be confused with Jungians) on this list. Can't say I agree with your dis of Ms. Stein particularly, but I think there's something about your basic approach to the issue of value which I feel very close to - which is to say, there's a difference it seems to me in the approach to history and tradition, a less Bloomian take on innovation which doesn't ask, or even really allow, questions such as, "Where are the great schools of the new? Breakers of the tablets?" etc; and, yes, this may partly be the result of a childhood spent learning how to deconstruct Ford commercials ("This Taurus is the newest of the newest new new sedans!" etc) as well as college education in the years of cultural studies (learning about things like Ford's anti-Semitic pamphlets which, a few decades ago, would have seemed arcane and irrelevant vis a vis poetry to be sure). But the most important thing you point to, to my mind, is a difference in how poets born post-Watergate, or nearly so (I was 3-4), approach the idea of "bigness." I feel, and I swear I don't mean to be condescending here, it's just an observation, that the baby boomers - on the left, right, middle, and however "radical," though of course with many exceptions - still deeply love the grand narrative, and, as such, narrative itself - one such narrative involves answering the question, "Where is the next great movement?" I think it's a bogus question and, in any event, not the one we should be asking. In a world which is increasingly diverse and complex, and where intellectuals are increasingly banking on constructs involving multiculturalism, well, the next great movement ain't coming, folks - or if it is we won't recognize it as such - hey, maybe it's already here. I agree with Josh, too, that there's plenty of great writing being done right now. Doesn't Harryette Mullin's **Muse & Drudge** stand up with any book of lyrics done in the last 30 yrs? With Creeley's **Pieces** or Levertov or Howe or whoever you want to name? In any event she's been just as important to me as those great writers and I like her just as much, and she's as "original" as hell. It's observations such as this which make cynicism seem, well, a little nostalgic.

-m.

According

to Joshua N Schuster: >

> Well, I agree with Ron that generational differences result in extremely
> different receptions of what is "new". When I read TJANTING a few years
> ago, it was wonderfully new to me in a way that, right now, Watten's FRAME
> is not. I spent some time thinking about Watten's Impercipient Lecture,
> rather put-off by the so-called "take-no-prisoners" attitude, especially
> with respect to the motor industry that gives Detroit a constant hum.
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> two categories.
>
> Ron and Jeff Derkson's recent Philly Talks is new to me, especially Ron's
> second letter to Jeff, as much a tour-de-force in its own, briefer way as
> Watten's ILS. Ron asks why there has been no new movement in poetry
> similar to the energy and community created during the early 70's.
> Certainly there has been several new movements in culture, especially in
> film and music, but Ron does not feel much of the recent work by younger
> poets "is actually new." This seems a bit too cynical to me, and would
> surely be attacked by almost any young writer. But I'm not interesting in
> the poetics and politics of attack and oppose, critique and defy.
>
> Cultural poetics cannot take place until, as Ron knows, we further
> understand what culture today exhibits and demands from us. But I also
> think that take-no-prisoners poetics is more ripping than truly opening
> up. Not that everyone has to be neat and nice. There are several
> contemporary and important historical poets who bore me constantly. I
> found a beat up copy of Coolidge's SPACE first edition from 1970 and I
> can't make much sense of it at all and I don't find it all that funny. I
> need another hint or clue at reading Coolidge before I can find it
> interesting. Dare I say I feel the same boredom when I read Stein (What
> are the politics of boredom?). Oh well, but there isn't a sentence by,
> say, Dodie Bellamy that I don't think is both very intense and intimate.
> One can still be a sensitive reader without being cynical, or needing to
> take-no-prisoners, or liking everything.
>
> -Joshua Schuster
>

[↑ Contents](#)

382. **eric blarnes**

Re: Hale, Fuller on FRAME

Wed 14 Jan 1998

On Wed, 14 Jan 1998 13:45:37 -0500 Gwyn McVay said:

>"real"space. I like the polysemy of the title FRAME and the way it brings
>in photographic/filmic presences--and reminds that those spaces are
>constructed as well.

How does that famous line of Milton go? "Frame is the spur..." - Eric Blarnes

[↑ Contents](#)

383. **Bob Grumman**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?

Wed 14 Jan 1998

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

Regarding Tom Bell's question as to whether visual poetry is visual or verbal, Bill Marsh said some thoughtful things, I think. Then he come up with a neology that I LOVE--because it's worse than almost anything I've ever come up with! (See what Marjorie Perloff's Seminar has done to me. I've become just . . .)

Actually, I'd never thought to describe a word or words intended to be taken both semantically and visually--or, as Bill puts it, "writing that *means* both visually and verbally, or that commits to exercising in both fields--things you both read and look at?" His term is "graphonemantic." Not really too bad. I've been using simply "visio-poetic" without thinking I was using a special term. It would seem a little more self-explanatory than Bill's. "poetic" instead of "phonemical" or "semantic" because the word would automatically be poetic if it was significantly both verbal and visual since the addition of the visual element would have to, it seems to me, make it metaphoric; otherwise the visual element would be decorative only and therefore not significant.

As for the different weights of the visual and the verbal in visual poetry, my taxonomy gets into the difference between VISUAL poetry and VISUALLY-ENHANCED poetry. I consider ALL poetry primarily verbal, including visual poetry. When it stops being verbal it becomes a form of illumagery (my term for visual art) I call textual illumagery-- usually letters that are visual interesting but not verbal. As the textuality of the piece fades further, we get textually-enhanced illumagery. Big controversy in taxonomy--at least among those who give a blip about taxonomy, who are few--is whether what I call Textual Illumagery is Visual Poetry. I say no, personally, but will leave it up to the consensus of informed participants in the field to decide. When their number reaches double figures.

--Bob G.

Bob Grumman



<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/1492>

Comprepoetica, the Poetry-Data-Collection Site

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[↑ Contents](#)

384. **Bob Grumman**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?

Wed 14 Jan 1998

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

Henry Gould asks, "If the boundaries are really frayed (regarding the classification of visual poetry)- would you include poetry that directs its attention to actual works of visual art under this rubric?"

I, for one, would not, Henry. I classify on what a poem does, not its subject matter. Similarly, for me a mathematical poem is a poem that DOES math, not one that merely discusses something mathematical.

Related to this is the idea of calling a conventionally textual poem visual because it vividly calls up some visual image or scene. No, it's just a highly visually-expressive (sorry, George and Judy) textual poem.

--Bob G.

To think is to classify.

Bob Grumman



<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/1492>

Comprepoetica, the Poetry-Data-Collection Site

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[↑ Contents](#)

385. **Bob Grumman**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Hmmm, my previous post was a little silly at the end. I said, "Related to this is the idea of calling a conventional textual poem visual because it vividly calls up some visual image or scene. No, it's just a highly visually-expressive (sorry, George and Judy) textual poem." "visually-expressive" doesn't work. Make it "expressive-of-the- visual."

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

386. **Susan E. Dunn**

vizpo, langpo & the zimmerman conference

Wed 14 Jan 1998

I'm on digest (undigested?) so excuse me if this message is out of date and far too long (my ondigestion has given me logorhea). But this is three messages in one and I promise not to write in for three more years again!

1. VIZPO Just a posting to say Charles Bernstein's reading last night was wonderful. Thank you very much. Quite the buzz (and the wine was okay too). STanding room only. It brought in folks from Berkeley, SF and Santa Cruz. It brought together the Creative Writing and the English Departments (no mean feat!) and the energy created was a terrific kickoff for this series even if it doesn't meet the approved list of whose in the visual poetics club. For the other vizpos in the bay area who are feeling neglected I say, come on down!! Introduce yourself. Have a glass of wine (on the house, or farm, as it were). Join the party. (And remember to thank Craig Dworkin for all his work too.)

I'm glad the viz po thread has turned into an actual discussion of poets and works and what to read and where to find things. This seems to be the point of the series and the course and this discussion list. (Sob! Why can't we all just get along?!) The petty attacks on critics and poets seems sadly misplaced. But I'm a sucker for visions of communities, imaginary and other/wise, which are usually fascist utopias I know I know. It just struck me that the tenor of the original postings was: How come MP isn't doing enough for ME? Why indeed. Ask not what . . . oh never mind. Well, I too tend to have a knee-jerk defensive response when being told I could be doing more when I'm in fact working my butt off for something. On the other hand, controversy IS a sign of success.

2. LANGPO

I'm interested in why "language poet" seems to be a pejorative term on this list.

3. ZIMCO I too found it depressing that more people wrote in about bob dylan than have regarding recent books of poetry. As for what Charles Bernstein called, "the STanford Zimmerman conference," It is not surprising but it is sad that this is the only event I've worked on that the national--and international--press has taken an interest in. But with billion dollar corporations involved in making lots of money off of cd sales, etc. the stakes are different. Talk about a CANONIZED writer! Nonetheless, I'm really looking forward to what Aldon has to say, and granted Dylan's important although he doesn't speak to me (except to say "change the station away from this adult contemporary baby boomer big chill nostalgia crap") I'd rather hear Beck. Or even Bowie. (Or Bernstein!)

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Fax: [REDACTED]
email: [REDACTED]
www: <http://shc.stanford.edu>

[↑ Contents](#)

387. **Jordan Davis**
duping someone else's mix tape
Wed 14 Jan 1998

To dupe --

I can't wait till I get to tell a poet twenty years younger than me that they haven't done anything new --

all the generation that fought the second part of the 30 yrs war can say is, how come those poets twenty years younger than my gang not only couldn't do anything new, they couldn't come to anything like a world-building -describing view --

this, btw, is what I meant by purge your vocabulary of the word "important" --
of course, we are all allies of the golden slumbers -- my money is on hubris to win place and show --

Jordan

[↑ Contents](#)

388. **Miekal And**

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Don Byrd wrote:

| I had
| big hopes for hypertext, but it has yet to produce much of interest.

Don

Id love to hear more of what expectations you had for hypertext in the 70s that remain unfulfilled, & what people were getting you excited about the promise of the ideal hypertext environment. My beard, being not quite so gray, picked up on Ted Nelson & his book Computer Lib/Dream Machines in the later 70s, almost ten years before I even touched a computer & could understand firsthand all the implications of dimensionally networked information.

miekal

PLAGERIST CODEX

<http://www.net22.com/qazingulaza/codex/codex.html>

[↑ Contents](#)

389. **d powell**

Re: Dylan, since you brought it up

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Susan,

Thank you for your honest comments on Bob Dylan. Truth be told, I have never understood what anyone saw, or excuse me, heard in this man's "music." But then, I also can't stand the beach boys, the rolling stones, nirvana, frankie valli or any of that crap. It all sounds alike to me. I guess I don't understand the aesthetics of white male rock. It is not simply unpleasant to me. My response is completely somatic, as if my entire central nervous system is somehow allergic to those screeching and gravelly sounds that white male rock singers love to make. Perhaps, in some preconscious place, those sounds represent to me not angst but aggression; not celebration, but negation. Where does one hide within one's own body when confronted with the terrifying cry of a Sammy Hagar or a whathisnamethatshothimselfinthehead (kojak?) as amplified to a menacing frequency through someone's beachblanket radio? Oh for a muse of fire give me the Ohio Players. Barry White. Isaac Hayes. These are the genuine poets. (aside: funny that I don't shrink from the music of Elton John, Queen or Bowie. Perhaps because they're queer, something softens the tones of their voices. Maybe queer people don't make those sounds. Who knows?)

But finally, I should add I agree that the discussion of "popular" "music" is seems to be taking up a very large section of this picnic about poetry. Why? Is music feeding poetry? Is music our proverbial chicken and potato salad? I wonder....

=====

=====
D A Powell



=====

=====

Susan E. Dunn wrote:

3. ZIMCO

I too found it depressing that more people wrote in about bob >dylan than have regarding recent books of poetry...and granted >Dylan's important although he doesn't speak to me (except to say "change >the station away from this adult contemporary baby boomer big chill >nostalgia crap") I'd rather hear Beck. Or even Bowie. (Or Bernstein!)

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[↑ Contents](#)

390. **Lawrence Upton.**

Re: Strange,Ron, how we got to be the old guys

Wed 14 Jan 1998

If you have been paying attention, you realize you have reached middle age not because your bones creak, which they do, but because you know that you will never find another book or work or art that seems truly strange.

[↑ Contents](#)

391. **William Burmeister Prod**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?

Wed 14 Jan 1998

On Jan 14, 2:40pm, Bob Grumman wrote:

> Subject: Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?

I, for one, would not, Henry. I classify on what a poem does, not its subject matter. Similarly, for me a mathematical poem is a poem that DOES math, not one that merely discusses something mathematical.

--Bob G.

Bob, I can appreciate the last sentence there from the point of view of acting out, or performing/enacting the thing, rather than talking about it (which I am not dismissing as viable either though). But when you say that the mathematical/visual poem does math, how do you visualize this happening? Do you mean this in the operational sense (in which case one runs into the abstract immediately)?

Best,

William Burmeister

[↑ Contents](#)

392. **David Kellogg**

Re: Strange, Ron, how we got to be the old guys

Wed 14 Jan 1998

these young people today
never cut their hair
and their music
noise just noise

[heard on saturday night live's wkend update: "Wouldn't it be weird to be Bob Dylan's son Jakob? Playing music in the basement, and he says: 'Hey son, cut that out!' 'Aww Dad, you're too old, you don't understand our generation.' 'Hey. Of course I understand -- I'm Bob Dylan! Your music sucks. Now cut it out!'"]

Peace,
David

~~~~~  
~~~~~

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██████ Durham, NC 27708
FAX ██████ <http://www.duke.edu/~kellogg/>

[↑ Contents](#)

393. **pritchpa**

Re: Byrd/Pritchett query: *_Loose Sugar_*

Wed 14 Jan 1998

I have nothing intelligent/insightful to add (coming down with a cold) but want to say thanks for a very stimulating post and thanks as well to Mark P., Don Byrd., Ron S., Josh S., Mike M., Susan D. et al. for equally stimulating, well thought out remarks.

[↑ Contents](#)

394. **William Burmeister Prod**

Re: vizpo, langpo & the zimmerman conference

Wed 14 Jan 1998

On Jan 14, 12:16pm, Susan E. Dunn wrote:

2. LANGPO

I'm interested in why "language poet" seems to be a pejorative term on this list.

See the Mark Wallace essay:

"Emerging Avant Garde Poetries and the "Post-Language Crisis" available at:
<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/wallace/>

William Burmeister

[↑ Contents](#)

395. **KENT JOHNSON**

Barrett, William, Jordan, Ron, Mark, Lyn, Michael, Allen, Joan,

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Feeling out of the loop of where it's at in American (non-visual) poetry, so just set mail again after looking into the archives and seeing all the interesting and somewhat hot threads. So I wanted to add my two cents of comments and questions:

William: Why is Ed Foster evil?

Jordan: OK, so you don't like to be told you're not interesting, but do you really think Don Byrd is a dupe? Add *_The Poetics of the Common Knowledge_* to your vocabulary and don't delete.

Ron: At the risk of making too much out of the letter "A" (that's a little joke referring back to an old thread I remember), I thought I would point out (since the error was repeated in two posts subsequent to yours) that it is "Guantanamo-*era*" and not Guantanamo*ero*". I think you might have been thinking about

Guantanamo, where, believe it or not, a Ron Silliman-admiring-brother-of-a-friend-of-mine is stationed. He is a naval mechanic of some sort, so the New Sentence and Tjanting (I know this for a fact) is present on occupied Cuban soil!

Mark: I know what you mean about Barrett Watten seeming "icy" and "cold". I was with him in what was then Leningrad, and he was, from a personal perspective, the epitome of that. (Ron, Lyn, and Michael were very nice, but Barrett was very not, at least toward me). Why do I point this out? Partly because I've long wanted to have the occasion for saying that it has always struck me as really strange that the detailed, journal-like chattiness of Leningrad (authored by Barrett, Ron, Lyn, and Michael) makes not a single mention that there were three other Americanski's there at the conference with them, who rode on the tour bus with them, ate lunch with them, walked around Leningrad with them, talked to them, changed dollars for rubles on the black market with them, drank with the same KGB agent with them, and so on. I mean talk about getting air-brushed out of the picture! Couldn't they have just said Kent, Ellen, and Steve just once?

The above, of course, is one of the weirdest, most petty notes ever posted to list, but it does add a small piece of trivia to the ever expanding canonization of Language poetry, doesn't it? Remember, historians, the authors of Leningrad just couldn't share the glory of being in the dying Soviet Union with any other gringos!

But on Barrett, I won't leave it at that: I saw him again a few years back at Orono, and he actually came up to me and said hello, how are you. I asked him where the registration table was and he even smiled and said, it's over there, through those doors. He was very nice, and later, in the evening of that day, he read (along with Allen Ginsberg, Charles Bernstein, David Bromige, and Joan Retallack), and I remember he seemed jsut a bit self-conscious and vulnerable before he began, though maybe that was just my impression. I thought it was the best reading (Ginsberg gave more of a talk) because Charles talked too fast, Joan was too imperious, and David obviously thought he was smarter and more clever than everyone present, and I remember that his attitude really bothered me. Barrett read a couple of long poems that were different than anything I had ever heard. They were prose pieces, one about female foxes underneath his house, and the other about him and Diane Ward at a difficult time and about something bad that happened to him. Those poems were different because they were both distant and cold and deeply, almost embarrassingly, personal. Go figure.

That's the report on the reading in Orono in 1992. But seriously, I keep reading those poems and I think they are brilliant. Watten is, even though he conspired

to air-brush me out of the picture, a great poet, no question. I hope I see him again sometime and can ask him why he was such an asshole in Leningrad.

Miekal: You make some interesting and thought-provoking points, but isn't it better for "visual poetry" to remain something akin to that isolated mountain village you mention in the country of Georgia? Isn't that part of the spirit of the movement and of the value of the work? Stay there, then, a hundred miles from the nearest university.

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

396. **david bromige**
(antilangpo?) stunned. very stunned. (ringo)

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Susan Dunn's posting (with its pzzaz-filled title! congrats) has much to chew on, but I'm amazed she finds the tenor of this List anti-LANGPO. It has always struck me as most pro-LANGPO, with the exceptions *_really_* noticeable for their rarity-value. I speak as a highly pro-LANGPO person, whose riff a few weeks back abt Langpo having quit the planet to pace the heavens o'erhead meant only that it's time for beginning poets to claim some further i.d., because to use langpo devices or stance today cannot mean anything like what it meant in 1972. Further to this, I didnt expect Bernstein or Andrews or Watten or Silliman to renounce anything, au contraire, I anticipate that each will continue to *_develop_* from initial premisses. I just dont think that in 1938 it would have made much sense to call either HD or EP "Imagist". But this was not to be "anti-LANGPO" & if I am the party responsible, Susan, for your impression, I hope this note clears matters up. --I wonder what my fellow listlings think about her impression? Buffalo Poetics List, Jan 1998 : pro-LANGPO, or anti-?

David

[↑ Contents](#)

397. **Harold Rhenisch**
Visual Poetics? Dylan?

Wed 14 Jan 1998

This post is in reply to Bob Grumman and the George Bowering.

First, Bob:

"expressive-of-the-visual"

Express? O, are we making strong coffee?

I for one don't want to express the visual. Grind it up, pound it in, steam it, drink it, scrape the grounds out and throw them away, wondering about banned agricultural chemicals, nerves shaking, smells so good. I'd rather set up little cell phone transmitting stations for it. Pass it on.

I don't think the words are quite right.

Second, George:

I just got a bit of colourful mail, with Dylan's mug on the blue envelope: get 11 CDs free, no cards to return, no automatic shipments!!!! Looks like I'll have to move a couple little stickers from the envelope to the reply card and buy another 4 selections for regular prices (from \$15.98), though.

Just imagine, the tables turned: George Bowering on the envelope in blue ink, looking pretty good, no automatic shipments, 11 free books of poetry, and just buy another 4 selections as explained in the material that came in the envelope with this brochure.

Teenage kids spending their McMoney on it, not even looking at the Dylan CDs in the back section of the local chain music store, stocking, as it does, reprints of Percy Faith and his musical heirs and heiresses.

Thing is, would Dylan buy his 4 selections for regular prices in the next 2 years?

Cheers, all!

--Harold Rhenisch



[↑ Contents](#)

398. **Don Byrd**

Strange, Ron, how we got to be the old guys

Wed 14 Jan 1998

I remember 20 years ago or so, Ron Silliman and I had a wonderful evening sitting at my kitchen table. We were in our early thirties. Now we are among the grey-beards of the Poetics List. This happens at a dizzying rate.

If you have been paying attention, you realize you have reached middle age not because your bones creak, which they do, but because you know that you will never find another book or work or art that seems truly strange.

When I was 16 or so, I saw *_La Dolce Vita_* and about the same time Seymour Krim's mass-market anthology *_The Beats_* somehow came into my hands. These made me a strangeness junky. There was a poem in anthology, very strange, Dan Proper's "The Fable of the Final Hour." Does any one know what

happened to Dan Proper, or for that matter who he was? As far as I know that one poem is the only thing of his I ever saw.

I can remember when Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, Ornette Coleman, and John Coltrane were strange. John Cage was strange. Olson, Duncan, Ashbery, O'Hara, and Dorn were strange. Clark Coolidge and Bob Grenier were strange. Chuck Stein and George Quasha's sound poetry was strange. The art from New Guinea in the Rockefeller Collection at the Met was strange. This gets me up to the 70s (I was 30 in 74). Since then there have not been many surprises. Those New Guinea people knocked me out. Talking about an avant-garde. A few ideas were strange: Eric Drexler's book on nanotechnology was strikingly odd. I had big hopes for hypertext, but it has yet to produce much of interest.

It's not as exciting, but it is a relief. You can begin to pay attention to things that humans have always paid attention to. In this connection, it seems to me the most important book of 1997 was John Clarke's *In the Analogy*. It's a big, baffling, posthumous book like Emily Dickinson's collected poems. It's hard to make much of most of it the first time and perhaps the second time you read it. You need to read *From Feathers to Iron*, and it helps to go through all of the issues of *Intent*, and then you need to read most of the books that mentioned in those places as well as in *The Curriculum of the Soul*.... You will need to read Blake, Melville, and Novalis again, if you have read them once, to read them with Clarke's eyes. It is a great education, and you begin to understand the depth and seriousness of the calling of the poet. You will begin to see what language can do, if you put enough pressure on it.

No matter who you are or where you are
in the world, no matter how much money
you have or how many hostages taken,
no matter what luxury and/or emergency
you're in, when you pick up the phone
you hear the same dial tone I hear
right here tonight, so who needs Death
to level us all out, is his voice more
common than the one we've known almost
as long, "whatcha doin?" You can hire
someone to push the buttons for you
so you never have to listen, but just
the same, isn't it better to bear this
unflagging drone than her obscure echo?

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The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

[↑ Contents](#)

399. **david bromige**
strange. very strange.

Wed 14 Jan 1998

As a third graybeard, I second Don Byrd's first-rate rap re-zero-degree art at 16. That stage was like the moment of learning to read all over again. I have my own favorite fetish-memories from that other life when I was alive (as Alice ordered me to be said).

But more pressing info : Dan Proper was (still is?) living nearby me in Sonoma County for some years, one of a number of readers at one event I attended. As a writer, & indeed a human being, he shared something with Wm Faulkner, E Hemingway and Chas Bukowski. Where he is today, I can maybe find out.

As for Bob Grenier, I was with him just 3 days since, and am happy to report that both in his art and his person, he continues to embody super-attractive homespun ostrananie.

David "Ingmar" Bergman

[↑ Contents](#)

400. **Bob Grumman**
Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?

Wed 14 Jan 1998

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

Hi, Wm B

When I say that "for me a mathematical poem is a poem that DOES math, not one that merely discusses something mathematical,: I mean what I'm saying pretty literally. For instance, in my own practice, I often subject words (verbalized images, really) to long division, which entails division/multiplication and addition/subtraction. A silly off-the-cuff example would be to divide robins into spring, and get an "answer" (or quotient) of rain. If rain times robins doesn't exactly equal spring, you'll get a remainder. Actually, this is close to one or two of my mathematical poems--mathemaku, I call them. I'm pretty Cummingsesque. In another mathemaku I use a negative one as an exponent for the

sun, I think, and the reader must imagine the reciprocal of the sun--do the math required by the exponent. In short, the poem IS math, not about math. It is, as you have it, "performing/enacting the thing, rather than talking about it"--and I agree with you that there's nothing wrong with talking about--I've read sever poems about math that I liked a lot.

In my characterization of the math-poem process, I guess you do "run into the abstract immediately"--except that I viscerally feel the operation being carried out. What I'm trying for is a mixture of the abstract and concrete, the images acting as mathematical values being the concrete, the math operation they're subjected, the abstract. I hope for a tension between the two, among other things.

I hope I've answered your question. In any event, thanks for giving me an excuse to rattle on about my math poems--which, by the way, are mostly not visual poems. (There's one on the home page of my poetry website, Comprepoetica, with a link to an explanation of it.)

--Bob G.

Bob Grumman



<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/1492>

Comprepoetica, the Poetry-Data-Collection Site

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[↑ Contents](#)

401. **Bob Grumman**

Re: vizpo, langpo & the zimmerman conference

Wed 14 Jan 1998

To Susan E. Dunn:

1. I'm glad Charles Bernstein's reading was successful. Hurrah for poetry readings!

2. I don't think my disappointment, which was not an attack, at the choice of poet for the reading, or--later--Marjorie Perloff's syllabus was petty. A whole precinct of poets seems to be being systematically excluded from even a toe into academic recognition.

3. Yes, I was more or less asking "How come MP isn't doing enough for ME?" Except that I was truly more interested in how come MP wasn't doing ANYTHING for MY main community of poets. I still am.

4. Some people on this list don't like language poetry, though exactly what it is, is not too clear. I didn't use the term in any negative way. I've published

several language poets, and even done a few poems I consider language poems. Coolidge, Inman, Grenier are among current poets I highly regard, and more than a few of the people insome of

2. LANGPO

I'm interested in why "language poet" seems to be a pejorative term on this list.

3. ZIMCO

I too found it depressing that more people wrote in about bob dylan than have regarding recent books of poetry. As for what Charles Bernstein called, "the STanford Zimmerman conference," It is not surprising but it is sad that this is the only event I've worked on that the national--and international-- press has taken an interest in. But with billion dollar corporations involved in making lots of money off of cd sales, etc. the stakes are different. Talk about a CANONIZED writer! Nonetheless, I'm really looking forward to what Aldon has to say, and granted Dylan's important although he doesn't speak to me (except to say "change the station away from this adult contemporary baby boomer big chill nostalgia crap") I'd rather hear Beck. Or even Bowie. (Or Bernstein!)

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email: [REDACTED]

www: <http://shc.stanford.edu>

[↑ Contents](#)

402. **Bob Grumman**

Re: vizpo, langpo & the zimmerman conference

Wed 14 Jan 1998

I don't know what happened but as I was typing my computer transmitted what I was typing. Apologies. I have a cat on my monitor. I'm sure she did something. Anyway, here's a second, no, THIRD try to, Susan E. Dunn, as I mailed my second try to myself:

1. I'm glad Charles Bernstein's reading was successful. Hurrah for poetry readings!

2. I don't think my disappointment, which was not an attack, at the choice of poet for the reading, or--later--Marjorie Perloff's syllabus, was petty. A whole precinct of poets seems to be getting systematically blocked from even the smallest academic recognition.

3. Yes, in the letter in which I started this little ruckus, I was more or less asking "How come MP isn't doing enough for ME?" Except that I was truly more interested in how come MP wasn't doing ANYTHING for MY main community of poets. I still am.

4. Some people on this list don't like language poetry, though exactly what it is, is not too clear. I didn't use the term in any negative way. My basic attitude is Hurrah for poetry of any kind--just please don't wholly ignore my particular kinds. I don't find Perloff doing much more for visual poetry than Vendler has done for language poetry, and it's sad.

5. I'm not a Dylan fan, or much interested in pop music, so have nothing to say about the last part of Dunn's letter.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

403. **David Kellogg**

Re: Barrett, William, Jordan, Ron, Mark, Lyn, Michael, Allen, Joan,

Wed 14 Jan 1998

Kent, I met Barrett for the first time at the subsequent Orono conference (1996) and had a very different experience. We tended to get drunk (at least I was drunk) and argue about the Rosenbergs with Marjorie Perloff. I found everybody concerned pretty affable.

Cheers,

David

~~~~~  
~~~~~

David Kellogg

Duke University

██████████

Program in Writing and Rhetoric

██████████

Durham, NC 27708

FAX ██████████

<http://www.duke.edu/~kellogg/>

[↑ Contents](#)

404. **louis stroffolino**

Re: LOOSE SUGAR 2nite in my tea

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Well, yeah, i had a similar response to hillman--found it more engaging than graham and her "hubby" hass (still remembering fondly that excellant critique of hass by joe wenderoth in an apr last year---oh no, hey does anybody know the email address for the CAP-L list? where some of these names might mean more; i won't send you a free copy of LIGHT AS A FETTER but maybe a discounted one)--so where was i? Oh yeah Hillman's book has these great moments DESPITE its terrible title....

So, I also wanna plug a book that came out last year not by me..... SCENE OF THE CRIME by Jane Ransom. Her work might be of interest to many on the list, though she has not circulated highly in such circles. I became aware of it courtesy of GENERATOR magazine Dissembling issue several years back and it's knock out wild feminist punny theory ridden (but worn so lightly) dense but oral somehow and daringly "sloppy" enough to get a rise out of those who love to be hit on the head with a bad joke that rebukes one's smugness---and it's very fast. One of my many new year's resolutions is to write a review of it, but maybe this will have more of an effect. Ransom also published a very weird novel this year called BYE BYE. Chris

On Tue, 13 Jan 1998, pritchpa wrote:

Important recent books for me have been:

Stepping Razor - Aldon Nielsen
il cuore: the heart - Kathleen Fraser
Prosepct of Release - Tom Mandel

I'm intrigued by Brenda Hillman's _Loose Sugar_, and would be interested in others' response to this work. I've only had it a couple of days, but so far am struck by the way she has opened up her work to more experimental techniques while retaining a backbone of more traditional narrative. I find the way she's gone at this more appealing - and far less pretentious - than the way Jorie Graham has.

Patrick Pritchett

From: Don Byrd
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Dylan
Date: Tuesday, January 13, 1998 1:18PM

Isn't it curious that we have extended discussions of Dylan's album, but rarely, if ever, a comparable discussion of a new

book of
poetry. I wonder if there is a book of poetry, published in the last
year,
that five people on the list have read.

[↑ Contents](#)

405. **Tom Mandel**
from another era....

Thu 15 Jan 1998

My father-in-law (82) remembers singing the national anthem in school:

"...Babe Ruth through the night...."

I like that. It makes you worry less about prayer in the schools.

Tom Mandel

Screen Porch * <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 * vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22031 * fax: [REDACTED]

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

406. **Thomas Bell**
Re: vizpo, langpo & a fit of nostalgia

Thu 15 Jan 1998

As a non member of the academy or poetry I have been somewhat bemused by the recent flurry here. I could see the same scenario taking place 30 years ago with different actors, which led to this fit of nostalgia:

Was it 30 years ago? Resisting in my mind as melancholy remodels my mind as green splendors the turf'n'surf, I still feel the obviously cheaper paper of the black and lonely book made in maybe Great Brittan never checked out maybe never to be. Ordered by mistake, a rebellious librarian in a rural and minor branch (2 small city blocks then now with an international rep) of a Big Ten, or as part of a job lot. Not part of anyone's curriculum. We were lucky to be allowed some Emily, some fresh air. CONCRETE (Heavy!) then was it Borys or some other foreign name the names The names were all foreign then to us. Joe McCarthy's spirit was still alive in this land. War (or notWar) to come and what was to come was still to come.

Shelved next to heavy and obviously complete and authoritative _Classics of World Literature_, two books on that shelf. What is this stuff? it will blow my teacher's mind we talked that way then. Not lined up - like a drawing almost. This is different this is new.

A
A A
A A A
A A
- "This is a poem? Where is...?"
tom bell [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

407. **david bromige**

kent's memory

Thu 15 Jan 1998

i really dont think i am cleverer than kent, but i think i have a better memory than he does. it was not ginsberg who read with barry, joan, charles, and me, but bob perelman. And i was helped in my reading by peter quartermain. And maybe there were female foxes in what barry read, but i recall the piece he read as being about his area code changing from 415 to 510. And it wasnt 1992, kent, it was 1993. Btw, sorry i havent responded to you yet about the yasusada book. Xmas intervened, and i had to hide everything from the relatives. I know i must be pretty hard to take, but if i write a book abt being on e-mail, i'll be sure that you're in it. david

[↑ Contents](#)

408. **Miekal And**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Abraham Lincoln Gillespie (1895-1950)

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Bern Porter who I contend, is one of the most overlooked experimental presences in 20th century lit & the originator of found poetry feels that Abraham Lincoln Gillespie has never gotten a fair read, & most often Gillespie has been discounted as a Joyce imitator. In this writing he both demonstrates how & proposes that typographical space be animated & multidimensionified.

READIEVICES

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er.....ahehhehoh>ahehahoo>WOPS.....
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from The Syntactic Revolution by Abraham Lincoln Gillespie, edited by Richard Milanzzo, Out of London Press, 1980. Project originally started by Dick Higgins & Something Else Press

LOGOKONS BY Miekal And

<http://www.net22.com/qazingulaza/joglars/logokon/logodex.html>

[↑ Contents](#)

409. **henry gould**

Re: Strange,Ron, how we got to be the old guys

Thu 15 Jan 1998

On Wed, 14 Jan 1998 15:22:48 -0800 Don Byrd said:

>O'Hara, and Dorn were strange. Clark Coolidge and Bob Grenier were strange.

>Chuck Stein and George Quasha's sound poetry was strange. The art from New

>Guinea in the Rockefeller Collection at the Met was strange. This gets me up
>to

>the 70s

When I was a youngster, those people were still strange too. But none of them were as strange as my friends from high school. I think that probably goes for

other people on this list. Experience is often an antidote to art-fetishism. -
Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

410. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**

Re: Strange, Ron, how we got to be the old guys

Thu 15 Jan 1998

not ever ever true!

Good grief!

Alan - it gets stranger!

URL: http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/~spoons/internet_txt.html MIRROR
with other pages at: http://www.anu.edu.au/english/internet_txt IMAGES:
<http://www.cs.unca.edu/~davidson/pix/>

On Wed, 14 Jan 1998, Lawrence Upton. wrote:

*If you have been paying attention, you realize you have reached
middle age not because your bones creak, which they do, but because you know
that you will never find another book or work or art that seems truly
strange.*

[↑ Contents](#)

411. **Bob Grumman**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Hi, Danny:

I hate to sound condescending but while I'm sure your suggestion that "the Visual Poetics community . . . organize readings/lectures/ performances/shows to complement (Marjorie Perloff's) course and to compensate for perceived weaknesses/biases in her syllabus" is well-intentioned, it's a little naive. First off, Dr. Perloff's show is already running. Second, the community I've been talking about (I'd call it the community of unrecognized visual poets rather than THE visual POETICS community, which shows you how nit-picking I can be), is scattered and unwealthy. It'd be very hard, whatever the energy available, to throw together ANY reasonably representative vispo reading ANYwhere in the country. The only recent one of any magnitude was the one in Edmonton, which had money troubles though backed by a university department. Even putting together a representative anthology of vispo has proved so far too much for us. The real problem seems to be that we're a community of artists, not a community of academics. Our minds aren't geared to career-lane functioning.

Finally, inasmuch as Dr. Perloff has left all material published by the people in our group off even her list of recommended publications, I rather doubt that she'd encourage attendance at any reading series we could put together. I suppose she'd have to mention it, as she has been said to have mentioned some of the websites our group has work at, though not the main one, Light & Dust, but more than that . . . well, I'm still awaiting evidence of any real openness on her part to our group.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

412. **Bob Grumman**

Re: Visual Poetics

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Harold, you lost me on this one. I was using "expressive-of-the-visual" (admittedly awkward) to describe textual poems that vividly bring to life some visual image or scene. The point was to distinguish them from visual poems. Such poems are not visual but ABOUT the visual. I don't see what whether you want to express the visual or not has anything to do with it. I also continue to feel bewildered about the hostility the word "express" occasions. I guess a lot of people (me, for one) don't think much of poetry-as-self-expression, but that's SELF-expression, not expression. All poetry has words (at least in my taxonomy), and all words express. Ergo, all poetry is expressive.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

413. **KENT JOHNSON**

Re: kent's memory

Thu 15 Jan 1998

David K: Just to be clear, I don't think anymore that Barrett is a bad guy. He just struck me that way in Leningrad, but now I think he is probably a good guy! And I also think he's an important poet, even if I can't understand him most of the time. It would have been nice to get drunk with you and Barrett and Marjorie sometime, but now I don't drink anymore, so there's no longer any reason to go to conferences! But I doubt if any of this matters, beyond Ron's interesting confusion of Guantanamera and Guantanamo, which more or less proves the whole argument from Sauserre to Derrida!

David B: Well, I was just kidding, sort of. Sort of, because, actually, I honestly do think you are smarter and cleverer than I. This pisses me off, so I was just blowing off a little steam. However, maybe you will get older faster than I will

and your memory will deteriorate beyond the already sad condition of my own! I certainly hope so! Please do write that book on e-mail with my name in it before this happens!

Kent

i really dont think i am cleverer than kent, but i think i have a better memory than he does. it was not ginsberg who read with barry, joan, charles, and me, but bob perelman. And i was helped in my reading by peter quartermain. And maybe there were female foxes in what barry read, but i recall the piece he read as being about his area code changing from 415 to 510. And it wasnt 1992, kent, it was 1993. Btw, sorry i havent responded to you yet about the yasusada book. Xmas intervened, and i had to hide everything from the relatives. I know i must be pretty hard to take, but if i write a book abt being on e-mail, i'll be sure that you're in it. david

[↑ Contents](#)

414. **Jordan Davis**
Rubber takes a beating

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Kent --

I'm sorry, I don't understand your reference.

POETICS --

A young writer I know is interested in the uses of collage and found language in American poetry. My line with him has been that these are cinematic uses, and that the impulse to edit the landscape is not restricted to language art. He says maybe people just don't know that it's fun to make things up. What do you think? Rob Fitterman's got a poem that remixes a gift basket catalogue; every time I hear it I get edgy at the salespeak until Rob comes to his refrain: "Net Wt 4 lbs" -- I hear a mental rhyme with "Raid Kills Bugs Dead", but that's not the only reason it cheers me. What do you think the other reason is?

-- Evoc Nomrah

[↑ Contents](#)

415. **Miekal And**
Whose Visual Poetics? Post Millenium Netizens

Thu 15 Jan 1998

DANIEL L. COLLIER wrote:

>

> One suggestion on the Perloff class controversy: maybe

- > someone from the Visual Poetics community could organize
- > readings/lectures/performances/shows to compliment her
- > course and to compensate for perceived weaknesses/biases in
- > her syllabus. This would take a good bit of energy on
- > someone's part, but judging by the discussions we're having
- > there's no lack of energy on the Visual Poetics scene.
- >
- > I'm sure Dr. Perloff would encourage her students to attend.

I believe the reason you see so much energy on this list is many of the poets/publishers of the visual poetry world have placed as much emphasis in creating community, networking across all boundaries, widening access, treating all media whether its a tape recorder, a copier or a computer as more bandwidth, more cracks for the new & unaccepted to flourish like weeds in the urban landscape. The movement of international visual poetries is participatory & on many levels unmediated by the regimes of academia. It invites marjorie & her students to become participants in a visual / virtual universe, show their work in mail art shows, post works to websites, interact with the wr-eye-tings email list, exchange & collaborate on works via mail. & since myself & others are half-a continent away, exchanges via internet geared toward designing a truly interactive online hyperculture have a decent chance to evolve toward a supportive decentralized learning for everyone.

Miekal

bluebearded zaumnik

Sustaining the Hyperculture: toward an ecology of information
<http://net22.com/qazingulaza/sustaining/sustaining.html>

[↑ Contents](#)

416. **Tom Mandel**
forging and feel?

Thu 15 Jan 1998

RE: Hank's

"I suspect that Tom may be doing it with cavity backs or with blades, but that's his own business.... (I use blades.)"

I wish I **could** use blades;
(remember their feel from youth)

but I can't handle the toe-
-d/shanked muff's sting

& need wound filaments in my shaft, yet
blades and graphite rarely accord

(in the marketplace I mean)
the real problem tho is added loft

somehow sliding or lifting from below
the solidest stroke a rainmaker

"It's down for up" I understand
if thinking only made it so.

Tom

Tom Mandel

Screen Porch * <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 * vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22031 * fax: [REDACTED]

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

417. **Michael Coffey**
schuster/dylan -Reply

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Since the Bob dylan thread has not broken yet, and we seem to be debating across some generational divide the value of dylan's work, i feel compelled to move into the liststream because this past fall i became excited about some dylan-related things, and these things might put his work in a context that is new to some people. It began with a chance discovery of Greil Marcus's book *Invisible Republic*, published by Henry Holt. Although the subtitle of the book would suggest it is about a two- or three-month period in 1967 when dylan holed up with members of The Band in a pink house in woodstock and made "The Basement Tapes," it is really another exploration for Marcus into his notion that there is a secret history, or an alternate history that cannot be found in large public events, and that is inscribed, and in some cases necessarily encrypted, in cultural products, like songs. He worked this out somewhat overheatedly in his book *Lipstick Traces*, published by Harvard UP, which i have since looked at. Marcus, in *Invisible Republic*, contends that Dylan chafed at being adopted into a anti-war anti-establishment college-based movement. He said to one reviewer, "how do you know i'm against the war?" Those months in Woodstock were a time when Dylan reconnected with an American folk tradition, what Marcus calls a "series of secret handshakes" conducted in "the old weird America."

Marcus is guessing (though he knows dylan well i believe, but dylan is one guy not in the book's acknowledgements) that Dylan renewed himself by sampling the songs of such fellows as Mississippi John Hurt and the Carter Family, Clarence Ashton, Blind Lemon Jefferson and all those people collected on the Harry Smith Antholgy of American Folk Music, which was recently rereleased in a handsome package that includes Smith's inimitable liner notes and a booklet that features one of the Marcus chapters from Invisible Republic. The spirit of Marcus's argument, and dylan corroborated this in a NYtimes interview with Jon Pareles, is that there is a renegade tradition in American music that represents the dispossessed outlawry, the crazed, often inbred nature of some regions not touched by commerce and middleclass aspirations, and that many many Americans respond to this whether they know it or not, in his songs, in the Stones, in the new blues.... and that dylan is more comfortable with this kind of apolitical opposition, an American independence born not of a pursuit of happiness or truth but escaping the dictates of a larger cultural expectation.

I like the new dylan album very much. It's tightly put together but it's in a gunny sack of sound. And in one song, the narrator cites his reading of Erica Jong as evidence that he is sensitive to women, so if he is aware of a possible generational divide, he is unbothered by it. It is the irreverent unrepentant dylan at top form, with the great swirling Wurlitzer organ in many of the cuts.

I recommend to anyone to take a look at the Marcus book and read his discussion of the "Folk-Lyric" section of the Smith anthology. This section is full of strange songs like Coo-Coo Bird, and Marcus cites some folk scholars who describe this song form, based in English folk song, as being devoid of narrative strategy or plot, and instead relying upon disorienting images and repetitions and disrupting breaks in hearer's expectations, not unlike what someone recently said on this list of Watten.

[↑ Contents](#)

418. **Miekal And**

[Fwd: Re: Whose Visual Poetics?..... What is.....?]

Thu 15 Jan 1998

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

Cybermind chops wood carries water. The moment continues....

by westbyserver.westby.mwt.net (8.8.7/8.8.6) with SMTP id LAA28028
for <[REDACTED]>; Thu, 15 Jan 1998 11:47:20 -0600 (CST)

by pop-mail.metronet.de with SMTP; 15 Jan 1998 17:49:19 -0000

Date: Thu, 15 Jan 1998 18:55:49 +0100

From: reiner strasser <[REDACTED]>

To: Miekal And <[REDACTED]>

CC: UB Poetics discussion group <[REDACTED]>,
[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Whose Visual Poetics?..... What is.....?

References: <[REDACTED]>

<[REDACTED]> <[REDACTED]> <[REDACTED]>

<[REDACTED]>

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What is.....?

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http://www.burningpress.org/wreyeting/strasser/what_is/what_is.html

Reiner

-----235845A146AF--

[↑ Contents](#)

419. **Tom Mandel**

dylan vs. poetry

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Tho I respect Don Byrd a lot, Dylan vs. "other serious artists" (i.e. poets) doesn't seem to me to be on any target.

Dylan is not a poet. His lyrics, great in their musical contexts, do not support being read either on a page or aloud w/o music. "Sarah," a song I love and whose lyrics, as I said in a previous post, I typed onto my screen, makes no sense at all as a poem. That's ok, it's not meant that way.

Dylan is a song-writer, a musician. Obviously, there are literary influences active but they are adjectival or, better, tonal with respect to the song.

This is an immense and interesting subject -- words/music -- though not as easy to address, perhaps, as the parallel one of "visual poetry."

Too big for me to undertake with a lunch meeting in 90 minutes. But, I'd just point out what happens, for example, to a poem when it's set to music. It is substantially reduced in its language-effect. It immediately becomes something quite different from itself. It can be a great work (recommend song-cycles and settings by Berlioz, Mahler, Milhaud, Poulenc, Lutoslawski, etc.), but you're not getting direct access to any part/place of/in the poem any longer.

"But poetry once *was* a musical art. The Psalms? Sappho?" Oral shape, oral memory are different media from those of writing. Once you could write down thoughts, everything changed. Poetry changed.

But, that's obvious -- or at least known. There's a lot more to investigate that I haven't got time even to adumbrate here.

Tom

Tom Mandel

Screen Porch * <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 * vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22031 * fax: [REDACTED]

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

420. **Tom Mandel**

schuster/dylan

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Josh Schuster's post on the new dylan album confirmed my own sense that it'd be hard to zero in on for anyone not Dylan's age.

"Adult contemporary" indeed. It's *not* about the future it's about the past and about waste. How interesting can that be for someone for whom it's an idea only?

Tom

Tom Mandel

Screen Porch * <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 * vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22031 * fax: [REDACTED]

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

421. **KENT JOHNSON**

Evil Foster/Postmodern Culture

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Since no one has responded to Joshua Schuster's description yesterday of Ed Foster as "evil", does this mean that there is a consensus on this list that he is? Personally, I think Talisman is a great magazine, so I'm wondering. Is it run by a bad person?

Also, wondering if it's been mentioned that there is a neat review of Poetics List up at Postmodern Culture, with our list compared (favorably) to the Academy of American Poets site. I think this is the last "free" issue of PmC, so those who haven't might want to check it out.

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

422. **Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks**

Re: dylan vs. poetry

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Tom Mandel wrote:

Too big for me to undertake with a lunch meeting in 90 minutes. But, I'd just point out what happens, for example, to a poem when it's set to music. It is substantially reduced in its language-effect. It immediately becomes something quite different from itself. It can be a great work (recommend song-cycles and settings by Berlioz, Mahler, Milhaud, Poulenc, Lutoslawski, etc.), but you're not getting direct access to any part/place of/in the poem any longer.

*"But poetry once *was* a musical art. The Psalms? Sappho?" Oral shape, oral memory are different media from those of writing. Once you could write down thoughts, everything changed. Poetry changed.*

But we don't need to go back to an idealized oral antiquity to supply examples of poetical-musical compatibility. What about Elizabethan ballads, Blake, even Ginsberg? One could argue that "poems" like "Come Live with Me and Be My Love" or "When to Her Lute Corrina Sings" are "substantially reduced" in their "language-effect" precisely because of being removed from their musical settings, as they are in their Nortonized fossil-existences. I'm not sure, however, that one wants to go there in either case, as what happens is one ends up

committed to a principle of preservation of the originary moment of creation, with all that baggage of intention and other bugbears.

My main point, I suppose, is that "direct access" is a problem no matter what; if being set to music closes off certain (imagined?) points of entry into a poem, so does a shift from manuscript to type, or from one printed format to another, or from being read silently to being read aloud, or from being read on Tuesday to being read on Friday. Conversely, a musical context might open up latent areas of signification unavailable on purely textual reading. A friend of mine picked up his guitar one day and belted out an impromptu country-western rendition of "Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night"--the printed version has seemed flat to me ever since. And of course, there's the old observation that you can sing the beginning to *Paradise Lost* to the tune of the *Flintstones* theme. This kind of backwards historical contamination operates, albeit in less violent degrees, on much of what we read, hear, etc.

imagine what revisions, thitherto undreaded, might emerge from an '80s-style West-coast hardcore version of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," or a polka treatment of Bob Perelman's "Chronic Meanings."

Um, Bob Dylan: he's that old guy, right?

Kasey Hicks

[↑ Contents](#)

423. **KENT JOHNSON**

Evil Sourmash

Thu 15 Jan 1998

I'm sorry! I now see that the evil one is *Hal Foster* and not *Ed*. The sauce has messed-up my vision along with my memory. By the way, David, what "yasusada book" are you talking about?

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

424. **david bromige**

kent not drunk last night

Thu 15 Jan 1998

I had accounted for kent's "let-em-have-it-on-all-sides" note by supposing he'd been at the sourmash, so it was disconcerting to learn he's on the wagon. I had also thought--since he'd put ginsberg *in* the picture, & left perelman *out* of it--that the poet at that group reading at Orono in 93 whom he recalls as acting smarter than everyone else, was not me but actually bob perelman. I thought

this because I didnt want to be described that way and figured bob would be an acceptable substitute, since he is smarter and cleverer than me.

But kent is correct, while my memory for distant events is nigh unimpeachable, more recent happenings tend to elude my recall. When i have to put everything into storage for christmas, because of having to clear space in our little home for all those big relatives, i cant remember what went in which box, which is why i havent yet resuscitated my yasusada. This jibes with the Don-Byrd syndrome of having one's keener memories date 'way back. I actually have listened to all the dylan albums, but the Surprise Factor kept lessening after Nashville Skyline, and that I found an unpleasant surprise, since it wasnt Highway 61 or even Blonde on Blonde. There's a reluctance to let more stuff in, I guess, has come with age. But my 33-y-o son gave me the new Dylan CD for xmas & one of these nights, I'll listen. But 'nostalgia' scarcely feels the word for the keenness of earlier astonishments, seared into the memory rather than confabulated there by dotage. "Visions of Johanna," wow, and equally intense were For Love, Words, Pieces, Bending the Bow and The North Atlantic Turbine. Or Persona or Il Notte. And all those Godard film/lectures. But while like some other old farts I have experienced what I feared was terminal diminution of esthetic elation, Made to Seem boils my potatoes, & McCaffery's tour de force pop-poem at New Hants, & anything by Randolph Healey, & Debbie an Epic, & Rough Bush, & The Garcia Family Co-Mercy, & Dan Farrell's poetry and Chris Stroffolino's, & Jeff Derksen recent effusions & those pieces I heard Aaron Shurin read recently & on & on I mustnt go, but. . . . Jack Spicer (who aged rapidly) once declared that it was hard to be a poet after 35, because you had accumulated so much furniture you couldnt get in or out of the poem-room with much alacrity; maybe thats what some of us suffer from as time goes by. It actually makes me all the more grateful for the young poets I do, by some chance, read or hear, and there are still too many to mention in an e-post, though Darren-Wershler Henry and Christian Bok come to mind from my recent trip to Toronto, and our own Alan Sondheim (young to _me_), and Tony Lopez, & [message ends abruptly as its author is dragged upstairs to breakfast]

[↑ Contents](#)

425. **Carl Lynden Peters**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? : bill bissett

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Dear Poets,

for anyone in vancouver on January 26: bill bissett: 1:30 pm.

a great innovator, a great poet - visual lyrical sound or concrete - he is just bill bissett! one of our greats.

carl

P.S.: if anyone is going to be in vancouver then and can find their way to Simon Fraser University and wld like details please don't hesitate to contact me for those,



take care

One suggestion on the Perloff class controversy: maybe someone from the Visual Poetics community could organize readings/lectures/performances/shows to compliment her course and to compensate for perceived weaknesses/biases in her syllabus. This would take a good bit of energy on someone's part, but judging by the discussions we're having there's no lack of energy on the Visual Poetics scene.

I'm sure Dr. Perloff would encourage her students to attend.

Just a thought.

Danny.

[↑ Contents](#)

426. **Miekal And**

Re: So tell Bromide and me what we should fear

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Don Byrd wrote:

| *What else?*

"Trip Tease" The Seductive Sounds of Tipsy

| *What else?*

Ubutronic Audio Faucet & Brainwave Seducer

<http://www.net22.com/qazingulaza/joglars/logokon/noise/prenoiseframe.html>

[↑ Contents](#)

427. **DANIEL L. COLLIER**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Thu 15 Jan 1998

One suggestion on the Perloff class controversy: maybe someone from the Visual Poetics community could organize readings/lectures/performances/shows to compliment her course and to compensate for perceived weaknesses/biases in

her syllabus. This would take a good bit of energy on someone's part, but judging by the discussions we're having there's no lack of energy on the Visual Poetics scene.

I'm sure Dr. Perloff would encourage her students to attend.

Just a thought.

Danny.

[↑ Contents](#)

428. **Michael Magee**

Re: Evil Foster/Postmodern Culture

Thu 15 Jan 1998

I believe it was not *Ed* Foster but *Hal* Foster, who teaches at Cornell, who Josh described as evil, a different situatio entirely. -m.

According to KENT JOHNSON:

>

> Since no one has responded to Joshua Schuster's description
> yesterday of Ed Foster as "evil", does this mean that there is a
> consensus on this list that he is? Personally, I think Talisman is a
> great magazine, so I'm wondering. Is it run by a bad person?

>

> Also, wondering if it's been mentioned that there is a neat review of
> Poetics List up at Postmodern Culture, with our list compared
> (favorably) to the Academy of American Poets site. I think this is
> the last "free" issue of PmC, so those who haven't might want to
> check it out.

>

> Kent

>

[↑ Contents](#)

429. **Jack Spandrift**

Re: schuster/dylan -Reply

Thu 15 Jan 1998

O I hear ya, McCoffey - "crazed, inbred regions" - why, that's where I was born an raised! Chickatoo County, just west northwest of Grmbajoyaho Valley - real mountain country, where the cider tastes like whiskey, and the whiskey tastes like diesel fuel, and the diesel fuel tastes like wine, and the wine tastes like Grandma's 44-Special! Hooeee! We used to sit out on the porch and throw horseshoes at the Fed-Ex delivery man every afternoon about sundown! I

member that Dylan fella comin around, beggin to learn tunes offa Gramps Jipsum, the Flea-band man! Gramps wouldn't play nothin for him for less than 5 Washintons! Them was crazy days, back in secret, independent ol USA! - Jack Spandrift

[↑ Contents](#)

430. **Safdie Joseph**
Post Postmodernism

Thu 15 Jan 1998

This message is in MIME format. Since your mail reader does not understand this format, some or all of this message may not be legible.

charset="iso-8859-1"

Fellow Listers --

The attachment above is an article by Mark Leyner that I found quite hilarious and also -- in a slightly perverse way -- extremely relevant to many of the concerns of this list. I hope you can all "get" this onto your word processor -- if you can't, please backchannel me and we'll arrange some other way to transmit it. It's worth the several screens it takes up!

I wanted to try and respond to David B.'s recent surprise about the list being thought anti-Langpo. I think he's certainly right to be surprised -- clearly the majority of folks here have, if not completely positive feelings, clear interest in and attraction to this . . . project. As people with whom I've exchanged backchannels with over the past year know, however, I was never among them, for a mixture of personal and poetic reasons.

Mike and Dale's Younger Poets has just published its new issue #7, with lots of work worth checking out, especially (for me) from Anselm Hollo, Lisa Jarnot, Duncan McNaughton and Lewis Warsh; the last third of this particular issue, however, is made up of posts from this list in late September. Without referencing that specific thread, I want to quote something that Dodie Bellamy said in the midst of it, this from September 26:

"I can sympathize with Tom Clark's hatred of Language Writers. I was living in San Francisco when the Lang-Pos took over the scene--it was brutal and many people were treated very badly."

I didn't know Dodie then (a situation I'm glad has been remedied!) but I can definitely understand and agree with this comment. I had just moved to San Francisco in 1980 when I first became conscious of a group of folks called the "Language Poets" -- the name was then an occasion of some consternation among them, but it's obviously stuck. It was at that time that I met Barry, Bob

Perelman, and Carla Harryman -- I never did meet Ron or Lyn, but they were prominently around, as was Steve Benson (whatever happened to Steve? Is he still around?) and some other folks that, I think, made up the "west coast branch" of the group. This was the personal part of the equation -- I found Barry (besides looking uncomfortably like George Will) well, almost insufferable. Prigish. Aloof. Supercilious. Contemptuous. On the other hand, Carla was quite affable; Bob was certainly always willing to engage in friendly debate. These are obviously personal reactions and carry the weight personal reactions do. I'm glad to see that other people feel differently about Barry's personality.

But the thing is, I found the poetics part insufferable too -- I came into poetry in the 70s, a devotee and student of, first, Pound and Williams, then Olson, then the Black Mountain folks (but not, as Ron had it a few months back, the "whiny 3rd-generation Black Mountain outsider nostalgia" school -- not an exact quote, but close) and the New York school -- later I was extremely fortunate to meet and even study with many of the people in the Allen Anthology and the New York school anthology, the two books that were my bibles. I remember really being excited about Don Byrd's book on Olson, felt it was one of the smartest things I'd ever read. This was my education -- this was the world I had somehow miraculously gained a small foothold in, and I was grateful.

And then I moved to San Francisco, and started publishing a short-lived but well-read magazine called Zephyr, and met the above-mentioned folks at readings, and talks, and seminars, and such, and found that they were consciously setting themselves in opposition to the people and ideas and work I had come out of, the universe that had formed my poetics and still does; I mean, people have joked about Freud's theory about the sons and the father on this list, but I have never seen -- and never will again, I'm sure -- such a conscious Oedipal scene as this one. They weren't nice about it, they weren't subtle about it: they just announced we are the new thing, take it or leave it. I left it. I found the work that came out of these half-baked French and Russian deconstructionist linguistic theories pretentious and extremely self-serving. Despite the undergraduate Marxism, I found it anti-political. I found it devoid of humor or wit. Most importantly, I found the ADDRESS of such work to be extremely narrow; I thought the work had abandoned the hope of affecting a wide audience, the hope of somehow EMBODYING that wider social context; I found it elitist.

Ancient history perhaps, but as Don and Ron and Tom have, I think, pointed out recently, what we learn is what stays with us. Now it's now, and after several years overseas and out of the loop of the poetry world, I've tried to re-educate myself about contemporary practice, what people are reading and writing and thinking; being part of this list has been a big part of that. Some things have changed, some things haven't; I find myself liking many poems that I would still call "langpo" 20 years later, and disliking others. I haven't read FRAME yet, but

will probably pick it up and give it a glance, based on what some people have said about it on this list; on the other hand, I found Barry's lecture in the ILS turgid and, finally, not worth the effort it took to read it. Is it all a matter of "taste," then, and can these things even be talked about? Well, I thought yesterday was the best day ever on the list, at least in my time on it -- so many provocative and intelligent posts! So I guess the answer is yes -- with the constant hope that people who are working different streets and different corners of those streets be granted respect and recognition and not automatically be shunted aside to the low-rent district.

Apologies for taking up so much valuable screen-space.

Joe Safdie

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name="Doc1.doc"
filename="Doc1.doc"
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[↑ Contents](#)

431. **Cadaly**
Visual Poetry at LACMA

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Just wanted to mention, if it hasn't been mentioned on this thread, that the LA County Museum of Art (LACMA) Winter Writer on Site is Austin Straus, who will be giving a tour, lecturing, and teaching at Beyond Baroque on Visual Poetry.

LACMA

Saturday, Jan. 24, 2:30

Tour

LACMA

Saturday, Feb. 1, 2

Lecture

BB

Saturday, APRIL 18, 7:30

Presentations/reading

Simply on the mailing list,
Catherine Daly

[↑ Contents](#)

432. **LAURA MORIARTY**

Saturday readings

Thu 15 Jan 1998

I seem to be having two of them:

This Saturday, the 17th, at the Luggage Store gallery at 1007 Market (Market and 6th in SF) at 8:00 I will be reading with Arnold Kemp and possibly Jack Hirschman - The current show there has to do with emotional and psychic baggage so I will be reading from my luggage-related work. (I actually have such work as I have just finished a manuscript called The Case.)

The Luggage Store is a new reading venue. Leslie Scalapino is doing a performance there with a performance artist whose name I can't remember in February in the store window that will also include a pile of dirt or possibly mud. More about this later.

Also Saturday 31 January there will be a group reading for the new Avec Sampler which will include Lissa McLaughlin, George Albon, Stephen-Paul Martin and myself.

Laura Moriarty

[↑ Contents](#)

433. **Bob Grumman**

Re: Whose Vispo?

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Odd, I sent two messages to the list around ten this morning and neither has been posted. One was innocuous, the other critical of Marjorie Perloff's seminar. Has freedom of speech been suspended, or is it just an oddly-timed glitch? --Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

434. **Aldon Nielsen**

Re: Dylan

Thu 15 Jan 1998

I've read Mark Wallace's Sonnets of a Penny a Liner 5 times -- does that count? anyway, at the risk of incurring the rath of the list -- permit me to mention the Bob Dylan conference at Stanford this Saturday -- running from 9:00 through the afternoon -- at which I will talk about Dylan and some, er . . . poets --

[↑ Contents](#)

435. **Henry Gould**
Re: Post Postmodernism
Thu 15 Jan 1998

"EMBODYING a wider social context" (J.Safdie). that seems like what it's all about - what poetry somehow does, or tries to do. the challenge facing every poet. Not in any simplistic sense, either. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

436. **David Zauhar**
Re: schuster/dylan -Reply
Thu 15 Jan 1998

O I hear ya, McCoffey - "crazed, inbred regions" - why, that's where I was born an raised! Chickatoo County, just west northwest of Grmbajoyaho Valley - real mountain country, where the cider tastes like whiskey, and the whiskey tastes like diesel fuel, and the diesel fuel tastes like wine, and the wine tastes like Grandma's 44-Special!
- Jack Spandrift

I thought Spandrift was from Brainerd or Bemidji Minnesota. Not exactly mountain country, if memory serves.

Dave Zauhar

[↑ Contents](#)

437. **hen**
Re: schuster/dylan -Reply
Thu 15 Jan 1998

On Thu, 15 Jan 1998 13:15:43 -0600 David Zauhar said:

>

>I thought Spandrift was from Brainerd or Bemidji Minnesota. Not exactly
>mountain country, if memory serves.

Spandrift went to Brainerd to escape the law. But he won't tell you that, he's on the run, the cagey varmint he is. Here's a tune from his most recent CD, "Words Gone Naked"

O them green, green hills of Brainerd,
How I long for your mustache in my pie!
For your dolesome wholesome Folsom
I will moan, moan, moan
Until I see them hilltops through the haze...

- ""Eric Blarnes""[hic]

[↑ Contents](#)

438. **Aldon Nielsen**

Re: C.L.R. James

Thu 15 Jan 1998

On the subject of conferences -- I have one slot still open on a panel on C.L.R. James for the American Literature Association , last weekend of May in San Diego -- The james panel will be on Saturday -- email quick if you'd like to propose a paper

[↑ Contents](#)

439. **MAYHEW**

History of Modern Poetry

Thu 15 Jan 1998

The History of Modern Poetry:

From the 1890s to the High Modernist Mode

(Chapter 1) To replace every line with a better one until the poem was perfected--such was his simplistic thinking until Ezra Pound straightened him out, circa 1914, staring for weeks at a rotting fish until the poem was perfected. There had to be a better way!

(Chapter 2) Until Ezra Pound straightened him out Yeats sulked in Celtic twilight staring for weeks at a rotting fish, surfacing only to consult the Martians.

(Chapter 3)

There had to be a better way to describe a red wheelbarrow!

(Chapter 4) Yeats sulked in Celtic twilight while Spicer and Duncan made world-series predictions, surfacing only to communicate with the Martians living in North Beach or Berkeley.

(Chapter 5) To describe a red wheelbarrow Wallace Stevens or that other poet whose name slipped my mind, while Spicer and Duncan made world-series predictions, squandering a family fortune and living in North Beach or Berkeley... No, that was somebody else.

(Chapter 6) Wallace Stevens, or that other poet, whose name slipped my mind delivered the infant Allen Ginsberg in Paterson, New Jersey, squandering a family fortune and marrying the woman whose face was on the nickel. No, that was somebody else.

(Chapter 7) In his old age he imagined that he had delivered the infant Allen Ginsberg in Paterson, New Jersey. It would have made a great story!

Marrying the woman whose face was on the nickel was small consolation for a life of obscurity.

(Chapter 8)

In his old age he imagined that he had once discussed Gertrude Stein with Picasso. It would have made a great story.

(Chapter 9) To replace every line with a better one was small consolation for a life of obscurity--such was his simplistic thinking. Once discussed Gertrude Stein with Picasso , circa 1914.

Jonathan Mayhew

Department of Spanish and Portuguese 3062 Wescoe Hall University of Kansas

██████████

██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

440. **Aldon Nielsen**
film etc.

Thu 15 Jan 1998

1. here's the "w" that was missing from "rath" in my previous post

2. AND for those interested in film etc. :

http://humanitas.ucsb.edu/~everett/news_letter/index.html

This address will bring you to the newsletter of the African-American caucus of the Society for Cinema Studies -- The issue now on line contains a short piece by our own Patrick Pritchett as well as nifty photos of Lorenzo Thomas at Naropa this past Summer

[↑ Contents](#)

441. **Robin Morris**
Re: schuster/dylan -Reply

Thu 15 Jan 1998

I'm not sure I follow your logic here: is Jong being read by young women (by anyone) these days? I consider her someone who seemed "liberated" half a life-time ago, but is a more than a little beside the point nowadays. The biggest belly laugh I got from the album on my first couple of hearings was from that line. He's got to be sarcastic, right, affirming how little he cares or knows about feminist issues.

Robin

I like the new dylan album very much. It's tightly put together but it's in a gunny sack of sound. And in one song, the narrator cites his reading of Erica Jong as evidence that he is sensitive to women, so if he is aware of a possible generational divide, he is unbothered by it. It is the irreverent unrepentant dylan at top form, with the great swirling Wurlitzer organ in many of the cuts.

* * * * *

Robin A. Morris

Home page: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ramorris>

[↑ Contents](#)

442. **Cadaly**

Re: Jong

Thu 15 Jan 1998

She's got a poem about shoes on the new Rhino compilation CD. Which seems to be overly indebted to the Lannan poetry series.

Catherine Daly

[↑ Contents](#)

443. **Michael Coffey**

Re: schuster/dylan -Reply -Reply

Thu 15 Jan 1998

yes indeed, the erica jong reference is funny, and blatantly a lazy rhyme given in the exhausted spirit of the song; that last tune, my heart's in the highlands, 17 minutes long or so, is as shaggy a dog song as dylan has. the music drives it, though, makes it stand up despite all the loose carefree phrasemaking that hangs off it. but of course one shouldn't say that bob dylan is anything with respect to feminism and the like. He's not in these songs in a literal way. He's doing voices.

a couple (three, actually) of the other posts seemed to be making merry with the idea that dylan or greil marcus or I have any right to point towards an "invisible republic" of outlawry threading its way through american folk music. but gawd, don't ever suggest that the poetic enthusiams of this list are not engaged in some spirited opposition to the narrow forces of a dominant culture. thar's the heroism, "emodying a wider social context" indeed!

>>> Robin Morris <[REDACTED]> 01/15/98 04:04pm

>>>

I'm not sure I follow your logic here: is Jong being read by young women (by anyone) these days? I consider her someone who seemed "liberated" half a lifetime ago, but is a more than a little beside the point nowadays. The biggest belly laugh I got from the album on my first couple of hearings was from that line. He's got to be sarcastic, right, affirming how little he cares or knows about feminist issues.

Robin

>I like the new dylan album very much. It's tightly put together but it's in a
>gunny sack of sound. And in one song, the narrator cites his reading of
>Erica Jong as evidence that he is sensitive to women, so if he is aware
>of a possible generational divide, he is unbothered by it. It is the
>irreverent unrepentant dylan at top form, with the great swirling
Wurlitzer
>organ in many of the cuts.
>
>

* * * * *

Robin A. Morris

Home page: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ramorris>

[↑ Contents](#)

444. **David Zauhar**

Re: schuster/dylan -Reply

Thu 15 Jan 1998

On Thu, 15 Jan 1998, hen wrote:

On Thu, 15 Jan 1998 13:15:43 -0600 David Zauhar said:

I thought Spandrift was from Brainerd or Bemidji Minnesota. Not exactly mountain country, if memory serves.

Spandrift went to Brainerd to escape the law. But he won't tell you that, he's on the run, the cagey varmint he is. Here's a tune from his most recent CD, "Words Gone Naked"

*O them green, green hills of Brainerd,
How I long for your mustache in my pie!
For your dolesome wholesome Folsom*

*I will moan, moan, moan
Until I see them hilltops through the haze...*

- """"Eric Blarnes""""[hic]

My Mistake, and thanks for the biographical clarification. I have relatives from towns near Brainerd (Crosby and Ironton), but unlike the guys in the movie _ Fargo_, I don't know where to go to get laid (though I imagine I could find a woodchipper without much difficulty).

DZ

[↑ Contents](#)

445. **Bob Grumman**
Re: Freedom of Speech
Thu 15 Jan 1998

Turns out the messages I tried to send to the list around 9:30 this morning never got beyond my server who had some kind of trouble he wasn't aware of till I called him around four this afternoon. Apologies to ye Guardians of the Buffalo List for my dark but amusing suspicions. But the timing of my server's problem WAS Very Weird!

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

446. **rsillima**
The Strangeness of Kinders
Thu 15 Jan 1998

"When I was a youngster, those people were still strange too. But none of them were as strange as my friends from high school... Henry Gould"

I, for one, would be willing to stipulate that Henry Gould's friends from high school and possibly even later might be as strange as....

Ron

[↑ Contents](#)

447. **CharSSmith**
Re: PhillyTalks #3
Thu 15 Jan 1998

In a message dated 98-01-09 04:06:08 EST, you write:

<< Jeff Derksen & Ron Silliman dialogue on opposition & contradiction in the unedited present, in PhillyTalks #3, available next week from this e-address to interested persons. #3 includes new poetry from each. >>

Louis,

Please send me a copy. What happened to number two? I saw the first one on the Web--maybe missed an announcement for the second? Anyway, it's a great idea!

all best,
Charles Smith

[↑ Contents](#)

448. **Susan Schultz**

Re: schuster/dylan -Reply

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Just got the tape; I especially liked the line before by a woman who says to the Dylan-narrator, "You don't read women writers, do you?" The response of "I do, I read Erica Jong" (or whatever) is surely ironic. What gets me about the album, in the context of all the discussion on this list, is how scenic-mode-official-lyric-culture-univocal it is. Does the music, mainly blues inflected, really draw us to such an extent to something many on this list (if not the langpo bashers, whoever they are) heartily disapprove of? It's all about love and loss, love and loss--and Tom, those themes _are_ ones that young people tap into, no? Or was I just warped? Ok, I was, no matter. Lots of sentiment and cliches. Does "sentiment" now belong in songs, but not in poems? But I, for one, have enjoyed my first couple of listens to it in my car driving through the Koolau tunnels to work (the album is tropical only in the linguistic sense...).

Susan

On Thu, 15 Jan 1998, Robin Morris wrote:

I'm not sure I follow your logic here: is Jong being read by young women (by anyone) these days? I consider her someone who seemed "liberated" half a lifetime ago, but is a more than a little beside the point nowadays. The biggest belly laugh I got from the album on my first couple of hearings was from that line. He's got to be sarcastic, right, affirming how little he cares or knows about feminist issues.

Robin

I like the new dylan album very much. It's tightly put together but it's in a gunny sack of sound. And in one song, the narrator cites his reading of Erica Jong as evidence that he is sensitive to women, so if he is aware

of a possible generational divide, he is unbothered by it. It is the irreverent unrepentant dylan at top form, with the great swirling Wurlitzer organ in many of the cuts.

* * * * *

Robin A. Morris

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Honolulu, HI 96822
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<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/eazines/tinfish>

[↑ Contents](#)

449. **Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher**

Re: dylan vs. poetry

Thu 15 Jan 1998

aw well, heck... i was gonna wait a spell, b/c i've been up to no good and i wanted to share it with you folks when it looked reasonably... good...

but what the hell: the working draft of a text of a talk i'll be giving at a suny/stony brook conference end of march, "new millennium, new humanities"... i'll be yapping, alongside mary kelly's and judith barry's no doubt wiser words, on "new arts" (a very brief description of what i hope to accomplish at my home page)... here's the title:

what a little moonlighting can do, seriously @
<http://www.iit.edu/~amato/moonlight.html>

no doubt i've excluded numerous somebodies... i'm trying!--it's an academic venue, and i'm trying to open it up some...

the dylan cd is ok, but i'm with mandel on this one---*blood on the tracks* is his best, from my pov... and don (folks---i studied with don, we be tight even if we don't always agree)---that word *serious* comes under some, uh, *serious* scrutiny at the url (above)...

be sure to follow (all!) the links... all pies (coconut cream is my favorite, but 3.14159... ok too) backchannel, please...

best,

joe

email: [REDACTED]

url: <http://www.iit.edu/~amato>

[↑ Contents](#)

450. **Heather Starr**

Re: (antilangpo?) stunned. very stunned. (ringo)

Thu 15 Jan 1998

I'm sorry -- I thought this was the Language Poetry Discussion List.

heather (joking, but pointedly pointing towards pro)

clears matters up. --I wonder what my fellow listlings think about her impression? Buffalo Poetics List, Jan 1998 : pro-LANGPO, or anti-?

David

--

Heather Starr

work: [REDACTED]

home: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

451. **Don Byrd**

Re: dylan vs. poetry

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Tom Mandel wrote:

Tho I respect Don Byrd a lot, Dylan vs. "other serious artists" (i.e. poets) doesn't seem to me to be on any target.

Dylan is not a poet.

Tom, I see nothing in your note that I do not agree with. My only question was, how come every one seems to have an opinion on this songwriter when there seems to be almost no comparable discussion of poets. I insisted that Dylan was a "serious artist" (i.e. a serious song writer whom I wanted to

compared with serious poets) precisely because I didn't want to make the category mistake you want to correct.

Although it appears that 5 or 6 people have read *_Frame_*, this is not enough common ground to support a serious discussion of current poetic practice. Pound says somewhere, "It doesn't make any difference what books people read as long as they read the same books." Of course, some may want to take his comment as a fascist apology for the canon, but in practical terms, if this list (or any list) is to support a useful discussion it must have shared a vocabulary.

Don Byrd ([REDACTED], [REDACTED])

Department of English

State University of New York

Albany, NY 12222

[REDACTED] (work); [REDACTED] (home); [REDACTED] (fax)

The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

[↑ Contents](#)

452. **Jack Spandrift**

Re: schuster/dylan -Reply -Reply

Thu 15 Jan 1998

On Thu, 15 Jan 1998 16:36:16 -0500 Michael Coffey said:

>

>a couple (three, actually) of the other posts seemed to be making merry
>with the idea that dylan or greil marcus or I have any right to point
>towards an "invisible republic" of outlawry threading its way through
>american folk music. but gawd, don't ever suggest that the poetic
>enthusiasms of this list are not engaged in some spirited opposition to the
>narrow forces of a dominant culture. thar's the heroism, "emodying a
>wider social context" indeed!

Ey, McCoffey, me lad, dinna take Spandrift's spirits amiss - e's with ye,
lad, e's with ye! Al 6'3" a South Carolina ruffian, aye!

- Eric McBlarnes

p.s. but I'm wi' Schuster al the wee on the Dylan lad's effarts!

[↑ Contents](#)

453. **Don Byrd**

So tell Bromige and me what we should hear

Thu 15 Jan 1998

david bromige wrote:

*. This
jibes with the Don-Byrd syndrome of having one's keener memories date 'way
back.*

David, the other side of this (or two other sides) is the fact that until about the time I graduated from college I listened almost exclusively to be-bop and blues. I had some Little Richard and some do-wop records, for parties, but I listened Parker, Monk and Davis, or B.B. King, Howling Wolf, and Muddy Waters, who all started recording about the time I was born, and to Ellington, who started recording twenty years before that. It was *_Hiway 61 Revisited_* and *_Sgt. Pepper_* (along with the various distortions--both ideological and otherwise--of that time) that made me part of my generation.

My daughter, who will graduate from college this spring, listens to *_Hiway 61 Revisited_* almost every day, I think, but, when I ask her what she thinks is going on musically, she gives me David S. Ware, post-Coltrane music of the spheres (so Ware insists)--wonderful, but I don't need her to tell me this is good.

But, of course, "Visions of Johanna" belongs to the art of the song in the grandest scale. One speaks of it, in the company of songs of the great Renaissance song writers.

I keep bugging my students about what to listen to. The best thing they have turned me onto recently is Tricky, *_Pre-Millennium Tension_*.

What else? What else?

Don Byrd ([REDACTED], [REDACTED])
Department of English
State University of New York
Albany, NY 12222
[REDACTED] (work); [REDACTED] (home); [REDACTED] (fax)
The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

[↑ Contents](#)

454. **Rachel Loden**

FYI (baby poet maudit alert)

Thu 15 Jan 1998

Poeta nascitur, non fit?

Study: Children of Divorce Twice as Likely to Write Bad Poetry

<http://www.theonion.com/onion3301/divorcepoetry.html>

Excerpts:

"DURHAM, NC--A study released Monday by Duke University's Center for the American Family confirmed what many child-development experts have asserted for years: Children whose parents are divorced are twice as likely to compose bad poetry as those whose parents are married....

"The Duke researchers also found a strong correlation between the nature of a particular divorce and quality of poetry. In 90 percent of divorces categorized as "amicable," the breakup results in rhyming poems, usually with irritating, "sing-songish" A-B-A-B rhyme schemes. The more acrimonious the split, however, the greater the odds of a child turning to other, more wretch-inducing poetic forms: Eighty-five percent of contested divorces end in free verse, the study found, and three in four divorces involving custody battles end in haiku...."

[More like "retch-inducing," maybe?]

Rachel Loden

[↑ Contents](#)

455. **Henry Gould**

Re: dylan vs. poetry

Thu 15 Jan 1998

I think if you correlate Jonathan Mayhew's mini-history of 20th century poetry with the general Dylan-poetry debate, you can just about sense a faint breeze wafting from the approaching future century-millennium-era. Because what seems Great & Essential to us is suddenly framed in an entirely new museum of events; maybe a repetition of what happened at the beginning of the 20th century, nevertheless a reconfiguration on behalf of the GNU gnu. - Henry Gould
p.s. Ron - great example of the New Sentence! Dig the ... ! (language poets : someday check out the subversive potential of the SUBORDINATE CLAUSE) ... !

[↑ Contents](#)

456. **Steve Shoemaker**

Re: dylan vs. poetry

Thu 15 Jan 1998

One of my fave popcult moments of recent times was in the "modernized" Richard III film, when "Come Live with Me and Be My Love" (a.k.a The Passionate Shepherd etc etc) was performed as a 1940s-style pop number. s

At 09:10 AM 1/15/98 -0800, you wrote:

>Tom Mandel wrote:

>

>>Too big for me to undertake with a lunch meeting in 90 minutes. But, I'd
>>just point out what happens, for example, to a poem when it's set to music.
>>It is substantially reduced in its language-effect. It immediately becomes
>>something quite different from itself. It can be a great work (recommend
>>song-cycles and settings by Berlioz, Mahler, Milhaud, Poulenc, Lutoslawski,
>>etc.), but you're not getting direct access to any part/place of/in the
>>poem any longer.

>>

>>"But poetry once **was** a musical art. The Psalms? Sappho?" Oral shape, oral

>>memory are different media from those of writing. Once you could write down

>>thoughts, everything changed. Poetry changed.

>

>But we don't need to go back to an idealized oral antiquity to supply
>examples of poetical-musical compatibility. What about Elizabethan
>ballads, Blake, even Ginsberg? One could argue that "poems" like "Come
>Live with Me and Be My Love" or "When to Her Lute Corrina Sings" are
>"substantially reduced" in their "language-effect" precisely because of
>being _removed_ from their musical settings, as they are in their
>Nortonized fossil-existences. I'm not sure, however, that one wants to go
>there in either case, as what happens is one ends up committed to a
>principle of preservation of the originary moment of creation, with all
>that baggage of intention and other bugbears.

>

>My main point, I suppose, is that "direct access" is a problem no matter
>what; if being set to music closes off certain (imagined?) points of entry
>into a poem, so does a shift from manuscript to type, or from one printed
>format to another, or from being read silently to being read aloud, or from
>being read on Tuesday to being read on Friday. Conversely, a musical
>context might open up latent areas of signification unavailable on purely
>textual reading. A friend of mine picked up his guitar one day and belted

>out an impromptu country-western rendition of "Do Not Go Gentle into that
>Good Night"--the printed version has seemed flat to me ever since. And of
>course, there's the old observation that you can sing the beginning to
>_Paradise Lost_ to the tune of the _Flintstones_ theme. This kind of
>backwards historical contamination operates, albeit in less violent
>degrees, on much of what we read, hear, etc.
>
>imagine what revisions, thitherto undreaded, might emerge from an
>'80s-style West-coast hardcore version of "The Love Song of J. Alfred
>Prufrock," or a polka treatment of Bob Perelman's "Chronic Meanings."
>
>Um, Bob Dylan: he's that old guy, right?
>
>Kasey Hicks
>
>

[↑ Contents](#)

457. **George Bowering**

Re: (antilangpo?) stunned. very stunned. (ringo)

Fri 16 Jan 1998

I too was puzzled by Ms Dunn's notion that this list was anti-LangPo. I have always thought that it was made up of people who are either Language Poets or assume that the Language Poets are the main thing or one of the main things. Maybe she got crossed between this list and the one we hear about from time to time, the one about the strangely named new Formalists.

George Bowering.

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Vancouver, B.C.,
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

458. **Louis Cabri**

histories

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Want to phatically blurt how posts in last
few days are an ore ridge in all ways golden, the 'vizpo'
ones for sure, & more. In particular it seems Joshua

Schuster's post has momentarily 'humanized' the list in a new way, resulting in some wonderful 'private' histories (let's have more!) of books read. Feel I have learned more about some of you folks from what you have described of your own past (poetical activities etc) in the last few days than.... Perhaps such a turn back to histories private & shared, so as to also get, in some larger sense, a collective history floating in the present tense, is needed, in order to begin to figure what future we might bring forward here together. (No, I have not joined the Folkways Department.) It's that common ground Don Byrd suggests, which appeals. It's not where your email's come to, but where it's never come to.... A cognitive mapping of books read (where, when, why, how, what)? Lurklessly bereft, but glad - l

[↑ Contents](#)

459. **david bromige**
dullard brutes of langpo

Fri 16 Jan 1998

I appreciate Joe Safdie's frankness. But sometimes it's more like a steamroller than a scalpel. The traits he attributes in one part to the langpos of sf en masse, turn out to be just those that he feels Barrett Watten possesses. Later in his post, he declares that langpoets (again en masse) were/are "devoid of humor and wit." Perelman? Benson? Harryman? Robinson? Four of the wittiest, funniest people I ever met! Ron Silliman once worked as a standup comedian! And perhaps perilangpoetic, but certainly very much in the middle of things then, the devastating wit of Tom Mandel, the deadpan humor of Michael Palmer!

Joe's take is unhappily similar to Tom Clark's would-be assassinations in *_Po-etty Flash_* mid-80s. Barrett is made the butt, and on the other hand, *_all_* langpos are tarred with the Barrett brush.

Moving in and taking over--what do you think it was like when Black Mountain came to *_your_* town?! When the Beats rolled into cities in the middle of the night, their tanks on rubber tracks, their submachine guns loaded with live ammo? There's been worse than Langpo, Joe! Ever read Robert Duncan's sadistic dissection of Robin Blaser's versions of *_Les Chimeres_* ? Look it up--in a journal called *_Audit_* issued in Buffalo in 66-67 or 67-68 : page upon redundant page of vitriolic grandstanding. Our dear friend Robert Duncan (I say that not only with irony). It drove Robin out of the country.

Ever read Ed Dorn & Tom Clark's *_Rolling Stock_* , that wanted to wipe out any number of xenotypes, including gays with aids? I personally do not remember

any occasion of Dodie Bellamy being tortured, nor would I have stood idly by had I been witness. I did hear complaints, from others, that they felt left out. It didn't appear to be, initially, a matter of personal animosity, but rather of ideological difference. So then why would you want to be acknowledged by a group that you thought should not exist?

Tom Clark was one mean opponent whose chief exception to langpo (since he couldn't handle theory) was that they operated as a group. This was to overlook Tom Clark and his cronies in the late 60's with their "All Stars anthology" and attitude. Well, that and his objection to Watten as humorless. Let me assure those of you who have not felt the barb of BW's wit, that he is far from that.

What I say above concerning groups does not, in my opinion, apply to any entity that takes upon itself the responsibility for the entire poetic community, such as the newspaper Poetry Flash. Tom became a willing hitman for Poetry Flash. Read the xenofiles for '85. PF still has a virtual embargo on Langpoets, which soon will have been in place as long as the USA's, on Cuba. A couple of token comrades have been admitted. I myself became involved in a cyclone in '89 after PF published my report on the Objectivist Conference at Royaumont : a number of contribs--and a PF editor--tried to trash it and the Conference, because in their judgment, Langpoets had no right to confer about Objectivists. Certainly not if it involved flying them to France, rather than (I guess) card-carrying Objectivist scholars and poets. I don't know where Joe was when "out of the country," but unless it was Bosnia, he probably had a quieter time than we did in SF. That cyclone whirled for 6 months.

Steve Benson, btw, is married, recently a father, living (quietly?) on the coast of northern Maine (hope they are ok thru this wretched weather). B-c me anyone who would like Steve's address. One of the two or three finest poets of performance in the anglophone world, and sorely missed by his friends and fans out here.

David

[↑ Contents](#)

460. **Miekal And**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics? The Intergalactic Hypertext Time Machine

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Today's venture on the Intergalactic Hypertext Time Machine with annotations by your humble psycho-navigator, Amendant Hardiker jerks & grumbles thru the transmogrified culture of visual poetry. Thus:

<This extraordinary hypertext essay chooses text/sound as its frame, which in many ways is the performative output of the visual text/score. A perfect starting

point as well for those who want to have a solid background on hypermedia poetry. Narrative as Genealogy: Sound Sense in an Era of Hypertext by Larry Wendt/>

<http://cadre.sjsu.edu/switch/sound/articles/wendt/nghome.htm#sp>

.....

<Patchen's picture-poems were an early high school inspiration to me, this site is the comprehensive Patchen site. Check out the 96 calendar, its worth the long download time to see these poempaintings in color. (Tho it certainly could be html'd in a browser-friendly manner)/>

Kenneth Patchen HomePage

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Patchen/>

.....

<I ran into the work of concrete poet Henry W. Targowski via a yahoo search for visual poets & bumped into Anachron City. The architectural metaphor of his world is a good example of what I was proposing about creating access into virtual communities, that the visual poetry world might be a shanty town of different visual poetry characters, even avatars, setting stakes around a larger more generalized virtual environment. At the rate of hardware/software evolution, vrml worlds will be accessible to a wide cross-section of internet users in 5 years (allow me a nostradomudance). Both for ease of creation & ease of navigation. Im operating here with 3 year old technology & I would say my computer only crashes half the time./>

Mark/Space Interplanetary Review

<http://www.euro.net/mark-space/index.html>

.....

<3ViTre Archive of Polypoetry has been founded by Enzo Minarelli in 1983. Its main role consists in gathering up systematically all that has been produced by poetical experimentation both at the visual and oral area (sound poetry, visual poetry) poetry performance and videopoetry. The Archive has up to now reached an amount over the 500 hours of sound poetry works which are collected in audiocassettes, records and CDs, including all the italian poets and a well documented range of the foreign ones. In the field of video-production, the Archive collection includes under the target 'Videopoetry' about two hundred hours of programs belonging to italian and foreign poets. Next to this cataloguing, 3Vitre Archive is involved in issuing or editing records, audiocassettes and CDs. With the aim of promoting even spreading the collected material, the Archive has been organizing since the first Eighties several events related to the field of poetical experimentation./>

MANIFESTO OF POLYPOETRY

<http://www.iii.it/3vitre/saggi/emanif.htm>

.....

<Poetry should be made by all; From hypertext utopias to cooperative net-projects netculture - cultural networks By Heiko Idensen/>

<http://www.uni-hildesheim.de/ami/hypcolla/kollab.htm>

.....

<Shozo Shimamoto is a japanese mailartist of the gutai tradition who became notable during 80s mailartdays for publishing/performing his works on his own shaven head./>

<http://www.shozo-shimamoto.com/index.html>

.....

<ULISES CARRION THE NEW ART OF MAKING BOOKS originally published in Kontext 1975 is hosted on Gyoryy Galanti's ARTPOOL website. Artpool was instrumental in bringing together & promoting the work of eastern european visual poets in the days before the iron curtain rod broke. While these works arent accessible via the net, he remains a vast archive of these works, while still going strong with hosting installations, performances & publications./>

<http://www.artpool.hu/bookwork/Carrion.html>

.....

from

Zaum: The Transrational Poetry of Russian Futurism by Gerald Janecek,
from Chapter Nine: Zaum in Tiflis, 1917-1921: KRUCHONYKH

<http://www.thing.net/~grist/l&d/kruch/lkrucht1.htm>

<Jim Andrews is a canadian visual poet whose work I was recently introduced to on the net*, his VisPo guests is a space which hosts kindred visual verbal installations. [...which is to say that Im able to learn about visual/verbal lit in a way that is nearly as interactive as trading my work with others. Since trading has fallen off considerably these last years, other's must be thinking the same thing.]/>

<http://www.speakeasy.org/~jandrews/vispo/guestartists.htm>

.....

<Certainly Palindromes are visual poetry? Arshad's Palindrome Page is at:/>

<http://www2.englib.cornell.edu/~at11/pal.html>

[↑ Contents](#)

461. **Susan Wheeler**

Digest -- Coffey/Marcus/Dylan

Fri 16 Jan 1998

I haven't read the Marcus, although he's ventured these ideas in his Artforum column so they're not entirely new to me. But recently I saw Don't Look Back, the early study of Dylan and Baez on tour by DA Pennebaker, again. At the beginning of the film Dylan lands on UK shores and holds a glutted press conference in which he tries to answer questions, well, helpfully. He's game even for the most confrontive and/or stupid. During the course of the film, mostly in back-seat shots in which Baez eats fruit and looks out the window, Dylan reviews the press coverage of his tour with growing incredulity/amusement; these scenes are interspersed with more media-interaction scenes in which Dylan bristles and begins to hone an evasiveness that aids him in side-stepping any pigeon-holing. To me, it seemed like a natural and inevitable response to external pressure to impose perimeters to his (aesthetic) field (as well as to participate in the culture-promo industry -- he points out to a Time reporter pleading with him for an interview that he has filled Royal Hall without Time coverage). It's a response he has perfected since -- this is the great I'm-not-here-to-meet-your-expectations-&-I-don't-give-a-fuck quality on this new platter (as well as there in Maggie's Farm & earlier). I get a sense that for him it's a global, automatic mechanism, and so the Marcus thesis seems both self-evident to this listener and partial.

I'll see him with Van Morrison at the Garden Tuesday.

On the music/writing arena, does anyone else know the Canadian/UK book The Penguin that John Lennon wrote maybe c. 1970?

Susan Wheeler

██████████

voice/fax ██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

462. **Jordan Davis**

Re: FYI (baby poet maudit alert)

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Rachel --

I liked the article in The Onion about Bill Gates getting 1.2 million hit points (from himself) better than the one about Bill Gates getting half. The classic though is the article that conclusively proves "Babies are stupid".

On Wisconsin --

Jordan

On Thu, 15 Jan 1998, Rachel Loden wrote:

Poeta nascitur, non fit?

Study: Children of Divorce Twice as Likely to Write Bad Poetry

<http://www.theonion.com/onion3301/divorcepoetry.html>

Excerpts:

"DURHAM, NC--A study released Monday by Duke University's Center for the American Family confirmed what many child-development experts have asserted for years: Children whose parents are divorced are twice as likely to compose bad poetry as those whose parents are married...."

"The Duke researchers also found a strong correlation between the nature of a particular divorce and quality of poetry. In 90 percent of divorces categorized as "amicable," the breakup results in rhyming poems, usually with irritating, "sing-songish" A-B-A-B rhyme schemes. The more acrimonious the split, however, the greater the odds of a child turning to other, more wretch-inducing poetic forms: Eighty-five percent of contested divorces end in free verse, the study found, and three in four divorces involving custody battles end in haiku...."

[More like "retch-inducing," maybe?]

Rachel Loden

[↑ Contents](#)

463. **Mark Prejsnar**
Re: Freedom of Speech
Fri 16 Jan 1998

Uh,...You *talk* to your server? You vispo people are even stranger than I thought!

On Thu, 15 Jan 1998, Bob Grumman wrote:

Turns out the messages I tried to send to the list around 9:30 this morning never got beyond my server who had some kind of trouble he wasn't aware of till I called him around four this afternoon. Apologies to ye Guardians of the Buffalo List for my dark but amusing suspicions. But the timing of my server's problem WAS Very Weird!

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

464. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**

Christine Tamblyn

Fri 16 Jan 1998

I got a note from a friend in NYC that Christine Tamblyn died - she was a wonderful theorist, very supportive; we had our differences, but they melted away. I think of her like I think of Kathy Acker, and both died way before they should have, and there are no "shoulds" and I don't want Christine's death to go unmentioned here; you can read one of her essays in *Vulvamor-phia*, she did pioneer cd-rom work as well.

Alan

[↑ Contents](#)

465. **Michael Magee**

Re: dullard brutes of langpo

Fri 16 Jan 1998

from db: "I appreciate Joe Safdie's frankness. But sometimes it's more like a steamroller than a scalpel. The traits he attributes in one part to the langpos of *sf en masse*, turn out to be just those that he feels Barrett Watten possesses. Later in his post, he declares that langpoets (again *en masse*) were/are "devoid of humor and wit." Perelman? Benson? Harryman? Robinson? Four of the wittiest, funniest people I ever met!"

allow me to indulge in a brief and frivolous bit of elder worship (and after I just ranted about baby boomers too): Bob P. *is* the funniest poet I've ever met: "Labile, the man said, make mine labile." Langpos not funny? Sheesh! -m.

[↑ Contents](#)

466. **Mark Prejsnar**

Re: schuster/dylan -Reply

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Susan, I think this is one of the main points, for me, about pop/rock/salsa/folk song (even rap when real good, tho' it may seem closer to speech): people on the list like this kinda stuff because it's *music*...In some sense the words (tho' very important indeed) have a function in relation to the musical/performative character of a song. (Which is why the well-intentioned populism of high-school and college teachers post-1965 was/is so off-base: you know, those folks who always thought they were getting students "interested in poetry" by analyzing *Blowin in the Wind* or *Elinor Rigby* *on the page* with minimal or no reference to the music). I'd argue that most of us aren't *asking the same questions*

(about sentiment or mainstream conventionality) of Dylan songs, that we ask of a Richard Wilbur poem. (and anyway Wilbur's harp-playing isn't as good)

Mark P.

On Thu, 15 Jan 1998, Susan Schultz wrote:

Just got the tape; I especially liked the line before by a woman who says to the Dylan-narrator, "You don't read women writers, do you?" The response of "I do, I read Erica Jong" (or whatever) is surely ironic. What gets me about the album, in the context of all the discussion on this list, is how scenic-mode-official-lyric-culture-univocal it is. Does the music, mainly blues inflected, really draw us to such an extent to something many on this list (if not the langpo bashers, whoever they are) heartily disapprove of? It's all about love and loss, love and loss--and Tom, those themes _are_ ones that young people tap into, no? Or was I just warped? Ok, I was, no matter. Lots of sentiment and cliches. Does "sentiment" now belong in songs, but not in poems? But I, for one, have enjoyed my first couple of listens to it in my car driving through the Koolau tunnels to work (the album is tropical only in the linguistic sense...).

Susan

On Thu, 15 Jan 1998, Robin Morris wrote:

I'm not sure I follow your logic here: is Jong being read by young women (by anyone) these days? I consider her someone who seemed "liberated" half a lifetime ago, but is a more than a little beside the point nowadays. The biggest belly laugh I got from the album on my first couple of hearings was from that line. He's got to be sarcastic, right, affirming how little he cares or knows about feminist issues.

Robin

I like the new dylan album very much. It's tightly put together but it's in a gunny sack of sound. And in one song, the narrator cites his reading of Erica Jong as evidence that he is sensitive to women, so if he is aware of a possible generational divide, he is unbothered by it. It is the irreverent unrepentant dylan at top form, with the great swirling Wurlitzer organ in many of the cuts.

* * * * *

Robin A. Morris

Home page: <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ramorris>

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<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/eazines/tinfish>

[↑ Contents](#)

467. **Mark Prejsnar**

Re: FYI (baby poet maudit alert)

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Rachel-- this is a brilliant addition to the previous badpo thread (which started with discussion of the Canadian guy who sells his anthology of bad poetry on the street...) But this is a joke and you wrote it, right.....*right??*.....!!!

On Thu, 15 Jan 1998, Rachel Loden wrote:

Poeta nascitur, non fit?

Study: Children of Divorce Twice as Likely to Write Bad Poetry

<http://www.theonion.com/onion3301/divorcepoetry.html>

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[More like "retch-inducing," maybe?]

Rachel Loden

[↑ Contents](#)

468. **Mark Prejsnar**

Re: dullard brutes of langpo

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Bromige's posting on langcomedians is first rate. Forgot to list the slapstick grouping (led by Chuck "Little Tramp" Bernstein).

Really, and seriously, that was a great post. You hit the head on the nail especially when you noted that Clark hates the langsters *because they are a group*....This is a very U.S. response. And in my opinion this resentment of people for their collective work is almost always present in lang-bashing. What's so preposterous about it, obviously, is that the langsters have always been, even at their most group-identish, an exceptionally loose and tolerant and vague kind of collective! But no one ever got poor overestimating the virulence of U.S. ultra-individualism.

Mark P.

[↑ Contents](#)

469. **Elizabeth Hatmaker**

Re: dylan vs. poetry

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Wasn't "Come Live with Me and Be My Love" also performed in the film Valley of the Dolls by the lounge singer character who married one of the leads-- she who later found out he was pretty badly developmentally disabled? Am I thinking of the same song?

E. Hatmaker

[↑ Contents](#)

470. **Bob Grumman**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Danny:

I now deem this little controversy over the Perloff Seminar an unqualified success! Why? It has now produced your infra-verbally delightful word "sylladiss!" Much thanks!

And I agree that "It doesn't take a full-scale conference to make a counterstatement... unless your mind is 'geared to career-lane functioning.'" It's just that me and my pals (and a lot of other people in the field that I don't know) have been making one-poet and two-poet counterstatements for many years with almost no effect on the big world, so it's hard not to be a little impatient, and perhaps get over-irked when someone with some clout like Marjorie Perloff seems so overtly to overlook us.

I'm wholly confident that our counterstatements WILL take effect eventually, though--and maybe this mini-brouhaha will ignite some more visible counterstatement. Meanwhile, I've got to get my sputtering for the year out (my year being up on Groundhog/Joyce Day, my birthday).

Apologies for (but not retraction of) the condescension, and I'll hold you to your promise of coffee money!

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

471. **William Shakespeare**

Re: dullard brutes of langpo

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Let those who are in favor with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such titles bars,
Unlook't for joy in that I honour most.
Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread
But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
And in themselves their pride lies buried,
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories once foil'd,
Is from the book of honour razed quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd:
Then happy I, that love and am belov'd,
Where I may not remove nor be remov'd.

Sonnet 25

[↑ Contents](#)

472. **Bob Grumman**

Re: (antilangpo?) stunned. very stunned. (ringo)

Fri 16 Jan 1998

I consider this list clearly a langpo center; thus langpo gets discussed a lot; thus anti-langpo comments (and negative comments about langpo eminences like Marjorie Perloff) HAVE to come up. And it's easy for a super-sensitive partisan like Dr. Dunn to decide from a few negative comments that "'language poet' seems to be a pejorative term on this list."

Thinking about it, I can't remember "visual poet" ever drawing a negative comment." Visual poetry is not discussed enough, or visible enough to draw fire, I suspect.

--Bob G.

anyone to get emotionalhostile

[↑ Contents](#)

473. **DANIEL L. COLLIER**

Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Hi Bob,

It doesn't take a full-scale conference to make a counterstatement... unless your mind is "geared to career-lane functioning." Take it as naive if you will, but I think even *one* person giving a reading at a coffee shop has an effect.

As I see it, you're definitely being sylladissed (new word for you)... but Marjorie Perloff's not the Visual Poetics Antichrist. She'd mention any readings/shows you put together & some curious someone would come, just as I've been checking out the web sites and printing out the book references mentioned in this thread. Print them out and distribute them at your reading... your conference will happen in individual heads.

But I *was* wrong about one thing: this doesn't have to take much energy.

Let me know if you hold a reading & I'll donate some money for coffee.

Danny.

"Daleko, daleko..." - DDT

Hi, Danny:

I hate to sound condescending but while I'm sure your suggestion that

"the Visual Poetics community . . . organize readings/lectures/

performances/shows to complement (Marjorie Perloff's) course
and to
compensate for perceived weaknesses/biases in her syllabus"
is
well-intentioned, it's a little naive. First off, Dr. Perloff's show is
already running. Second, the community I've been talking about
(I'd
call it the community of unrecognized visual poets rather than
THE
visual POETICS community, which shows you how nit-picking I
can be), is
scattered and unwealthy. It'd be very hard, whatever the energy
available, to throw together ANY reasonably representative vispo
reading ANYwhere in the country. The only recent one of any
magnitude
was the one in Edmonton, which had money troubles though
backed by a
university department. Even putting together a representative
anthology
of vispo has proved so far too much for us. The real problem
seems to
be that we're a community of artists, not a community of
academics. Our
minds aren't geared to career-lane functioning.

Finally, inasmuch as Dr. Perloff has left all material published by
the
people in our group off even her list of recommended
publications, I
rather doubt that she'd encourage attendance at any reading
series we
could put together. I suppose she'd have to mention it, as she
has
been said to have mentioned some of the websites our group
has work at,
though not the main one, Light & Dust, but more than that . . .
well,
I'm still awaiting evidence of any real openness on her part to our
group.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

474. **Douglas Barbour**

Re: talking about poetry rather than 'just' Dylan

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Getting too far behind, but Mark P's comments on Mark W's poetry does hit home, & I'm ashamed to have forgotten Mark W's book(s) when I listed some of the really good stuff Ive read lately. But memoru doesnt always serve.

I take the point that it would be good to say something about those books, but I dont have much time this ay em to do so. On the other hand, getting the digest, I see that this 'turn' of the conversation has definitely expanded the whole thing, so it seems 'we' can & do get going over poetry once the glove is thrown...

=====

Douglas Barbour
Department of English
University of Alberta
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5
[REDACTED] FAX: [REDACTED]
H: [REDACTED]

~~~~~

Whose song is this anyway?  
Is it a song being sung  
on the narrow road to the North?

Phyllis Webb

[↑ Contents](#)

475. **Fred Muratori**

***Re: schuster/dylan -Reply***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

This discussion reminds me of one of the funniest encounters between pop and poetry I've ever heard. Some years ago NPR interviewed James Merrill, and -- god knows why -- Susan Stamberg decided to get Merrill's opinion on the poetic quality of rock music by reciting some lines from a Eurythmics song ("Sweet dreams are made of these./Who am I to disagree./I traveled the world and the seven seas./Everybody's lookin' for something.") He was reluctant to take the

bait, and said something about needing the music to go along with the words before he could make an assessment. Stamberg all-too-quickly obliged by humming (and humming badly) the melody to the song, to which Merrill replied, "Hardly Mozart."

-- Fred M.

\*\*\*\*\*

Fred Muratori

()

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\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

476. **Fred Muratori**

***Langpocomics***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

*Bromige's posting on langcomedians is first rate. Forgot to list the slapstick grouping (led by Chuck "Little Tramp" Bernstein).*

*Mark P.*

And let's not forget the unwitting pioneers of langpocomedy: Lord Buckley, Prof. Irwin Corey, and (from the somewhat less improvisational langpocomedy-clubs in Vegas and the Catskills) slammaster Norm Crosby. Unless I mis-screw.

\*\*\*\*\*

Fred Muratori

()

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Ithaca, NY 14853

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\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

477. **d powell**

**Re: dylan vs. poetry**

Fri 16 Jan 1998

"Come Live Me and Be My Love" was also the basis for the song that Tony sang in "Valley of the Dolls" and that later momentarily revived him when he heard Neely O'Hara singing it in the sanitorium.

=====

=====

D A Powell

=====

=====

Steve Shoemaker wrote:

>One of my fave popcult moments of recent times was in the >"modernized"  
>Richard III film, when "Come Live with Me and Be My Love" (a.k.a >The  
>Passionate Shepherd etc etc) was performed as a 1940s-style pop >number. s  
>

>

>

>

>At 09:10 AM 1/15/98 -0800, you wrote:

>>Tom Mandel wrote:

>>

>>>Too big for me to undertake with a lunch meeting in 90 minutes. >But, I'd  
>>>just point out what happens, for example, to a poem when it's >set to mu-  
sic.

>>>It is substantially reduced in its language-effect. It >immediately becomes  
>>>something quite different from itself. It can be a great work >(recommend  
>>>song-cycles and settings by Berlioz, Mahler, Milhaud, Poulenc, >Lu-  
toslawski,

>>>etc.), but you're not getting direct access to any part/place >of/in the  
>>>poem any longer.

>>>

>>>"But poetry once \*was\* a musical art. The Psalms? Sappho?" Oral >shape,  
oral

>>>memory are different media from those of writing. Once you >could write  
down

>>>thoughts, everything changed. Poetry changed.

>>

>>But we don't need to go back to an idealized oral antiquity to >supply  
>>examples of poetical-musical compatibility. What about >Elizabethan  
>>ballads, Blake, even Ginsberg? One could argue that "poems" >like "Come  
>>Live with Me and Be My Love" or "When to Her Lute Corrina Sings" >are

>>"substantially reduced" in their "language-effect" precisely >because of  
>>being \_removed\_ from their musical settings, as they are in >their  
>>Nortonized fossil-existences. I'm not sure, however, that one >wants to go  
>>there in either case, as what happens is one ends up committed >to a  
>>principle of preservation of the originary moment of creation, >with all  
>>that baggage of intention and other bugbears.  
>>  
>>My main point, I suppose, is that "direct access" is a problem >no matter  
>>what; if being set to music closes off certain (imagined?) >points of entry  
>>into a poem, so does a shift from manuscript to type, or from >one printed  
>>format to another, or from being read silently to being read >aloud, or from  
>>being read on Tuesday to being read on Friday. Conversely, a >musical  
>>context might open up latent areas of signification unavailable >on purely  
>>textual reading. A friend of mine picked up his guitar one day >and belted  
>>out an impromptu country-western rendition of "Do Not Go Gentle >into  
that  
>>Good Night"--the printed version has seemed flat to me ever >since. And of  
>>course, there's the old observation that you can sing the >beginning to  
>>\_Paradise Lost\_ to the tune of the \_Flintstones\_ theme. This >kind of  
>>backwards historical contamination operates, albeit in less >violent  
>>degrees, on much of what we read, hear, etc.  
>>  
>>imagine what revisions, thitherto undreaded, might emerge from >an  
>>'80s-style West-coast hardcore version of "The Love Song of J. >Alfred  
>>Prufrock," or a polka treatment of Bob Perelman's "Chronic >Meanings."  
>>  
>>Um, Bob Dylan: he's that old guy, right?  
>>  
>>Kasey Hicks  
>>  
>>  
>  
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>Subject: Re: dylan vs. poetry  
>To: [REDACTED]  
>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

478. **d powell**

***Re: Whose Visual Poetics?***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Put me down for a donation of two dozen cookies.

=====  
=====

D A Powell [REDACTED]

=====  
=====

*But I \*was\* wrong about one thing: this doesn't have to take  
much energy.*

*Let me know if you hold a reading & I'll donate some money for  
coffee.*

*Danny.*

*"Daleko, daleko..." - DDT*  
-----

Hi, Danny:

*I hate to sound condescending but while I'm sure your suggestion that "the Visual Poetics community . . . organize readings/lectures/performances/shows to complement (Marjorie Perloff's) course and to compensate for perceived weaknesses/biases in her syllabus" is well-intentioned, it's a little naive. First off, Dr. Perloff's >show is already running. Second, the community I've been talking about (I'd call it the community of unrecognized visual poets rather than THE visual POETICS community, which shows you how nit-picking I can be), is scattered and unwealthy. It'd be very hard, whatever the energy available, to throw together ANY reasonably representative vispo reading ANYwhere in the country. The only recent one of any magnitude was the one in Edmonton, which had money troubles though backed by a university department. Even putting together a representative anthology of vispo has proved so far too much for us. The real problem seems to be that we're a community of artists, not a community of academics. Our minds aren't geared to career-lane functioning.*

*Finally, inasmuch as Dr. Perloff has left all material published >by the people in our group off even her list of recommended publications, I rather doubt that she'd encourage attendance at any reading series we could put together. I suppose she'd have to mention it, as she has been said to have mentioned some of the websites our group has work at, though not the main one, Light & Dust, but more than that . . . well, I'm still awaiting evidence of any real openness on her part to >our group.*

--Bob >G.

-----

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Subject: Re: Whose Visual Poetics?  
To: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

479. **Harold Rhenisch**  
***Expression/Self-Expression***  
*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Sorry, Bob,

that 'express' thing's just so close to 'self-expression' I get scared, I see language sliding away into unconsciousness....

The question that I was muddily circling, like a carp on the bottom of a murky pond in some zoo where there are a lot of ducks eating bread crusts, is:

Does poetry express?  
and its twin: Do words express?

To say that a textual poem that vividly brings to life some visual image is "expressive-of-the-visual" doesn't sound right to me. It seems to me that the poem is the visual, just as a painting is visual. It doesn't stand at a remove from it. The painting can be representational or not, but it is always visual, although it is not un-mediated perception. It's a structure that sets up the possibility of transfer of certain information.

On the other hand, such a textual poem is not the same as one where the actual visual layout of components on the page or screen or brick wall or wherever is transferring the information. You're right, some distinction needs to be made.

I just don't see the two as being as different as I sense you do. I have a sense that it is the same impulse, with different tools, different viewing mechanisms, different technology. In that regard, the poem laid out visually, the concrete poem, for instance, is also "expressive-of-the-visual". If that's the case, I doubt the term is doing the work you're asking of it.

I can't do it, Bob. I can't use that word in good conscience. I'm trying, but I'm cringing here.

Let me try again: "Ex p p pp rrr e sssssssssss!"

Hurts.

As for words being... "that word" ...well, I've thought for a few years now that they were containers, holding material. A kind of shorthand. Say "tree", you get a vast history of usage and perception. Plunk it down. Stick something next to it. Pretty soon, the mind can wander through this world, and it is the world, but perceived differently than with biological technology. That's not "that word", though. It's visual, but differently visual.

It's like divining by throwing coloured beans on a cloth.



If the mind's not obsessed with a conception of 'self', then this "that word" thing is not right. It's a transitional term, then. I'd like to see some term which speaks of what is actually going on, because it's a very interesting story.

"meta-visual" doesn't say what's going on, really, but it doesn't use "that word". Could it serve as a temporary substitute, like a sticky note, with a grocery list scribbled on it?

I mean no disrespect. On the contrary, your taxonomies are always most useful. In this case, I think there's more going on.

Cheers,

Harold



[↑ Contents](#)

480. **hen**

***Re: dullard brutes of langpo***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

On groups in poetry:

Is it necessary to line up for or against groups & their activities in poetry or other arts? Groups have their positive & their negative aspects, with regard to both production and reception. In fact, since we are (by Dante's definition) "the companionable animal", groups are unavoidable, essential.

However, all that doesn't keep me from believing that the most intense & compelling realities of making poetry (on the one hand), and reading/hearing/understanding it (on the other), happen to individuals, often quite solitary individuals. A corollary of this is that the poet's pantheon of heroes and influences, unlike the conscientious critic or scholar's - the poet's sense of literary history - will be absolutely personal, based on all sorts of private, conscious & subconscious, literary & extra-literary, LOVES & HATES. The poet doesn't care if there is no arguable relation between, say, Hart Crane and Osip Mandelstam; he or she will MAKE the relation if necessary. All this is of very little interest to literary politicians always targeting what's "useful" or "new" or "correct" or whatever. And though criticism & poetry support one another to some extent, there will always be that little gap, that difference, too. - Henry Gould

p.s. I would also hold that the individuality involved in making poetry inheres, to some extent, in the artwork itself; so that there's always more THERE than will fit into any group trends or classification systems.

p.p.s. Montale once criticized Italian intellectuals, always eager to articulate & take sides in political debates, who also claimed to be artists. He said

something like: "I don't deny the genuine seriousness of their social commitment; I simply deny that they are free men." I know how recherche & unfashionable all this sounds... hey, what IS a free man? Or woman?

[↑ Contents](#)

481. **Matthew Stadler**

**Re: FYI (baby poet maudit alert)**

Fri 16 Jan 1998

---

The piece on bad baby poets is from The Onion, a satirical newspaper in Madison, WI, which was founded by Tim Keck (and others), who now publishes The Stranger, a weekly in Seattle, where I'm now typing this note. Matthew Stadler

[↑ Contents](#)

482. **Eryque Gleason**

**Re: (antilangpo?) stunned. very ...**

Fri 16 Jan 1998

---

funny, my take was that there were language poets present, poets that deny being language poets as others will label, people that just aren't language poets, people that are anti-language poetry, and those that choose to stay out of it.

in other words, there just ain't one pov 'round here.

eryque

On Thu, 15 Jan 1998, George Bowering wrote:

*I too was puzzled by Ms Dunn's notion that this list was anti-LangPo. I have always thought that it was made up of people who are either Language Poets or assume that the Language Poets are the main thing or one of the main things. Maybe she got crossed between this list and the one we hear about from time to time, the one about the strangely named new Formalists.*

*George Bowering.*

*2499 West 37th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4*

*fax: [REDACTED]*

[↑ Contents](#)

483. **david bromige**

**deliberately omitted**

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Thanks, Mark. But I didn't forget Chas, I left him out because I understood Joe Safdie to be addressing his problem with the west coast Langpoets.

Would also remark that a number of Langpos didnt suffer fools gladly--so I can't agree to the "vague" in yr characterization, and even the "loose" hardly fits my recollection of public correction during post-talk discussions. But humor there always was. Humor is serious business, and vice versa. Language is inevitably funny, if you look long enough.

Hugh Steinberg told me the other night about a T-shirt he'd had made up, with pictures of Groucho, Chico and Harpo--and "Carlo". It would have been fun if everyone had turned up one evening at the Perelman/Shaw loft talks, or at an 80 Langton St event, wearing the same. "False Portrait" of the Language School.

David

[↑ Contents](#)

484. **d powell**

**Re: Saturday readings**

Fri 16 Jan 1998

Laura,

The flyer I received regarding the Avec reading said the reading was at A Clean, Well-Lighted Place for Books on Van Ness, not the Luggage Store. I'm confused.

Doug

=====

D A Powell

=====

LAURA MORIARTY wrote:

>I seem to be having two of them:

>

>This Saturday, the 17th, at the Luggage Store gallery at 1007 >Market

>(Market and 6th in SF) at 8:00 I will be reading with Arnold Kemp >and

>possibly Jack Hirschman - The current show there has to do with >emotional

>and psychic baggage so I will be reading from my luggage-related >work. (I

>actually have such work as I have just finished a manuscript >called The  
>Case.)  
>  
>The Luggage Store is a new reading venue. Leslie Scalapino is >doing a  
>performance there with a performance artist whose name I can't >remember  
in  
>February in the store window that will also include a pile of >dirt or  
>possibly mud. More about this later.  
>  
>Also Saturday 31 January there will be a group reading for the >new Avec  
>Sampler which will include Lissa McLaughlin, George Albon, >Stephen-Paul  
>Martin and myself.  
>  
>Laura Moriarty  
>  
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>To: [REDACTED]  
>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

485. **Thomas Bell**

**Re: FYI (baby poet maudit alert)**

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Does this also mean that  
Children of Divorce are more likely to write poetry?  
Children of bad poets are more likely to divorce. - I worry  
about mine in any case.

What is BAD POETRY?

tom bell

At 08:43 AM 1/16/98 -0500, Jordan Davis wrote:

>Rachel --

>

>I liked the article in The Onion about Bill Gates getting 1.2 million hit  
>points (from himself) better than the one about Bill Gates getting half.  
>The classic though is the article that conclusively proves "Babies are  
>stupid".

>

>On Wisconsin --

>Jordan

>

>On Thu, 15 Jan 1998, Rachel Loden wrote:

>

>> Poeta nascitur, non fit?

>>

>> Study: Children of Divorce Twice as Likely to Write Bad Poetry

>>

>> <http://www.theonion.com/onion3301/divorcepoetry.html>

>>

>> Excerpts:

>>

>> "DURHAM, NC--A study released Monday by Duke University's Center for  
the

>> American Family confirmed what many child-development experts have  
>> asserted for years: Children whose parents are divorced are twice as

>> likely to compose bad poetry as those whose parents are married....  
>>  
>> "The Duke researchers also found a strong correlation between the nature  
>> of a particular divorce and quality of poetry. In 90 percent of divorces  
>> categorized as "amicable," the breakup results in rhyming poems, usually  
>> with irritating, "sing-songish" A-B-A-B rhyme schemes. The more  
>> acrimonious the split, however, the greater the odds of a child turning  
>> to other, more wretch-inducing poetic forms: Eighty-five percent of  
>> contested divorces end in free verse, the study found, and three in four  
>> divorces involving custody battles end in haiku...."  
>>  
>> [More like "retch-inducing," maybe?]  
>>  
>> Rachel Loden  
>>  
>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

486. **Thomas Bell**  
***Re: Whose Visual Poetics?***  
*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Bob,

Perhaps could be an impetus for an on-line seminar,  
counterstatement, or? Or do many of these "people in the  
field not have computer access, not being academically affiliated  
or heaven forbid not even computer-affluent.  
tom bell

At 09:54 AM 1/16/98 -0500, Bob Grumman wrote:

>Danny:

>

>I now deem this little controversy over the Perloff Seminar an  
>unqualified success! Why? It has now produced your infra-verbally  
>delightful word "sylladiss!" Much thanks!

>

>And I agree that "It doesn't take a full-scale conference to make a  
>counterstatement... unless your mind is 'geared to career-lane  
>functioning.'" It's just that me and my pals (and a lot of other people  
>in the field that I don't know) have been making one-poet and two-poet  
>counterstatements for many years with almost no effect on the big world,

>so it's hard not too be a little impatient, and perhaps get over-irked  
>when someone with some clout like Marjorie Perloff seems so overtly  
>to overlook us.  
>  
>I'm wholly confident that our counterstatements WILL take effect  
>eventually, though--and maybe this mini-brouhaha will ignite some more  
>visible counterstatement. Meanwhile, I've got to get my sputtering for  
>the year out (my year being up on Groundhog/Joyce Day, my birthday).  
>  
>Apologies for (but not retraction of) the condescension, and I'll hold  
>you to your promise of coffee money!  
>  
>--Bob G.  
>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

487. **david bromige**

**dylan/poetry**

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

clothesline saga

after a while we took in the clothes  
nobody said very much  
just some old wild shirts & a couple pairs of pants  
nobody really wanted to touch

mama come in and picked up a book  
and papa asked her what it was  
somebody else said, "what do you care"  
and papa said "just because"

then he started to take back the clothes  
and hang them on the line  
it was january 30th  
and everybody was feeling fine

the next day everybody got up  
to see if the clothes were dry  
the dogs were barking, a neighbor passed  
mama of course she said "Hi"

"have you heard the news?" he said with a grin  
"the vice-president's gone mad"

"where?" "downtown" "when?" "last night"  
"hmm, well that's too bad"  
  
"well there ain't nothing we can do about it" said the neighbor  
"it's just something we're going to have to forget"  
"yes, i guess so" said ma, then she asked me  
if the clothes were still wet  
  
i reached up and touched my shirt  
the neighbor said "are those clothes yours?"  
i said "some of them, not all of them"  
then he said "you always help out around here with the chores?"  
  
i said "some of the time, not all of the time"  
then the neighbor, he blew his nose  
just then papa yelled out  
"mama wants you back in the house with those clothes"  
  
i just do what i'm told to of course  
so i went back into the house  
mamma met me and took all the clothes  
and then i shut all the doors

--This ballad, from The Basement Tapes, struck me from the word Go as wonderful folk-poetry (As well as more priceless bob dylan camping of a form); if Sir Patrick Spens and Twa Corbies etc etc which we were presented with in college english, sans music, cd be poetry, then surely "clothesline saga" will live for ever. David

[↑ Contents](#)

488. **DANIEL L. COLLIER**

***Re: dylan vs. poetry***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Since the Dylan discussion continues...

My Russian rock geroi, Boris Grebinshikov, just released an album ("Lilit") recorded with members of The Band. Excellent album, but I presume it's not sold in the USA since it inexplicably bears a sticker announcing (po Angliskii) "Not Sold in the USA." Another bizarre manifestation of kiosk marketing theory.

If it is available, I recommend it. Avoid his English-language recordings, though; the lyrics are as bland as his Russian lyrics are intricate & rhythmic.

Danny

"Daleko, daleko..." -- DDT



[↑ Contents](#)

489. **William Burmeister Prod**

***Re: dylan vs. poetry***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

If Dylan, then why not Jimi Hendrix. 'Specially within the context of blues guitar. How his axe had a way of nearly fatally de-electrifying it's operator as in Electric Ladyland. The axe as voice. empathy with the axee. what is the name of that long instrumental track on "lectric ladyland where he spasms out at the end with his axe? Say, if you get near a tune, play it.(- Groucho )

- William

[↑ Contents](#)

490. **KENT JOHNSON**

***Some questions for Don Byrd***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Following up on comments made by Don Byrd, Louis Cabri, and Doug Barbour about reading and talking about what we read:

Don-- I believe that for the past number of years you have been part of an informally-knit community of poets that has been seriously discussing a range of works. I have heard through the grapevine that this group has included Robert Kelly, Charles Stein, Jed Rasula, George Quasha, Elizabeth Robinson (?) among others. I wonder if you might say something here about that "experience," what such a poetic and intellectual community has meant to you and others involved, what some of the key focusings of your discussions were, and so on. In other words, what did you read that that community (is "community" the appropriate word?) came to feel was indispensable to a serious grounding in poetics? I realize that The Poetics of the Common Knowledge would stand as a "full" answer to these questions, but that incredible book is an answer of a labyrinth-like, very demanding kind (I myself have been reading the book off and on for a few months and am able to move only very slowly with it). So would it be possible for you to share here some of those readings that have been of most importance for you and to others you are close to?

And also: When you call for real discussion here around books that "five" or more people have read, do you think that this electronic medium is enough? What I mean is that I have this image of a small group of poets in upstate NY talking about poetry in somewhat domestic settings, where you heard each others' voices and laughter, watched the ways each other moved, shared food and drink, listened to music, touched the books you were talking about, embraced one another in hello or goodbye, and that all that is, however sentimental and

nostalgic it sounds, an intrinsic part of the true flowering of reading and community-- something that is not just incidental, but something to be sought out and cultivated as *\_necessary\_*, because such "sensuous" collective dimensions to reading enter and make deeper and more tangible one's particular *\_understanding\_*.

Maybe I'm sounding like a bad imitation of Sven Birkerts, and maybe the questions are fairly old and uninteresting. But if I'm at all saying anything relevant, what about the above, and what about this amorphous, fairly impersonal space we are now in? Can we really talk on the Buffalo Poetics list-- in the way that we would need to talk--about *\_reading\_* a poet like Jack Clarke?

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

491. **Bob Grumman**  
***Re: Whose Visual Poetics?***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Tom:

Some kind of online seminar would be great (aside from the possible loss of Danny's coffee and D A Powell's cookies). Not as a counter-statement but as a discussion would certainly be best if those hitherto ignoring us would agree to participate.

As for the people in what I loosely refer to as my crowd, there ARE a lot of them with no or difficult access to the web. I myself have only been connected to it for ten months. Money is one problem, and opposition to computers another. But enough visual poets are on the web to make it feasible.

The biggest problem would be getting participation--but I think if we made it a continuing seminar it could work. People offline could mail me statements. So, without thinking it through AT ALL, here's what I suggest:

1. I set up a URL for people to go to, to post a statement in answer to some Interesting Question. People without access to the web could mail their responses to me, Bob Grumman, 1708 Hayworth Road, Port Charlotte FL 33952.
2. For Interesting Question, I propose: "What is your take on the current American/Canadian/World visual poetry scene?"
3. I'd collect but not post responses until they'd built up to a fair size. Then I'd put them up unedited--but, maybe, with some attempt to put them into some kind of order . . . sort them by attitude, say.
4. Same thing for responses to the initial statements.

Another possibility would be to post some relevant essay and have people respond to that.

One odd problem: GeoCities, where my website is, is currently down, so who knows when I could do anything. I'm quite up about it, though.

Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

492. **David Benedetti**  
***Re: Dylan not vs. poetry***  
*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

"I'm a poet  
I know it  
Hope I don't blow it" --Dylan

Mandel's exclusionary categorical ambitions are pointless at best. The argument over (between) Dylan VERSUS poetry doesn't go anywhere productive. "Other serious artists"--"artists" include painters, musicians, poets, doesn't it?

Being a gray-beard, I heard and wrote down the lyrics of Dylan songs just at the moment (in the 60s) that they arrived, and they seemed like poetry to me. Also Ginsberg chanting/singing with a harmonium seemed like poetry to me.

Derrida had a lot to say about the false primacy of orality over writing. ("idealized oral antiquity"--Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks)

On the other hand, Blood on the Tracks seemed like a let down to me, kind of toward a country music dirrection...

Highway 61, going electric, "Like a Rolling Stone" seemed like one of the major high points....

children of poets are twice as likely to write poor briefs in law school

Attacking langpo--or the people involved--is not only self defeating but shows only the limitations and prejudices of the attacker. (wake up Joe Safdie)

I like Watten. I even lived with him for a month or two.

But that's another poem, and  
I haven't got time to be a dumb brat

David B (and I don't mean Bromige) aka Ben Dead (Benedetti)

On Thu, 15 Jan 1998, Tom Mandel wrote:

> Tho I respect Don Byrd a lot, Dylan vs. "other serious artists" (i.e.  
> poets) doesn't seem to me to be on any target.  
>

- > Dylan is not a poet. His lyrics, great in their musical contexts, do not
- > support being read either on a page or aloud w/o music. "Sarah," a song I
- > love and whose lyrics, as I said in a previous post, I typed onto my
- > screen, makes no sense at all as a poem. That's ok, it's not meant that way.
- >
- > Dylan is a song-writer, a musician. Obviously, there are literary
- > influences active but they are adjectival or, better, tonal with respect to
- > the song.
- >
- > "But poetry once *\*was\** a musical art. The Psalms? Sappho?" Oral shape, oral
- > memory are different media from those of writing. Once you could write
- > down
- > thoughts, everything changed. Poetry changed.
- >
- > But, that's obvious -- or at least known. There's a lot more to investigate
- > that I haven't got time even to adumbrate here.
- >

[↑ Contents](#)

493. **Bob Grumman**

***Re: Expression/Self-Expression***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Good post on your reaction to the word, "express," Harold. I guess I'm just more of a reductionist than you: "expression" is completely different to me from "self-expression." Anyway, "expressive-of-the- visual" is not a taxonomic term of mine, just an ad hoc way of describing textual poems that are, how 'bout "visually-descriptive?" but not therefore visual. But they do more than describe; they add emotional over/under-tones. So they express. Or we could call such poems visio-advertive. See, now you've gotten me into my addiction to neologizing. I now think maybe at the lowest level of my taxonomy (which does not classify by subject-matter yet but at the lowest level, I guess, might) "visio-advertive," "audio-advertive" (poetry about music, say), "mathadvertive," etc., might work.

I don't see words as containers but (very old-fashionedly) as tags. They make you remember what you've perceived in the past. I would claim your brain has "tree" stored somewhere, and that when you read it, the "knowlecule" (as I call it in my theory of the mind, which is even nuttier than my poetics) in your brain for "tree" straight-forwardly links to all the knowlecules there that have anything to do with trees, the strength of any particular link depending on context. For instance, now "tree" will probably not be making you think of some particular tree that you climbed as a kid--as its repetition just now possibly does. This

all probably sounds simple-minded and, I think, is. I hope it gives you an idea of where I'm coming from, though.

[↑ Contents](#)

494. **Christina Fairbank Chirot**

***Re: Whose Visual Poetics?***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

First, I'd like to thank Luigi for sending on a useful and "important" (I realize Jordan Davis wd. like to purge this word--but beware those who urge to purge!)-list of journals and web sites to start finding out about visual poetry. I shd note, that besides the CORE anthology, Crag Hill (with Spencer Selby) has done some magnificent issues year in and year out of SCORE--as well, Harry Burrus's great journal O!!ZONE also had a 97 edition, which Luigi may not have mentioned-- So--thanks, Luigi! And to put in a plug for you--Luigi's Taproot Review has continually covered visual poetry productions-- I want to say that I whole heartedly agree with Bob Grumman's points re the class being presented by Dr. Perloff. As a participant in visual poetry and mail art, I am always of two minds--first--it would be great if there were more recognition for visual poets and mail artists. Second--maybe it is better not to be recognized! Except amongst ourselves and the ever growing network of fellow artists and poets, the people like Karl Young who have put in years of work and love and faith in their publishing, organizing of shows and web sites--and there is it sometimes seems almost weekly an ever growing number of sites--the people who put out the mail art and visual poetry calls and organize the exhibitions and performances, make and print the catalogues and send out the documentation--maybe it is best, in the spirit of this activity, that the graduate seminars just handle what is --easier to handle--that is, work in the more "aco-dominant" (to use A Gurmman taxonomic phrase) vein--because this work "fits" better (the issue of the shoehorn brought up . . . should we consult the former First Lady of the Phillipines in this regard . . or Nike . . .)--and makes things easier for theoretical discourse, which often can recognize only the objects it has already described, or those which mirror and echo in the proscribed manner its rules . . . re the issue of being able to bring people for one reason or another to give readings--as I believe Bob pointed out, and I know from experience, as long as there is a place to sleep and a kettle on, well, visual poets will come one way or another!--(ask jwcurry who rides the rails, hopping freights--)

The issue Bob is trying to bring up--I hope I understand it?--is that now seems to be the moment when suddenly after a long period of lack of interest on the part of the academic community, there is now a kind of flare up of what hopefully is not simply a faddish interst in visual poetry--and, in that perhaps brief moment, there will be a kind of institutionalizing and narrowing, a categorization and

canonization (for all the academic world's wanting to do away with the canon--it seems they are continually inventing new sub canons, making a Byzantine world Borges would have enjoyed writing some stories about!)-which will put in place a kind of accepted criteria and curriculum of visual poetry--and once again, the vast and vibrant and vital world of visual poetry--this will be passed by--much as in a city square for example, full of life, a tourist might pause before the monuments in the center, erected by the powers that be, and consider this, consulting the guidebook and taking a few photos and notes--and pass on--while all that was quite possibly quite well alive in that moment--the movements of the people, the voices, the spontaneous outbreaks of music or painting on walls, or recitations by contemporary zaumi--all this--is washed away with the sand--

but then again--perhaps it is better to be in the sun, continually, though it may to others appear to be shade--than to have a "moment in the sun" that is only a snapshot to be pinned down like a beetle on a dusty shelf . . .

"viva la escritura en libertad"

TODOS SOMOS MARCOS

(btw--re the tenor of this discussion--did anyone notice 13 January 1998 was the 100th anniversary of Zola's "J'accuse"--!!??? --)

dave baptiste chirot

[↑ Contents](#)

495. **d powell**

***Re: what is bad poetry?***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

W. C. Williams in a letter to R. Creeley: "Bad Poetry is that which does not succeed in purging the dead, stinking dead, usages from the language." This quoted from memory, so it may be inexact. David B., do you have a better idea?

Doug

=====

D A Powell

=====

Thomas Bell wrote:

>

> What is BAD POETRY?

>  
>tom bell  
>  
>>>  
>>> Study: Children of Divorce Twice as Likely to Write Bad Poetry  
>>>  
>>> <http://www.theonion.com/onion3301/divorcepoetry.html>  
>>>  
>>> Excerpts:  
>>>  
>>> "DURHAM, NC--A study released Monday by Duke University's >Center  
for the  
>>> American Family confirmed what many child-development experts >have  
>>> asserted for years: Children whose parents are divorced are >twice as  
>>> likely to compose bad poetry as those whose parents are >married....  
>>>  
>>> "The Duke researchers also found a strong correlation between >the na-  
ture  
>>> of a particular divorce and quality of poetry. In 90 percent >of divorces  
>>> categorized as "amicable," the breakup results in rhyming >poems, usu-  
ally  
>>> with irritating, "sing-songish" A-B-A-B rhyme schemes. The >more  
>>> acrimonious the split, however, the greater the odds of a >child turning  
>>> to other, more wretch-inducing poetic forms: Eighty-five >percent of  
>>> contested divorces end in free verse, the study found, and >three in four  
>>> divorces involving custody battles end in haiku...."  
>>>  
>>> [More like "retch-inducing," maybe?]  
>>>  
>>> Rachel Loden  
>>>  
>>  
>>  
>  
>-----  
>Return-Path: <[REDACTED]>  
>Delivered-To: [REDACTED]  
>Received: (gmail 25991 invoked from network); 16 Jan 1998 >20:39:05 -0000  
>Received: from deliverance.acsu.buffalo.edu (128.205.7.57)  
> by herring.com with SMTP; 16 Jan 1998 20:39:05 -0000  
>Received: (gmail 24903 invoked from network); 16 Jan 1998 >18:39:36 -0000  
>Received: from listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu (128.205.7.35)

> by deliverance.acsu.buffalo.edu with SMTP; 16 Jan 1998 18:39:36 >-0000  
>Received: from LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU by  
>LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU  
> (LISTSERV-TCP/IP release 1.8c) with spool id 26627735 >for  
> [REDACTED]; Fri, 16 Jan 1998 >13:39:32 -0500  
>Received: (qmail 20649 invoked from network); 16 Jan 1998 >18:39:31 -0000  
>Received: from transfer.usit.net ([REDACTED]) by  
> listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu with SMTP; 16 Jan 1998 >18:39:31 -0000  
>Received: from trbell (NASH-MAX191.DYNAMIC.USIT.NET >[208.10.174.81])  
by  
> transfer.usit.net (8.8.7/8.8.5) with SMTP id NAA14436; >Fri, 16 Jan  
> 1998 13:39:29 -0500 (EST)  
>X-Sender: [REDACTED]  
>X-Mailer: Windows Eudora Light Version 1.5.4 (32)  
>Mime-Version: 1.0  
>Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"  
>Message-ID: <[REDACTED]>  
>Date: Fri, 16 Jan 1998 12:43:12 -0600  
>Reply-To: UB Poetics discussion group <[REDACTED]>  
>Sender: UB Poetics discussion group <[REDACTED]>  
>From: Thomas Bell <[REDACTED]>  
>Subject: Re: FYI (baby poet maudit alert)  
>To: [REDACTED]  
>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

496. **Christina Fairbank Chirot**

***Re: Whose Visual Poetics? (fwd)***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

----- Forwarded message -----

Date: Fri, 16 Jan 1998 14:45:39 -0600 (CST)  
From: Christina Fairbank Chirot <[REDACTED]>  
To: Bob Grumman <[REDACTED]>  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Whose Visual Poetics?

First, I'd like to thank Luigi for sending on a useful and "important" (I realize Jordan Davis wd. like to purge this word--but beware those who urge to purge!)-list of journals and web sites to start finding out about visual poetry. I shd note, that besides the CORE anthology, Crag Hill (with Spencer Selby) has done some magnificent issues year in and year out of SCORE--as well, Harry



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TODOS SOMOS MARCOS

(btw--re the tenor of this discussion--did anyone notice 13 January 1998 was the 100th anniversary of Zola's "J'accuse"--!??? --)

dave baptiste chirot

[↑ Contents](#)

#### 497. **Miekal And** **address?**

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

anyone have Manuel Brito's address handy. wet addresses are extraordinary visual poetry but not so functional. backchannel me.

miekal

[↑ Contents](#)

#### 498. **Jimi** **Re: dylan vs. poetry**

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

On Fri, 16 Jan 1998 14:30:19 -0500 William Burmeister Prod said:

>If Dylan, then why not Jimi Hendrix. 'Specially within the context of blues  
>guitar. How his axe had a way of nearly fatally de-electrifying it's operator  
>as in Electric Ladyland. The axe as voice. empathy with the axee. what is the  
>name of that long instrumental track on "lectric ladyland where he spasms out  
>at the end with his axe? Say, if you get near a tune, play it.(- Groucho )  
>

Oh if only once a streak  
of air and summer warmth could make me  
(sleep and death avoiding)  
hear the axis of the earth, the axis of the earth...  
- Mandelstam, late 1930s, trans. D. McDuff

(not a good translation)

Hendrix never tries to be "above it all"... his X does that for him.  
"Look over yonder".... blues is Ezekiel. The wheel of the Earth,  
invisible except to blind Blake.

- Henry Gould

(cf. final footnote to "Mudlark Poster #10") Hooooeee!!

[↑ Contents](#)

499. **Jimi**

***Re: Dylan not vs. poetry***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

what Derrida says about orality has nothing to do with reading a poem out loud or hearing a voice in your chest. Tom Mandel is right about poetry as an "art form" - it's just naked words spoken, recited, wallawalla. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

500. **david bromige**

***bad poetry***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Doug, I yield to you in this matter. After all, you did give us the "Bad Poetry manifesto" a few years ago. (Would you post it to this List?) De gustibus non disputandum would be my motto, except that questions of taste are what people persecute one another for all over the world, all the time. "One [person's] meat is another [person's] poison" makes more sense. I can't believe what some people think is good poetry, and I can't even believe that I once thought such-&-such was good poetry, because today it strikes me as bad. Here in California (as you know), one strives for the value-free evaluation : "It's all part of the pile . . ." But I really would like a dollar back from the State for each bad poetry reading I've sat through--I could send my kids to graduate school. "Used" language or whatever the wcv quote was (it's hidden behind my own message-in-progress, and I can't be bothered to look for it)--well, Flaubert's "Dictionary of Received Ideas", and the recent take on it from The Imprecipient, are both marvelous fun. It's all in how we use used language. Poetry recycles language, we cd say.

"O spade, wherewith Wilkinson hath delved,"--I think I have that right--is bad, dont you agree? And it's Wordsworth. A lot of bad poetry turns up intermit-  
tently among not-so-bad poetry. Theres plenty of it in my oeuvre. Its the un-  
remittingly bad that knocks the stuffing out of a reader/auditor.

I do wonder that people think they can write (good) poetry without knowing the equivalent of scales & chords. Just because we talk all our lives, but most of us seldom sing, I guess. What is the equivalent of scales & chords? It cd be writing sonnets & pantoums & villanelles, or it cd be reading 50 books of poetry published before 1940. But all the scales and chords there are, wont necessarily produce surprising/pleasing/stimulating music. Me, I'm going to lie on the couch and read William MacGonnigal. Go for it! David

[↑ Contents](#)

501. **david bromige**

***funny poets***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Did I neglect to name Rae Armantrout? And the humor is right there in the poems, too! (Often, not the case : e.g. Robert Duncan was a barrel of laughs improving conversation or annotating verbally twist poems at a reading, but his poetry doesn't have much to laugh about does it, except in a couple poems.) Not that humor is everything. But then again, I recall the time when Jack Hirschman said to Sherril Jaffe, after her reading, "Good, but not enough pain"--to which she responded, "Well, pain isn't everything, you know, Jack."

I had better issue a disclaimer at this point, to the effect that I know I am forgetting to name other langpoets who can make me laugh, but that enough is as good as a feast, & that I've already posted more than is good for me--or anyone else--to the List today (yesterday, Wednesday . . .). David

[↑ Contents](#)

502. **Rachel Loden**

***Re: FYI (baby poet maudit alert)***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Jordan Davis wrote:

*The classic though is the article that conclusively proves "Babies are stupid".*

Oh, I agree! And Matthew Stadler is right that the piece is from *The Onion*, which is why I helpfully posted the URL. Tom Bell asks "What is BAD POETRY?" I doubt I have the critical apparatus to answer that one, but "The Purple Lake of Desolation," reproduced (complete with angry cross-outs) in the piece, is at least Exhibit A.

So again:

<http://www.theonion.com/onion3301/divorcepoetry.html>

"Wasserbaum urged America's troubled couples to split up while their children are still very young. 'If you have children who are, say, between the ages of three and nine, and you suspect you might not want to spend the rest of your life with your spouse, I would urge you to get divorced now,' he said. 'At least that way, your kids have a fighting chance to heal emotionally before they reach their prime poetry-writing teenage years, and we can all be spared reading about a beautiful rose that withers and dies because no sunlight ever fell upon it.'"

Rachel

[↑ Contents](#)

503. **Maz881**

***barratt's beauty***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

who said watten looked like george will? that's just wrong. he looks like clark kent. i have a big crush on barrett. he's always showed great kindness to those less fortunate than himself. me, for example. don't go messing up his looks. now become the the person in your life. start writing autobiography. don't you just swoon when he uses the imperative?

[↑ Contents](#)

504. **Safdie Joseph**

***Re: dullard brutes of langpo***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Well, as David's already officially signed off the list for the weekend, I guess I can go ahead and try to respond to some of his comments three or four posts ago. (By the way, thanks A LOT to all who backchanneled me about this post; I do think Mark Leyner's piece I appended at the top is pretty great -- especially considering humor and those who have it, or don't -- and I'll be glad to furnish that to anyone who couldn't get it. And David Benedetti: I'm awake, thanks. Glad to hear that any adverse comments about langpo are automatically invalid: is that on one of your computer programs? It's a real honor to hear from someone with no limitations or predudices).

So, David Bromige wrote:

> I appreciate Joe Safdie's frankness. But sometimes it's more like a  
> steamroller than a scalpel.

>

Only sometimes? I was envisioning myself behind one of those tanks at Tiannemen Square . . .

> The traits he attributes in one part to the  
> langpos of sf en masse, turn out to be just those that he feels  
> Barrett  
> Watten possesses.

>

No, this is an example of metonymy (I think) -- the part standing for the whole.

> Later in his post, he declares that langpoets (again en  
> masse) were/are "devoid of humor and wit." Perelman? Benson?  
> Harryman?  
> Robinson? Four of the wittiest, funniest people I ever met! Ron  
> Silliman  
> once worked as a standup comedian! And perhaps perolangpoetic, but  
> certainly very much in the middle of things then, the devastating wit  
> of  
> Tom Mandel, the deadpan humor of Michael Palmer!  
>

I like to laugh more than I like to do almost anything, so I'm very glad  
to hear this. You know, I don't get around much, but what I've seen on  
this list has been more devastating than witty . . .

> Joe's take is unhappily similar to Tom Clark's would-be  
> assassinations in  
> \_Poetty Flash\_ mid-80s. Barrett is made the butt, and on the other  
> hand,  
> \_all\_ langpos are tarred with the Barrett brush.  
>  
> Moving in and taking over--what do you think it was like when Black  
> Mountain came to \_your\_ town?! When the Beats rolled into cities in  
> the  
> middle of the night, their tanks on rubber tracks, their submachine  
> guns  
> loaded with live ammo?  
>

Just tons of military metaphors here, David! Where do they come from?

> There's been worse than Langpo, Joe! Ever read  
> Robert Duncan's sadistic dissection of Robin Blaser's versions of \_Les  
> Chimeres\_ ? Look it up--in a journal called \_Audit\_ issued in Buffalo  
> in  
> 66-67 or 67-68 : page upon redundant page of vitriolic grandstanding.  
> Our  
> dear friend Robert Duncan (I say that not only with irony). It drove  
> Robin  
> out of the country.  
>

I'll look it up, thanks. Do you think Robin still holds a grudge? Surely  
you're not suggesting that all criticism is vitriolic grandstanding.

> Ever read Ed Dorn & Tom Clark's \_Rolling Stock\_ ,  
>  
frequently; I was, as they say, "present at the creation"

> that wanted to wipe out  
> any number of xenotypes, including gays with aids?  
>

As you know, this article has been discussed on the list before and  
really, too much was said about it then.

> I personally do not  
> remember any occasion of Dodie Bellamy being tortured, nor would I  
> have  
> stood idly by had I been witness.  
>

I wonder what Dodie did mean by what she said.

> I did hear complaints, from others, that  
> they felt left out. It didn't appear to be, initially, a matter of  
> personal  
> animosity, but rather of ideological difference. So then why would you  
> want  
> to be acknowledged by a group that you thought should not exist?  
>

It wasn't that \_I\_ wanted to be acknowledged; it was exactly a matter of  
"ideological difference" -- certain poets and ideas and poetic theories  
that I valued were being ignored, trampled upon even, in the name of  
something altogether more narrow and petty.

> Tom Clark was one mean opponent whose chief exception to langpo (since  
> he  
> couldnt handle theory)  
>

stop with the ad hominem already! Tom can more than speak for himself,  
but he's hardly someone who "couldn't handle theory"!

> was that they operated as a group, This was to  
> overlook Tom Clark and his cronies in the late 60's with their "All  
> Stars  
> anthology" and attitude. Well, that and his objection to Watten as  
> humorless. Let me assure those of you who have not felt the barb of  
> BW's  
> wit, that he is far from that.  
>

I'll take your word for it -- I can only go on what I experienced.

> What I say above concerning groups does not, in my opinion, apply to  
> any  
> entity that takes upon itself the responsibility for the entire poetic  
> community, such as the newspaper Poetry Flash. Tom became a willing  
> hitman  
> for Poetry Flash. Read the xenofiles for '85.

>

I don't have to, I remember it; I wrote one of the letters that followed.

> PF still has a virtual  
> embargo on Langpoets, which soon will have been in place as long as  
> the  
> USA's, on Cuba. A couple of token comrades have been admitted. I  
> myself  
> became involved in a cyclone in '89 after PF published my report on  
> the  
> Objectivist Conference at Royaumont : a number of contribs--and a PF  
> editor--tried to trash it and the Conference, because in their  
> judgment,  
> Langpoets had no right to confer about Objectivists. Certainly not if  
> it  
> involved flying them to France, rather than (I guess) card-carrying  
> Objectivist scholars and poets. I don't know where Joe was when "out of  
> the  
> country,"  
>

. . . it was the Czech Republic . . .

> but unless it was Bosnia, he probably had a quieter time than we  
> did in SF. That cyclone whirled for 6 months.

>

I remember that too! And I don't want Joyce Jacobs or Richard Silberg or the many other tireless workers of \_Poetry Flash\_ to take this the wrong way, but . . . thank GOD I don't have to see \_Poetry Flash\_ every month any more.

> Steve Benson, btw, is married, recently a father, living (quietly?) on  
> the  
> coast of northern Maine (hope they are ok thru this wretched weather).  
> B-c  
> me anyone who would like Steve's address. One of the two or three  
> finest  
> poets of performance in the anglophone world,



agreed!

> and sorely missed by his  
> friends and fans out here.  
>

But really, David, I thank you for this post and all your posts. As I tried to say in my summation, I don't quite feel the same way about "langpo" as I did in the early 80s -- I don't, for example, feel anymore (as I did then) that it's a phenomenon that can be treated *carte blanche*. I try (in the context of my many prejudices and limitations, of course) to give everything that crosses my path an honest look. But I resisted then, as I hope I would now, any so-called "movement" that wanted to sweep away what had gone before in its triumphal path; the Tradition is important to me. Sometimes I think it's all we have -- "liberating the past from the future" as a current essay contest says. This is getting a little too watery for my own tastes so I'll stop. Only one more thing: is Michael Boughn not on this list anymore? What happened to the Jack Clarke sub-group? (where we had, Don, in fact started to talk about *\_In The Analogy\_* in a fairly substantive way!)

Joe Safdie

[↑ Contents](#)

505. **William Marsh**

***Re: Whose Visual Poetics? Verbal or visual?***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

At 02:40 PM 1/14/98 -0500, bob g wrote:

>Henry Gould asks, "If the boundaries are really frayed (regarding the  
>classification of visual poetry)- would you include poetry that  
>directs its attention to actual works of visual art under this rubric?"  
>

>I, for one, would not, Henry. I classify on what a poem does, not its  
>subject matter. Similarly, for me a mathematical poem is a poem that  
>DOES math, not one that merely discusses something mathematical.  
>

well, the modem's been down for two days and i'm just now able to get back into the fray (or not so frayed) of Poetics / i agree with bob here / no, i wouldn't use "visual poetry" to name the poetry henry describes, unless the "actual works" it directs its attention to are the poems themselves (going mobius here, sorry) / but, in the spirit of challenging perhaps over-taxed taxonomies, what if, for example, you put a poem about an external work online and then link to that work (let's assume it's a work of visual art built for online display), i wonder whether or not that other-sited work

would then become part, by hypertextual appropriation, of the poem / could we then call the whole thing a "visual poem"? (skirting temporarily, if i may, the idea that anything "on screen" is visual anyway) / bob, i know i'm giving you grief with my own terminology, but my own word for this--freely absorbing or integrating stuff off the web into singular works (or v.v. self-integrating into the web-work-world)--is "transpiracy": an over-arching term i sometimes use for everything i do on the web (ie, it's all there, i just build through it)

otherwise, karen kelley's idea of "the verbal and the visual suggesting relationships with our senses that want to mix together to form something greater than graphic or phonemic: an expression that speaks to our eyes/hands/mouths/minds" [can't forget ears] seems useful when attempts to distinguish the two get out of hand

for what it's worth 2 days late

bill marsh

-----

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[↑ Contents](#)

506. **Bob Grumman**  
***Defining Visual Poetry***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

Bill, I love "transpiracy!"

As for your question about what to call "for example . . . a poem about an external work online (that's linked) link to that work (let's assume it's a work of visual art built for online display," I say it's just a captioned illumage (work of visual art)--or an illustrated poem. I think my Official Taxonomy has more awkward terms for this, but I can't remember them right now, and can't access my site, which is at GeoCities, which is having temporary problems. I wouldn't call such a combination a visual poem. Also, I wouldn't call anything onscreen visual.

Thanks for the response, Bill. At times like this I wish there were some way to allow readers of a thread to signify interest or non-interest. I truly wonder if our chat is interesting more than three or four other people. I'm having fun, though!

--Bob

G.

[↑ Contents](#)

507. **Harold Rhenisch**  
***Re: Whose Visual Poetics?***

*Fri 16 Jan 1998*

---

>>>As a participant in visual poetry and mail art, I am always of two minds--first--it would be great if there were more recognition for visual poets and mail artists. Second--maybe it is better not to be recognized! <<<

Mainstream poetry could benefit by such wisdom.

[↑ Contents](#)

508. **Joe Ahearn**  
***Re: Dylan not vs. poetry***

*Sat 17 Jan 1998*

---

*Highway 61, going electric, "Like a Rolling Stone" seemed like one of the major high points....*

At the end of an acid trip once (this was **\*\*not\*\*** in the Sixties o graybeards) someone played "It's Alright Ma, I'm Only Bleeding," and when it was over another friend said, "Oh so that's what the void's like."

I think about '66 Dylan saw something that scared him so bad he just had to back away. Hence country music and all the rest.

Like you, David B, I think Dylan going electric was one of the Really Big Deals. I'm not kidding. I think what happened with Dylan, the Band, and electricity after Newport '65 probably changed the world. And when I finally heard it (in '75, through the hiss of a faraway and drifting Canadian all-night station), it certainly changed me.

On the other hand, I met a woman once who claimed to have spent the night with Dylan in a camper parked on Sixth Street in Austin. Desperate for gossip, insight, whatever, I said, well tell me, what happened. It was awful, she said, he made me chew tobacco.

*Attacking langpo--or the people involved--is not only self  
defeating but shows only the limitations and prejudices of the attacker.  
(wake up Joe Safdie)*

Once after a reading by a Famous Language Poet in San Francisco, my friend Len walked up to the poet and said, wow that was great, here's your pineapple. And he handed her a pineapple. Would it have been better if he had saved his pineapple for, say, Galway Kinnell, or Marvin Bell, or James Merrill? Or is it best just to go ahead and give away pineapples when the mood hits, even if the only poet there is a Language Poet?

~~~~~  
~~~~~

[↑ Contents](#)

509. **Don Byrd**

**Re: Some questions for Don Byrd**

Sat 17 Jan 1998

---

*Don-- I believe that for the past number of years you have been part  
of an informally-knit community of poets that has been seriously  
discussing a range of works.*

*I am a little startled that whatever temporary autonomous zones we  
have managed in the mid-Hudson valley have become a topic of the  
grapevine.*

*Over the last twenty-five years, I have been involved with a constantly  
shifting group of poets, painters, and composers which at one time or  
another has included most of the people you mention, though there has  
never been a formal arrangement. There were great picnics at Paul and  
Nancy Metcalf's house in Berkshires in the 70's. A few of us were  
involved in something that we called (half-jokingly) The Rhinebeck  
Institute Seminars, which resulted in book, edited by Charles Stein,  
\_Being = Space x Action\_ (North Atlantic Books). There was one  
somewhat formal session at Bard College, but most of the seminars were  
gatherings at Christer Hennix's apartment.*

*I meet with some regularity with Chuck Stein and some times other  
people at the Ambrosia Diner in Catskill, NY, which has nothing to  
recommend it other than the fact that it is roughly half way between  
his house and mine, and that the food is barely edible (a rare  
commodity in Catskill).*

*We gather when we can, though I am sorry to say, Kent, it is often not  
quite as ideally literary as you imagine. There will be a Super Bowl  
Party at my house, and, while the talk will be as much about poetry as*

football, some people will actually watch the game. I suppose my 50th birthday party (1994) might be more what you are thinking of. Paul Metcalf (as a descendent of Melville, a Gansevoort in Albany terms), Gerrit Lansing (whose family were 17th-century Dutch settlers of Albany), and Peter Ten Eyck (also from the 17th century Dutch and owner of apple orchards in western Albany county) were, at one point, around a table with William Kennedy, the chronicler of Irish Albany, talking about the history of Albany.

For the most part, however, the community has always been virtual. We write letters and/ or email and phone and drive cross-country to see one another. Jed Rasula lived in the mid-Hudson valley for a year in the early 80s, but for most of the twenty-years I have known him, he lived in Los Angeles and more recently Kingston, Ontario, five or six hours west of Albany.

When the culture is utterly fragmented, of course, these small cultures look like cults, I suppose. It some times seemed like a cult to me, when Harvey Brown, a person of angelic presence and mythic proportions, would show up at my door at 7 a.m., carrying news from other people in the community as well as much other arcane information and recordings from Jamaica. There is a good deal to be said for cults. It seems to be the only way, for the present, to create the kind of dense context that allows art to address the high matters.

At any rate, I see no reason at all that such a community cannot be served by the net. Of course, it would be nice to get people together from time to time.

Incidentally, to pick up another thread of the discussion: the folk music scene in the early 60's was a similar kind of cult (larger and more organized). The power and importance of *\_Bringing It All Back Home\_* and *\_Highway 61 Revisited\_* is that, by going electric, Dylan revealed the cult secret to the masses, and, of course, the folkies hated him for it. Rightfully so. But the entrance of dope wisdom and folk surrealism into pop culture provided a rare opening to a possible, broad-based cultural transformation. It was, of course, a commercial move, but it was naïve on the part of both Dylan (the Beatles, Hendrix, et. al) and the record companies. No one knew what they were doing. And for about four years, there was the chance that something might happen. Of course, it was never much of a possibility—commercial interests being what they. A cultural revolution requires more than hallucinogens and a few songs, and by 1971, the record companies had it back under control. For better or worse, the secrets of the profounder cults did not enter in popular circulation, and capitalism lost its last little bit of innocence. They'll never let that happen again. The popular culture left only being a punk as an honest possibility.

*The other honest possibilities are occult and perennial. "Oh poets, you should get a job." What's the job? Most of the sonnets in Clarke's \_In the Analogy\_ have four epigraphs. They could be taken as topoi for serious discussion..*

*Right now I am struck by this one, from C.S. Peirce: "I cannot exert strenght all alone... only if there be something to resist me."*

*Or this one, from Hawthorne: "Sin is followed by isolation."*

*Or this one from H.D. "Most of the so-called artists of today have lost the use of their brain."*

--

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd ([REDACTED], [REDACTED])  
Department of English  
State University of New York  
Albany, NY 12222  
[REDACTED] (work); [REDACTED] (home); [REDACTED] (fax)  
The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

## 510. **Schuchat Simon**

*milieu etc*

*Sat 17 Jan 1998*

I have recently, with an entirely rational purpose, read Norman Mailer's lengthy novel ANCIENT EVENINGS which is, as no doubt everyone on the list knows, set in Pharonic Egypt. It seemed to me entirely a product of its time, the mid 70s, or roughly from Watergate through the Iranian hostage crisis (to use mediated history as a marker), i.e., the conscious attempt to "get in the ring" with (in this case) Thomas Mann, the apparent total disconnect from life as it was going on around the author in favor of a total connect with literary models, the persistence of the author's signature characteristics (there's a lot of buttfucking and shit smelling in ANCIENT EVENINGS), etc.

Then I thought how Allen Ginsberg during the same historical period seemed to respond to similar aesthetic impulses, Contest of Bards being the main exhibit (shall I become Milton!) though the neo-Elizabethan songs of that period (Love's Answer, etc) are more delightful to my own tastes. Again, its a conscious effort to make "literature" according to some received definition of what constitutes literature.

Now, this is the same period that saw the beginnings of soi-disant language school poetry, whether in California or New York. My question for the list is, was langpo equally part of this same period style, the deliberate invention of an avant garde poetics according to a recipe for what ought to constitute an avant garde poetics, just as Mailer is writing what everybody knows is what a "great" novel is supposed to be. (With Allen its a little more complicated, he knew he had already made great poetry, then I think he wanted to see if he could make great poetry as defined by somebody else, or, to answer the questioner a hundred years hence who asks, what if Allen Ginsberg had tried to write like Milton.)

I guess what I am driving at is whether we can define this 70s period style as some kind of "naive programmatic" or "systematic rangement of the sensibility" any rocks?

[↑ Contents](#)

511. **Jordan Davis**  
*Some problems in discourse*

Sat 17 Jan 1998

---

This was a strange thing to wake up to --

*First, I'd like to thank Luigi for sending on a useful and "important" (I realize Jordan Davis wd. like to purge this word--but beware those who urge to purge!)--list of journals and web sites to start*

not that I don't think you shouldn't beware me --

I'm really very scary!

in case you didn't notice the scare quotes.

I just think the word wastes time.

Importance is the closest thing to money in poetry.

The Taylor Mead retrospective, for those of you within the blast radius of Manhattan Penal Colony, still has two shows to go, next Saturday and Sunday. You missed seeing Ed Sanders and Jack Smith cavort with my hometown's favorite native goof in Ron Rice's The Queen of Sheba Meets the Atom Man. Shot on surplus gun film, it's just gorgeously gray New York from the ice on the East River to Taylor taking a big swig of wheat germ. A useful counterbalance to the Rudy Burckhardt film program last Tuesday at the New York Studio School where Kevin Davies' rule about poetry events in New York held true -- if it's Langpo, show up ten minutes late, if it's New York School, get there fifteen minutes early.

"Doctor, I'm worried I may be, you know, important" --

Jordan

[↑ Contents](#)

512. **Douglas Barbour**

***Re: Byrd on Clarke etc***

*Sat 17 Jan 1998*

Oh God, Don Byrd on growing (not old but) middle aged! I wont go on in agreement about that, but realize that yes indeed I did read Clarke's massive opus & was taken many places. Why didnt I mention it too? Because one of the facts of aging is forgetfulness I guess. I only read it once -- so far. And that means I havent done the 'curriculum' much yet at all, but it tempts me & I can hope I'll find the time.

I read mina loy, the new Lost Lunar Baedeker, really for the first time; after so many others. So that whole string about the variousness of different individuals' sense of 'poetic history [ies]' makes a lot of sense to me. I found the Black Mountain group before I really read the Beats & that was really important to me (but I did so because there was a copy of Olson's Maximus 1-20 in a small bookshop in Halifax (!), & then I found a copy of The Opening of the Field on sale in Montreal, & only then did The New American Poetry turn up among my writing friends. And only later did I really begin to read Canadians, meet bpNichol & begin to devour everything of his as it arrived. Oh yeah, since so many of you here know him, George Bowering's work (& that of many of the writers associated with the action on the west coast promoted by the Vancouver conference of 63 [which i only read about later -- sob]) has shone, Daphne Marlatt's, Fred Wah's, etc. And so on. The sense I have of recent poetry is therefore different than that of many people I know personally, let alone those I've read here. What I know is not what you know. You know?

=====

Douglas Barbour  
Department of English  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5

██████████ FAX: ██████████

H: ██████████

~~~~~

Whose song is this anyway?
Is it a song being sung
on the narrow road to the North?

Phyllis Webb

[↑ Contents](#)

513. **groberts**
squib miscellany

Sat 17 Jan 1998

These birdseeds landed on my snow:

-I share Kent Johnson's uncertainty or curiosity about the ways in which "community" has been used in the visual poetry thread, given the ways in which that poetry is produced and distributed, and wonder if anyone feels committed enough to a specific definition of it to explain why anyone else should honor an appeal to it as a term. The matter of Perloff's syllabus and her appeal to logistics got me thinking about how universities sit in "communities." In them still, solicitation of transhistorical and transnational knowledge, however incoherent or incomplete, is different from acknowledging a social ecology in the name of facilitating praxis (which doesn't mean that knowledge and praxis are binaries, even in an academic course).

-Ann Lauterbach's *On a Stair* is another '97 product worth mentioning, even if it does have the mark of the penguin upon it.

-If Bruce Andrews has not yet been named re:humor, then why not? Don't know the man, never saw him, can't testify as to his courtesies and conviviality, but his party-mouth, howsoever juvenal, cracks my ass. Chfuck the opacity business, he is a laugh riot in here age of satire.

-Hendrix's long live version of his song "Machine Gun" is the definitive statement on the guitar-as-battle ax, and deserves to be as well known as his "Star-spangled banner": the cadenza at the end of it gives me chills every time I listen.

Gotto go shovel now.

Gary R.

[↑ Contents](#)

514. **Daniel Zimmerman**
Re: Lady Mondegreen

Sat 17 Jan 1998

I just found this "compendium of Misunderstood Lyrics"--

<http://www.flash.net/~trevas/>

Enjoy!

Dan Zimmerman

Tenney Nathanson wrote:

>

> I heard this one a decade or so ago as a true story about Allen Grossman at
> Brandeis, and in the version I heard a whole lotta people in the class made
> the

> same error, compounding A.G.'s accent and their ineptitude. who knows?

>

> At 05:22 PM 1/12/98 -0500, you wrote:

> >Well, this one is not exactly a misheard lyric and won't cause smirks and

> >laughter, but is maybe worth sharing anyway.

> >

> >A prof reading a term paper on Yeats comes across the phrase "fantasy
echo"

> >thoughtout, and is curious as to what the undergraduate means by it and
where

> >it comes from. The two meet to talk, the prof poses his questions, and

> >the student replies, "But you used it yourself all semester in your lectures

> >about the fantasy echo." At which point the prof realizes that the phrase

> >has replaced "fin de siecle." I like the way the replacement has named

> itself.

> >

> >Gary R.

> >

[↑ Contents](#)

515. **pollet**

icestorm poetics

Sat 17 Jan 1998

I'm at a friend's in the big city of Bangor, to catch up on the list, take a shower, enjoy the bright lights. Close to 300,000 houses lost power and/or phones. My house now in day ten without either. We heat with wood anyway, & have a gas stove to cook on, so I'm not shivering except for Poetics List withdrawal, and just when it really got busy again, after the holiday doldrums. I did hear from Ted Enslin, he's OK, keeping warm, just getting sick of melting snow for water. Claims he's done with winters in Maine. can't imagine why! I did manage to get out the mailing of Backwoods BroadSides Chaplet Series #32 & 33, Nathaniel Tarn & Jerome Rothenberg. Ted said he read them by candlelight & they cheered him up immensely. Pixels aren't everything. The earliest mondagreen I can remember is singing the refrain of "Blue-tail fly" as "Jimmy

Raccoon and I don't care," which still makes more sense to me. best,
Sylvester

[↑ Contents](#)

516. **MillettC**

Juliana Spahr

Sat 17 Jan 1998

Folks,

If someone has Juliana Spahr's e-mail address, would you mind backchanneling me with it?

Thanks,
Christina Milletti

██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

517. **Don Byrd**

Re: Garbled Citations

Sat 17 Jan 1998

For some reason known only to my mail utility, who says what in my answers to Kent Johnson got completely garbled.

Kent Johnson wrote:

Don-- I believe that for the past number of years you have been part of an informally-knit community of poets that has been seriously discussing a range of works.

And Don Byrd Wrote:

I am a little startled that whatever temporary autonomous zones we have managed in the mid-Hudson valley have become a topic of the grapevine.

*Over the last twenty-five years, I have been involved with a constantly shifting group of poets, painters, and composers which at one time or another has included most of the people you mention, though there has never been a formal arrangement. There were great picnics at Paul and Nancy Metcalf's house in Berkshires in the 70's. A few of us were involved in something that we called (half-jokingly) The Rhinebeck Institute Seminars, which resulted in book, edited by Charles Stein, *Being = Space x Action* (North Atlantic Books). There was one somewhat formal session at Bard College, but most of the seminars were gatherings at Christer Hennix's apartment.*

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At any rate, I see no reason at all that such a community cannot be served by the net. Of course, it would be nice to get people together from time to time.

*Incidentally, to pick up another thread of the discussion: the folk music scene in the early 60's was a similar kind of cult (larger and more organized). The power and importance of *_Bringing It All Back Home_* and *_Highway 61 Revisited_* is that, by going electric, Dylan revealed the cult secret to the masses, and, of course, the folkies hated him for it. Rightfully so. But the entrance of dope wisdom and folk surrealism into pop culture provided a rare opening to a possible, broad-based cultural transformation. It was, of course, a commercial move, but it was naïve on the part of both Dylan (the Beatles, Hendrix,*

et. al) and the record companies. No one knew what they were doing. And for about four years, there was the chance that something might happen. Of course, it was never much of a possibility—commercial interests being what they. A cultural revolution requires more than hallucinogens and a few songs, and by 1971, the record companies had it back under control. For better or worse, the secrets of the profounder cults did not enter in popular circulation, and capitalism lost its last little bit of innocence. They'll never let that happen again. The popular culture left only being a punk as an honest possibility.

The other honest possibilities are occult and perennial. "Oh poets, you should get a job." What's the job? Most of the sonnets in Clarke's In the Analogy have four epigraphs. They could be taken as topoi for serious discussion..

Right now I am struck by this one, from C.S. Peirce: "I cannot exert strenght all alone... only if there be something to resist me."

Or this one, from Hawthorne: "Sin is followed by isolation."

Or this one from H.D. "Most of the so-called artists of today have lost the use of their brain."

--

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[↑ Contents](#)

518. **Harold Rhenisch**
Re: Expression/Self-Expression
Sun 18 Jan 1998

Bob,

to your,

>>I don't see words as containers but (very old-fashionedly) as tags.
They make you remember what you've perceived in the past.<<

Tags is good.

But who is this 'you' perceiving in the past? I'd say the words had their hand in it. This 'you' is a tool the words have made for their own ends, no? Sure, this 'you' exists, but it is a very special meta-creature, and a very powerful one. What happens when one moves away from the country of the you into the country of the words?

>>I would claim
your brain has "tree" stored somewhere, and that when you read it, the "knowlecule" (as I call it in my theory of the mind, which is even nuttier than my poetics) in your brain for "tree" straight-forwardly links to all the knowlecules there that have anything to do with trees, the strength of any particular link depending on context.<<

My 12 year old daughter claims that if she wants to remember something, she just has to visualize a general category, and then she sees the sub-categories unfold below it, including, in the example of our tree, every instance of tree she has encountered. She then searches through this list of images, film-clips, and words, etc., until she lights upon what she was looking for. Now, I find this remarkable and profound, but I know my mind does not work like that. Mine is symbolic. There's a logic there, but an entirely different one. I think that's what helps make this so difficult: we don't all think the same.

>>This all probably sounds simple-minded and, I think, is. I hope it gives you an idea of where I'm coming from, though.<<

Not simple-minded. Was always clear.

Harold



[↑ Contents](#)

519. **MARK LEAHY**
readerly consumption
Sun 18 Jan 1998

a question to the list, particularly those on the icy side of the Canadian border; I was told the other day of an essay by Frank Davey which dealt with 'readerly consumption' and or the reader as consumer; I have been unable to locate it in our library here and wonder if anyone can point me in the right direction; (thanks in advance)

in response to those musings as to how many people were interested in the Visual Poetics debate, I for one have been following it, and am only waiting for some time to follow up the online links;

Mark

Mark Leahy



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[↑ Contents](#)

520. **Michael Magee**
Re: Dylan not vs. poetry
Sun 18 Jan 1998

From Joe A: "On the other hand, I met a woman once who claimed to have spent the night with Dylan in a camper parked on Sixth Street in Austin. Desperate for gossip, insight, whatever, I said, well tell me, what happened. It was awful, she said, he made me chew tobacco."

This is just beautifully funny. -m.

[↑ Contents](#)

521. **Miekal And**
[Fwd: Re: RHIZOME_RAW: Live on the Poetics List: Whose Visual Poetics?]
Sun 18 Jan 1998

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

intergalactic
hypertext

time machine
presents

by westbyserver.westby.mwt.net (8.8.7/8.8.6) with ESMTP id OAA20763
for <[REDACTED]>; Sun, 18 Jan 1998 14:02:26 -0600 (CST)
by jeter.acpub.duke.edu (8.8.5/Duke-4.5.3) with ESMTP id PAA25868;
Sun, 18 Jan 1998 15:00:24 -0500 (EST)
by godzilla4.acpub.duke.edu (8.8.5/Duke-4.4) id PAA20929;
Sun, 18 Jan 1998 15:00:24 -0500 (EST)

Date: Sun, 18 Jan 1998 15:00:23 -0500 (EST)

From: alex galloway <[REDACTED]>

To: Miekal And <[REDACTED]>

cc: [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: RHIZOME_RAW: Live on the Poetics List: Whose Visual Poetics?

*in order to widen the bandwidth of the list's discussion & scholarship
on the topic Ive been seeking out relevant works, citations,
manifestoes, & websites to enter into the discussion. I have created an
ascii gadget called The Intergalactic Hypertext Time Machine which will
post all materials that are sent me as an ongoing series of posts.*

general hyperdoor to DIGITAL STUDIES with manifestoz:

<http://altx.com/ds>

for visual poetry within DIGITAL STUDIES see especially:

Truth is a moving target

by erwin redl

<http://www.thing.net/~parallel>

ooxxxxooo

by Juliet Ann Martin

<http://www.bway.net/~juliet/ooxxxxooo/Answer.html>

Amerika

Poem by Nari

<http://members.tripod.com/~poembynari/amerika.htm>

Solve et Coagula

by Knut Mork

<http://www.gar.no/sec/>

-----1D81CED636A--

[↑ Contents](#)

522. **Tom Mandel**

A miscellany, or I can't keep up.

Sun 18 Jan 1998

Don's right of course. People build knowledge a world together of shared contexts. Otherwise everyone is just opining into the stream.

Thanks to Kasey for pointing that yes there is more to the subject I said I couldn't really begin to explore because of how much more there was. If only this listserv could pass realaudio I'd be looking forward to the c&m "do not go gentle...." Anything changes anything, you bet. That is the point. But by direct access to the poem I didn't mean an occasion for theorizing but just that, me and the poem rather than me and the night and the music.

Greil Marcus is a fuddy-duddy and always has been. I remember a dinner out with him one night in the late seventies. He wore a blue 3 piece pin-striped Brooks Brothers makers (the expensive kind) suit, paraded his educational qualifications and polysyllabic capacities (natch i blew him away on both counts) and seemed to regard any thought he had as philosophy. He did drive us to dinner, tho, in his new chug-chug Mercedes Benz Diesel. As a guide to our era he really won't do. Baedeker's fine for the chapels, don't ask him for an opinion on the dance-halls. Talk about received ideas! Anybody read Sainte-Beuve lately? -- Greil's the Sainte-Beuve of our time, at least.

Visions of Johanna is my favorite Dylan song too, Don. Send me an email and we'll discuss it! Inside the museums / infinity goes up on trial.

Why don't we all know the same books, but we all know Dylan? For one thing, in a world with thousands of poets "taste" (or any other personal filtering term you like) becomes the active master. There's just a *huge* range out there and no objective measuring device by which you can categorize or otherwise order it. Despite (or the cause of?) theory. Dylan is in a different world, one that's pushed at us. The money spent to market Dylan's comeback album for example, who knows how much? And it worked (here we are talking about it).

Joe Safdie calls the Allen anthology and the NY School anthology his (twinned) "bible." No surprise, in that case, if he had trouble with the Language Poetry scene in SF around the turn of 1980. It would be hard to get along with people who felt they were the heirs of your bible and also felt strong enough to critique it. Especially if they *were* strong enough to critique people you "were fortunate enough to study with." This is *not* the same as rejection of that tradition. It's just taking it away from you. Moreso the Allen anthology than the NY school anthology, yet really both, were seen as the place where the real past was collected, however. It was Richard Wilbur, et. al. that came in for veritable scorn.

The following is a personal reaction: I find criticism of Barry's "personality" annoying. "Priggish. Aloof. Supercilious. Contemptuous" Joe Safdie calls him.

For one thing, such criticism seems to be used to prove something (what?). For another, it is a reaction to the surface of a person to his self-presentation and to a way of presenting self that is evidently not a matter of personal control for anyone. We don't make what we look like nor how we appear to others. Above all, it has literally nothing to do with whether, for example, Barry is a good friend to his friends, to take a simple example (he is). Nor with any other feature of his character. Character not personality is what goes into making poems, because it is what goes into making people.

Finally, it is a weak way of addressing whatever issue a person and his work raises in your life and in your poetics. That is, there's no place to go with it. Connecting someone's manner with their matter (assuming Joe has even gotten to any essential of Watten's manner -- Barry always seemed more awkward than contemptuous to me during those years, more preoccupied than aloof) removes the need to craft a strong position on that matter, on poetics. Where's the critique of the poetics? A series of conclusions (e.g. it wasn't political even tho it thought it was, to paraphrase Joe) really doesn't get very far.

Anyway, that's my personal reaction. I'm fond of Barry -- personally, and of his work -- as I hope I am making clear.

Tom

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Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

523. **Tom Mandel**

Joe on Barry

Sun 18 Jan 1998

I should add that Joe frames his personal reaction to Barry generously -- saying that he is pleased others feel differently, and pointing out himself that his response has "the weight" of the personal. It was not to him but precisely to weighting the issue of Watten or anyone's "personality" in an understanding of poetics or work that I meant to be objecting. Actions, works, statements, yes. Quotations please.

Tom

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[↑ Contents](#)

524. **Tom Mandel**

pointless at best

Sun 18 Jan 1998

Hi David Benedetti -- haven't seen you in years. I wasn't trying to be exclusive or even exclusivist or create some exclusivista which all must see as me. Dylan pretty clearly, repeatedly, says he is not a poet. Doesn't mean I'm trying to see Dylan VERSUS poetry as you put it. I agree that's pointless. Anyway, I listened to all those albums as intensely as all of us did and had my view of the world shaped by my time, how the hell not? (and why the hell not?), but... I don't see how Blood on the Tracks was a diversion toward country? "Idiot Wind" -- sort of the signature song on the album -- "Tangled up in Blue"? these don't seem "country" to me. I assume it's not Nashville Skyline (*explicitly* country album) you mean?

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[↑ Contents](#)

525. **Tom Mandel**

Oy and more on language poetry

Sun 18 Jan 1998

It seems to me that Joe Safdie is being pretty straightforward in discriminating between his reactions to Language Poetry then (early 80's) and now. I think he

offers us a model to discuss this (briefly I hope) w/o being sucked back into the wars of that time.

A word on this remark by Joe, however:

"I resisted then, as I hope I would now, any so-called "movement" that wanted to sweep away what had gone before in its triumphal path..."

Well, sure. But, I have no idea what this is about in reference to that time. In fact, to my knowledge no one in the group of people who came retroactively to be seen as a movement particularly regarded language poetry as a movement at all. We did think we were investigating a way of writing, but we also thought it was being investigated with a lot of variety and that there was virtually no program for it whatever. There were agreements of rejection certainly -- what we all or mostly all seemed not to like (viz. Richard Wilbur, James Merrill -- *not* the Allen anthology!) -- and of agreement (the Allen anthology, early Ashbery), and of ambiguousness (Ashbery after The Tennis Court Oath). But even these "agreements" were far from that. Frameworks for discussions that didn't really have agreement as a goal at all.

I.e. there was some level of social self-consciousness among these people, but it was not as a movement. As to "sweep away what had gone before..." I can't begin to identify what is meant by this. Passion and a critique of the past are not identical to a rejection of that past. They're not even necessarily Oedipal (whatever in hell that mannish-boy theory-parable might still imply for anyone). And as to "in its triumphal path" where might the feeling of triumph have arisen?

Joes's sentence goes on:

"; the Tradition is important to me. Sometimes I think it's all we have..."

Well, I can identify with that and strongly. But how do you go on? An example please where piety (that word is not being used sarcastically) leads to innovation? I think I could point to one in the rabbinic Midrash tradition. But there is a particular set of formal constraints which follows, and, no matter how compelling that work is, it is limited in its effect by those constraints.

We are limited by our own metaphors. We talk of "breaking new ground," but there is always a life there destroyed by our plow. The tradition itself, it's that kind of story.

Tom

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[↑ Contents](#)

526. **Steven Marks**
talking about poetry; and time
Sun 18 Jan 1998

On Fri, 16 Jan 1998, Douglas Barbour wrote:

 $\succ$

> I take the point that it would be good to say something about those books,
> but I dont have much time this ay em to do so.

"O Whirl Wind"

O busy schedule, when wilt thou stop
that the reign of the clock will no longer reign
Christ! that time was on my hands
and I in my bed again.

ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ,
Steven

Steven Marks

<http://members.aol.com/swmarks/welcome.html>

[↑ Contents](#)

527. **Tom Mandel**
Ah, human weakness
Sun 18 Jan 1998

Dan Zimmerman backchanneled me pointing out the contradiction -- blatant -- between my defense of BW against personal attacks and my personal attack on Greil Marcus... in the same post!

I have to plead guilty. I just couldn't stand the guy -- a rich little prig living in the Berkeley hills in a fancy house since his midtwenties who never had to work and never bothered to think.

Ah, human weakness. Wall here I come (but Dan predicts pie in the face rather than a firing squad so maybe I'll be ok).

TM

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[↑ Contents](#)

528. **Franklin Bruno**

Chester Hennix, what was read in '97

Sun 18 Jan 1998

Don Byrd wrote:

> A few of us were involved in something that we called (half-jokingly) The > Rhinebeck Institute Seminars, which resulted in book, edited by Charles Stein, > _Being = Space x Action_ (North Atlantic Books). There was one somewhat > formal session at Bard College, but most of the seminars were gatherings at > Christer Hennix's apartment.

This moves away from the original topic of community, but: This book has long fascinated me, ever since I was introduced to it by Jed Rasula when he was visiting faculty at Pomona College. A close friend of mine, Dave Carl, did a fair bit of work at giving a rational, bare-bones reconstruction of what Chester Hennix is getting at in the portions of "The Yellow Book" therein, and a while later a few of us got together for a day-long seminar (that began at a breakfast joint and adjourned to a community center) discussing these themes (diagnolization, etc.). Who exactly Hennix is has remained a bit mysterious to me. Don, would you be willing to fill me and the list in with some info about him and how he fit into that community--Jed told me some things, but my memory's shaky. Also, is there any other writing by or about him out there to be tracked down? Finally, while I'm at it, is the redoubtable Mr. Rasula emailable? (Backchannel is fine on the last.)

Oh--for comparisons sake, '97 poetry I've read and enjoyed has included Moxley's "Imagination Verses," Damon Kruskowski's "5000 Musical Terms" (maybe that was '96), Watten's "Frame," Jordan Davis' "Upstairs," the book of Lyn Hejinian's "A Border Comedy" that appeared as a chapbook from Seeing Eye, Heather Fuller's "perhaps this is a rescue mission," Ron Padgett's "New And Selected Poems," Dennis Philips' "Credence," Jim Brodey's "Heart of the Breath" (96?), Campbell McGrath's "Spring Comes to Chicago," & Joshua Clover's "Madonna Anno Domini." These last two I've tried to bring up on the list with no success, which fuels my nagging suspicion that my list-capital is so low as to

make my interests appear beneath collective contempt, but no matter. I've read around in Mark Wallace's "Sonnets of A Penny-A-Liner" (haven't seen his even more recent book), and recent books by Jarrot (96?), Mandel, and Piombino, but not thoroughly enough to add them honestly to the above list. Lastly, I'm currently dealing w/ Fanny Howe's "One Crossed Out," which showed up in the bookstore about 2 weeks before the end of the year.

Why my two cents? Why not? Oh, and the Dylan is good not great and the years' best lyrics, poetry or not, were by Belle and Sebastian.

fjb

[↑ Contents](#)

529. **Bob Grumman**

Re: Expression/Self-Expression

Sun 18 Jan 1998

Oh, boy, Harold, you iz really pushin' me! The you--"this 'you' perceiving in the past? I'd say the words had their hand in it. This 'you' is a tool the words have made for their own ends, no?" No, not as far as I can see. For me the you, let's call it the mind, is just there listening in on the brain, passively (although it might be part of it, or even all of it). As for the brain's "me," it is, I believe, an innate knowlecule (or urceptual complex, how's that?) that has to do with the brain's visceral perception, so to speak, of the body it's globbed to. The brain is what might move from the country of the mind or you into some other country, such as the country of words. As I see that's no more than watching a silent movie and being in visuality, then closing one's eyes and turning on some music to go into the country of aurality. The you/mind is in the country of the self. There's also the country of words, which for people more Evelyn Wooden than I might be pure words--one word going to another with a trace of visual involvement but nothing else. For me the country of words includes fragments of sub-vocalization and sound.

More about this will have to wait my finally writing down the basics of my theory--or, more exactly--turning my notes into some kind of finished monograph.

As for remembering something, that's more mechanical, more the result of training, and we all have our own remembering strategies. Well, except for me. I don't remember nuttin'.

All best, Bob

[↑ Contents](#)

530. **Laurie Schneider/Crag Hill**

Has anyone else read Strabismus?

Sun 18 Jan 1998

To pick up the reading thread again:

When I first read Joseph Ceravolo's Transmigration Solo years ago (followed closely by Coolidge's Quartz Hearts), I gasped, "I've never read anything like this before!" I was utterly delighted by its originality, not in the least concerned that I couldn't identify or describe the mechanisms of that originality. It was pleasurable simply to experience, a joyful romp of language.

Reading Brian Schorn's Strabismus (from Burning Deck, 1995), I had a similar experience. I don't know how the hell he's doing what he's doing, nor did I want to break off the experience to analyze it - so rarely recently have I found poetry "pleasurable" in any sense. But now as I think about the poems and re-read them, the root of this pleasure has to be in the many impossible, improbable, unpredictable lines and sentences that build up the poems -- accretion of the unexpected: "Temperatures are convincing jerks between the people in the canoe, hence, their legs support them like four broken ferns." I beg your pardon? I ask, a smile on my reading face. "I am the plaid formation on a Midwestern bow tie, capsized/somewhere on a whitecap, say/Lake Michigan." I've been there, seen that, I think. No, I haven't, though I grew up on the western shores of Lake Michigan. I haven't been there, but those lines are. "Hands entwined around each end of a wine bottle will not enhance the greenery of a swamp." Well, yes, but...These poems are delightful. That's a hell of a place to start.

Where have others gone with Strabismus?

Best, Crag Hill

[↑ Contents](#)

531. **Miekal And**

povispo? squibble misc

Sun 18 Jan 1998

Gary Roberts wrote:

>

> These birdseeds landed on my snow:

>

> -I share Kent Johnson's uncertainty or curiosity about the ways in which

> "community" has been used in the visual poetry thread,

my reading of community is that it has always formed the backbone to all my interactions with other visual poets & mailartists, that the networking & the making contact, knowing who was out there, being attracted to the work of

some, where the networking between us is an enduring link. (for instance just these last weeks meeting artists whom I havent heard from in 5-10 years as they slowly join the electronic parade (why are the poets the last to tool up?))

given the ways in which

> that poetry is produced and distributed,

way every way

and wonder if anyone feels committed

> enough to a specific definition of it to explain why anyone else should honor

> an appeal to it as a term.

unlike Mr Bob in the far south, Im quite uncomfortable with categories & terms, especially when something about the term's nature suggests a generality that yet remains exclusive. & especially I contend with many of the best works, their vibrancy is partly in the way the work defies a branding. my personal bias when using the term "visual poetry" is that historically & in practice large sectors of various visual poetry movements such as zaum, lettrism, fluxus, & mail art were foremost interested in transcending nationality.

The matter of Perloff's syllabus and her appeal

> to logistics got me thinking about how universities sit in "communities."

being a founder of a real life community, my relation to that word is experiential. access, participation, mutual aid. if I am a grad student in a seminar, my question would be: is the model of community something that is dynamic that I can participate in (as in summerhill style open classroom) or a static appointment with information retrieval which ends when the course is over?

In them still, solicitation of transhistorical and transnational knowledge, however incoherent or incomplete, is different from acknowledging a social ecology in the name of facilitating praxis (which doesn't meant that knowledge and praxis are binaries, even in an academic course).

to me the analogy is comparable to studying a computer manual to learn a software program & then not actually using the program for its intended purpose.

miekal

[↑ Contents](#)

532. **Don Byrd**

Re: Chester Hennix, what was read in '97

Sun 18 Jan 1998

Franklin Bruno wrote:

Who exactly Hennix is has remained a bit mysterious to me. Don, would you be willing to fill me and

the list in with some info about him and how he fit into that community--Jed told me some things, but my memory's shaky.

Christer Hennix is a Swedish mathematician, composer, philosopher--a concept artist--who lived in the U.S. for a number of years. He is one of the great originals. I must say that my struggle to understand his work, which is deeply embedded in mathematics that I do not have the background for, left a permanent mark on not just my thinking but my way of perceiving. In his Introduction, Chuck Stein notes, "...the theoretical structures of the text build up structures from fundamentally empty concepts and collapse all the structures generated back into a recapitulated emptiness at the end (while at the same time allowing a phantasmagorically rich array of mathematical structures and possibilities to shimmer before the contemplating intellect in passing). To witness this process, even as one who does not command the necessary topology and category theory, is to begin to have some idea what "structure" might mean, if one goes to the trouble to get one's language clear enough that it means any thing.

He and Henry Flynt define concept art as working with concepts as material (as a composer works with sound), as opposed to conceptual artists, who, from their point of view, merely illustrate concepts. There is a web site devoted to Flynt's work, including his Concept Art manifesto and his essay summarizing Hennix's career.

<http://www.butterfly.net/henryflynt/index.html>

Hennix has been back in Europe for a number of years, and sadly I missed him when he lectured at Dia in NY last fall. Chuck Stein said that his vocabulary is heavily Lacanian these days, but that the concepts are still those explored in "The Yellow Book," in *_Being =Space x Action_*.

--

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[↑ Contents](#)

533. **Don Byrd**
Re: Chester Hennix,
Sun 18 Jan 1998

I should have mentioned also an excellent collection of essays, with important essays by Hennix and Flynt, *_Sound and Light: LaMonte Young, Marian Zazeela_*, ed. Wm. Duckworth and Richard Fleming (Bucknell UP, 1996). They are properly at home in the context of minimalism....

DB

--

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[↑ Contents](#)

534. **nico vassilakis**
NEW HARRY SMITH Book
Mon 19 Jan 1998

----- Forwarded message -----

Date: Sat, 20 Dec 1997 19:33:10 -0800 (PST)
From: Darrin Daniel <[REDACTED]>
To: nico vassilakis <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Think of the Self Speaking

THINK OF THE SELF SPEAKING: Selected Interviews of Harry Smith

Introduction by Allen Ginsberg

Elbow and Cityful Press announce the first book collection of interviews by the filmmaker, painter and archivist, Harry Smith. Over 30 years of his life, Smith came back to the interview as a medium for his brand of thought and expression. These interviews reveal the genius of the man and his contribution to arts and letters.

Harry Everett Smith was born May 29th, 1923 in Portland, Oregon. His early childhood was spent in the Pacific Northwest- Bellingham, Anacortes, Seattle and Portland. He attended University of Washington until before his move to

Berkeley, California in 1948. While in Berkeley he began extensively painting and filmmaking. Smith based much of his work in the non-objectivist style of Bauer and Kandinsky. In 1951 he received an invitation from Hilla Rebay of the Museum of Non-Objectivist art. He also received a Guggenheim, which allowed for him to move to New York City to pursue film and painting.

Primarily recognized as a filmmaker, Smith's innovations in hand-painting, collage, and batik directly on film continue to influence on filmmakers today. His immense 78 album collection culminated in the "Anthology of American Music" [Re-released by Smithsonian Folkways].

Smith's range of discussion in "Think of the Self Speaking" includes: painting, music, film, the occult, anthropology and his early childhood in the northwest.

ISBN 1-885089-06-6. 175 pgs. 6x9, paper. \$14.95 plus postage (\$2.25). Cityful Press pob 4477 Seattle, Wa 98104-0477. Or e-mail at: [REDACTED]. Check or money order.

[↑ Contents](#)

535. **David R. Israel**

Hughes & Plath

Mon 19 Jan 1998

clack . clack . clack .

this just in . . .

(thanks to <http://my.yahoo.com/>):

Sunday January 18 3:01 PM EST

UK Poet Hughes Breaks Silence Over Sylvia Plath

LONDON, Jan 17 (Reuters) - British poet Ted Hughes, vilified for more than 30 years over the suicide of his wife Sylvia Plath, has broken his silence by publishing a collection of startling love poems about the affair.

A collection of 88 poems called "Birthday Letters" written at intervals over the past 35 years, depict Hughes's love for Plath since their first meeting and in the years after her suicide.

Described by one poet and critic on Saturday as "a thunderbolt from the blue" the poems reveal for the first time Hughes's account of one of the century's most tragic literary love stories.

<snip>

The Times newspaper on Saturday published a selection of the new poems, which are to be published on January 29.

<snip>

The Times in an editorial called the collection "the greatest book by our greatest living writer."

"For 30 years Sylvia Plath's pain has been public knowledge... Now, in an autobiographical sequence that forms the finest work of his life, Ted Hughes brings his own pain into the open. he has taken a risk -- and should win full reward," the newspaper said.

Reuters/Variety

For the unabridged Reuters, see:

http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/980118/entertainment/stories/culture_poets_1.html

d.i.

[↑ Contents](#)

536. **Bob Grumman**

Re: povispo? squibble misc

Mon 19 Jan 1998

I'm with Meikal about community--with regard to visual poets, mail artists, poets-in-general, artists-in-general . . . (who are among the last to tool up because they are among the last to be able to afford to). Community is what pastes Miekal and me together despite our opposed feelings about categories and terms.

Yes, "access, participation, mutual aid."

As for terms, I say against Miekal that if a term's nature does not suggest "a generality that yet remains exclusive," what's the point of it? A term, in the final analysis, is just a word, and words--all words--are what we use to communicate to others, "this, not that." About individual terms we can of course argue, and the foolishly judgemental use of them we should condemn.

[↑ Contents](#)

537. **Harold Rhenisch**

Re: Expression/Self-Expression

Mon 19 Jan 1998

>>You or your daughter might be interested in "The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci" by Jonathan D. Spence which describes a technique of mentally building, well, a "memory palace" where a structure of rooms contain objects which correspond either symbolically or practically to what you are remembering.<<

Marcella, I've enjoyed Frances A. Yates' "The Art of Memory" for years. Same deal, but in Classical Greece. I have even used the technique in a writing class, asking the students to build such a palace, then to step back through it and write what they found, with the one twist that on the second time through they were to see their fantastic objects and creatures as if for the first time. A sneaky way to get at symbolism, but it worked marvellously. Matteo Ricci probably turned over in his grave.

Sorry, Matteo.

Harold Rhenisch



[↑ Contents](#)

538. **Rachel Loden**

Hughes v Plath

Mon 19 Jan 1998

David R. Israel wrote:

LONDON, Jan 17 (Reuters) - British poet Ted Hughes, vilified for more than 30 years over the suicide of his wife Sylvia Plath, has broken his silence by publishing a collection of startling love poems about the affair.

More odious than startling, judging from the three poems available on the Times site yesterday. In the second one, he refers to her "African-lipped, laughing, thickly / Crimson-painted mouth . . ." In the third, there's this:

And I became aware of the mystery
Of your lips, like nothing before in my life,
Their aboriginal thickness. And of your nose,
Broad and Apache, nearly a boxer's nose,
Scorpio's obverse to the Semitic eagle
That made every camera your enemy,
The jailor of your vanity, the traitor
In your Sexual Dreams Incorporated,
Nose from Attila's horde: a prototype face
That could have looked up at me through the smoke
Of a Navajo campfire.

I mean, what, no tittering lotus blossoms, no Mexican spitfires, while we're throwing in the kitchen sink? Haven't had this particular chill since coming across words like "Negress" and "Jewess." Which is to say, not in a long time.

Bring your Pepto-Bismol to

<http://www.sunday-times.co.uk:80/news/pages/tim/98/01/17/timnnfnf02008.html?1971198>

Headline from Andrew Motion's review, also on the site: A thunderbolt from the blue: this book will live forever.

Rachel Loden

[↑ Contents](#)

539. **Miekal And**
Ice Fishing in Wisconsin School of Poetry
Mon 19 Jan 1998

Manifesto:

1. Coldness is a state of mind, words generate thermodynamic warmth.
2. Throw back what you cant eat.
3. If you cannot identify what you catch as belonging to a particular movement or category, it doesnt exist.
4. Success in the catch is directly proportional to the rise & fall of stock market events & solar storms.
5. Most language is fishy, all language has scale.
6. [additions?]

[↑ Contents](#)

540. **Jacques Debrot**
Re: Burning Deck
Mon 19 Jan 1998

I agree entirely with Crag Hill about Schorn's work, it's terrific. However I don't see Schorn's achievement as being an isolated -- or entirely unique -- one. Its peculiar collagist sensibility seems related to a lot of work being published by Burning Deck. For instance Lisa Jarnot's extraordinary verbal collage **Some Other Kind of Mission** seems to me an important breakthrough for post-Langpo writing. A breakthrough I see as already being extended by Sianne Ngai in work she's recently published in **Abacus** and **Chain 4**.

[↑ Contents](#)

541. **Michael Magee**

Re: Hughes & Plath

Mon 19 Jan 1998

'Described by one poet and critic on Saturday as "a thunderbolt from the blue"
- ??? goodness, If I were this poet I certainly wouldn't want people revealing
that I'd used a phrase like "a thunderbolt from the blue"! Ted Hughes "Our
greatest living writer"? even if this refers only to the island its impossibly
wrong. Isn't he about 30 yrs too late for the "autobiographical sequence"? Still
catching up w/ his ex. And that racialized description of Plath - what the hell!?!
Oh, boy. -m.

[↑ Contents](#)

542. **Harold Rhenisch**

Re: Ice Fishing in Wisconsin School of Poetry

Mon 19 Jan 1998

Poetry is best spoken from deep in the trout.

--Harold Rhenisch

[↑ Contents](#)

543. **Jacques Debrot**

Oy . . . Langpo

Mon 19 Jan 1998

In the new *Philly Talks* Ron Silliman writes:

"*what is it about language writing and all that has come after it that there has
been no moment nor movement that has crystallized in anything like the same
way poetry did in the early 1970s?* For all the anthologies of younger writers,
many of then extraordinarily gifted, what do we find in the way of work that is
actually new? I think this must be the challenge that faces every younger
writer . . . "

Perhaps it would help to answer this question if we asked what *exactly* was
new about Langpo. It strikes me that you only have to glance quickly through
an anthology like *Poems for the Millenium* to realize that, formally, there are
many poems -- and hundreds of passages -- as radically innovative as anything
in Langpo. In fact, as John Shoptaw notices, a poem like Frank O'Hara's "What
Appears to be Yours" from 1960 would not seem at all out of place in *The Lan-
guage Book* or *In the American Tree*. By the mid-1950s -- as a reaction
against the culture of Abstract Expressionism -- the New York avant-garde of
O'Hara's and Ashbery's generation had already moved away from an aesthetic
based on the physical body in relation to the poetic line. If Ashbery himself

talks about the influence of say Pollock on *The Tennis Court Oath* this has really everything to do with the enormous power of the critical vocabulary with which theorists such as Clement Greenberg, Harold Rosenberg and Meyer Shapiro articulated the project of Abstract Expressionism -- that is, the difference between the art of Ashbery's generation and the Abstract Expressionists was incapable of being described within the limits of the language and concepts available for thought at this particular period. And it is this that seems to me to be the breakthrough of Langpo -- a breakthrough that is more a matter of being able to *read* -- in an entirely new way -- the more radical passages in the New American poetry than it is of *writing* poems in a fundamentally new way. (Here of course the reception to post-structuralist theory -- particularly the Marxist inflection it was given by Althusser -- motivated the character of this reading.) Nor does Ashbery's influence end, as Mandel seems to suggest, with *The Tennis Court Oath* -- I don't think it's mentioned in "The New Sentence," but isn't "Three Poems" the crucial stimulus for the explosion of Language prose poems written during the mid-, late- 70s? Today I think there are formal innovations being made that are as distinct from Langpo as Langpo's were from the New American poetry. The problem is that the critical language has grown stale -- & like the radical work of the 1960s, there is no adequate vocabulary with which to describe the implications of these innovations.

[↑ Contents](#)

544. **Michael Magee**

Re: Oy . . . Langpo

Mon 19 Jan 1998

from Jacques: " Today I think there are formal innovations being made that are as distinct from Langpo as Langpo's were from the New American poetry. The problem is that the critical language has grown stale -- & like the radical work of the 1960s, there is no adequate vocabulary with which to describe the implications of these innovations."

This seems to me a smart and succinct addition to what Josh Schuster began the other day regarding generational differences, etc. I wonder if some of those poets on this list who consider themselves related-to-but-clearly-post Language Writing might take a shot at adding a few words of "adequate vocabulary" regarding "the implications of [their] innovations." That'd be fun to read; and it would make great use of this List. -m.

[↑ Contents](#)

545. **Douglas Barbour**
Re: Mandel's online thinking
Mon 19 Jan 1998

The trials & tribulations of trying to 'reply' to the list: I had a nice long note thanking Tom Mandel for his postings 17-18 Jan (including his nice mea culpa for his remarks on Greil Marcus). So I have to try again. I appreciate his comments on the diverse bunch of people who have come to be called Language Poets. I think I said something about the way his comments on their choices of tradition(s) to follow & critique as well as those they simply ignored made good sense, partly in terms of Constance Penley's comments on an entirely different matter in her delightful & provocative *_NASA/TREK_*: choosing to write as a fan because fans are most critical from a position of desire. Anyway, that bunch of posts was useful in the best sense. But then a lot of the talk recently has been.

Mark Leahy: not sure which essay of Frank Davey's you mean, but you could try either *_Reading Canadian Reading_* (Turnstone 1988) or *_Canadian Literary Power-* (NeWest 1994? [I don't have my copy beside me]), for some essays that take on those questions. Frank, if he checks in on the list might give you the exact essay title...?

=====

Douglas Barbour
Department of English
University of Alberta
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2E5
[REDACTED] FAX: [REDACTED]
H: [REDACTED]

~~~~~

Whose song is this anyway?  
Is it a song being sung  
on the narrow road to the North?  
Phyllis Webb

[↑ Contents](#)

546. **Miekal And**  
**Whose Visual Poetics? Global mimesis**

Mon 19 Jan 1998

---

*the convergence of hypermedia in the 20th century is  
technological & inextricably organic & moving at biologically recursive  
speeds toward a global mimesis of international sightsound.*

cris cheek wrote:

*can i tease you to say more on this 'global mimesis'?*

in the last few years Im seeing a convergence of crossmedia experimentation, computers realizing the promise of the early 60s & a boundlessly exploding internationality of networking. mimetically our mothertongues are being invited to morph into a larger confluence of multi-dimensioned & interactive world-speak. while nationality of language will always be a limitation, extra-language artforms like visual poetry self-organize as intelligent biomes of sightsound interactivity, & oftentimes the edges where radically differing styles meet expose openings for the new work to follow. as dynamic codes I see their effect most profoundly on someone such as my son, who lives amidst a mini empire of such signs, his own expressions layered with these sensibilities. so in the physiological sense, the visual poetry meme is the paradise garden we can choose to cultivate, it is the wilderness we can be lost in...

sing sing the paper black

miekal

[↑ Contents](#)

547. **Miekal And**  
**[Fwd: ] THE III INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF VISUAL >POETRY**

Mon 19 Jan 1998

---

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

the  
intergalactic  
hypertext  
time machine  
presents

by westbyserver.westby.mwt.net (8.8.7/8.8.6) with ESMTP id PAA07186  
for <[REDACTED]>; Mon, 19 Jan 1998 15:21:02 -0600 (CST)

Date: Mon, 19 Jan 1998 16:32:48 -0500

To: [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

X-From\_: [REDACTED] Sat Nov 8 06:05:38 1997

X-Sender: [REDACTED]

Mime-Version: 1.0

Date: Wed, 05 Nov 1997 16:27:48 -0300

To: [REDACTED]

From: Clemente Padin <[REDACTED]>

III INTERNATIONAL

EXHIBITION OF VISUAL POETRY

Dear Friend,

Next september we'll organize THE III INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF VISUAL POETRY, in Bento Gonçalves, a city in the south of Brazil.

The Exhibition will be included in the VI BRAZILIAN CONGRESS OF POETRY, the most important Congress of Poetry in the South America.

The title of the Exhibition is "2000 - 2", maximum format until A-3 (42 x 30 cm), and the deadline is 10th of september of 1998.

You can send 2 or 3 visual poems to:

ADEMIR ANTONIO BACCA

P O BOX 41

BENTO GONÇALVES-RS

BRAZIL

95700-000

The coordinators of the Exhibition (Clemente Padin, Fernando Aguiar and Hugo Pontes) will make a large selection of the best visual poems, and will be printed a special number of the newspaper "Garatuja", as a catalogue, who will include, at least, one poem of each selected poet. We'll make an archive of visual poetry with the documents of the first and second exhibition.

So, if you like, you may send books, catalogues, magazines, C.D., K-7, etc., for integrate that archive.

-----  
Fraternal greetings,

Clemente Padin

C.Correo Central 1211

11000 Montevideo

URUGUAY Fax (598) 2 915 94 17

-----6AC10C22F8B--

[↑ Contents](#)

548. **KENT JOHNSON**  
*The Catskill School of Poetry*  
Mon 19 Jan 1998

---

Just got back from ice fishing in Wisconsin to find Don Byrd's reply to my questions about community and the "Catskill School"--a group that I have apparently more or less dreamed up in my mind over the past several years. Thanks Don, though I sort of feel that I fell through the list's thin ice with that post (with a bigger splash than usual, that is), coming off pretty much like a secret Bloomsbury wanna be, longing for the drawing room and patter about books over tea.

Actually, I can trace this all back to the Sheraton lobby bar where I had a drink or two with Jed Rasula at the MLA in Washington D.C., which was in '88 or thereabouts. As David Bromige has recently shown, I don't have much of a memory, but I do know that after I told Jed I wanted him in the Buddhist anthology even though he wasn't exactly a Buddhist, I sat back and listened to Jed talk about his association with you and Chuck Stein, and about other people in and around Bard whose names I can't now remember, and the naive idea I got was, indeed, of an "ideally literary" community, a real *\_comunitas\_*, engaged in study and talk about some pretty heavy and weird stuff, some of which I remember Jed going on about at some length with frightening eloquence, bringing home to me that my best hope, really, was to be a decidedly third or fourth tier personage in the pantheon of postmodern poet-critics. And then I read Stein's anthology, and he says something there about all the close associations and then, too, the "Acknowledgments" page of *\_Poetics of the Common Knowledge\_* does too. So you see, I took that and stoked it wildly up, and here I've been, all this time, imagining poets strolling by the Hudson, or sitting around the fire two or three times a week, earnestly talking about Olson, Hegel, and high mathematics. Hoo boy...

Let me try to rephrase what my conjectural points were about this community question, and here I suppose I'm going to sound completely silly again, but so what, because as I recently said to someone b-c, I teach at a community college and don't really have an academic reputation to uphold. It's this: For poetic community, the presence of *\_bodies in the flesh\_*, gathered together inside the sound of voices, is key. And it's key because only with mutual human presence can one witness and grow wiser from the falterings and awkwardnesses and qualifications and sudden synchronicities of thought and insight that are intrinsic to any movement toward understanding. I *\_agree\_* with you that this doesn't mean that e-mail lists are not a good thing! Far from it--obviously there's an incredible amount of intelligence that arises here and the medium makes that possible. But the medium also has its flip and "darker side" as I see it. And one thing that I've come to feel is interesting about this list (and correct me list-mates if I'm just projecting because maybe I am) is that it is a place, in the first

instance, of positioning and \_performance\_, and one rarely finds a person and poet here openly vulnerable in the sense of groping and stumbling \_in the process of thought\_, certainly never totally at a loss for what to make of this or that. Nor, consequently, does one often find others entering, and sharing, and making use of, such falterings and false starts. To the contrary: "Thinking" here tends to be sheathed in the finish of performance (the best "finishes" being those that obscure such status), in posts that are eloquent and quite sure of themselves, quick to certainty and knife-edged irony, and quick to draw the line of defense. Long posts and bitty short ones. Very careful, everyone of us, and rarely a stutter to be heard. Even as I try to type quickly here and make this be "not careful", I'm going back and changing a whole bunch of stuff to make it sound better, even more natural and spontaneous!

So the medium does that too, I think, amkes it fairly impossible to enter into a relationship to thought and language that is not thoroughly staged --and in that sense, it might be seen as having a contradictory sort of relationship vis a vis the formation of real poetic community that is enabling of the kinds of truly new thinking and work that Ron Silliman laments the absence of, for example, in his Philly Lectures.

\*\*\*Oh Poets, get together in human form and talk with vulnerable seriousness about difficult books, and reveal, proudly, that \_most of the time\_, even if you're a big shot, that you don't know what the fuck you're talking about, for this might lead us to places we could never have suspected!!\*\*\*

All of this stochastic in the extreme, but it's in that spirit that I asked about Clarke, a really hard poet who makes me scratch my head and sound like an idiot when I try to talk about him with my voice box. To "talk" about him here would be a fantastic thing, of course, and all sorts of new and breathtakingly eloquent insights would emerge. But I suspect I might actually learn more \_deeply\_ about Clarke by participating immediately (like at the diner, with plastic ketchup and mustard bottles under the wall-juke) in the non-mediated, non-edited struggle of others to understand and say, and then sharing in, and being truly changed by, the moments of mutual clarity in which all the false starts and silences inhere. Even if E.O. Wilson is ultimately right that "what we call \_meaning\_" is nothing more romantic than "the linkage among the neural networks created by the spreading excitation that enlarges imagery and engages emotion," it would be the case that the chaotic background patterns of half-thought rivulets I have engendered iwth others will enter and excite meaning and understanding, making it richer, more fractal, in the human sense of the word. Yes, whatever that all means.

(Emma! More coffee!).

Alright, I suppose I've ruined myself now. I'm a fifth tier sap who needs to spend some time with Of Grammatology. I'm an ice-fisherman who can't catch fish. I am a fool who just screamed I LOVE SPEECH. But I will never forget my vivid, waking dream about the beautiful, light-encased men and women of the Catskill School of Poetry.

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

549. **Dale Smith**

**Langpods**

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

I read both of Safdie<sup>1</sup>'s recent posts with pleasure. One of the many thoughtful things he said to the Great Bromige was, <sup>3</sup>I resisted then, as I hope I would now, any so-called <sup>3</sup>movement<sup>2</sup> that wanted to sweep away what had gone before in its triumphal path; the tradition is important to me.<sup>2</sup> I have to admit, when I saw the Great one<sup>1</sup>'s slams on Tom Clark, I wrote Safdie saying that I'd like to get my Beowulf paws on that self deluded, lying coward. Something sweet like that. But Safdie addressed with intelligence the disease, while I fumed over the symptom. I merely want to stress Joe<sup>1</sup>'s remark, and ask, that guardian of banality Broomige why he, like many others (and maybe you Æothers<sup>1</sup> could help him out too), want to sweep the past away. This repressed, psychotic inability to acknowledge the mercantile reality of the art today is revealed too often in the way poets like Tom Clark and Edward Dorn are tossed off by the clergy of the precious librully minded langpod and langpod wannabes. Hell. Enough of these self-righteous and complacent Æcritiques,<sup>1</sup> Æexperiments,<sup>1</sup> and Æsyllogistic<sup>1</sup> amputations. The imported theories that fog your minds don't deserve the attention of some one like Tom. But if they did call his attention, as some have, as Joe says, he is more than able to Æunderstand.<sup>1</sup> He can even take these verbose and hideous reformations and sniff out the lies, delusions and repressed cravings that created them. But that's not the point. The point is two of the most brilliant and dedicated men to engage the art of verse this century are referred to only for an award for poetic idiocy that any of us should have received instead of Steve Abbot. Human beans, I dare say, have allowed worse folly in their ranks. Until now. If that's the only crime. Because that's the only ever fully mentioned. You, who can name their atrocities, I'm sure, live in a moral void that is sinister in its delusion.

Since I'm now on a holy high roll, please refrain from cursing my name until I finish this paragraph. Although that Bear Watten essay was, as Joe points out, turgid, it did reveal something to me about the division between material and non material texts. Now, for the sake of simplicity, I'm gonna get binomial.



Stein represents one side, Pound another, for us, active poets, in this dying century. You langpods and langpod wannabes adore Stein and the material text because all that matters is the form. You don't have to risk your necks on your opinions, which is probably for the best, for obvious reasons. Nor do you have a single thing to say other than the most trite librul platitudes. So Ctexts<sup>1</sup> are arranged with splashes of polite humor. (Something truly funny, by the way, sticks to you deeply, and would hurt if time were allowed for reflection). The arrogance of the material text actually goes against your desire to be Cinclusive,<sup>1</sup> to let the Creader<sup>1</sup> read you because a reader (without quotes) is gonna laugh and shut the book. Hey, check it out. I do all the time. Take something like Dark City to your mother. Now what's she gonna make of that? Or are you so enlightened you know prior that she'll never understand? Because, you see, unlike with Pound, you know that with a Steinian text you're not going to receive anything for your efforts. That would be fine, in and of itself. Art for art's sake. But add some blind moral obedience to these Ctexts<sup>1</sup> and then you get all sorts of high-minded bullshit. Plus, now, the material text is part of the orthodoxy of the avant gard. Dissent is silenced by the usual unquestioned platitudes and reductions. Lighten up. There's a world out there. Poetry's not about right and wrong. It's about what gets let into the poem and how that is expressed. The poem is worthy of everything available to the poet, which includes the most frightening, disturbing and darkly unspoken symptoms of a culture on the verge of moral bankruptcy.

I know what I'm saying here will be received with disdain and <sup>3</sup>horror<sup>2</sup> but I must beseech you who condemn without reason and you who remain silent about this condemnation to acknowledge the thoughtless, cruel and truly disturbing state of poetry that exists today due to this langpod attempt to silence the past, even silencing those from whom the art was learned. Disagreement and debate is one thing. Reduction, character assassination, smear campaigns and consignment to oblivion are truly evil because nothing grows from this silence. Somehow the poetic avant gard (as opposed to the Random House of song) must confront its internal tensions with courage and strength. What separates this avant gard (I use this term for lack of a more satisfactory one at hand) from the Cmainstream<sup>1</sup> is twofold (at least on the surface): formal challenge and moral challenge. At least the big pubs acknowledge, in their way, their motivating force: money. IF that's not our goal, what is? And if it's not, then why model our practices on a corporate platform? Well, actually, it is about money, but not as much. There's a lot of us after a tiny piece of the pie, which is recognition, publication, teaching and editing positions. Is that the real issue? I'm not asking for Cacceptance<sup>1</sup> of every opposing idea, but for vigorous debate over the received ideas by which we function as artists in this culture. Looking for Cbalance,<sup>1</sup> or Cseeing the value<sup>1</sup> in opposed traditions is



fine, but if something's not believed in enough to put your neck out on the chopping block, then what's the point of this relativism? But this is a waste of time. I can already imagine the responses because I have spoken to a group of people engaged with the orthodox issues of a decadent late century art form whose practitioners are confused by their own motivations for success and their desire to sublimate fear and uncertainty through the medium of poetry.

Not to set myself above anyone. I came to San Francisco enthused by the works of Silliman et al, and I enrolled at New College to study with Lyn H. But in the process of that education I slowly came to realize how utterly vapid, elite and alienating langpod poetry truly is. But obviously, others disagree and find much of value there. But your attempts to silence dissent are ridiculous and totally undermine the methods practiced. I, again, have written this to voice my dissent and to let you know that such glib refutes as Bromige's are terribly transparent.

Dale Smith

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[↑ Contents](#)

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550. **Marcella Durand**  
**Re: Expression/Self-Expression**

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

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You or your daughter might be interested in "The Memory Palace of Matteo = Ricci" by Jonathan D. Spence which describes a technique of mentally = building, well, a "memory palace" where a structure of rooms contain = objects which correspond either symbolically or practically to what you = are remembering. Ricci, a Jesuit priest, travelled to China to teach it. = It seems your daughter has hit upon it instinctively.

-----  
From: Harold Rhenisch  
Sent: Sunday, January 18, 1998 2:30 AM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Expression/Self-Expression

Bob,

to your,

>>I don't see words as containers but (very old-fashionedly) as tags.  
They make you remember what you've perceived in the past.<<

Tags is good.

But who is this 'you' perceiving in the past? I'd say the words had =  
their  
hand in it. This 'you' is a tool the words have made for their own ends,  
no? Sure, this 'you' exists, but it is a very special meta-creature, and =  
a  
very powerful one. What happens when one moves away from the country of =  
the  
you into the country of the words?

>>I would claim  
your brain has "tree" stored somewhere, and that when you read it, the  
"knowlecule" (as I call it in my theory of the mind, which is even  
nuttier than my poetics) in your brain for "tree" straight-forwardly  
links to all the knowlecules there that have anything to do with trees,  
the strength of any particular link depending on context.<<

My 12 year old daughter claims that if she wants to remember something, =  
she just has to visualize a general category, and then she sees the sub-cate-  
gories unfold below it, including, in the example of our tree, every instance of  
tree she has encountered. She then searches through = this list of images, film-  
clips, and words, etc., until she lights upon what = she was looking for. Now, I  
find this remarkable and profound, but I know my mind does not work like that.  
Mine is symbolic. There's a logic there, = but an entirely different one. I think  
that's what helps make this so difficult: we don't all think the same.

>>This all probably sounds simple-minded and, I think, is. I hope  
it gives you an idea of where I'm coming from, though.<<

Not simple-minded. Was always clear.

Harold



[↑ Contents](#)

551. **groberts**

***Re: Ice Fishing in Wisconsin School of Poetry***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

6. The ice you remove may be pushed through or thrown aside, but it must go  
somewhere.

[↑ Contents](#)

552. **Michael Magee**

**Re: Langpods**

Mon 19 Jan 1998

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Dale Smith:

"Because, you see, unlike with Pound, you know that with a Steinian text you<sup>1</sup>re not going to receive anything for your efforts."

Not to draw the battle lines to plainly, but this is total bullshit, however rhetorically it may have been intended. I don't have much at stake here since I feel far too young to be caught up in what is obviously a painful and historically determined tussle, and I certainly have nothing against Dale, how could I?, not knowing him. But, c'mon, let's be more precise - there are enough intelligent, sincere, and kind people out there who *\*have\** gotten something out of Stein that we surely shouldn't piss on her like that. Can you not get anything out of, at least, *\*Three Lives\** - I did, in fact, recommend it to my mother, as well as my 17 yr old sister, neither of whom are experimentally inclined in the least, and they both loved it; I teach it to my students, few of them Einsteins, and they tend to dig it; I also read "The Completed Portrait of Picasso to my six-year-old twin nieces and they find it great fun, for the same reason that I do - because language itself is a great pleasure, whatever it happens to "mean." You want everyone to read Pound because he rewards exegesis?! Well, hell, I like Pound well enough, but I don't have to tell anyone that reading Pound and taking him at his word ain't without its dangers. Besides, why always the manichean approach? Too much us and then spoils the list. -m.

[↑ Contents](#)

553. **Jacques Debrot**

**Re: Langpods**

Mon 19 Jan 1998

---

Dale Smith, I wonder if, just once, you could talk about the virtues of, say, Tom Clark's latest -- something I'd love to read about -- without positioning yourself against the strawman/dead horse of Language poetry. Rather than being "shocking" your polemics strike me as somewhat shrill & naive -- more like projections of your own anxieties about "relativism," etc. than really speaking to the complicated issues Langpo raises.

[↑ Contents](#)

554. **d powell**

**Re: Langpods**

Mon 19 Jan 1998

---

I appreciate the coinage of the "us and then" mentality.

=====

=====

D A Powell [REDACTED]

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Michael Magee wrote:

Besides, why always the manichean approach? Too much >us and  
>then spoils the list. -m.

>

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> 19, 98 10:01:24 am  
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[↑ Contents](#)

555. **William Marsh**

***Movement:movement***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

At 09:47 AM 1/19/98 -0500, jacques d wrote:

Today I think there are formal

>innovations being made that are as distinct from Langpo as Langpo's were  
from

>the New American poetry. The problem is that the critical language has  
grown

>stale -- & like the radical work of the 1960s, there is no adequate

>vocabulary with which to describe the implications of these innovations.

>

i think this and much else in Jacques's post raise some pretty good questions / i'd like to pick up on the issue of "movements" though with a question or concern on my mind: to respond to the beginning of the Silliman quote that Jacques used to open, i wonder if the lack of "crystallization" among young writers isn't due in part to the kind of movement-aversion instilled by some of the LangPo rhetoric that seemed to voice a disinclination to regard (or argue for) the goings-on of the early 70's as a "Movement" per se / i think for a lot of writers for whom Language Poetry offered a point of departure, the work and activities of these poets seemed like a convergence of movements (some personal/individual, some collective) from which other movements could arise / i think many of us have taken quite literally the resistance with which many Language Poets greeted statements that theirs was a Movement, at least in the early 20th c. avant-garde sense born out of the moments of Surrealism, Dadaism, etc.

rejecting "anxiety of influence," i think a lot of younger writers avow a \*passion for confluence\* / and don't consider as a chief concern embracing a Movement platform that would require, realistically, marking distinctions between new 90's and new 70's writing / there might be brief moments of crystallization or freeze, perhaps when the power goes out and all the wood in the world can't keep the chill out / but there seems to me to be so much movement these days, such strong currents, at various speeds and depths, that the kind of freeze that

might mark a Movement is just not possible / the quick-fold rate of web sites, magazines, micropresses, organizations, homes, affiliations, friendships -- also the kinds of electronic and atomic flickering that keep things stirred up and uncongealed on this discussion list -- index the movement i'm thinking about: present and powerful but hardly localized, except in the individuals whose sense of community often comes from fleeting moments of confluence in time and space

i think that's why younger writers growing out of Language Poetry, Black Mtn Poetry, Visual/Concrete Poetry, on back and out, are perhaps willing to greet with a silent smile such labels as "post-language" and such qualifications as "not new" -- because jelling/distinguishing/defining (ourselves, the newness) are not priorities, having learned our lessons well ("born again in the swarm, not separate and self-hypnotized, but individual and related"--Miller) / the problem of distinguishing ourselves as "the generation that refuses to distinguish itself" is perhaps something to take seriously / certain efforts to avoid this paradox (in the diligent essays of Mark Wallace, for example) might begin to address it / otherwise, to me the new good work is roughage in a rough age, high-fiber poetry that knows there's a lot still to be worked out / screw the new, anxious only to see what's next...

this before breakfast and coffee

bill

-----  
William Marsh  
PaperBrainPress  
Voice & Range Community Arts  
National University  
[REDACTED]  
<http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh>  
snail: 1860 PB Dr. #4  
San Diego, CA 92109  
-----

[↑ Contents](#)

556. **David Zauhar**

***Re: Ice Fishing in Wisconsin School of Poetry***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

On Mon, 19 Jan 1998, Miekal And wrote:

*Manifesto:*

*1. Coldness is a state of mind, words generate thermodynamic warmth.*

2. *Throw back what you cant eat.*

3. *If you cannot identify what you catch as belonging to a particular movement or category, it doesnt exist.*

4. *Success in the catch is directly proportional to the rise & fall of stock market events & solar storms.*

5. *Most language is fishy, all language has scale.*

6. *[additions?]*

"Your ear / is cold!-- here, / drink"

--Lorine Niedecker, Poet Laureate of the IFW School, 1967-1970.

DZauhar

[↑ Contents](#)

## 557. **Gwyn McVay** **2 counterexamples**

Mon 19 Jan 1998

Sez Dale Smith:

1. Take something

like Dark City to your mother. Now what's she gonna make of that? Or are you so enlightened you know prior that she'll never understand?<<<

2. Because, you see, unlike with Pound, you know that with a Steinian text you're not going to receive anything for your efforts.<<<

1. I had the pleasure of shopping in Bridge Street Books with my mother, who is not versed (sorry) in the many different avant-garde/innovative/ querzblatt poetries that are out there. She picked up a book by Bernadette Mayer, read in it, started to laugh, said, "This woman is crazy!" and then bought the book. (Why does that figure of speech always involve the mother? Are they dimmer about poetry than "your father"?)

2. Example of something I received for my efforts with Stein:

"I am very miserable about sentences. I can cry about sentences but not about haircloth." (/How to Write/)

I love this. I mean, I really enjoy this in a way that requires no theory to understand. I have received 44 freshman English diagnostic writings today; I shall be very miserable about sentences indeed when I read them, and miserable about sentences in a different way when I sit down and work on my next titanic masterpiece. Haircloth, blah. But sentences--I relate.

Anecdotally,  
Gwyn McVay

[↑ Contents](#)

558. **Jo Ann Blevins**

***Lisa Jarnot***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

List members: Can anybody share the most current snail mail address for Lisa Jarnot, please? I have materials concerning Robert Duncan that won't email. Thanks, Rich Blevins

[↑ Contents](#)

559. **Jordan Davis**

***Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

When did the underlying assumption of american poetry go from Frank O'Hara's "I'm assuming everything is all right and difficult" to John Cougar Mel-lencamp's "Nothing ever matters and what if it did"?

\*

Are mandalas and cathedrals equivalent structures? I hear tell that both are supposed to be formal structures that when meditated upon reveal the image of heaven. Kent, Eliot, somebody jump in here.

\*

Did nobody see Starship Troopers? What an amazing movie!

\*

OK, so accepting that poets are proforma liars and thieves, how do we as a union justify that behavior? That we have a higher order we're following? And if we are as a class completely reprobate, do we have, um, standards? Honor? As much as the non-participants want to say tut tut, let us have no binaries here, think -- can poetry call attention to itself without some serious us and them action? It is much doubted. Or maybe justification isn't what happens in those essays, articles, blurbs, etc. Public relations, so they tell me, was invented when Rockefeller handed out dimes to starving children. Ladies and gentlemen, no program you have written will keep you awake -- you are tired! So! sleep. We will wake you. And then, when we're sleepy, maybe we will have invented an alarm clock, maybe not.

With love and concern,  
Your contemporary



[↑ Contents](#)

560. **Charles Bernstein**

***msg from Paul Zukofsky***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

Paul Zukofsky asked me to forward this message to the list. Please pass the request on to anyone you think might be interested:

"I am looking for someone to compile, *\_lightly\_* edit, and annotate Zukofsky's *\_Index of American Design\_*, as soon as possible. While there is currently no contract for publication, I feel we would be able to obtain one."

Paul Zukofsky also notes that he is interested in working with someone who might like to write a biography of his father.

Correspondence to Paul Zukofsky can be sent to the UB Poetics Program and we will send it on to him:

c/o Poetics Program  
438 Clemens Hall  
State University of New York  
Buffalo, NY 14260

[↑ Contents](#)

561. **KENT JOHNSON**

***Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

On Jan 19, Jordan Davis wrote:

*Are mandalas and cathedrals equivalent structures? I hear tell that both are supposed to be formal structures that when meditated upon reveal the image of heaven. Kent, Eliot, somebody jump in here.*

\*

*Did nobody see Starship Troopers? What an amazing movie!*

Well to me, Jordan, Starship Troopers, as very much as mandalas or cathedrals, may reveal the image of heaven.

Don't you love it when the bugs blow up? It's like poetry wars!

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

562. **Michael Magee**

**Re: Langpods**

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

Man, I wish I had intended it! but I'm afraid just a typing-disabled version of "us and them" - although, didn't Pound himself say something like, "All accidents sanctioned by the author"? -m.

According to d

powell: >

> I appreciate the coinage of the "us and then" mentality.

>

>

=====

=====

> D A Powell [REDACTED]

>

=====

=====

>

>

> Michael Magee wrote:

> Besides, why always the manichean approach? Too much >us and

> >then spoils the list. -m.

> >

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> > 19, 98 10:01:24 am  
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[↑ Contents](#)

563. **Hank Lazer**

***Re: Dylan, Visual Poetics, & Jake Berry***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

My gratitude to one & all for a spirited, informative, interesting wave of e-discussion, especially the Dylan and visual poetics strands.

\*

I've been listening for the past few weeks to a new CD, Shadow Resolve, by Jake Berry. The latest installment--Book Two--of his ongoing holy text BRAMBU DREZI is due out in a few months from Pantograph Press. If you don't know Jake's poetry, Book One of BRAMBU DREZI appeared from Bob Grumman's Runaway Spoon Press (1993), complete with all sorts of visuals--a kind of fusion of Klee/Miro and a biology/chemistry textbook--in the service of a visionary project.

The CD, Shadow Resolve, strikes me as very much in keeping with Dylan's lyrics of the Highway 61 / Blonde on Blonde era. (Jake claims other affinities as well: Neil Young, Doc Watson, Hank Williams, Robert Johnson...) Jake's CD is the first on the Front Porch Records label. Recorded at his homw (9th Street Laboratories, Florence, AL--where the Experioddicist e-zine arises as well), the

CD was mastered at FAME studios, Muscle Shoals, AL. Basically, it's 10 tracks--great lyrics--Jake on vocals, harmonica, guitar.

If you're interested, order CDs at \$12 (included postage/handling) from Jake Berry, either e-mail or snail mail:

e-mail: [REDACTED]

snail mail: Jake Berry  
Ninth St. Labs  
111 Teks St.  
Florence, AL 35633

a snippet from track #2: From a String of Pearls

Mary undoes her perfumed hair  
and dries the master's wounded feet  
to hide the swans of Avalon  
from the Penteteuch's retreat  
In caves of the antlered dancer  
where Broadway meets divine  
I clipped your robes to save your soul  
when you hated your own life

[↑ Contents](#)

564. **Dale Smith**

***Re: Langpods***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

For views on Tom Clark's "latest" see Poetry Project Newsletter, winter issue.

---

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[↑ Contents](#)

565. **Harold Rhenisch**

***Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

Cathedrals are very imposing structures. Take the Freiburg cathedral. The nave is all gold and glitter inside, for that is the focus of power. Outside, the sandstone is encrusted with gargoyles, this world of demons trying to get in. Compare that to the tiny village churches of northern France, north of Charlesville or Sedan, to which the houses of the village cling, like limpets to a rock.

In Freiburg, again, the side doors are each guarded by an angel, with a sword, providing safe passage. Inside is stillness, a forest of stone, rising to imposing

height, designed to make one incredibly small, and it works well at that. It is also a crypt. My take on it is that it has captured space, held it inviolate from the corrupt world, and purified it over centuries, carrying it to paradise, when \*all\* of time (and similarly life and death) shall be dismissed, as it is in the cathedral.

The Marienkirche in Constance has, in the centre of the ceiling, a small oval of plaster, on which is painted the eye of God, in a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. He's watching, always. We take our place, on the floor of his creation. His sky is situated, not as an over-arching blue dome, but in the midst of a grander scheme, lines of tension, so to speak, flying buttresses, which are manifested or given worldly shape as the cathedral.

In the Grossmuenster in Zurich, the doors are cast out of iron. Each door is divided into squares, and each square depicts a story from the Bible. One door is the Old Testament, one the New. They are incredibly heavy, yet can be opened with a light touch of the hand. By passing through their gateway one enters the interior of the Word.

Harold Rhenisch



[↑ Contents](#)

566. **David Kellogg**

***Re: Langpods/Word to your Mother***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

Dale, am I correct in noting that you seem a little tense?

As someone who has moved slowly (both in reading and practice) from the dominant "workshop" mode into a more experimental poetry, I find your characterizations of language writing in general (as well as Bromige's piece in particular) pretty unrecognizable.

As for \_Dark City\_ and my mother: well, unless you're gonna split hairs, \_my father and his wife\_ (a mathematician and a "homemaker") went to a Bernstein reading in DC last year and really dug it. I believe my father got \_Dark City\_ at the reading, or perhaps soon afterward. He thinks CB is the bee's knees.

Try to calm down.

Cheers,

David

~~~~~  
~~~~~

David Kellogg Duke University

██████ Program in Writing and Rhetoric  
██████ Durham, NC 27708  
FAX ██████ <http://www.duke.edu/~kellogg/>

[↑ Contents](#)

567. **Daniel Zimmerman**

***Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

Jordan Davis wrote:

>

> Are mandalas and cathedrals equivalent structures? I hear tell that both  
> are supposed to be formal structures that when meditated upon reveal the  
> image of heaven. Kent, Eliot, somebody jump in here.

>

>

Hi, Jordan.

An interesting point. Mandalas seem to me like "magic eye" pictures, except that they require trifocal vision [not necessarily an effect of aging; '3rd eye'] in order to make them 'spiritually equivalent' to \_cathedrals\_ [< L. sit + down, i.e., seat (of authority, of power)]: the center that does hold. Also, despite their three- dimensionality, cathedrals seem to me like texts/rites that require traversal via 'stationing' [e.g., of the cross], so one sees their story cumulatively, whereas mandalas offer the kind of 'single image' for which Pound exalted the Divine Comedy, or Blake's 'expanded moment.'

.

..

|

—

--Dan Zimmerman

[↑ Contents](#)

568. **d powell**

***Re: Bad Poetry***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

David,

I'll see what I can do about finding the manifesto of "Badism" (from the term coined by J. Lennon) and its followup essay "A Brief, Yet Helpful Guide to Bad Poetry"--I'm sure they're buried in a sock drawer somewhere, which makes

them harder to retrieve than one might suspect, especially given my penchant for socks.

As I recall, at the time, I was trying to establish an aesthetics for bad poetry. While there seem to be so many opinions as to what makes a good poem, the criteria for a bad poem seemed much more universally-arrived-at-able.

I did for a time then set out to write bad poems, because I thought that if I could attain badness through intent, then I could also attain greatness through same (as soon as I figured out what greatness was in a poem). Unfortunately, my poems were not apparently bad enough. In fact, they were not unlike what passes for good poetry. My conclusion was that whether a poem was good or bad remained largely a matter of opinion (Lyn Hejinian recently confirmed this when she explained to me how she had discovered the simple truth that one argues for a poem because one likes it). David, you once said something that I think is applicable: "Being a poet is after all a matter of reputation. You're a poet because other poets say you are." And indeed I find that a poem is good, bad or etc. largely because we say so. I find it strange, for example, that Amy Lowell is still dismissed by folks who have read all of two poems by her (the unfortunate ones that keep cropping up in anthologies) largely due to Pound's dismissal of her. I trust Pound as a reader, but not as a personality, and I think Amy pushed him the wrong way. And (sheepishly) I admit that I like many of her poems and have preferred them to poems by Mina Loy (for example). Perhaps I like the poems because I like the idea of Amy, brash, butch and forceful. And yet, in "Venus Transiens," the most delicate ear...

I'll go through my socks this week, if you like.

Doug

=====

D A Powell

=====

david bromige wrote:

>Doug, I yield to you in this matter. After all, you did give us >the "Bad  
>Poetry manifesto" a few years ago.(Would you post it to this >List?) De  
>gustibus non disputandum would be my motto, except that questions >of taste  
>are what people persecute one another for all over the world, all >the time.  
>"One [person's] meat is another [person's] poison" makes more >sense. I  
>can't believe what some people think is good poetry, and I cant >even  
>believe that I once thought such-&-such was good poetry, because >today it  
>strikes me as bad. Here in California (as you know), one strives >for the  
>value-free evaluation : "It's all part of the pile . . " But I >really

>would like a dollar back from the State for each bad poetry >reading I've  
>sat through--I could send my kids to graduate school. "Used" >language or  
>whatever the wcw quote was (it's hidden behind my own >message-in-  
progress,  
>and I can't be bothered to look for it)--well, Flaubert's >"Dictionary of  
>Received Ideas", and the recent take on it from The Impercipient, >are both  
>marvelous fun. It's all in how we use used language. Poetry >recycles  
>language, we cd say.  
>  
>"O spade, wherewith Wilkinson hath delved,"--I think I have that >right--is  
>bad, dont you agree? And it's Wordsworth. A lot of bad poetry >turns up  
>intermittently among not-so-bad poetry. Theres plenty of it in >my oeuvre.  
>Its the unremittingly bad that knocks the stuffing out of a >reader/auditor.  
>  
>  
>I do wonder that people think they can write (good) poetry >without knowing  
>the equivalent of scales & chords. Just because we talk all our >lives, but  
>most of us seldom sing, I guess. What \_is\_ the equivalent of >scales &  
>chords? It cd be writing sonnets & pantoums & villanelles, or it >cd be  
>reading 50 books of poetry published before 1940. But all the >scales and  
>chords there are, wont necessarily produce >surprising/pleasing/stimulating  
>music. Me, I'm going to lie on the couch and read William >MacGonnigal. Go  
>for it! David  
>  
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>To: [REDACTED]  
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[↑ Contents](#)

569. **pritchpa**

***Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

Cathedrals have it common with mandalas in as much as they are drawn up according to some notion of sacred or symbolic geometry in order to serve as meditational devices for focussing the outward as well as the inward gaze.

Chartres is a good example: the Rose Window is a famous example of a Western mandala. Less well known, perhaps, is the maze in the cathedral's entrance, which mapped a symbolic route for the soul's travels and by which one of the faithful could, in walking it a sufficient number of times, enact the journey to Jerusalem which he or she might not otherwise be able to afford. It may be useful too to think of a cathedral as fully functional only when it was full of the townsfolk for whom it was built. Amiens could, when it was first built, accommodate all 10,000 of its people. The Super Bowl notwithstanding, there's nothing comparable to that today.

Patrick Pritchett

[↑ Contents](#)

570. **Henry Gould**

***Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

re: mandalas set in self-paddled rotating canoes:

I just finished a poem. It started out with something about "New Year's" etc. I noticed after finishing (finally) (after a weekend of blessed solitude & demonic possession) it had 352 lines (in quatrains, abba). I go to bed (very late). The next day, I realize I have left something, an essential episode, out. I finish it with 2 more quatrains and a 5-line stanza, something about "the year ending". The poem now is a circle of 360 degrees (lines) plus five. a year. - Henry Gould

p.s. the title is "Ancient Light". watch for the Spandrift CD version from your local Wyoming outpost.

p.p.s. re: poetry wars. let me help you guys. it's all about the war between text & voice, letter & presence, person & ink. 70s poetry (following the 60s) had a lot invested in "the natural". Note how Langpo claims to begin with the motto "I hate speech" (Grenier). This explains a lot. By going back to text, Langpo had a lot of unclaimed turf to exploit & mine for all it's worth. Trouble is it's too easy, gets kinda boring without an authentic performer there. But often equatable with all the too-easy unauthentic PERFORMERS they were against.

A lot of internet poets, collagists, visual poetrists, are excited now about jazzing up the scene with multimedia collage. Hey, go for it. I get more out of japanese rock gardens. stick with your metier. Look at what Wallace Stevens, say, could do, just THINKING about visual art. That stream's still running. But I have to admit I've been too busy with my own stuff to care too much about the next generations.

I like that Naples guy, Vico, the one behind Finnegans Wake. He thought writing came before speech, because early speech was a kind of gesture, a simple sign language, hieroglyphics. He equated visual art, poetry, and speech - they're all in the same cabin. I find that a happy thought.

But the difficult thing, oh... putting it into words that sing. that's what poets do. naked words, not lyrics, not scribbles, not politico-aesthetico-academico-yam-meryammer-crapola. as Edwin Honig, my old teach, used to illustrate again & again, it's an elusive thing you can't predict, & it's hard to pull off. poetry is rare. or maybe I just like mine medium rare. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

571. **Maria Damon**

***reading thread***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

for me the big reading turn-on was first genet, at 15, then somewhat later, at 17 or 18, creely. i'd been taking an "independent study" in creative writing at my rigidly uptight girls' school, with the one teacher who when she looked at my stuff didn't say something like, "oh i can see you never had a real childhood," or some such thing that at the time felt insulting and irrelevant. so this teacher, who was willing to talk about \*writing\*, had taken a summer course w/ creely or something. i didn't know that, but somehow obviously the influence seeped over, cuz when i was on a bus going up to visit a "boyfriend" in upstate new york i came across creely in an anthology and had the most peculiar feeling, as if the words i was reading on the page were in fact emanating from a point between my ribs, i.e. i was somehow creating them simultaneously with reading them. extraordinarily gratifying, almost psychic, like "yr not alone, others are doing this too." not that my writing was really much like creely's at all. there was also, i cringe to confess, bukowski. but that being the early 70s, it was impossible to be a girl writing poetry without being sent to plath and sexton, with dire predictive undercurrents about how it was all sure to turn out. i couldn't relate to those two at all, except that my mother knew sexton and didn't much like her (felt intimidated by her flamboyant sexuality).

[↑ Contents](#)

572. **Maria Damon**

***mfa reports?***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

speaking of barry, etc, is anyone up for reportage a la poetix of various poetix related mfa panels, including barry's, aldon's, c funkhouser's, kathy crown's women's long poems extravaganza, and others i may not know about? it's the first time in years i haven't been to mfa, and feel the need for some kind of vicarious fix. thanks --i know it's not the most timely request and may be ancient history by now --md

[↑ Contents](#)

573. **Bob Grumman**

***Re: Dylan, Visual Poetics, & Jake Berry***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

Hank:

Thanks much for plugging the first volume of Jake Berry's BRAMBU DREZI, one of the books I'm proudest to have published. Copies still available for \$7! Just e.mail an order to me.

--Bob G.

Bob Grumman



<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/1492>

Comprepoetica, the Poetry-Data-Collection Site

-----1B1D130548BE--

[↑ Contents](#)

574. **Dale Smith**

***Langpods & the "Material Text"***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

It's unfortunate that I referred to the Pound/Stein axis. I merely wanted to identify two opposing formal practices of many poets on this list. In all fairness to Stein, I should leave her out of my tirades. Also, mentioning her name often obscures the more immediate issues I want addressed. Regardless. I've spent too much time with Stein to be so reductive about her work. Her books on Picasso, the *Autobio* and *Three Lives* all stand out, with others, as subtle, charming and innovative examinations and presentations of the diverse quality and depth of life at the beginning of a new era. More than anyone else she tries, I think mimetically, to alter language to fit her perceptions of a startling new world unlike anything in the past in terms of mechanical and electrical stimulation. I use her name though as being representative of a pattern of language usage among certain poets this century. Although many today practice forms derived from Stein, very few have the artistry, music or ambition to sustain that kind of close examination of life that so intrigued Stein. That kind of exactitude and subtle humor is rarely exhibited in material texts today. Clark Coolidge is really one of the few poets today who can actually use the material text to an advantage. B. Meyer is another. Others with a sensitivity to music and to the exact nature and relation of their perceptions to the mimetic possibilities of language are learning to balance the formal complexities of the material text. Where there are signs of life there is art. My gripe is with the degenerated practice of the material text that so consumes poets today, the langpod and langpod wannabes I have referred to. The material text, for many, serves as an excuse to sublimate not just conflicting, but confused, half-hearted and duplicitous impulses based primarily on power, success and the other predatory issues that consume society as a whole. This can be revealing, but it lacks an integrity and devotion to our perceptive antennae. When life is sucked out of language

nothing is left but this sublimated husk of an only personal desire. The material text at its best is responsive to, and receptive of, life. Langpods exclude life and fill 'texts<sup>1</sup> with the random debris collected by an arrogantly selective self that can not, or will not, acknowledge the self's role, even in the most methodical and abstract instances. Perhaps formal gestures such as the material text can and will experience the same deprecations of value as iambic verse or heroic couplets (Hi Chaucer!). I think this is certainly the case today.

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[↑ Contents](#)

575. **J. Kuszai**

***Re: Langpods & the "Material Text"***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

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I want to thank Dale for returning to the poetics list, and I'm glad he's picked up where he left off at the end of the summer. It's difficult to excerpt from his writing but the following leaps out:

"My gripe is with the degenerated practice of the material text that so consumes poets today, the langpod and langpod wannabes I have referred to. The material text, for many, serves as an excuse to sublimate not just conflicting, but confused, half-hearted and duplicitous impulses based primarily on power, success and the other predatory issues that consume society as a whole. This can be revealing, but it lacks an integrity and devotion to our perceptive antennae. When life is sucked out of language nothing is left but this sublimated husk of an only personal desire. The material text at its best is responsive to, and receptive of, life. Langpods exclude life and fill 'texts<sup>1</sup> with the random debris collected by an arrogantly selective self that can not, or will not, acknowledge the self's role, even in the most methodical and abstract instances."

First off, I want to apologize for the apparent typos, but I am assuming that there is a formatting error in the way my email software receives Dale's messages (does anybody else experience this?). Second, Dale makes a number of very interesting points, which suffer unfortunately from the very evacuation of specificity that I think he might be referring to (note how much his post embodies what he calls "When life is sucked out of language nothing is left but this sublimated husk of an only personal desire"! ). I think the conversation might be advanced by the extension of the argument into more developed and sustained critique, rather than bland and vague attacks. It isn't worth really looking into the details of what he's saying here (although I find it very very interesting this quote above) but I have no idea who or what he's talking about. With some

engaged discussion of actual texts (people?) this might be some fun. So, how about it, Dale? Welcome back.

jk

[↑ Contents](#)

576. **Pierre Joris**

***Re: The Catskill School of Poetry***

*Mon 19 Jan 1998*

---

Kent, that was a great & useful post -- Wow -- do I dare wade in on this ice fishing scene. cld get wet or frozen feet. but, doggone, here I am up way past my bedtime listening to Visions of Johanna and remembering all of those specific epiphanic moments, but that will have to wait for another post — what I wanted to say was, no Kent, you didn't really dream up that "Catskill school" community, its just that ole friend Don, as good hill people will be, is ever ready to keep them furrinners at bay & won't let you in on the secret community, unless of course you show up with a bottle of Maker's Mark (hey Don, if he does, call me) — if you go out through the back door of that lousy diner he and Chuck have here meetings at (there's a much better one in Redhook, where I used to... but that's another story too) you come out in Lyonesse and a whole range of magico-poetico esoteric landscapes never dreamed of.

Look -- I moved back to the mid-Hudson valley several times and from several continents because I have felt since the late sixties when I first lived here that there was some magick here. And especially poetry. The present stretch is from south of Kingston, where the likes of David Levi- Strauss and Carolee Schneeman nest among the plasticians, as they call visual artists in France, up & through Kingston (with Lydia Davis & Pauline Oliveros) and on to Barrytown & Annandale, i.e. Quasha, Stein, Kelly, Higgins territory, then up through Hudson — Ashbery land — to Albany, Byrd-man-land. And West is Woodstock with Ed Sanders on poetry & various instruments & Marilyn Crispell on piano, & East is the Bershires with Paul Metcalf, plus a medley of poetas, Coolidge, Gizzi etc. (though these last ones are conscious that they live in Mass & kind alook down on us lowland new york catskill hicks).

Now, we don't all get together all the time for jamming on Hegel, but have over the years done so in various visible and invisible formations. (last time I remember doing that was a long time ago when Jed was out here & I had come in from London — wondering if I should join Quasha's Rhinebeck ventures in publishing & restauration or go off to teach & travel in Algeria). But the place is full of such energy nodes -- from late sixties first Bard undergraduate days with Norman Weinstein, Bruce McClelland and Thomas Meyer, to that whole incredible list of interesting & amazing poets who've come out of or through Bard —

just think of Juliana Spahr, Tim Davis, Kimberley Lyons, David Gansz, Drew Gardner, to name but the first names that come to mind. And obviously Robert Kelly, who has been there, central, peripheral, visible, invisible, but a major source of energy for over 30 years now. I may have spent most of my post-teenage years living in Paris, London and New York, but the strongest sense of community — poets' & artists' but also just plain human — even if and maybe exactly because often "unavowable" communities — & the strongest actual experiences of exchange in ideas & inspiration & energy happened here during the thirty years I have known the place. And that's not over — it's ongoing even if often the community is, as Don wld say, more virtual than real. & doggone, this here house is often full with live bodies, eating, drinking talking that poetry talk (& other talk as well) and reading. You're welcome, next time you drive through. & I got to sack out so can't reread and edit this thing down to good email protocol, so here goes as is,

Pierre

*So you see, I took that and stoked it wildly up, and here I've been, all this time, imagining poets strolling by the Hudson, or sitting around the fire two or three times a week, earnestly talking about Olson, Hegel, and high mathematics. Hoo boy...*

*Let me try to rephrase what my conjectural points were about this community question, and here I suppose I'm going to sound completely silly again, but so what, because as I recently said to someone b-c, I teach at a community college and don't really have an academic reputation to uphold. It's this: For poetic community, the presence of \_bodies in the flesh\_, gathered together inside the sound of voices, is key. And it's key because only with mutual human presence can one witness and grow wiser from the falterings and awkwardnesses and qualifications and sudden synchronicities of thought and insight that are intrinsic to any movement toward understanding. I \_agree\_ with you that this doesn't mean that e-mail lists are not a good thing! Far from it--obviously there's an incredible amount of intelligence that arises here and the medium makes that possible. But the medium also has its flip and "darker side" as I see it. And one thing that I've come to feel is interesting about this list (and correct me list-mates if I'm jsut projecting because maybe I am) is that it is a place, in the first instance, of positioning and \_performance\_, and one rarely finds a person and poet here openly vulnerable in the sense of groping and stumbling \_in the process of thought\_, certainly never totally at a loss for what to make of this or that. Nor, consequently, does one often find others entering, and sharing, and making use of, such falterings and false starts. To the contrary: "Thinking" here tends to be sheathed in the finish of performance (the best "finishes" being those that obscure such status), in posts that are eloquent and quite sure of*



*themselves, quick to certainty and knife-edged irony, and quick to draw the line of defense. Long posts and bitty short ones. Very careful, everyone of us, and rarely a stutter to be heard. Even as I try to type quickly here and make this be "not careful", I'm going back and changing a whole bunch of stuff to make it sound better, even more natural and spontaneous!*

*So the medium does that too, I think, amkes it fairly impossible to enter into a relationship to thought and language that is not thoroughly staged --and in that sense, it might be seen as having a contradictory sort of relationship vis a vis the formation of real poetic community that is enabling of the kinds of truly new thinking and work that Ron Silliman laments the absence of, for example, in his Philly Lectures.*

*\*\*\*Oh Poets, get together in human form and talk with vulnerable seriousness about difficult books, and reveal, proudly, that \_most of the time\_, even if you're a big shot, that you don't know what the fuck you're talking about, for this might lead us to places we could never have suspected!!\*\*\**

*All of this stochastic in the extreme, but it's in that spirit that I asked about Clarke, a really hard poet who makes me scratch my head and sound like an idiot when I try to talk about him with my voice box. To "talk" about him here would be a fantastic thing, of course, and all sorts of new and breathtakingly eloquent insights would emerge. But I suspect I might actually learn more \_deeply\_ about Clarke by participating immediately (like at the diner, with plastic ketchup and mustard bottles under the wall-juke) in the non-mediated, non-edited struggle of others to understand and say, and then sharing in, and being truly changed by, the moments of mutual clarity in which all the false starts and silences inhere. Even if E.O. Wilson is ultimately right that "what we call \_meaning\_" is nothing more romantic than "the linkage among the neural networks created by the spreading excitation that enlarges imagery and engages emotion," it would be the case that the chaotic background patterns of half-thought rivulets I have engendered iwth others will enter and excite meaning and understanding, making it richer, more fractal, in the human sense of the word. Yes, whatever that all means.*

*(Emma! More coffee!).*

*Alright, I suppose I've ruined myself now. I'm a \_fifth\_ tier sap who needs to spend some time with Of Grammatology. I'm an ice-fisherman who can't catch fish. I am a fool who just screamed I LOVE SPEECH. But I will never forget my vivid, waking dream about the beautiful, light-encased men and women of the Catskill School of Poetry.*



Kent

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=====

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tel/fax [REDACTED] email: [REDACTED]  
http://www.albany.edu/~joris/  
-----

"What often prevents us from giving ourselves over to  
a single vice is that we have several of them."

— La Rochefoucauld

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[↑ Contents](#)

577. **George Bowering**

**Re: Lisa Jarnot**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

List members:

Can anybody share the most current snail mail address for Lisa Jarnot,  
please? I have materials concerning Robert Duncan that won't email.

Thanks, Rich Blevins

I just sent her something c/o The Poetry Project.

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

578. **dbkk**

**List member in the news**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

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Hi everyone, it's Kevin Killian. I was reading the "Chronicle" this morning here  
in San Francisco and saw the big write up of the Stanford conference on Bob  
Dylan. Congratulations to Aldon Nielsen, "literature and writing chair at Loyola  
Marymount University," and a member of this list. Nielsen "offered one of the  
day's few mischievous views of Dylan's ascension into pop culture legend.  
Nielsen hopscotched deftly from the Supremes and the "Blues Brothers" movie

to playwright Brendan Behan, critic-philosopher Jacques Derrida and Dylan's own impressionistic novel, "Tarantula," suggesting that Dylan's appropriations of black American culture have been less than pure." Congratulations also on following up Saturday's talk with your reading on Sunday at Canessa Park, which I did attend, a reading pelted with rain but you and Shauna Hannibal were both quite good. Sexy too. And I'm glad I went. Good on ya Aldon!

[↑ Contents](#)

579. **Dean A. Brink**

**Re: Hughes v Plath**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

These are great examples of Orientalism in contemporary poetry. A reference catalogue. PCPRx

Rachel Loden wrote:

*David R. Israel wrote:*

*LONDON, Jan 17 (Reuters) - British poet Ted Hughes, vilified for more than 30 years over the suicide of his wife Sylvia Plath, has broken his silence by publishing a collection of startling love poems about the affair.*

*More odious than startling, judging from the three poems available on the \_Times\_ site yesterday. In the second one, he refers to her "African-lipped, laughing, thickly / Crimson-painted mouth . . ." In the third, there's this:*

*And I became aware of the mystery  
Of your lips, like nothing before in my life,  
Their aboriginal thickness. And of your nose,  
Broad and Apache, nearly a boxer's nose,  
Scorpio's obverse to the Semitic eagle  
That made every camera your enemy,  
The jailor of your vanity, the traitor  
In your Sexual Dreams Incorporated,  
Nose from Attila's horde: a prototype face  
That could have looked up at me through the smoke  
Of a Navajo campfire.*

*I mean, what, no tittering lotus blossoms, no Mexican spitfires, while we're throwing in the kitchen sink? Haven't had this particular chill since coming across words like "Negress" and "Jewess." Which is to say, not in a long time.*

*Bring your Pepto-Bismol to*

<http://www.sunday-times.co.uk:80/news/pages/tim/98/01/17/timnnfnf02008.html?1971198>

*Headline from Andrew Motion's review, also on the site: A thunderbolt from the blue: this book will live forever.*

Rachel Loden

--

dean brink



interpoetics - poetry of Asia and the Pacific Rim  
[www.w-link.net/~dean/interpoetics/index.html](http://www.w-link.net/~dean/interpoetics/index.html)

[↑ Contents](#)

580. **Steve Evans**  
***The New (was Oy . . . Langpo)***

Tue 20 Jan 1998

Having over my years as a list-member watched Ron Silliman repeatedly--and I think with good intentions--try to insult a new generation into existence, I feel more bemused than offended to see him at it again in the passage excerpted by Jacques Debrot from the new *\*Philly Talks\** (which I've not yet received):

*"\*what is it about language writing and all that has come after it that there has been no moment nor movement that has crystallized in anything like the same way poetry did in the early 1970s?\* For all the anthologies of younger writers, many of them extraordinarily gifted, what do we find in the way of work that is actually new? I think this must be the challenge that faces every younger writer . . ."*

While I would confidently put the first books, chapbooks, and editing projects of Lisa Jarnot, Lee Ann Brown, Bill Luoma, Jennifer Moxley, Kevin Davies, Rod Smith, Chris Stroffolino, Peter Gizzi, Juliana Spahr, and many other "young" writers up against any work done at a comparable age by any language poet, I do think that one material condition has greatly distinguished the task of emergence after 1989 from the one faced by Ron's generation in the mid-1970s: the comparative lack of state and federal arts funding for avant-garde writing and publishing projects.

How many of the exceptional magazines and books of 70s language-centered writing would have been brought into existence *\*without\** California arts funding and the NEA? Kit Robinson's excellent *\*Streets & Roads\** folded after one issue for lack of it; *\*Hills\**, *\*This\**, *\*The Figures\**, *\*Tuumba\**, all managed to receive some very significant support, as did *Burning Deck* and scores of other

hospitable small houses on both coasts and throughout the country. As an experiment, try taking every book by Silliman that received NEA support off your poetry shelf and tell me how much of the alphabet remains. Now do it for all the other usual suspects. See?

I am familiar to the point of nausea with critiques of the NEA, but I think the money it infused--mostly to publishers rather than individual poets, who certainly were often discriminated against for their radical aesthetic commitments--goes a long way toward explaining the difference Ron mistakenly assigns to the novelty-deficient young.

I might also say that the situation is past critical now and shows every sign of declining more, the evangelism of the e-mediasts aside. Jarrot's *\*Some Other Kind of Mission\** was a first book published in the year its publisher, Burning Deck, had its NEA money more or less totally eliminated. Multiply that story fold upon fold and you get something of the picture. The ability to get the new(s) out depends on slimmer and slimmer margins, as the shots get longer and longer. The lack of dynamic new venues for the sustained presentation of work--magazines of course, but more importantly publishing houses--troubles me the most. Hello era of the chapbook with zero circulation, ask England how they've liked it. But against such a backdrop, to impugn the accomplishment of young writers is grossly misplaced. Viewed as they must be in relation to real material conditions, their accomplishment is in many ways ethically as well as aesthetically grander than that of their counterparts who now are the president's age.

Time to sing a new song, Ron.

Steve Evans

[↑ Contents](#)

581. **George Bowering**

***Re: Ice Fishing in Wisconsin School of Poetry***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

*Poetry is best spoken from deep in the trout.*

*--Harold Rhenisch*

Aha! A sly reference to that wonderful short story by Billy Hutton!

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

582. **david bromige**

***dullard brutes***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

I second Joel Kutzai's response to Dale Smith's latest : attach these general aspersions to some particular texts. Elsewise it's all a blather of received opinion "understandable" only to the already-to-Smith's-viewpoint converted. It's vague, so far, and worse, it's cowardly.

Show us the century-penetrating brilliance in a text by Tom Clark, too.

David

[↑ Contents](#)

583. **david bromige**

***The New (& how to help it along)***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

I agree with Steve Evans that a new generation (including those he names) are writing terrific poetry, and I agree that the absence of arts funding is one big change since the 70s. I am not quite sure how this prevents a more general formulation among corresponding poets, of common ground or common goals--which I think was part of Ron Silliman's question.

In any case, I want to remind Steve and the others of my post from nearly a year ago, suggesting ways to raise money for reading series and publications. I said, and repeat now, that I learned this in the course of working with an ad hoc group of environmentalists here in Sonoma County : we needed to hire an attorney, and she needed \$16 grand. We held two weekend-long flea-markets in a parking lot that goes with an office building where one of our number has his business. We raised \$4 grand each time. We held a "social" at the community center, asking musicians and other entertainers to donate their services, and we made a net profit of \$3500.

The rest of the money we came up from our own donations and those of people we solicited.

Sure, it takes time--planning sessions, rounding up junk to turn into antiques, finding big enough pieces of plywood to serve as tables, and the sawhorses to support them, manning the tables. . . But it beats sitting on one's duff bemoaning the cruel fate (and cruel it is!) that got one born too late for an

NEA. It creates or enhances a sense of community, what's more. There could be yard sales for poetry throughout america.

David

[↑ Contents](#)

584. **cris cheek**

**Re: The New (was Oy . . . Langpo)**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

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Hi,

Steve Evans writes:

*The lack of dynamic new venues for the sustained presentation of work--magazines of course, but more importantly publishing houses--troubles me the most. Hello era of the chapbook with zero circulation, ask England how they've liked it.*

I'm not England, but i live here and am one among several who's work is considered almost invisible from the 1980s-90s, by newer generations of poets eager to read their immediates - let alone anything much else (until more recently). The funding dearth in England was politically imposed, but happened to coincide with a period of time when attitudes towards ephemerality and orality were playing themselves out most rigorously. By that i mean, performances were often obscure sites of extremely interesting work imho. Book production did explore the dematerialization of its object status here. This was also a time when performance poets of many persuasions were also forging alliances with practitioners from other art forms and so at least partialliy shifting the boundary of their practice away from conspicuous consumption by literary readers. What i mean by that is that good work happened in movement-based or sound-based or live art-based (and so on) contexts rather than in bookshops or at poetry reading series.

What little was published, and Steve's bleak assessment is accurate, was mostly by auteurs using photocopying. Poets doing the typesetting, printing, collating and stapling themselves. A press such as Meow would be an upmarket model (i love Meow books btw). Some 'books' were circulated in editions of 30 or 50 copies only. Many did not have ISBN numbers and were either not placed with or even in some instances willfully misheld from placement in the 'public' collections (such as the POetry Library and the British Library et al).

Things are considerably improving but it's a long slow mend. There were those (such as Reality Studios, Reality Street, Spanner, Writers Forum, Equipage, Pig Press, North and South and others) who kept the flame going or who spurred the gathering resurgence. Advancing regional dispersion has helped 'us'

funding wise as has perhaps most significantly developments in production and reproduction technology. With 'products' once again looking sellable, distribution opportunities are opening up.

That's part of our story from this point of view. Be careful. From my limited travelling in the US i'd say the market needs a push, not a wither. It's time to become extremely resourceful. If the conventional pathways are shrivelling then take note of ways in which other groups fund their campaigns. David Bromige has good points.

love and love  
cris

[↑ Contents](#)

585. **david bromige**

***p s to The New, etc***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

Listfellows, that bit about "sitting on one's duff," etc, was definitely not aimed at Steve Evans, despite juxtapositioning can make it seem so. Few have done as much as he, to circulate and devise necessary info in these times that would make an endeavor such as his, impossible.

I think the hint of irascibility is due to the following : it was almost a year since I first posted this suggestion, and to date i have not heard of one poetry community that has essayed this solution. I don't think my irritation is altogether due to "how could they overlook a suggestion coming from me !?" It's just so plain to me (since I have been among those successful at it) that there's a way partially to remedy the attrition in funding for oppositional groups; given that, at the same time, it was never going to be easy. Me, I'd sooner get together with 15 other like-minded souls for a weekend of junk-recycling and amiable hag-gling, than fill out a grant application. But hey it's your generation, I'm sure your time to you is worth saving. David

[↑ Contents](#)

586. **Pierre Joris**

***The News***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

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Ugh, the news -- so Carl Perkins is now hanging with the King, Lennon, Otis et companie -- nobody's gonna step on his blue suede shoes no more -- but I'll keep listening & dancing -- Pierre

--

=====

pierre joris 6 madison place albany ny 12202  
tel/fax [REDACTED] email: [REDACTED]  
<http://www.albany.edu/~joris/>

---

"What often prevents us from giving ourselves over to  
a single vice is that we have several of them."

— La Rochefoucauld

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[↑ Contents](#)

587. **rsillima**

***Ol' langpod here***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

The most mysterious comment of Joe Safdie's recent missives is his claim not to have met me. Having had numerous conversations with him at and after readings back in the days when we were both in the SF area, I'm puzzled. Perhaps I wasn't rude or funny enough. I'll try harder,

Ron

[↑ Contents](#)

588. **Harold Rhenisch**

***Re: The New (& how to help it along)***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

Don Byrd wrote of how the NEA brought perfect binding for little magazines and small press books, but did nothing to solve the distribution problem. He suggested that if they had given money to libraries to "buy small press and little magazine material, instead of giving it directly to publishers to publish that problem could have been in part solved".

I wonder. The Canada Council in its 1970s days of wealth sent small press books to libraries for free. They have pretty well all been sold off (at \$.50 a pound) or discarded. I got Mike Yates' "The Breat Bear Lake Meditations" for 50 cents, Mary de Raschewitz' "Discretions" for \$1, and on and on it goes. Public libraries, at least the ones I know, cull any book that has not been borrowed for the previous 4 years. After 20 years, that is pretty well the whole lot.

Don also notes:

>>People started tailoring their work to the NEA, not to the issues of the necessities of their work. <<

The Canada Council also has this effect.



>> It seems to me frankly that a great deal of the weariness in the poetry scene can be traced directly to the NEA. You cannot expect a government to fund revolutionary art.<<

Mind you, it's not just revolutionary art that suffers. Even basic and necessary extensions of conservative art, filling in regional and class blanks, completing a pattern, bringing the wealth, so to speak, to the furthest reaches of society, suffer. The consequence: vast areas are left out of the swim.

>>The Humanities were offered to the New Left of 60s as a kind of preserve.<<

Don, I like your idea about the 560 megabyte CDs, as long as we are careful not to help build our new preserve. That is, distribution beyond the boundaries of electronic access is just as important as distribution beyond the boundaries of the NEA- or University English Department- or Canada Council-defined book.

--Harold Rhenisch



[↑ Contents](#)

589. **Jacques Debrot**

***Re: DIASTEXT, etc.***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

Does anyone on the list know of an internet source from which it would be possible to download the DIASTEXT, DIASTEX4, and TRAVESTY programs as shareware?

Thanks in advance.

--Jacques

[↑ Contents](#)

590. **Henry**

***Re: p s to The New, etc***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

Just want you to know, David, I took your yardsale idea seriously. Passed around your message at meeting. People were skeptical ("\$4,000. from a yard sale? Must be Beverly Hills..." etc.) but the idea is good & the same energy could be applied to a variety of fundraising methods. Grassroots fundraising to build poetry audiences - I like the sound of it... Steve was right to call Ron on his statement, but do we want to go back to NEA grantsmanship & the dual system of commercial publishing and gov't funding? Poetry has a very weird relationship to the mechanism of mass marketing, fiction publishing, and the

general reader; you could get all the funding you needed, all the books out there you wanted, all the p.r. & press coverage - and would you have any interesting poetry?

I realize this sounds very complacent in the face of a depressing publishing situation. But my point is that the issue between generations hinges more on a "theoretical" self-understanding or self-presentation of a mode of poetry (which maybe is what Ron was getting at) than on differing "material conditions". The poetry groupings of the past that we're all interested in assumed that poetry is ONE THING, and it's a battle for hegemony - thus no matter where they were on the publicity canvas, their position was "political" (in an artistic sense) and their voices mattered. The issue is not, can the "younger generation" break out of its obscurity via a more supportive publishing environment; the issue is, can they distinguish themselves from the aesthetic-cultural niche ESTABLISHED for them by the Ron-Clinton-etc. generation. Established for them - but still run & controlled & thinned out by the tenured oldsters - all those "teachin' experimentalists", all those grayheads at Brown, SUNY, Naropa, SF, San Diego, the Poetry Project, or whatever mafias you want to check out. That's what attracts people to the Russians - they're good at chess, mafias, and theory. And now & then you find, hey, there's a few poems there. a few. Written by talents nurtured in childhood outside of ANY literary politics.

sorry for the obscurity of this post - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

591. **Susan Wheeler**

**Re: POETICS Digest - 18 Jan 1998 to 19 Jan 1998**

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

but that being the early 70s, it was

>impossible to be a girl writing poetry without being sent to plath and  
>sexton, with dire predictive undercurrents about how it was all sure to  
>turn out.

Dead-on, I'm afraid. My public-school English teachers put on paper hats once a year and merged their classes to act out Godot; screened Bunuel, The Seventh Seal and Last Year at Marienbad in any class that would reasonably apply; and seemed confused by the notion that the Plath/Sexton trajectory wouldn't interest a girl. For Love came into my hands somewhere around there, I remember, but my antidote was Gary Snyder. Bless them, though, for Nathaniel West. Susan Wheeler [REDACTED] voice/fax [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

592. **robert drake**

**Re: The New (was Oy . . . Langpo)**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

*"\*what is it about language writing and all that has come after it that there has been no moment nor movement that has crystallized in anything like the same way poetry did in the early 1970s?\* For all the anthologies of younger writers, many of them extraordinarily gifted, what do we find in the way of work that is actually new? I think this must be the challenge that faces every younger writer . . . "*

tardily, i'll suggest (again) a look at:

[www.burningpress.org/va/vaintro.html](http://www.burningpress.org/va/vaintro.html)

representing but one of a number of moment/movements that have, if not crystallized, at least been strong confluxes of poetic/community energies... one significant difference, as i've suggested before, is the lack of critical/ theoretic attentions either from within or outside... of course, such attentions/components are sometimes held as markers of "seriousness" (as if, lacking overt critical discourse, there is no critical thought or theoretic underpinning)--certainly that's an impetus to my part in the project... but, to the extent that these poetries are oppositional, perhaps part of the opposition is aimed at that kind of performative proof-of-value?

asever

luigi

[↑ Contents](#)

593. **Maria Damon**

**Re: The New (was Oy . . . Langpo)**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

i am glad steve evans brought material history to bear on the history of the "material text." without wanting to engage the langpo vs postlangpo thread, i must say that many discussions of the langpos' "complicity" with the academy and other institutions they seek to undermine in praxis overlook the fact that this turn to the academy has much to do with the erosion, starting under reagan, of not only money for the arts, but any kind of "alternative" and useful employment opportunities that existed during the days of economic expansion and funding for social programs.

At 1:40 AM -0500 1/20/98, Steve Evans wrote:

>Having over my years as a list-member watched Ron Silliman repeatedly--and

>I think with good intentions--try to insult a new generation into

>existence, I feel more bemused than offended to see him at it again in the

>passage excerpted by Jacques Debrot from the new \*Philly Talks\* (which I've  
>not yet received):

>

>>"what is it about language writing and all that has come after it that there  
>>has been no moment nor movement that has crystallized in anything like the  
>>same way poetry did in the early 1970s?" For all the anthologies of younger  
>>writers, many of then extraordinarily gifted, what do we find in the way of  
>>work that is actually new? I think this must be the challenge that faces  
>>every younger writer . . . "

>

>While I would confidently put the first books, chapbooks, and editing  
>projects of Lisa Jarnot, Lee Ann Brown, Bill Luoma, Jennifer Moxley, Kevin  
>Davies, Rod Smith, Chris Stroffolino, Peter Gizzi, Juliana Spahr, and many  
>other "young" writers up against any work done at a comparable age by any  
>language poet, I do think that one material condition has greatly  
>distinguished the task of emergence after 1989 from the one faced by Ron's  
>generation in the mid-1970s: the comparative lack of state and federal arts  
>funding for avant-garde writing and publishing projects.

>

>How many of the exceptional magazines and books of 70s language-centered  
>writing would have been brought into existence \*without\* California arts  
>funding and the NEA? Kit Robinson's excellent \*Streets & Roads\* folded  
>after one issue for lack of it; \*Hills\*, \*This\*, \*The Figures\*, \*Tuumba\*,  
>all managed to receive some very significant support, as did Burning Deck  
>and scores of other hospitable small houses on both coasts and throughout  
>the country. As an experiment, try taking every book by Silliman that  
>received NEA support off your poetry shelf and tell me how much of the  
>alphabet remains. Now do it for all the other usual suspects. See?

>

>I am familiar to the point of nausea with critiques of the NEA, but I think  
>the money it infused--mostly to publishers rather than individual poets,  
>who certainly were often discriminated against for their radical aesthetic  
>commitments--goes a long way toward explaining the difference Ron  
>mistakenly assigns to the novelty-deficient young.

>

>I might also say that the situation is past critical now and shows every  
>sign of declining more, the evangelism of the e-mediasts aside. Jarnot's  
>\*Some Other Kind of Mission\* was a first book published in the year its  
>publisher, Burning Deck, had its NEA money more or less totally eliminated.  
>Multiply that story fold upon fold and you get something of the picture.  
>The ability to get the new(s) out depends on slimmer and slimmer margins,  
>as the shots get longer and longer. The lack of dynamic new venues for the

>sustained presentation of work--magazines of course, but more importantly  
>publishing houses--troubles me the most. Hello era of the chapbook with  
>zero circulation, ask England how they've liked it. But against such a  
>backdrop, to impugn the accomplishment of young writers is grossly  
>misplaced. Viewed as they must be in relation to real material conditions,  
>their accomplishment is in many ways ethically as well as aesthetically  
>grander than that of their counterparts who now are the president's age.

>

>Time to sing a new song, Ron.

>

>Steve Evans

[↑ Contents](#)

594. **Maria Damon**  
***it's \*creeley\* you dope***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

kent johnson pointed out to me, back-channel, that i might want to post a correction for my misspelling of "creeley" in the reading thread post. as i told him, the teacher who'd studied w/ him was called jonatha ceely, and to this day i get the spellings mixed up. (kent didn't express himself in the terms of my subject line.)

[↑ Contents](#)

595. **Gwyn McVay**  
***Re: Langpods & the "Material Text"***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

Dale replies:

Langpods exclude life and fill ?texts9 with the random debris collected by an arrogantly selective self that can not, or will not, acknowledge the self9s role, even in the most methodical and abstract instances.<<<

But again, and please, older heads, correct me if I'm wrong, such notorious aleatorists as Cage and Mac Low (a) make UP the arbitrary rules in the first place--somebody (cf. Charles O. Hartman) has to \*write\* programs that generate or mangle text, however much calculation the computer itself does in running that program--and (b) admit to fudging the rules a little bit on occasion. I flatly don't believe Clark Coolidge and Larry Fagin didn't fudge once or twice in applying the  $n + 7$  algorithm to the inaugural poem to create "On the Pumice of Morons."

When I've read some of these artists on the subject of their work, it seems to me that they're very conscious of making aesthetic (better word?) choices, even in creating a work that includes aleatory processes. To reductio this ad absurdum, Cage willingly chose to write for prepared piano, not prepared glockenspiel, tuba, etc. (to my knowledge)--

Gwyn

[↑ Contents](#)

596. **Miekal And**  
**Re: Uh...New?**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

There are no new forms? I'm very disappoint?ed.....  
There are no new forms? I'm very disappoint?ed.....

[↑ Contents](#)

597. **KENT JOHNSON**  
**Missing "e"'s**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

On Jan 20, Maria Damon wrote:

*kent johnson pointed out to me, back-channel, that i might want to post a correction for my misspelling of "creeley" in the reading thread post. as i told him, the teacher who'd studied w/ him was called jonatha ceely, and to this day i get the spellings mixed up. (kent didn't express himself in the terms of my subject line.)*

What is it about missing "e"'s? Here's an open confession to show that Maria is not alone--To this day I have to look up the poet's name I've probably most often seen: Is it Alan Ginsberg or Allen? Embarrassing, but what the heck, I \_love\_ to confess myself on this list.

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

598. **Miekal And**  
**kenning**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

p. durgin wrote:

*` ----->\*<-----  
` K E N N I N G |  
` anewletterof]*

` poetry&poetic|  
` s418BrownSt.#|  
` 10IowaCityIA5|  
` 2245USA\\W\\|

can you  
post more  
info about  
yr newsletter?

[↑ Contents](#)

599. **Mark Prejsnar**

**Re:** [REDACTED] *deliberately omitted*

Tue 20 Jan 1998

I stand corrected. Have never met a living Langpote (only paper and digital ones, and they've been pretty nice to me...Maybe I'm not a fool after all!!)

I wasn't where it was at, to see those public corrections. But in a sense I stand by what I said (or thought I was saying): whether personally tolerant or not, the Language circle(s) have never held a single set of beliefs and goals. But much of the feeble flak fired at 'em seems to imply a uniformity I don't believe I see there. You were right to pick up on my word, "vague"..I expressed myself badly, and meant that in many cases they were rather "vaguely connected" with each others' goals and projects, not that they were mild absent-minded confessors.

On Fri, 16 Jan 1998, david bromige wrote:

*Thanks, Mark. But I didn't forget Chas, I left him out because I understood Joe Safdie to be addressing his problem with the west coast Langpoets.*

*Would also remark that a number of Langpos didnt suffer fools gladly--so I can't agree to the "vague" in yr characterization, and even the "loose" hardly fits my recollection of public correction during post-talk discussions. But humor there always was. Humor is serious business, and vice versa. Language is inevitably funny, if you look long enough.*

*Hugh Steinberg told me the other night about a T-shirt he'd had made up, with pictures of Groucho, Chico and Harpo--and "Carlo". It would have been fun if everyone had turned up one evening at the Perelman/Shaw loft talks, or at an 80 Langton St event, wearing the same. "False Portrait" of the Language School.*

*David*

[↑ Contents](#)

600. **Suzanne Burns**

**Re: Hughes & Plath**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

On Mon, 19 Jan 1998, Michael Magee wrote:

| *Isn't he about 30 yrs too late for*  
| *the "autobiographical sequence"?*

Who's to say? I have no trouble understanding why it would take 25 years of writing for him to come to terms with Plath's tragedy. It probably has taken many people who were not even particularly close to Plath at least as much time.

Nor do I have a problem with anyone wanting to keep private about their emotions or to think about the impact on their children. Perhaps if he had come out with an "autobiographical sequence" immediately after Plath's death, you would be accusing him of opportunism, false emotion (and everything else under the sun). Personally, I would be more inclined to trust the emotions of a sequence of poems such as this if it comes out later, after some soul-searching.

I wouldn't call him "our greatest poet", not by a longshot. Nor would I call Andrew Motion the greatest of critics given these comments ( though I still look forward to reading his book on Keats). The poem Rachel quoted stinks (\*vomiting noises\*)-- it is easy to agree on that. I'd like to see the whole collection before judging, though. Some of the other poems, printed Monday in NYT, struck me as much better, more real, and genuinely grieving, and it might be that they are more representative.

Suzanne

[↑ Contents](#)

601. **Suzanne Burns**

**Re: Hughes v Plath**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

Dean, could you say more about this?

[↑ Contents](#)

602. **Dale Smith**

**Uh...New?**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

Although I'm glad the NEA funds have dried up I want to second Steve Evans' comments re: younger writers. Lisa Jarnot, Hoa Nguyen, Connie Deanovich, Kevin Opstedal and others are actively engaged with poetry, producing



provacative and exacting forms of verse. Two invocational poems published recently in Mike and Dale's by Jarrot stand out to me as intelligent and deeply felt examples of poetry that conveys the freshness and novelty of the 'material text' while permitting a personal voice to carry through the poem in a sustained projection of immediacy and power. Jarrot reveals an experience of urban life with subtle humor and music. Her form isn't new, but the content lives. You see, 'New' does not mean innovative forms only. There are no new forms. There are existing forms used by poets to different ends. This measurement in terms of Newness is limited and limiting. It's arbitrary and used to increase distances between generation of poets. If it were up to the Silliman, Langpods would be known as the only folks to ever practice poetry, every one else, before and after, falling short of his ideal demands of the new, whatever those may be.

More specific examples for Joel and Bromige later today. Stay tuned, by Gar.

---

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[↑ Contents](#)

603. **pritchpa**

***Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

A lovely evocation, Harold - thank you. I think you've hit the proverbial nail - cathedral as poem in stone, as demarcation, temenos even, between sacred and profane space, as surely anyone who has ever entered one can attest to.

Patrick Pritchett

-----

From: Harold Rhenisch

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Mandalas / cathedrals / insects / thieves

Date: Monday, January 19, 1998 4:59PM

My take on it is that it has  
captured space, held it inviolate from the corrupt world, and purified  
it  
over centuries, carrying it to paradise, when \*all\* of time (and  
similarly  
life and death) shall be dismissed, as it is in the cathedral.

Harold Rhenisch

[REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

604. **Fred Muratori**

***Re: Hughes & Plath***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

A Hughes stanza from the new book actually made the CNN news last evening, with the newswoman reciting -- over displayed text -- a section of a poem recounting Ted & Sylvia's wedding day. I'll bet that was a CNN first. The passage sounded like pretty bland, standard fare to me, and I didn't buy the image of Sylvia standing there "brimming with God" at all. I think Hughes is much more comfortable when he writes about nasty animals eating other nasty animals. - Fred M.

\*\*\*\*\*

Fred Muratori

(██████)

Reference Services Division

Olin \* Kroch \* Uris Libraries

Cornell University

Ithaca, NY 14853

WWW: <http://fmref.library.cornell.edu/spectra.html>

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

605. **David R. Israel**

***found poem***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

(unedited text excerpted from  
a gratuitous marketing email msg., 1/21/98)

| E-PARADISE

|

| Do you know what it's like  
| to turn your computer on in the morning  
| to find an email box full of orders for your product  
|   Where it takes over an hour to sift through just  
|   the credit card orders alone? We do!

|

| Do you know what it's like  
| to have the postman bring you a bag  
| full of orders for products you have marketed  
|   on the Internet, and then hear him  
|   complain about all the mail you get? We do!

|

| Do you know what it's like  
| to place a simple ad into a newsgroup or  
| classified section on the Internet and have your  
| Order Department's phone ring off the hook with  
| people who want to buy your product. We do!

clearly (though the conceit is rather guache), the writer's referring to the experience of subscribing to the Poetics list -- the riches of theory ("credit card orders") which the writer's sensibility ("Order Department") gets to process en masse, etc.

d.i.

[↑ Contents](#)

606. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Re: Has anyone else read Strabismus?***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

I don't have time to reply (in any great detail)!! But I don't want to let this slip away without agreeing. Rosemarie W. sent me a review/exchange copy of Strabismus, in connection with my mag Misc. Proj., about a year ago, and I'm delighted to be goaded into at least a brief response. It is a fine book. (I may yet run a review of it..Maybe I should get Crag to write it!) A great range, wit, energy. A poet to be encouraged.

Also to be encouraged: spontaneous generous appraisals on the List, like this one by Crag. I see the affinity to Ceravolo, a real favorite of mine (transrational musicality as a form of intuition?)...But wouldn't'a thought of it myself...

Mark P.

On Sun, 18 Jan 1998, Laurie Schneider/Crag Hill wrote:

*To pick up the reading thread again:*

*When I first read Joseph Ceravolo's Transmigration Solo years ago (followed closely by Coolidge's Quartz Hearts), I gasped, "I've never read anything like this before!" I was utterly delighted by its originality, not in the least concerned that I couldn't identify or describe the mechanisms of that originality. It was pleasurable simply to experience, a joyful romp of language.*

*Reading Brian Schorn's Strabismus (from Burning Deck, 1995), I had a similar experience. I don't know how the hell he's doing what he's doing, nor did I want to break off the experience to analyze it - so rarely recently have I found poetry "pleasurable" in any sense. But now as I think about the poems and re-read them, the root of this pleasure has to be in the many impossible, improbable, unpredictable lines and sentences that*

*build up the poems -- accretion of the unexpected: "Temperatures are convincing jerks between the people in the canoe, hence, their legs support them like four broken ferns." I beg your pardon? I ask, a smile on my reading face. "I am the plaid formation on a Midwestern bow tie, capsized/somewhere on a whitecap, say/Lake Michigan." I've been there, seen that, I think. No, I haven't, though I grew up on the western shores of Lake Michigan. I haven't been there, but those lines are. "Hands entwined around each end of a wine bottle will not enhance the greenery of a swamp." Well, yes, but...These poems are delightful. That's a hell of a place to start.*

*Where have others gone with Strabismus?*

*Best, Crag Hill*

[↑ Contents](#)

607. **KENT JOHNSON**

***Re: Hughes & Plath***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

On 20 Jan. Suzanne Burns wrote:

*The poem Rachel  
quoted stinks (\*vomiting noises\*)-- it is easy to agree on that. I'd like  
to see the whole collection before judging, though. Some of the other  
poems, printed Monday in NYT, struck me as much better, more real, and  
genuinely grieving, and it might be that they are more representative.*

*Suzanne*

I accidentally deleted Rachel Loden's post that quoted the poem with "racist" imagery, but I wanted to ask if perhaps in context of the whole work it might be read differently? That is, the poem is about Hughes remembering Plath over 30 years ago. Might the bizarre references to physical type be a frank and self-conscious recalling of his own racism, a way of evoking an emotional darkness that presages what is to come? It does have a very 1960's ring. Eliot, for example, is still around at the time of this "picturing" of Plath.

I have no idea, but just wondering if Hughes might be up to something more here which the whole book might make clear. But maybe not, and that would really be something!

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

608. **William Marsh**

**Re: Missing "e"'s**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

At 09:42 AM 1/20/98 -0500, kent wrote:

>What is it about missing "e"'s? Here's an open confession to show  
>that Maria is not alone--To this day I have to look up the poet's  
>name I've probably most often seen: Is it Alan Ginsberg or Allen?  
>Embarrassing, but what the heck, I \_love\_ to confess myself on this  
>list.

>

Olson with an "e" was a problem for me several years back, until i learned  
"old son" as a helpful mnemonic device

bill

-----  
William Marsh

PaperBrainPress

Voice & Range Community Arts

National University



http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh

snail: 1860 PB Dr. #4

San Diego, CA 92109  
-----

[↑ Contents](#)

609. **p. durgin**

**ad. req. -- Jarnot**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

Would anyone out there happen to have an e-mail address for Lisa Jarnot?  
Please back-channel, thanks. -- Patrick F. Durgin

`

`

`

` ----->\*<-----

` K E N N I N G|

` anewletterof|

` poetry&poetic|

` s418BrownSt.#|

` 10IowaCityIA5|  
` 2245USA\\W|

[↑ Contents](#)

610. **Chris Sawyer**

***Re: The New (was Oy . . . Langpo)***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

I think Robert Drake makes a good point. For the most part the older, established "Langpo"s have teaching positions and groups of students or former students who follow and imitate their work. Additionally, these younger writers have swallowed in part their tradition and aesthetic to the point of myopia. As someone who went through a different tradition as a MFA student at Columbia, and fought for my personal aesthetics without this support system, I find comments about postlangpo or lack thereof a little inbred. I'm a younger writer who is "influenced" by langpo, but I never studied with one in an institution. "New" writing is happening now, just not necessarily under the umbrella of "established" langpos or their university affiliations.

check out his site of "discontiguous" poetries:

[www.burningpress.org/va/vaintro.html](http://www.burningpress.org/va/vaintro.html)

Content-Description: Card for Chris Sawyer

begin: vcard  
fn: Chris Sawyer  
n: Sawyer;Chris  
org: Pei Cobb Freed & Partners  
adr: 600 Madison Ave;;;New York;NY;10022;USA  
email;internet: [REDACTED]  
title: Library & Archives  
tel;work: [REDACTED]  
tel;fax: [REDACTED]  
tel;home: [REDACTED]  
version: 2.1  
end: vcard

-----BCF77FE3ED37047D1DD10E7B--

[↑ Contents](#)

611. **JBCM2**  
**Re: Uh...New?**  
Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

There are no new forms? I'm very disappoint?ed.....

[↑ Contents](#)

612. **Don Byrd**  
**Re: The New (& how to help it along)**  
Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

david bromige wrote:

*Sure, it takes time--planning sessions, rounding up junk to turn into antiques, finding big enough pieces of plywood to serve as tables, and the sawhorses to support them, manning the tables. . . But it beats sitting on one's duff bemoaning the cruel fate (and cruel it is!) that got one born too late for an NEA. It creates or enhances a sense of community, what's more. There could be yard sales for poetry throughout america.*

There is so much going on here that I can't keep up. I will try to get in on the meatier issues of the new (though classes are starting at the University this week) and say a few words about Pierre's expose later.

I only want to make one quick observation here. The poetry scene of the 60s and early 70s that Ron and I came into and which we both would like to see reappear, because it was an almost unbearably exciting time for every one, young and old, was created without the NEA. (Incidentally, take a look at Elsa Dorfman's web site. She has a photograph of Duncan, Irby, and Waldman which seems to me to capture a lot of that time in a single image--three generations as it were. For some reason, I can seem to connect with it right now, to get the URL, but it will turn up in a search).

The NEA brought us perfect binding for little magazines and small press books. This was nice: book stores like perfect binding because the books fit on the shelves. Huge numbers of books were produced. Jed and I cashed to produce a few issues of Wch Way (most of which are still in my basement by the way, if any one wants a genuine piece of literary history). But the NEA did nothing to solve the distribution problem. That, however, was just bad administration: if they would have given money to libraries to buy small press and little magazine material, instead of giving it directly to publishers to publish that problem could have been in part solved.

The deeper problem, however, is that it created an industry, producing products that for the most part no one wanted to buy. People started tailoring their work to the NEA, not to the issues of the necessities of their work. It seems to

me frankly that a great deal of the weariness in the poetry scene can be traced directly to the NEA. You cannot expect a government to fund revolutionary art.

While I am on this track, incidentally, I should also say that you cannot expect universities as institutions of the state or, worse, of private wealth, to support revolutionary art. The same thing is happening in universities that happened with the NEA. The Humanities were offered to the New Left of 60s as a kind of preserve. I don't think there was an active conspiracy, but it is as if some time during the Carter or Reagan administration, someone said, "What are we going to do with all damned the Marxists and poets?" "Give'm the English department."

Now they are pulling the plug on English departments as they did on the NEA. Since 1991, the faculty of the department here has been reduced from 43 to 27 full-time faculty members, and the slack has been taken up by adjuncts, many of them poets.

Granted, born in 1944, I am not quite a baby-boomer. I have gone through demographic doors that have slammed closed behind me. I have a cushy job, tenure, a Professorship. I have no more hurdles to jump. It must be remembered that jobs for poets in English departments in any number is also a new development. Even when I was tenured, a book of poetry was not held against you, but, you had to have produced a "serious" book as well.

Let me make one more quick hit, and get down to the business of the day. The problem of publication is solved. For considerably less than the price of one 80-page perfect-bound book, it is possible to produce a cd-rom. A cd-rom will hold about 560 megabytes. You could almost squeeze the entire contents of the Encyclopedia Britannica on one of them. We could publish an annual that would include every scrap of text that every one on this list writes, leaving space for much of the multimedia work, if the multimedia people would compress the files to the size they have to be for web sites.

Don

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd (██████, ██████)

Department of English

State University of New York

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The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)



613. **pritchpa**

***FW: The Catskill School of Poetry***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

Marvelous description of a utopian poetic community, Kent - though not quite so utopian as one might imagine. I enjoy something like it, albeit on a smaller, humbler scale, here in Boulder, among the well-entrenched poets of Naropa, CU and Denver. Jack Collom, myself, Lindsay Hill and Michael Friedman get together at each other's houses once a month to read our own and others' work and to discuss the stuff at hand at some length. Hegel never comes up, I confess, but it has been very instructive and stimulating for all of us. Community must be grounded in the physical, finally, I think. That's part of the problem with this list - one of the reasons, as I've opined to others in the past, why people get so easily bent out of shape and say things here they'd never say to a person's face. Well, most of us anyway. I'd never get rich betting on the limits of your cheeky chutzpah - you really know how to throw a gauntlet with style and that's something I say. (Dale Smith, please take note! And btw it is good to see you back.. even though I could not agree less with your stand re: Langpo).

Patrick Pritchett

[↑ Contents](#)

614. **Aldon Nielsen**

***Re: Digest -- Coffey/Marcus/Dylan/etc***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

footnote to Susan's note on \_Don't Look Back\_ -- the film occupies an innerstin' spot in film history, not just as progenitor of much subsequent success & excess in the concert documentary genre -- several of the people involved in the Dylan project had earlier worked on the film that follows President Kennedy around during the Alabama intergration crisis

[↑ Contents](#)

615. **pritchpa**

***Re: Hughes & Plath***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

Well Fred, I think that sounds like a lot of marriages I've seen - including my first.

Patrick Pritchett

-----

From: Fred Muratori

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Hughes & Plath

Date: Tuesday, January 20, 1998 10:11AM

I think Hughes is much more comfortable when he writes about nasty animals eating other nasty animals. - Fred M.

[↑ Contents](#)

616. **Aldon Nielsen**

**Re: dylan vs. poetry**

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

At 02:30 PM 1/16/98 -0500, you wrote:

>If Dylan, then why not Jimi Hendrix. 'Specially within the context of blues  
>guitar. How his axe had a way of nearly fatally de-electrifying it's operator  
>as in Electric Ladyland. The axe as voice. empathy with the axee. what is the  
>name of that long instrumental track on "lectric ladyland where he spasms out  
>at the end with his axe? Say, if you get near a tune, play it.(- Groucho )  
>  
>  
>- William  
>

O.K. -- how about Hendrix's versions of "Drifter's Escape," "Like A Rolling Stone" and "All Along The Watchtower"

[↑ Contents](#)

617. **Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher**

**Re: Uh...New?**

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

dale, beg your pardon, and not to pick on you, but---

i've grown about as weary of defending the "new" as a yet viable category of---is it analysis? or (pro)creation?---as i've grown weary of hearing a specific past erected as an arbiter of same...

which is to say, what we're doing now, \*here\*, is new, yes... if "new" means, can mean something akin to "what 'we' did not/could not do a decade ago"... \*and\* if one is capable of sensitizing oneself to the difference(s) twixt a letter column, in print, and a string of ascii characters (e.g., and with due regard for problems with ascii)... \*and\* if one is willing...

nothing wrong, necessarily, with the old either... but just b/c some of my (beloved---i am not being ironic) friends from the 60s seem dedicated to

naysaying the "newness" of what has arrived since does not mean we should refuse to deploy said term, or to dispense with it entirely... \*esp.\* not when the very medium in which such discussions are permitted is, uh, new... "life goes on/long after the thrill/of living is gone"?---ok, but the thrill is just not gone for me...

oh & check that: for "deploy" insert "deploy"...

now: i guess i'm 'picking on' ron s. and don b. as much as on dale!... i'm trying to do so in a friendly way, really---to gloss kent j., w/o a whole lot of refinement... please try to imagine my distressed look at the moment as i work up this para to assuage any residual irritation that comes seeping through the pixels... but steve e. makes a lot of sense to me...

ok: as i've just posted someone backchannel, and to riff on \_easy rider\_, "we blew it"... but thank the lord we're not stuck back in 69, as any person of color or feminist or gay (and please don't tell me these are not useful distinctions) will be sure to intuit... in some sense we've come a long way, baby... in others, we've still a long fucking way to go...

as to aesthetic/poetic mimicry: i just don't get laying this at the doorsteps of the langpo 'movement'... i see much more of same in the hallmark universe of discourse... at the same time, if langpo seems powerful to you non-academics out there, perhaps you ought to consider how much power is behind an avg. annual salary (all profs, all disciplines, all universities) of just over \$50K (which i and many like me, moving into our 40s, are still a long way off of)... i raise this monetary issue b/c i sense a lurking tangent re who speaks---as in the vizpo thread, where it was clear to me that marjorie perloff (ok yeah sure a friend) is doing her best to shake up a rather staid stanford institutional setting... do any of you folks think the ivory tower is really an ivory tower?---if so you haven't gotten your hands dirty with academic politics... every course is an act of exclusion---i hope nobody judges my course by some strict (new critical?) measure of my syllabus, lordsakes... if in class you encourage your students to read around in print and get online and explore, class discussion will always diverge from stated loci, and open to, uhm, new directions... do you really believe marjorie is \*not\* doing this?...

there are just so many issues here, i think it'd be nice if we'd try to disentangle a few... and hey, while i'm at it: why the casual diss of c & w music (e.g., vis-a-vis dylan)?... i can see [cough] ideological problems with \*all\* popular music... what of it?...

i've posted this before:

<http://www.iit.edu/~amato/moonlight.html>

it's a draft (is this public aspect of a conference "process" new?---nobody asked me to post this draft)... i think i use the word "new" once in the piece, a piece directed of course to folks who know little of the vital work so many of you on this list are actively engaged in... please advise if acceptable, or if just a gimmick... one thing is certain: nothing is stopping me from linking to mandel, brathwaite, giscombe, hunt, barbour, levy, miekal and, perloff etc etc etc... not yet anyway...

all of that said: the discussion hereabouts has picked up some of late, in what seem to me---unnecessary provocations aside---some intriguing ways... but (if i may) let's not mistake animosity for animation---you can have the latter w/o the former, you bet, though we moths tend to be drawn into the flames [flap flap]...

best,

joe

[↑ Contents](#)

618. **d powell**

***Re: Missing "e"s***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

How about Ashbery/Ashberry? I always got that one wrong. And James Wright, Charles Wright, C D Wright and C K Williams were all the same person; I used their names interchangably. Also, for whatever reason, Rilke, Roethke and Goethe. Funny, but I remember all the names of the Pips...

Doug

=====

=====

D A Powell

=====

=====

William Marsh wrote:

>At 09:42 AM 1/20/98 -0500, kent wrote:

>>What is it about missing "e"s? Here's an open confession to >show

>>that Maria is not alone--To this day I have to look up the >poet's

>>name I've probably most often seen: Is it Alan Ginsberg or >Allen?

>>Embarrassing, but what the heck, I \_love\_ to confess myself on >this

>>list.

>>

>Olson with an "e" was a problem for me several years back, until >i learned

>"old son" as a helpful mnemonic device

>

>bill  
>  
>-----  
>William Marsh  
>PaperBrainPress  
>Voice & Range Community Arts  
>National University  
>[REDACTED]  
><http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh>  
>snail: 1860 PB Dr. #4  
>San Diego, CA 92109  
>-----  
>  
>-----  
>Return-Path: <[REDACTED]>  
>Delivered-To: [REDACTED]  
>Received: (qmail 24019 invoked from network); 20 Jan 1998 >19:32:45 -0000  
>Received: from deliverance.acsu.buffalo.edu (128.205.7.57)  
> by herring.com with SMTP; 20 Jan 1998 19:32:45 -0000  
>Received: (qmail 21563 invoked from network); 20 Jan 1998 >17:46:15 -0000  
>Received: from listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu (128.205.7.35)  
> by deliverance.acsu.buffalo.edu with SMTP; 20 Jan 1998 17:46:15 >-0000  
>Received: from LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU by  
>LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU  
> (LISTSERV-TCP/IP release 1.8c) with spool id 26839057 >for  
> [REDACTED]; Tue, 20 Jan 1998 >12:46:08 -0500  
>Received: (qmail 3186 invoked from network); 20 Jan 1998 17:45:58 >-0000  
>Received: from nunic.nu.edu ([REDACTED]) by >listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu  
> with SMTP; 20 Jan 1998 17:45:58 -0000  
>Received: from charlot.san.rr.com (dt016n5d.san.rr.com >[204.210.18.93]) by  
> nunic.nu.edu (8.6.12/8.6.10) with SMTP id JAA01824 for  
> <[REDACTED]>; Tue, 20 Jan 1998 >09:43:48 -0800  
>X-Sender: [REDACTED]  
>X-Mailer: QUALCOMM Windows Eudora Light Version 3.0.5 (32)  
>References: <l0310280401ba25c9e697@[160.94.61.188]>  
> <[REDACTED]>  
>Mime-Version: 1.0  
>Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"  
>Message-ID: <[REDACTED]>  
>Date: Tue, 20 Jan 1998 09:48:30 -0800  
>Reply-To: UB Poetics discussion group ><[REDACTED]>  
>Sender: UB Poetics discussion group ><[REDACTED]>

>From: William Marsh <[REDACTED]>  
>Subject: Re: Missing "e"s  
>To: [REDACTED]  
>In-Reply-To: <[REDACTED]>  
>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

619. **Suzanne Burns**

***Re: Hughes & Plath***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

On Tue, 20 Jan 1998, Fred Muratori wrote:

> The passage sounded like pretty bland, standard fare to me, and I didn't buy

I was struck by the poems in NYT-- the poems seemed like diaries almost, present tense, personal, confessional, etc. Very different from the mythic voice that Hughes usually aims for. Bland, yes. It's not his usual thing, but then this seems to be the first time he has published strictly autobiographical material. Since it is 25 years worth of revisiting the same subject, it will be interesting to see if this changes or if writing about very personal things is something he can do well at all.

*Hughes is much more comfortable when he writes about nasty animals eating other nasty animals.*

Or about the natural world in general. Yes, those are much better poems. Hm-mm... he and Plath both seem to have a flare for really aggressive subject matter.

Suzanne

[↑ Contents](#)

620. **Aldon Nielsen**

***Re: List member in the news***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

thanks Kevin -- and great to have seen you again

haven't seen the CHRON -- but want listophiliacs to know that the words "less than pure" never passed my lips! and just what would a "pure" appropriation of black American culture be????? and more importantly, why would it be?

the pure appropriations of American go hazy --

but, it's about what I'd expect -- I joked with somebody at the conference (after Christopher Ricks's paper) that if somebody were to say "Dylan's poetry pales next to that of Coleridge," the next day's paper would say "critic compares Dylan to Coleridge!"

but, will have to get me a copy of that rare notice --

(now about that Ted Hughes and those "African lips" . . .)

[↑ Contents](#)

## 621. **Gary Sullivan**

### ***Some "New" Poets***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

| *Also to be encouraged: spontaneous generous appraisals on the List*

George Albon--possibly San Francisco's best-kept secret, two chaps, Possible Floor (e.g.) and King (Meow). His more "significant," larger-scale writings include Cosmophagy and Empire Life (two titles I remember), as well as a collection of shorter poems, We'll Build Here. Work upcoming in Avec Sampler (hopefully lots); also in the last Gertrude Stein Award, issues of lyric&, Anonym, Mirage and Cyanosis. Wide range of reading, but primary generative influences seeming to be Celan, Niedecker & Oppen. His work somewhat similar, but more colorful, lushly populated. Does extraordinary things with rhythm--one piece written as kind of overlay to Ives piece. Catullus versions as good as anyone's. A few things on the web:

<http://www.system-zero.com/cyanosis/Image/digitum/albon/thecurrent1.html>

<http://hardpress.com/hewhp/lingo/authors/albon.html>

Laurie Price--first book, Except for Memory (Pantograph), hands down the best full-length collection by a contemporary I've read. How describe what her writing does? Some influences: Stein, Laura Riding Jackson, Niedecker, Berrigan, Notley. Thankfully resembles none of these, nor a melange (to me). Often ethereal stuff, & feels oddly not situated this century (rare in avant & mainstream alike). Genuinely baffling. Other projects include a glass book (extraordinary--Steve Clay oughta publish someday) & many many other poems, most unpublished. She's been in NYC (after 4 years in Mexico) a year, but don't think she's read more than once. Come on, People in Charge: Ask her to read!

Eric Malone--consistently omitted from "Boston" issues despite being (my opinion) Boston's finest, second only to Wieners (also omitted from some mag's recent "Boston" issue). Early writing published: Evening Dispatch (Hornswoggle). Mountains of other, more significant: A Backwards Book, Magic Marker Poems, October--well, lots more. Spicer, Berrigan, Lansing, Blaser, Stein, Whalen (from '64 on) big influences. A Backwards Book effect maybe like hearing

Enochian (sp.?) & suddenly "getting it," but at a level just beneath the skin. Not without wit: "Experimental literature? Or the effect of 10 volumes on colonial furniture . . ." Special Bonus: Looks remarkably like David Letterman!

Kimberly Lyons--well, SURELY others on this list have read her work & have infinitely more intelligent things to say than I do. I've only seen Mettle (sp.), which Granary recently put out.

Don David--a couple of chaps (from Spectacular Diseases?), work in Long News and Mirage. At least one collection, The Persecution (I think?), unpublished. Some of the most bizarre, visceral and (I think) intelligently generated sex-related writing I've read.

John McNally--wow, best ear of anyone I know. Aetherstock, which he published in an edition of--what?--10 copies?--one of the few things I brought with me to New York. Another Gertrude Stein winner.

Jeff Conant--most consistently successful overtly political poetry as poetry I've read since the late Daniel Davidson's. One chap, Breathing Problems (whut). Stein winner last time, I think. Post Project did a swell selection of his prose: "Help Save America for the Goodguys." Last I heard Buck Downs Books was bringing out a new one. Did they?

Work by the above names & a few others (Colleen Lookingbill, Bob Harrison, Ange Mlinko, Daniel Davidson) a significant portion of my library--and, Ron & others, would probably be of yours too, if there was any money to publish it. No question but that it's every bit as generative, significant, important--take your pick--as work by others, prior, everyone's seen. I've read Perelman's early poetry (his Iowa thesis) and believe me, Conant's similarly early work is more advanced, his ear already better developed. We simply don't have any equivalent these days to the NEA & the West Coast Print Center, etc., of the 70s, 80s. The work itself is here. Where are you?

Gary Sullivan



[↑ Contents](#)

622. **Suzanne Burns**

***Re: Hughes & Plath***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

On Tue, 20 Jan 1998, KENT JOHNSON wrote:

*I accidentally deleted Rachel Loden's post that quoted the poem with "racist" imagery, but I wanted to ask if perhaps \_in context\_ of the whole work it might be read differently?*



I'm glad you made that point-- and I think it might be that context is really important to these poems. I would also wonder about Hughes's awareness of his language, how he plays it against other things. I don't want to leap to easy judgements.

It does have a very 1960's ring....

Actually my first thought was that it sounded "Plathy"! I'd have to look at it again.

Suzanne

[↑ Contents](#)

623. **Tom Orange**  
**Oy . . . (post)langpo**  
*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

to the comments made by michael, jacques, bill, and by extension joshua a few days ago.

re critical vocabularies adequate to describing innovations be they those of the 60s 70s or 90s. while langpo certainly carried a critical vocabulary with it, we are only still beginning to describe the various writing practices of this "mvmt," no? perelman makes this point: take the 20 writers in the messerli anthology, then there are 40 in the silliman anthology, 20 of whom are not in messerli, then take all the people in peter ganick's anthology, plus the 82 people silliman mentions in his preface (some of whom are in ganick i'm sure), we're looking at upwards of 100 writers here, each of whom would have to be considered individually in terms of their own career trajectories and then against one another.

in other words, the "history of langpo" is one big livre a venir, one for which a writer/critic of my "generation" may not have sufficient critical distance. yet were we to write this history, to digest \*all\* of this writing, yes by all means. to me it's all new, only having come to bernstein three years ago, coolidge only very recently and via watten, watten still to come, tho with some very useful pointers thanks to the recent discussions here. but for what? to master, to contain, to taxonomize and rank innovation according to form, lexicon, degrees of syntactic rupture, etc.? (doubtless a worthwhile project,...)

and then to emulate accordingly? rather, i think, the "passion for confluence" bill marsh describes. to stand awash amidst the baroque proliferation.

i wd point to bill howe's ongoing homophonic translations of emily dickinson, or christian bok's vowel poems-in-progress. one cd point to any number of prior texts from which these may be said to be "derivative" without at all contesting the striking originality of these works.

at what point do "innovative" or "derivative" continue to be meaningful tags?  
t.

[↑ Contents](#)

624. **James Brook**  
*reclaiming sf / shaping sf release parties*  
Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

What follows is a press release for two related publications, Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture (a book from City Lights) and Shaping San Francisco (a CD-ROM from Cloverleaf Multimedia).

I'm principal editor of the book--and one of the other editors is the principal producer of the CD-ROM. Essays and pictures from the book appear on the CD, along with a LOT of other material.

If you're in the area this week, you may want to attend the launch parties.

The RECLAIMING SAN FRANCISCO anthology will debut Friday, Jan. 23, 7:30 p.m., at Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia St. (nr. 20th St.), in San Francisco. Many of the more than two dozen contributors will be on hand.

The SHAPING SAN FRANCISCO CD-ROM will be presented in the Koret Auditorium of the Main Library in San Francisco on Thursday, Jan. 22, at 6:00 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### MULTIMEDIA SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY INAUGURATED

Announcing a landmark project in the discovery, sharing, and reclaiming of  
San Francisco's history.

---

City Lights Books presents Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture, edited by James Brook, Chris Carlsson, and Nancy J. Peters. Here is a City Lights anthology of fresh appraisals of the contrarian spirit of the city--a spirit "resistant to authority or control." The official story of San Francisco is one of progress, development, and growth. But there are other, unofficial, San Francisco stories, often shrouded in myth and in danger of being forgotten, and they are told here: stories of immigrants and minorities, sailors and waterfront workers, artists and neighborhood activists--along with the stories of speculators,

land-grabbers, and the land itself. San Francisco is not alone in being transformed according to the dictates of the global economy. But San Franciscans are unusual in their readiness to confront the corporate agenda for their city. On sale at bookstores. \$17.95 (ISBN: 0-87286-335-2)

"A breathtaking ride through a dozen different cities called San Francisco."

--Mike Davis, author of *City of Quartz*

"The radical energy that animated San Francisco is pulsing in these pages, as does dismay at its murder by greed and promotion." --Andrei Codrescu, author of *The Dog with the Chip in Its Neck*

"This book celebrates the fact that we live in the most glorious of all human creations, a city, with living streets . . . . Read it to understand why San Francisco is still alive--and how we have to defend it." --Joan Holden, San Francisco Mime Troupe

-----  
Cloverleaf Multimedia Productions announces a magnificent new CD-ROM, *Shaping San Francisco*. This is the product of three years of work by a group of local historians, community activists, computer workers, artists, academics, and librarians. Recipient of a California Council for the Humanities grant in 1996, the project has also enjoyed support from several dozen private donors, although not enough to underwrite a paid staff. Consequently, over 10,000 hours of labor has been donated. The producer, Cloverleaf Multimedia Productions, was founded in 1994 by Chris Carlsson, Greg Williamson, and Jim Swanson to bring a radical political sensibility to computer multimedia. This exciting exploration of our history will be available on public kiosks around the city, in community centers, and at branch libraries.

The CD will also be on sale at \$35.00.

A web site (<http://www.shapingsf.org>) will offer a sample of the full public kiosk CD-ROM, while providing an on-line forum for further contributions, criticism, and comment. The project will continue to grow and develop as people and groups contribute their own stories, archival materials, and original research.

----- FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Stacey Lewis at City Lights Books [415] [REDACTED] and Cloverleaf Multimedia Productions [415] [REDACTED]  
-----

[↑ Contents](#)

625. **Maz881**

**Re: Langpods & the "Material Text"**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

Dale,

you're almost as cute as barrett. give me a kiss  
before high noon.

BillL

ps.

Ron, you might want to look at chip & dale's for signs of a new convergence.

[↑ Contents](#)

626. **Gwyn McVay**

**Re: Missing "e"s**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

>>>And James Wright,

Charles Wright, C D Wright and C K Williams were all the same person<<<

I'm guessing Ms. Wright would probably be the most alarmed by the conflation.

People I know have had terrible times with Ted Berrigan/John Berryman, and  
then the two peace-activist brothers as well--and while in line to see /Shadow-  
lands/ not long after it came out, I overheard:

"Which children's author is this movie about?"

"A.A. Milne. You remember, he wrote /The Hobbit/."

& a belated mondegreen--heard X's song containing the refrain/title? "shoot out  
the lights" as "chew up the blinds," like overacting in front of suburban  
scenery--

Gwyn

[↑ Contents](#)

627. **p. durgin**

**Re: kenning**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

I'm sure I can... KENNING is a "newsletter" of new & ostensibly innova-  
tive poetry, poetics, and other genres of non-fiction writing, based on a notion  
that contemporary poetics (of variable & various stripes & spots & degrees of  
avantness) is an integral facet of progressive social discourse. The mag. is  
modestly priced & produced almost solely on demand. KENNING's premier

issue is due out about a month from now, edited by myself, with Mark Wallace, Juliana Spahr, John Kinsella, and others set to appear. More info as it comes available. Submissions are accepted at the address below or via e-mail. & thanks for asking. -- Patrick F. Durgin

`  
`  
`  
`  
` ----->\*<-----  
` K E N N I N G|  
` anewletterof|  
` poetry&poetic|  
` s418BrownSt.#|  
` 10IowaCityIA5|  
` 2245USA\\V\\|

On Tue, 20 Jan 1998, Miekal And wrote:

*p. durgin wrote:*

` ----->\*<-----  
` K E N N I N G|  
` anewletterof|  
` poetry&poetic|  
` s418BrownSt.#|  
` 10IowaCityIA5|  
` 2245USA\\V\\|

*can you  
post more  
info about  
yr newsletter?*

[↑ Contents](#)

628. **William Burmeister Prod**

**Re: dylan vs. poetry**

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

On Jan 20, 11:15am, Aldon Nielsen wrote:

> Subject: Re: dylan vs. poetry

> At 02:30 PM 1/16/98 -0500, you wrote:

> > If Dylan, then why not Jimi Hendrix. 'Specially within the context of blues  
> > guitar. How his axe had a way of nearly fatally de-electrifying it's  
operator  
> > as in Electric Ladyland. The axe as voice. empathy with the axee. what is  
the  
> > name of that long instrumental track on "lectric ladyland where he spasms  
out  
> > at the end with his axe? Say, if you get near a tune, play it.(- Groucho )  
> >  
> >  
> >- William  
> >  
>  
> O.K. -- how about Hendrix's versions of "Drifter's Escape," "Like A Rolling  
> Stone" and "All Along The Watchtower"  
>-- End of excerpt from Aldon Nielsen

Choices! "All along the Watchtower" is the tune I had stuck in my head the  
morning I posted thusly.

-William

[↑ Contents](#)

629. **William Burmeister Prod**

***Re: kenning***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

On Jan 20, 2:57pm, Miekal And wrote:

> Subject: kenning  
> p. durgin wrote:  
>  
>  
> > ` ----->\*<-----  
> > ` K E N N I N G|  
> > ` anewletterof|  
> > ` poetry&poetic|  
> > ` s418BrownSt.#|  
> > ` 10IowaCityIA5|  
> > ` 2245USA\VV|  
>  
>  
>  
>

> can you  
> post more  
> info about  
> yr newsletter?  
>-- End of excerpt from Miekal And

Knew that would get the attention of the visually attentive. Kinda' looks like an eye chart doesn't it? Ditto.

-William

[↑ Contents](#)

630. **William Burmeister Prod**

**Re: Oy . . . (post)langpo**

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

On Jan 20, 3:57pm, Tom Orange wrote:

> Subject: Oy . . . (post)langpo  
> at what point do "innovative" or "derivative" continue to be meaningful  
> tags?  
>  
>  
> t.  
>-- End of excerpt from Tom Orange

I think that "derivative" stopped being a dirty word with postmodernism. Even Harold Bloom has a rather nice take on the word (as he redefines it) in *\_A Map of Misreading\_*.

-William

[↑ Contents](#)

631. **CharSSmith**

**Re: Oy . . . (post)langpo**

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

In a message dated 98-01-20 17:51:33 EST, Tom Orange writes:

<< at what point do "innovative" or "derivative" continue to be meaningful tags? >>

when they are seen as complements ala Robert Duncan?

--CS

[↑ Contents](#)

632. **david bromige**

***The New (& how to help it along)***

*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

(Preamble : The New, not distinguishing between form and content. Somewhere Ron Silliman formulated an equation that said that the formal New and the contentual New can never occupy the same place....Ron, do I have that right? Is that still a formulation you stand by, and if so, could you post it?)

I was pleased to hear from Henry that he had aired the yard-sale notion where it might do some good. Not pleased that it hadn't been acted on. No, we're not Beverly Hills. A lot of our sales were early in the morning, to people who live (or augment their living) by buying cheapest and selling slightly dearer--some were en route to the "official" flea market that's held every weekend at the south end of town, and we were at the north end, and a lot of these dealers live north of town, where the housing is cheaper. I mean, location is everything : one needs to consider that.

Other notions in case there are listlings who want to be free of the literary establishments in their neighborhoods (with the chokehold on budgets, etc) : make Round Table Pizza your venue. Layne Russell of this list did just that last sat nite, bringing some 30 of us together for a poetry reading in a private room at RTP. It cost nothing : RTP is glad of the custom. Layne booked about 10 days in advance. Fifty or more could have been fit into that space. Although the room had windows that gave onto the surrounding restaurant, it was pretty much soundproof (therefore far preferable to coffee-shops, with their ringing registers and growling Smoothie-mixers and coffee-grinders). Plenty of parking on site. This room is even equipped with a large tv screen and vcr capability, so that we can have an evening of poetry tapes if we want. And beer and wine (well, of a kind) are available.

Don Byrd's post re-\*pre\*NEA days reminds me that at Berkeley in the 60s, some of us formed an on-campus club, which gave us access, for a nominal fee, to lecture halls where we put on poetry readings. We were allowed to charge an entrance fee, although perhaps it was disguised as a donation. In those years of rising poetry popularity, we often had 150 or 200 in the audience; I remember we were able to pay the likes of Robert Duncan and Robert Creeley and Diane Di Prima and, I think, Ed Dorn, something like \$150 honoraria--surely about \$600 in today's money. We did this because the Arts & Lectures series brought to campus poets who, in the words of one of my associates in the enterprise, Ron Loewinsohn, were dead but didn't know enough to fall down (and this despite the input of "The Book of Beat" Tom Parkinson.)-- Even the most, uh, libral (or even redickul) among the Tenured have incurred a certain amount of damage during their ascension, have feuded with writers whom the students would



love to hear but never will (due to these wounds), and the Poetry Club is one way to by-pass these Great Limping Albert Rosses (as Sherril Jaffe dubbed them). We paid membership dues--maybe \$2 per term? Say \$8 in today's money. This also was an incentive to attend all the readings (to get your money's worth). I think we got in for \$1, whereas non-members got in for \$1.50.

These days, a likely turnout would be considerably smaller. But still, 40 people paying an average of \$5 each = \$200, and that, less venue-rent, and expense of a mailer, would probably net \$120.

These are some ways of working with The System to take the power back.

David

[↑ Contents](#)

633. **Safdie Joseph**

**Re: Oy and more on language poetry**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

Tom, just a quick note to say that I appreciate your even-handed and careful responses to my posts very much -- they seem, at least to me, very different from our last virtual meeting some months back -- so thanks. I'll try and get back to you as soon as I can about the substance.

Best,

Joe

-----  
From: Tom Mandel[SMTP: [REDACTED]]  
Sent: Sunday, January 18, 1998 10:12 AM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Oy and more on language poetry

*It seems to me that Joe Safdie is being pretty straightforward in discriminating between his reactions to Language Poetry then (early 80's) and now. I think he offers us a model to discuss this (briefly I hope) w/o being sucked back into the wars of that time.*

*A word on this remark by Joe, however:*

*"I resisted then, as I hope I would now, any so-called "movement" that wanted to sweep away what had gone before in its triumphal path..."*

*Well, sure. But, I have no idea what this is about in reference to that time. In fact, to my knowledge no one in the group of people who came*

retroactively to be seen as a movement particularly regarded language poetry as a movement at all. We did think we were investigating a way of writing, but we also thought it was being investigated with a lot of variety and that there was virtually no program for it whatever. There were agreements of rejection certainly -- what we all or mostly all seemed not to like (viz. Richard Wilbur, James Merrill -- *\*not\** the Allen anthology!) -- and of agreement (the Allen anthology, early Ashbery), and of ambiguousness (Ashbery after *The Tennis Court Oath*). But even these "agreements" were far from that. Frameworks for discussions that didn't really have agreement as a goal at all.

I.e. there was some level of social self-consciousness among these people, but it was not as a movement. As to "sweep away what had gone before..." I can't begin to identify what is meant by this. Passion and a critique of the past are not identical to a rejection of that past. They're not even necessarily Oedipal (whatever in hell that mannish-boy theory-parable might still imply for anyone). And as to "in its triumphal path" where might the feeling of triumph have arisen?

Joes's sentence goes on:

"; the Tradition is important to me. Sometimes I think it's all we have..."

Well, I can identify with that and strongly. But how do you go on? An example please where piety (that word is not being used sarcastically) leads to innovation? I think I could point to one in the rabbinic Midrash tradition. But there is a particular set of formal constraints which follows, and, no matter how compelling that work is, it is limited in its effect by those constraints.

We are limited by our own metaphors. We talk of "breaking new ground," but there is always a life there destroyed by our plow. The tradition itself,

*it's that kind of story.*

Tom

Tom Mandel

\*\*\*\*\*

Screen Porch \* <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 \* vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22031 \* fax: [REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

*Join the Caucus Conversation*

[↑ Contents](#)

634. **Pierre Joris**

**Re: Oy . . . (post)langpo**

Tue 20 Jan 1998

---

William Burmeister Prod wrote:

*I think that "derivative" stopped being a dirty word with postmodernism. Even Harold Bloom has a rather nice take on the word (as he redefines it) in A Map of Misreading.*

-William

Even better -- actually, much better than going to oedipally-challenged Gloomy Bloom -- is to check out Robert Duncan re "derivative." -- Pierre

--

=====

pierre joris 6 madison place albany ny 12202

tel/fax [REDACTED] email: [REDACTED]

<http://www.albany.edu/~joris/>

-----  
"What often prevents us from giving ourselves over to  
a single vice is that we have several of them."

— La Rochefoucauld

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[↑ Contents](#)

635. **J. Kuszai**  
***running smack***  
*Tue 20 Jan 1998*

---

As a fledgling small press publisher, I'd like to jump into these discussions about funding, new writers, the problems we all face getting work out there and getting it discussed, etc.

And by way of an announcement, I'd like to mention that Graham Foust, newly recruited by the University at Buffalo's soon-to-be division IA football team, will be now helping me carry the ball. No longer will I be stuck trying to break through the tough defense which mounts against us all by myself. (BTW the UB football team is called the Bulls, which I find very amusing--

OK OK, so for real. Meow Press has suffered from my having had to do all this myself. I've not had an interest in doing it that way, except that it just worked out that when the books needed to be folded, I was the only one there. It's somehow embarrassing to ask for help, I guess. I don't know. Graham's editorial interest will mean a significant change for the press. It seems that for many people on this list, being the student of Charles Bernstein means that I would have his interests, that I would imitate him, etc. And it is a strange opinion. I would love to see an analysis of any of the Buffalo poetics grads' writings (who are in actuality,,shhhh,,really english grads) which demonstrates that Charles is here deploying clones. If there is a specific case of this "student of langpo" / wannabe, etc. then please let's talk about it. I keep thinking that I know what's being discussed, but the materials of the material text seem to be elided here. As Jim Rome would say, "Have a take and don't suck"

Before Graham agreed to accept a share in the ideological responsibility for the books soon to be published by Meow Press, I was really disturbed by my own editorial policy. I am not nor have I ever been comfortable making good / bad judgements about people's writings. Nor am I really interested in propping up some formal technique over another. But that isn't to say that one press or another "must" publish this or that... and then there seems to be an awful lot of pressure to reduce the amount of poetry that's out there. As if too much poetry is a bad thing. Perhaps it waters down the genius, I don't know. And it isn't that I like every poem I read, or every poem that I publish. It's my suspicion that social concerns (both swell and dubious) come into play far more often than ever get discussed. Perhaps that is taboo. But I'll tell you, I've received fan letters from people trying to reach certain Meow authors, people who aren't part of this national-matrix, and who I published because I wanted to help them. And I don't feel bad about that. Often those books are very "popular"--and certainly here locally those are the books that sell out at Talking Leaves Books, or the new usedbookstore, Rust Belt Books. It is my opinion, and my desperate

interest, that books and poetry participate in such a community. If my book came out and disappeared into the realms of some virtual debate I didn't have access to--well, what's that worth? Chapbooks offer something that is more modest, something small. Does that seem right? Does it seem absurd? Isn't that the goal: that our poems would participate in the world that we inhabit? And so yeah, whatever. I must seem pretty silly.

These are just thoughts. For what they're worth. Those of you who are waiting for books (ordered or to be published), rest assured. Graham Master Foust is here to make it all right. And he's not a langpo, is he? Graham---are you out there? Graham, what do you wannabe?

[↑ Contents](#)

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636. **John Tranter**

***nasty animals***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

In a recent post Fred Muratori said:

"I think Hughes is much more comfortable when he writes about nasty animals eating other nasty animals. - Fred M."

Aren't Ted and Sylvia supposed to have bitten each other on the neck in a fit of passion  
at the party where they first met?

John T

from

John Tranter, 39 Short Street, Balmain NSW 2041, Sydney, Australia

tel ( [REDACTED] ) fax ( [REDACTED] )

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/tranter/3poems-interview.html>

Editor, Jacket magazine: <http://www.jacket.zip.com.au>

[↑ Contents](#)

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637. **Franklin Bruno**

***a squint at strabismus***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Odd that Craig Hill brought up Schorn's "Strabismus" when he did, as I had just read, that morning, in Zukofsky's "An Objective":

"Strabismus may be a topic of interest between two strabismics; those who see straight look away."

First thoughts: My dictionary defines 'strabismus' as "the inability of one eye to attain binocular vision with the other because of imbalance of the muscles of

the eyeball." 'Squint' is given as a synonym, though 'crosseyed' sounds closer. (The etymology of the term may also be related to that of 'strophe.') Assuming that Schorn's allusion to Z. is not inadvertent, and putting the matter simply-mindedly, I would guess that the former is arguing for subjectivity as against Z's apparent rejection of a 'perverse,' 'sick,' or 'deficient' way of seeing as appropriate for poetry. (Or, Schorn may simply be addressing other squinters.) This helps a lot with the first piece in the book, "Entering Poetic Blindspots," which shifts quickly from manifesto to the kind of image-torque that Hill mentions:

"We must force ourselves into the danger of not seeing in order to see the poem more clearly, to see it as clearly as the head of a giant pin being thrust through the walls of the mouth."

The notion of an "asymptote" (the book's third section), the line that a plane curve approaches or approximates but never touches, seems similarly related to Schorn's approach to narration.

I see J. Debrot's characterization of the Burning Deckness of it all, but Schorn's work is also more than a bit similar to some recent writers who definitely think of their work as fiction, not poetry. I'm thinking of Ben Marcus, Gary Lutz, and Diane Williams, all pub'd by Knopf, all often found in -StoryQuarterly- and -Conjunctions- (see #26 for a Marcus-edited section w/ Williams, Lutz, and a very interesting sustained piece by Schorn). I don't know anything about Schorn's provenance, but I suspect the rest of these folks are latter-day Lish-disciples. I've always idly wondered how this Lish/Knopf cabal operates, constantly producing slim volumes of short stories that I never meet anyone who reads. But I'm digressing--Schorn's writing, accidentally or not, gives off a similar sense that determinate events are being represented in unrationalizable terms, though without the kind of sublimation or repression that makes Marcus or Williams seem 'psychological' in intent.

Has anyone else here read the other folks I mention (Marcus' -Age of Wire and String- is one of the strangest works I've come across for a while), even with contempt?

fjb

[↑ Contents](#)

638. **rsillima**

**Various**

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Steve,

I think of myself as lovingly prodding younger writers to go that next step further (it's a big one). I'll sing a new song when a new one is warranted.

I concur with David re the functional irrelevancy of the NEA. It may have helped some book publishers, notably The Figures, Roof and Sun&Moon, but all the major events of the '70s were done without its assistance.

David,

I've written at times about the conflict between form/content (as distinct from mere extension), but don't think I ever quite put it the way you suggest. See "Wild Form" on my EPC web site (soon to be part of the Quarry West issue).

Steve's list of younger writers is a superb starting place, tho far too short. Laurie Price, whom somebody else mentioned, has been writing great work for at least 15 years that I know of. The real question is why has it taken so long for a first big book to come out.

Ron

[↑ Contents](#)

### 639. **Miekal And** ***Best New Poet Club***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

I will try my best to think of each & everyone of you as the best new poet, especially those gray beards out there & especialiest the bestest newest poet Bern Porter. Our sole mission is to recuperate the words "best" & "new" in a way that invites participation rather than the window-shopping critiques that seem to be in wholesale fashion on the poetics list.

Miekal And

best new html geezerwrecker in the hypermedia hippocket

[↑ Contents](#)

### 640. **Annie Finch** ***Spenser, Jarrot, Hightower***

*Thu 13 Oct 2039*

---

Kent et al: Sane excerpts from Hightower's show are also printed in many free weeklies.

Et al: Would one of the people who has been discussing Lisa Jarrot mind posting a representative piece of hers for those who don't have her books?

Henry: your anecdote about the 365-line piece reminded me of Spenser's tactics as delineated by Kent Hiatt in the amazing SPENSER AND THE NUMBERS OF TIME. That's moving towards what I like to call postmodernism.

Annie

*Listees:*

*This not exactly "poetics", but everything is connected to everything else. Plus, when you are eventually confronted by a detachment of your local workers' militia, you can say, no, look, I'm not just an aesthete, why I even got Jim Hightower's Chat and Chew on the radio here!*

*Check out Jim Hightower's web site-- [www.jimhightower.com](http://www.jimhightower.com)*

*carries his daily, cut-to-the-quick three minute spot, and the whole archive going back to '96 is there too (good teaching materials). Hightower, as most of you probably know, is the former Texas Commissioner of Agriculture (think I got that right) who is now the Left's and sanity's answer to Rush Limbaugh. (JH: "Some people think we need a third party. I think we need a second one.")*

*There are helpful hints on the site for getting your local radio station to carry his mini-spot, or his two hour "Chat and Chew" call-in show, both of which are carried on over a hundred stations nationwide. Doing so will certainly be an honorable little commando strike against corporate media!*

*Kent*

---

Annie Finch  
Assistant Professor of English  
Miami University  
Oxford, Ohio 45220

[↑ Contents](#)

641. **Michael Magee**

***Re: nasty animals***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

More than this, according to the biographies - Ted was a Marv Albert-style biter during sex. Ah, gossip. -m.



According to John Tranter:

>  
> In a recent post Fred Muratori said:  
>  
> "I think Hughes is much more comfortable when he writes about nasty animals  
> eating other nasty animals. - Fred M."  
>  
> Aren't Ted and Sylvia supposed to have bitten each other on the neck in a  
> fit of passion  
> at the party where they first met?  
>  
> John T  
>  
>  
> from  
> John Tranter, 39 Short Street, Balmain NSW 2041, Sydney, Australia  
> tel ( [REDACTED] fax ( [REDACTED]  
> <http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/tranter/3poems-interview.html>  
> Editor, Jacket magazine: <http://www.jacket.zip.com.au>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

## 642. **Miekal And** **Surveillance**

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Thanks to Gary Sullivan, Crag Hill & others who've been posting pointers to names not normally in the wordstream here. For me it has the quality of unrequited tease since I haven't been able to afford a book of poetry for years & only really spend time with works I've traded for & libraries (other than Dreamtime's archive) are a universe away. These kinds of introductions are & should be endless in such a vast poetic universe & we are our own remedy for the crisis in distribution, promotion & criticism. I welcome the shift from so much book production toward more genuine & personal forms of networking & exchange along with an acknowledgement that it's ok to be the best guardian of one's own work, that expecting some unknown other out there to give your words their due recognition is happenstance at best. I'm searching for a manifesto I wrote about appropriate publishing, will try to post it in the next couple days, about archival sensibility & print on demand bookmaking, which of course is accessible to each & everyone of us, even my friends in the mountains of rural Russia.

---

Dreamtime Village  
<http://www.net22.com/dreamtime/index.shtml>

QAZINGULAZA: And/Was/Wakest website:  
<http://net22.com/qazingulaza/index.html>

email for DT & And/Was: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

643. **Fred Muratori**

***Re: Missing "e"s***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

*& a belated mondegreen--heard X's song containing the refrain/title?  
"shoot out the lights" as "chew up the blinds," like overacting in front  
of suburban scenery--*

*Gwyn*

Yes, X recorded "Shoot Out the Lights" in muddy-tho-decent fashion, but since people on the list have been talking lately about songwriters whose lyrics approach/appropriate/approximate poetry, let's give due credit to the scandalously un-famous (although I think he likes it that way) writer and performer of the original, Richard Thompson. In Thompson's version, you hear the words as written. (Though, for the record, John Doe is okay in my book, too.)

And as for tales of the misheard, I can still remember a grammar school classmate who confidently recited the prayer "Hail Mary, full of gas..."

-- Fred M.

\*\*\*\*\*

Fred Muratori

([REDACTED])

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[↑ Contents](#)

644. **Rachel Loden**  
**Re: Some "New" Poets**  
*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Gary Sullivan wrote of Laurie Price:

| *Other projects include a glass book*

What's a glass book?

"She puzzled over this for some time, but at last a bright thought struck her. 'Why, it's a Looking-glass book, of course! And if I hold it up to a glass, the words will all go the right way again . . . It seems very pretty,' she said when she had finished it, 'but it's rather hard to understand!' (You see, she didn't like to confess, even to herself, that she couldn't make it out at all.) 'Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas--only I don't exactly know what they are! However, somebody killed something: that's clear, at any rate--'"

(Lewis Carroll, of course.)

Rachel, who'd really like to know

[↑ Contents](#)

645. **Fred Muratori**  
**Re: Missing "e"s**  
*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

>And as for tales of the misheard, I can still remember a grammer school  
>classmate who confidently recited the prayer "Hail Mary, full of gas..."

>

>-- Fred M.

>

Yeah, yeah; I know. It's "grammar."

\*\*\*\*\*

Fred Muratori

(██████)

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[↑ Contents](#)

646. **sylvester pollet**  
***Concrete New Yorker?***  
*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Check p.38 of the Jan. 26 issue (all on Cuba) for "La Isla" by Guillermo Cabrera Infante.

[↑ Contents](#)

647. **Dale Smith**  
***Detail and Concept***  
*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

I'll put my formal prejudice aside for the time being to elucidate more concretely my gripe with langpo.

If you turn to p. 538 of the Norton Anthology of Post Modern Poetry you'll find a selection from Barrett Watten's *Progress*. What I find ingenuine about this piece is not the clerical tone or lack of musical appeal, but the arrogant assumption of a shared conceptual knowledge with a reader. I've selected the following stanza which, like the others, posits broad ideas within closely-related units:

Comes to the history of words.  
The thought to eradicate  
In him. The poetry,  
by  
Making him think certain ways...

The surprises are syntactical, with broad conceptual leaps. But the meaning(s) is distorted by six open words that signify generalizations outside of the poem: *history*,<sup>1</sup> *words*,<sup>1</sup> *thought*,<sup>1</sup> *him*,<sup>1</sup> *poetry*,<sup>1</sup> and *ways*.<sup>1</sup> Now I've been accused in my posts of not being specific enough. Why doesn't the same charge stand for poetry? What history of words does Watten refer to? Is he implying an etymological process? How would that *eradicate*<sup>1</sup> something (?) in *him*?<sup>1</sup> Who is *him*?<sup>1</sup> Of course, there's no answer to these rhetorical questions because we are supposed to know how to read this. This stanza might mean that the history of words coerce human thought processes. Watten's formal challenge is to try to write outside of this *history of words*.<sup>1</sup> But the lack of concrete examples in the poem, the reliance on broad and non-specific conceptual relations combined through the moralizing tone of this stanza only invite speculation. It does not inspire curiosity because nothing remains but a few broad words that repel, not attract, meanings from this text. This poem addresses progress only in vague conceptual terms, not in a detailed or perceptive language. Watten offers no examples, only an opinion. Stein at

least focused on the primacy of things in the emotional appeal of names. Watten's elevated position as Possessor of conceptual rather than experiential knowledge undermines the potentially sympathetic appeal the title of this poem might attract. In the same anthology, Bob Perelman is at least clever enough to let his generalizations function on their own, as fragments of perceived ideas in his poem, *Chronic Meanings*. Here, each line is a sentence forming a paratactic verse that one could, arguably, see as a mimetic response to the accumulative pressures of urban life. Still. It's length, lack of crescendo and monotone sound structure limits the poem's potential. Perelman relies on the surprises and small syntactical leaps between each line rather than developing unified themes throughout the larger progression of the work as a whole. He basically takes the conceit and drives it into the ground, plodding the idea forward through smart and provocative stanzas. But the idea is expressed soon enough and several stanzas could have been cut to spare the reader without losing the intended impulse of poetic expression. The sense of inclusiveness in Ron Silliman's work attracted me years ago. The feeling that anything is permissible was empowering. Anything could go into a poem. That democratic function is still the most appealing aspect of his work. *Ketjak* and *Tjanting* are his important books for me. He does let *Things* - a dailiness, a reality - into those poems. But without language's connective tissue such non-syllogistic approaches are limited in their appeal simply because the basic impulses of the work are obscured. The work remains with the reader alone to understand. And unless that reader lives in Leisure Land there's really very little reason to supply his or her own emotional impulses to the author's alienating sentence structures. That original socialist impulse that guided the *langpods*, to my point of view, is subverted by their own overly intellectualized attempts to find forms that appeal to their utopic impulses, but that are formally *new* as well. Not to deny or in any way diminish whatever pressures they were faced with 20+ years ago, but to read much of their work, to read Silliman, a great deal is demanded from a reader who is not in communication with, but enslaved to, a text that must have meanings supplied for it. Such readerly demands assume a life of luxury. But, if like most people, you've got a job and certain economic demands of survival, there's little incentive to invest one's time with Silliman because the return does not exceed, or even match, the work put into reading something like *Tjanting*. Maybe that's one reason *Langpo* has been influential to younger writers who would have come into contact with it as students, when more time for formal investigations was available. Another attraction is the assumption that anything goes. *Langpo* gives young writers, it gave me, permission to exercise a disregard for subject and things, allowing every generalization imaginable into the poem. But after a certain period, unless you've got a career based on it, *langpo*'s revolutionary first impacts wane dramatically. At least it did for me.

“No ideas but in things,”<sup>1</sup> I think, is still the essential aesthetic statement of our century, at the most basic level. Tender Buttons at least reveals an attentiveness to a world of object and space through an emotional linguistic response to perception. The formal assumptions of many langpods made isolated ideas -- broad generalization -- into the elemental units of their aesthetic projections. Silliman, Bernstein et al go to great length in their essays to explain the significance of this approach. But if they have to justify their practice through another formal medium, their poems cannot be seen to generate sympathetic readings on their own. Maybe novel or intrigued readings. But not readings based on any emotional appeal between two humans engaged with a shared world of potential value. These generalized and cerebral appeals cannot \*communicate\* with the full potential of language, which also contains an emotional velocity, balanced and expedient perceptions and brave but sympathetic appeals to a world of human activity, not conceptual ideals. Thought adds to an active intelligence that stems from the perceptual and communicative capabilities of the poet. Thought is a tool -- not the source -- of understanding.

Finally, the langpods seem to be alienating younger generations of writers with a tyranny of the “new.”<sup>1</sup> Having exiled already a number of older poets and traditions to oblivion they stand in danger of isolating themselves from a future as well, as if poetry only existed for one brief moment late in the 20th century.

I’ll conclude this too-long post with a quote from Keats who was onto this thread long ago. He writes:

It is easier to think what Poetry should be than to write it<and this leads me on to another axiom. That if Poetry comes not as naturally as the Leaves to a tree it had better not come at all...We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us... The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man: It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness in itself<That which is creative must create itself...

---

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[↑ Contents](#)

648. **Mark Wallace**

***"actually new"***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Although I admire Ron Silliman's work greatly, I have to agree with Steve Evans' critique of the implications of Ron's recent Philly Talks piece, although rather than deal with the issue of NEA funding I'd like to take a look at the entirely vague claim on which Ron's supposed critique of writers who have

published first/second books some twenty years after he himself. One of the things I admire about Ron's work is its constant SPECIFICITY--it seems a shame, in this case, that he has to rely on a empty catch phrase such as "actually new" without any elaboration of what he thinks such a term might mean.

I'm finding it hard to imagine what the phrase "actually new" might mean if there were some content to it beyond the general place it occupies in Ron's argument (while at the same time it is meant to carry the whole weight of his dismissal). The "actual new," I take it, might be opposed to the "psedo-new" or the "fake new" or perhaps the "artificial new"? What exactly makes "the new" "actual" is something that Ron never mentions. Nor does he take up the perhaps even larger question of why exactly "the new" itself stands in his writing as such an unquestioned catch phrase for all significant poetry. Even the original creator of this slogan, Pound, also understood that "new" meant creative re-uses and recreations of the past, unless one thinks that all those classical references in his work had never been used before, or that Provencal poets were from the 20th century. Indeed Pound may not have felt he was making creative re-use of the past at all, but rather, was simply getting the poetic tradition CORRECTLY, taking it from the hands of the corrupt academicians of modern capitalist slavery.

Don Byrd's recent comments about how he's bored and has seen it all before are perhaps equally disheartening, although I'm used to it from him. Both Ron and Don have implied, and stated directly in fact, repeatedly the idea that there is nothing "radical" (or some variation thereof) in the work of later writers (indeed Don has gone so far as to refer to my own work as "reactionary," a claim that leaves me somewhat bemused). Then, of course, their definition of radical turns out to be their own practice, or some variation of it that does not violate THEIR unwavering sense of what constitutes "radical." With the assumption in place that one's own work constitutes the "radical," then any other poetry can only be one of two things--derivative of you, or "not radical." A nice double bind there, and I'm tempted to feel a CHEAP one. Indeed it's quite a typical move for the patriarchal authority that Byrd and Silliman ostensibly reject (and usually do--I'd be tempted to say "when it's not their own authority in question," but that would be as unfairly dismissive as they are)--note that, in such a formulation, the word "radical" could be replaced by the word "traditional" and BE THE EXACT SAME ARGUMENT that more aesthetically conservative poets use to guard the boundaries of their own poetics. I wonder whether Ron and Don will consider whether a critical perspective that sees the similarity between their own poetics and the "conservatives" they reject constitutes for them "the radical"? I wonder what it would mean if they did not.

Let me be perfectly clear then: the problem is not that there is no "actually new" poetry. Certainly there is such poetry, just as there is poetry for which the

notion of the "actually new" is itself a question, rather than a certainty. The problem is, instead, that "the new" or "the radical" for both Byrd and Silliman is a tightly defined, unchanging category--that is, their definition of "the radical" or "the new" is traditional in precisely the worst sense. Byrd and Silliman have sometimes therefore chosen to play exactly the role that older patriarchal authorities (of poetry and other activities) have traditionally played in western culture--the dismissal of the new on the grounds that it does not meet the standards of the old. Haven't we seen this move before, from men (I use this word pointedly) supposedly as disparate as Matthew Arnold and Robert Duncan? That Byrd and Silliman use the "radical" as their standard for the old certainly should grant them points for ingenuity, but seems less helpful as perceptive critical commentary for those of us crucially interested in what poetry might do at the present moment. It seems, finally, a great shame, that two such active and much admired writers should feel so ungenerous towards the work of writers younger than they are that their usual critical insight becomes sacrificed for this vague and empty posturing (and in fact both HAVE been quite generous at times). Indeed it reminds me again how grave is the individual disappointment that haunts the world of avant garde poetries, for if one can find no value in the work of others, must it not be because one feels that no one else has found the value in their own work? Byrd and Silliman must, I think, feel BETRAYED by the work of poets who come after them. Whether justified or not (and I think, of course, that it is not), I can find no cause for celebration in such a feeling.

I don't have the time here to provide close readings of some poets investigating "the new," but would be glad to send to anyone who thinks that I CAN'T do it a large number of my own essays and reviews, or equally to point readers in the direction of critical work being done by Steve Evans and many many others.

Mark Wallace

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/-----\
||      ||      GWU:
||      http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~mdw      ||      EPC:
||      http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/wallace      ||

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[↑ Contents](#)

649. **Miekal And**  
***Re: you poets! (yard sales)***  
*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

my greatest bestest find ever at a yard sale was getting Alan Sondheim's first ESP record (1968) for a quarter. Id cite the name but it's one of



those names that has the e thing happening with it. alan if youre listening remind us. I think given the context of the times the record was produced in, it is the one of the progenitors of the abrasive/difficult listening because it can never be reduced to background music.

---

Dreamtime Village

<http://www.net22.com/dreamtime/index.shtml>

QAZINGULAZA: And/Was/Wakeest website:

<http://net22.com/qazingulaza/index.html>

email for DT & And/Was: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

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650. **KENT JOHNSON**

***Jim Hightower***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Listees:

This not exactly "poetics", but everything is connected to everything else. Plus, when you are eventually confronted by a detachment of your local workers' militia, you can say, no, look, I'm not just an aesthete, why I even got Jim Hightower's Chat and Chew on the radio here!

Check out Jim Hightower's web site-- [www.jimhightower.com](http://www.jimhightower.com)

carries his daily, cut-to-the-quick three minute spot, and the whole archive going back to '96 is there too (good teaching materials). Hightower, as most of you probably know, is the former Texas Commissioner of Agriculture (think I got that right) who is now the Left's and sanity's answer to Rush Limbaugh. (JH: "Some people think we need a third party. I think we need a second one.")

There are helpful hints on the site for getting your local radio station to carry his mini-spot, or his two hour "Chat and Chew" call-in show, both of which are carried on over a hundred stations nationwide. Doing so will certainly be an honorable little commando strike against corporate media!

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

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651. **Graham W Foust**

***wanna be***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Joel asked what I wanna be:

Sedated, adored, a lifeguard, just like somebody on TV, and your dog. (That's the Ramones, the Stones Roses, Blotto, Oingo Boingo, and the Stooges for those of you assembling the soundtrack at home.)

But I, too, am Meow now, and dogs and cats don't mix. Except when it rains of course, and it does that plenty in Buffalo.

I'll bring my staplers (all two of 'em).

But seriously Joel, where were you for our 10am publishers meeting at Starfuckers yesterday? I had to decide how to use the \$10,000 Bernstein had diverted from the SUNY-Buffalo day care center funds to Meow Press all by myself! Now I know how you must have felt during the solo years, brother: lonely and rich. By the way, where's the Neiman-Marcus card?

I just want to do what I have to do to keep this a successful ball club, which, to me, means publishing small books by people who've published no books, small or otherwise, and maybe even some really small books by people who've published small, medium, and/or large books if they're up for it. And some ephemera, too, so we'll have secret "in the know" things to talk about at out-of-town gigs. But no matter how small Meow books are, I've noticed that one can always see them if one really tries. The point, I believe. So yeah, there you go.

Now that I've completed my first official week as co-elf, I'd like to issue my first decree/promise to all you poetics fans out there: Meow Press will publish no books by Ted Hughes this year. Thank you and goodnight.

Hi mom,

Graham

p.s. As of Monday, January 19th, 2pm, Poetics at Buffalo (the band, not the list) has officially disbanded. Various solo projects, duo projects, and reunion tours to follow.

p.p.s. Another "thmup" here for Brian Schorn. Thanks, Poetics (the list, not the band), for bringing it off my shelf again.

---

Meow Press

"Guzzling Moet and knocking each other over the head with polo mallets, all in the name of poetry, baby."

[↑ Contents](#)

652. **J. Kuszai**

*vine ripened*

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Dale-

I just read your message to the list, which was interesting and very very provoking, once again. I have a number of thoughts that strike me immediately, and I'll give you a taste of it here as I'm not sure how much I will be able to develop my response before the barrage of replies begins.

While you offer a very interesting reading of the Watten poem, I'm going to have to cite it here, as I have a few questions:

"Now I've been accused in my posts of not being specific enough. Why doesn't the same charge stand for poetry? What history of words does Watten refer to? Is he implying an etymological process? How would that 'eradicate' something (?) in 'him'? Who is 'him'? Of course, there's no answer to these rhetorical questions because we are supposed to know how to read this. This stanza might mean that the history of words coerce human thought processes. Watten's formal challenge is to try to write outside of this 'history of words.' But the lack of concrete examples in the poem, the reliance on broad and non-specific conceptual relations combined through the moralizing tone of this stanza only invite speculation. It does not inspire curiosity because nothing remains but a few broad words that repel, not attract, meanings from this text. This poem addresses progress only in vague conceptual terms, not in a detailed or perceptive language. Watten offers no examples, only an opinion. Stein at least focused on the primacy of things in the emotional appeal of names. Watten's elevated position as Possessor of conceptual rather than experiential knowledge undermines the potentially sympathetic appeal the title of this poem might attract."

I find it odd that you think that Watten's language here "... only invite[s] speculation. It does not inspire curiosity..." How about "inspiring speculation and inviting curiosity" or "speculating curiously" or "curious speculation" or "speculous curiosity" or ... you get the point. Inspiration I guess is relative.

Do you really think that Watten is trying to write "outside" the history of words? That's kind of a silly take on what that stanza says. One of the joys of syntax and punctuation is that they are usually incredibly specific in what they can mean. I'll never forget the frightening moments of REAL ambiguity in some of Vergil's syntax in Aeneid, when whether the whole trip to the underworld may have been a dream, etc...and this craggy old philologist is trying to tell me its one way, but the language on the page looks very much like it could be taken the other way. (It's been some years). Anyhow, Watten does not here seem to be

leaving it open. The leaps that are being taken here seem to be largely your own.

I have found Watten's work to be littered with the experiential, so your claim for him only to be conceptual professor is off the mark. But he's subtle, so you've got to read harder.

Some of what you're asking of the poem: "what history of words" "who is him" etc. seems to take all the fun out of reading. Why read poetry? You want poems to be like essays? I thought it was supposed to be the other way around...I don't see that stanza as argumentative, which your mode has been, and that is the only reason that I asked for something specific to talk about. Who is the "Him" of a Shakespeare sonnet? Isn't that ambiguity (while dated) one of the definitions poetic language? You seem to suggest that poems can only mean one thing, ya ya ya.

You say Watten is moralizing, but I find the quote from Keats to be pretty much the paragon of moralizing. What do you think? And isn't your whole notion about how texts should be closed enough to cause an emotional response between 2 people, based in things, doesn't that strike you as the least bit moralizing?--I'm curious as to what you think of Zukofsky, who skates, it seems, between what you decry and what you applaud. Obviously, there'll be work that you like and work that you don't. Also--I would bet that the jingle "no ideas but in things" would end up pretty much a slogan manufactured by the idea-industry of poetic statement and if you really read Williams you see far more ideas than things. Someone here was doing an annotation of Zukofsky's marginal notes to a ms. version of *The Wedge*, which WCW had asked him to edit, and my guess is that LZ had a big part in that post-production design process known as editing (like Pound's take on *Wasteland*) Also, wouldn't a poetry "devoid" of ideas (full of things) end up where you don't want to be, i.e. with Steinian objects and Silliman's quotidian accumulation? Anyhow, I don't think that is really going anywhere.

These are just quick thoughts. By the way, as a student, I find that I don't have any time for formal innovation whatsoever. So I don't know what you're talking about there. I find that there is all sorts of economic pressure to "give the people what they want" and even my work on Mac Low has revolved mostly around his political and social connections of the 40s and such. Nobody wants to hear another theorization of chance-operations, or whatever you want to call them, as being "like" some kind of anarchist epistemology. It's always "like" never "is" and it's the leap of the simile there that causes all the problems. I think that Mac Low would be among the first to admit that poems in and of themselves aren't the things that are going to save the world. There's plenty of work to be done, if that's your bag.

Also--as someone who used to drag his typewriter to the midnight shift at a gas station, I'd beware of dumbing it down for "working people." Remember, for every intellectual in a warehouse, there's a pot of tomatoes on a rooftop...

jk

[↑ Contents](#)

653. **David Kellogg**

**Re: "actually new"**

Wed 21 Jan 1998

---

All this reference to Ron's "Philly Talks" piece has me feeling left out. Can anybody zap me a copy, since I asked for one directly several weeks ago and received nothing? Thanks in advance.

Cheers,

David

~~~~~  
~~~~~

David Kellogg

Duke University

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FAX ██████████

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[↑ Contents](#)

654. **Tom Mandel**

**yard sales**

Wed 21 Jan 1998

---

Re: David's "There could be yard sales for poetry throughout america"

...Ron, Krishna, and the twins visited us a couple of months ago and I pulled an old box game out of the basement for the kids.

Jesse looked at it: "Hey, we have this same game! But... this is missing a piece, it's broken. Did you buy this game at a yard sale?"

Tom

Tom Mandel

██████████

\*\*\*\*\*

Screen Porch

\* <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 \* vox: ██████████

Fairfax, VA 22031

\* fax: ██████████

\*\*\*\*\*

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

655. **Ben Carrelis**

***a new poet***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

With all the sharp dialogue on the new, the old, and the unknown - in the impossible situation in which we live, this derelict menagerie full of birds-of-paradise and uppity new chicks, all crowding around the tin pan - I'd like to alert everyone to a genuinely new poet, Cris Trapender, of Australia. The only way to do this right, though, is to be a serious investigative scholar: Trapender's work is scattered in the most obscure ephemeridae unknown. I've been studying his output now for 5 years, and would be happy to backchannel bibliographic data. But here's a sample of his new serial work, combining oral histories, traditional forms, and torqued pilferings in a genuinely solid contribution to the "perennial canyon":

from CALENDAR SPIT 11.4

I see the elbows through the cloudy  
terpsichore of your jacket  
and the impossible forays, remember?  
fast food and fasting, faster, fastest...  
- Ben Carrelis

[↑ Contents](#)

656. **DANIEL L. COLLIER**

***Re: Ice Fishing in Wisconson School of Poetry***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Don't know about Wisconsin, but in Vladivostok:

#?) Don't throw anything back. It's a matter of faith: if you stand on the street corner long enough, someone will ask about your frozen darters.

#?) Squint. Drink. Squint.

#?) Despite official warnings, someone always stays out on the ice too late in the season. Usually they get rescued.

#?) It's windy out there.

#?) The river is a highway, except when it's not.

#?) Craggiest-looking fisherman gets his picture in the foreign-language newspaper.

#?) The small fish taste like fresh cucumbers.

#?) You're just fishing; leftover mercury spills & blown-up nuclear submarines are someone else's concern.

#?) Spring thaw will help you dispose of your burdensome worn-out Japanese car.

#?) Forget fishing; there's a ship in the ice that needs you and your bottle.

[↑ Contents](#)

657. **Miekal And**  
***Re: Best New Poet Club***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

actually sylvester, the post office, with no explanation, changed Bern's address from 22 to 50 salmond, tho he's lived in the same place for years. that's not good news (busted femur) for Bern, being in his middle 80s, sometimes hard for those things to mend....he has been making a plea to me to find places for his unpublished works, & we can only do so much, Im hoping that he'll send on his Abraham Lincoln Gillespie work for publication.

gallump

m

[↑ Contents](#)

658. **Gary Sullivan**  
***Re: Some "New" Poets***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Hi, Rachel:

How are you? Loved the Lewis Carroll quote. As to what a "glass book" is:

Literally, glass pages, with text silk-screened on, in white. Don't have the text with me, unfortunately. To give you some idea of the effect of this: Pages can be stacked onto each other--overlay schema so certain words're repeated, given 3-dimensional push upward, toward viewer. At least two events happen this moment: (1) the words repeated lose former "transparency" (their materiality made blatant) and (2) a second "narrative" thread is made visible. ("Transparency" obvious issue: glass is, duh, transparent.) As pages are stacked onto each other, new narrative threads, or trajectories if you prefer, become visible, generating tension, a kind of "gravity" I guess, as former "meaning" of the text on the first glass sheet becomes bent into second, third, fourth & so on "meanings" of new sheets & confluences between sheets. This, by the way, strikes me as an example of "wild form" (just having read the referred-to essay), her book

making manifest, in the reading of it, a sense of causality (George Albon is, I think, writing on causality right now), relationships/-shifts, slowing & speeding up of perceived time--the book's value maybe less social (why, as suggested in "Wild Form," is consideration of form limited to its merely social situation(s)?), more philosophical & "scientific" (bad word choice; I mean, manifestation of consideration of nature of physical existence as warped by perceptive organs & extensions ((glasses, microscopes, the book, language, other filters, overlays)) ) . . .

Anyway, glass being ultimate transparency, to put words down on glass suggests initial overlay: e.g., language as overlay; subsequent overlayings of sheet upon sheet, word upon word secondary overlays. I do wish I had the text, though. The writing's extraordinary, not separate from the form: The piece strikes me as thoroughly successful FORM/CONTENT interweave, or coupling, co-generative, ultimately there as ONE.

Now, for the person who asked why it took (at least) 15 years for Laurie's first full-length collection to arrive; well, who knows? I've sent my own first couple of collections out to all the groovy presses still doing full-length books and most presses don't bother even returning the SASE. Those who do reject. Best rejection letter: "I can't look at new work right." Yes, "sic"--editor forgot to add "now"--but "can't look at new work right" probably closer to the case. The one thing of mine published, a "novella," Dead Man, by Meow Press (Hi, Joel!), kind of a fluke. I met Joel, who I really liked, when he came out to visit Charles Alexander at the MCBA in Minneapolis. I sent him Dead Man to read, not thinking of ever publishing it (er, copyright complications...), & got a call a couple months later saying Meow wanted to add it to its list. Wow! Very generous of Joel to do. A plug for Meow & Joel (from someone w/an admittedly personal investment): He's truly indefatigable, his project thoroughly open, the books utilitarian w/out being ugly, attractive w/out being precious, the work taken en toto as if Meow an antenna picking up a wide range of activity, filtering it through "the press." (See the Poetry Project Newsletter review of the press last issue. ((I think Katie Leder or Lederer wrote it--anyone know who that is?)) )

Wanna respond more to "Wild Form"--maybe later. Thanks for asking about Laurie's glass book, Rachel. Hope you're doing well.

Yours,

Gary Sullivan



[↑ Contents](#)



659. **cris cheek**

**Re: scoured grapes**

Wed 21 Jan 1998

---

Hi Dale, 'Detail and Concept' is a great name for a double act on the tails of Penn and Teller. However, and Joel you made me alguy (i meant to type laugh) out loud a lot. I'd sort of already decided not to post this reply, but in your wake, and very mcu (much) more humbly re:

- > Comes to the history of words.
- > The thought to eradicate
- > In him. The poetry,
- > by
- > Making him think certain ways...

*What history of words does Watten refer to? Is he implying an etymological >process? How would that eradicate something (?) in him? Who is him? Of course, theres no answer to these rhetorical questions because we are supposed to know how to read this.*

It's a poem. There is no way through which anyone is supposed to read it, just as there never was or is with almost any other poem. I can't think of the exceptions, but someone must have a list of them - somewhere.

What I've often admired about Barrett's work, amongst many admirations it generates, is the dark humour discontinuously moving among its surfaces. 'He' frequently disturbs any 'got it' mentality by a 'what am i trying to get and what might that "got it" tell me once it's "In him", i.e. in my bag?' (both in respect of 'myself' and in respect of 'him') in the process, thereby debunking exactly what this little passage you've so perceptively chosen identifies. Following the narrative introduction 'Comes to the history of words', ie there is potential character here (Thus spake Beowulf, his shining blade - tongue in pocket) 'The thought to eradicate / In him. The poetry,' leads directly towards a mud wrestling between presence and absence more fully played at volume in his 'Under Erasure'.

Read it specifically then:

'The [not A] thought to eradicate'

(releases exactly your critique, in that he is decrying THE thought and encouraging specificities stemming from A thought. He is suggesting that such generalities won't do - they are tied to lazy thinking, which either actively predispositions itself towards or else passively condones attitudes of destruction. This is a poem that critiques the very notion of progress as a fixity to be pocketed and owned).

Read that sentence again as 'The thought - to eradicate - In him.' Becomes a critique of competitive (if not downright warring) male tropes, offering a pithy, wry performance 'doubleness' through self-critique at one and the different time.

s p a c e - let the line 'The thought to eradicate' float, there's a whole lot of space following it and more still to come before the next (however habitually one's eyes might negate it - a materiality of page and book as much as of the marks that articulate such sites), even though the indented alignments of the 'internal' lines in each stanza are 'framed' by the top and bottom. even though the bottom line each time visibly discourages closure . . . . (i notice you left one of the dot dot dots off, what did you mean by that?) 'In him. The poetry, by'

This is a gorgeously ludic toying with the persona of 'male poet', 'In him. The poetry' (that THE again). There's a serious point and a ribbing here. And why, whilst we're at it should we presume that Barrett is not also present throughout. I mean, this work is not being assembled by rote. It is motivated. Each word and each unit of sense is motivational. Sometimes that motivation is one thing cancelling out the next, one building constructing on the site of another's demolition. Sometimes there is a dialectical tension mobilised. Often though a teasing interplay between serious construction and playful undermining of the stasis born out glib satisfaction with knowing, or the supposition of knowing 'how to read it'.

I haven't even got to that last line . . .

And btw i really don't read poetry this way at all, just teasing your sense of coming up empty handed on this one. How does:

'How he, reclining on the limp edge of  
wet dawn, divines rhetorically the stem  
of his life which purports a kissing wind,  
baguettes, managerial consistency, and  
he is seen by too many people. It is'

make you feel? It's the opening of O'Hara's 'Hermaphrodite'. (1954?) Or:

'Triangle to Bach  
Is triangle to me - and  
A clown's hat and a lovely hair pie  
(Turn it over in your heads.)

Like I mean you  
Aren't questions, each of you  
Is an answer,  
But you'd gone, all of you afraid'

from Whalen's 'Esprit d'Escalier Rant' (1957)

The 'good' stuff, for me, often unveils such nagging densities. There is no 'how' or no 'know how' the reading of negative capabilities.

love and love  
cris

[↑ Contents](#)

660. **david bromige**  
***you poets! (yard sales)***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Tom Mandel's post encapsulates the trouble with all anecdotal poetry. I can well imagine such a poem (not that Tom makes that claim for it) being read aloud and the way the audience would nod its heads & sigh acquiescence. Shucks, why bother with yard sales at all, Clem? There's a bound to be some-  
thin' wrong with whatever you buy they-r!

(Hey--one way to know you're a redneck is, when somebody knocks on the door and asks if you're having a yard sale).

Well, yard sales might be beneath Tom Mandel, *de gustibus disputandum* (shee-it, this here latin tag's got a piece missin', Blanche! You git it down at that flea-market?!), but I got some GREAT STUFF at the ones I mentioned yesterday. Artie Shaw's "Backbay Shuffle" for one buck! a couple of Nina Simone's for a dollar a piece. All unscratched. The shorter novels of Stendahl for \$3. A sweater I'm wearing as I type this, \$4, an unholley bargain. So don't let Uncle Tom from the nation's capital discourage you, you young uns out here in the U S of A.. Too bad that child's folks don't check the toys out 'fore they takes them home--  
caveat emptor\* they might oughta think. Uncle Dave.

\* preacher says this is what the roman soldiers said when they heard Christ had risen--means "the cave is empty," and by extension "this party's a tile shy of a scrabble game."

[↑ Contents](#)

661. **david bromige**  
***wanna be (kudos for foust)***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

I thought Graham Foust's post today was one of the most delightful I've read on this list. It was not overly burdened with "something to say," therefore it had more chance to say itself superbly. Kudos, Graham! And it was a necessary saying.

I am tempted to emulate, though knowing I'll fall far short. Graham's use of the phrase wanna be reminded me of a question (one of several, including "where does he get that stuff?") stirred up by Dale Smith's recent posts. Usually, a "wannabe" is someone despicable. But a "Langpod wannabe" is surely less despicable than an actual dues-paying Langpod? It's like a langpod is someone with a real small weenie, and a langpod wannabe is someone with an average-size weenie (or even a huge one like GB) who wishes it were shorter, so he could join the club.

So the hierarchy goes    TOM CLARK / ED DORN    (dead heat)

DALE SMITH                    (hanging in there, 3rd)

WANNABE LANGPOD            (running out of the money)

AUTHENTIC LANGPOD        (Pulled up short; shot)

DAVID BROMIGE                (suffered oedipal

castration)

[↑ Contents](#)

662. **d powell**

***Re: The New (& how to help it along)***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Another great example of grassroots funding is Geri DiGiorno's annual Poetry Walk in Petaluma. The Walk is an all-day series of readings, held at various venues around the town of Petaluma. DiGiorno started the walk on a shoestring (ouch, what a terrible turn of phrase) by soliciting contributions from local businesses. The first year, her major funder was Empire Waste Management--that's right, the local garbage company.

She also received small donations from bookstores, music stores, coffee houses, even pet stores. In exchange, her event brings hundreds of poetry listeners into those businesses for the afternoon. I like the event for many reasons. It puts poetry center stage in an otherwise typical mid-sized town. The audience is not just made up of poets but of grocers, pharmacists, waiters, kids, seniors...The selection of poets is balanced between local and nationally-known (and some who are both). The aesthetic range is broad (last year's poets included Kathleen Fraser, Brenda Hillman, Gary Short, Kay Ryan, Jane Hirschfield, Ed Klein-schmidt, Tight magazine editor Ann Erickson playing a soundtext collaboration with Jake Berry, and Amy Trussell who danced her poem. The best part of the event is that the funding comes largely from the private sector, so the private sector feels a sense of collaboration.

=====

===== D A Powell



=====

david bromige wrote:

>(Preamble : The New, not distinguishing between form and content. >Some-  
>where

>Ron Silliman formulated an equation that said that the formal New >and the  
>contentual New can never occupy the same place....Ron, do I have >that  
>right? Is that still a formulation you stand by, and if so, could >you post  
>it?)

>

>I was pleased to hear from Henry that he had aired the yard-sale >notion  
>where it might do some good. Not pleased that it hadn't been acted >on. No,  
>we're not Beverly Hills. A lot of our sales were early in the >morning, to  
>people who live (or augment their living) by buying cheapest and >selling  
>slightly dearer--some were en route to the "official" flea market >that's  
>held every weekend at the south end of town, and we were at the >north end,  
>and a lot of these dealers live north of town, where the housing >is  
>cheaper. I mean, location is everything : one needs to consider >that.

>

>Other notions in case there are listings who want to be free of >the  
>literary establishments in their neighborhoods (with the >chokehold on  
>budgets, etc) :

>make Round Table Pizza your venue. Layne Russell of this list did >just that  
>last sat nite, bringing some 30 of us together for a poetry >reading in a  
>private room at RTP. It cost nothing : RTP is glad of the custom. >Layne  
>booked about 10 days in advance. Fifty or more could have been >fit into  
>that space. Although the room had windows that gave onto the >surrounding  
>restaurant, it was pretty much soundproof (therefore far >preferable to  
>coffee-shops, with their ringing registers and growling >Smoothie-mixers and  
>coffee-grinders). Plenty of parking on site. This room is even >equipped  
>with a large tv screen and vcr capability, so that we can have an >evening  
>of poetry tapes if we want. And beer and wine (well, of a kind) >are  
>available.

>

>Don Byrd's post re-\*pre\*NEA days reminds me that at Berkeley in >the 60s,  
>some of us formed an on-campus club, which gave us access, for a >nominal  
>fee, to lecture halls where we put on poetry readings. We were >allowed to  
>charge an entrance fee, although perhaps it was disguised as a >donation. In  
>those years of rising poetry popularity, we often had 150 or 200 >in the  
>audience; I remember we were able to pay the likes of Robert >Duncan and  
>Robert Creeley and Diane Di Prima and, I think, Ed Dorn, >something like

>\$150 honoraria--surely about \$600 in today's money. We did this >because  
>the Arts & Lectures series brought to campus poets who, in the >words of one  
>of my associates in the enterprise, Ron Loewensohn, were dead but >didn't  
>know enough to fall down (and this despite the input of "The Book >of Beat"  
>Tom Parkinson.)-- Even the most, uh, librul (or even redickul) >among the  
>Tenured have incurred a certain amount of damage during their >ascension,  
>have feuded with writers whom the students would love to hear but >never  
>will (due to these wounds), and the Poetry Club is one way to >by-pass these  
>Great Limping Albert Rosses (as Sherril Jaffe dubbed them). We >paid  
>membership dues--maybe \$2 per term? Say \$8 in today's money. This >also  
was

>an incentive to attend all the readings (to get your money's >worth). I  
>think we got in for \$1, whereas non-members got in for \$1.50.

>

>These days, a likely turnout would be considerably smaller. But >still, 40  
>people paying an average of \$5 each = \$200, and that, less >venue-rent, and  
>expense of a mailer, would probably net \$120.

>

>These are some ways of working with The System to take the power >back.  
David

>

>-----

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>Subject: The New (& how to help it along)  
>To: [REDACTED]  
>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

663. **louis stroffolino**

**Re: Missing "e"s**

Wed 21 Jan 1998

And james wright's son and jay wright... well, i would confuse robert coover and raymond carver or is it chandler and raymond ("whose heaven is like ironsides, whose tears fall like the rain") burr or aaron burr or the irish parish or parrot (erin go braaaaaack")-----cs

On Tue, 20 Jan 1998, Gwyn McVay wrote:

*And James Wright,  
Charles Wright, C D Wright and C K Williams were all the same person<<<*

*I'm guessing Ms. Wright would probably be the most alarmed by the  
conflation.*

*People I know have had terrible times with Ted Berrigan/John Berryman, and  
then the two peace-activist brothers as well--and while in line to see  
/Shadowlands/ not long after it came out, I overheard:*

*"Which children's author is this movie about?"  
"A.A. Milne. You remember, he wrote /The Hobbit/."*

*& a belated mondegreen--heard X's song containing the refrain/title?  
"shoot out the lights" as "chew up the blinds," like overacting in front  
of suburban scenery--*

*Gwyn*

[↑ Contents](#)

664. **d powell**

***Re: Some "New" Poets***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Gary,

Katie Lederer is a student at Iowa. She's doing a magazine called Explosive, that combines a lot of great poets, both known and unknown. I don't have my copy handy, so I can't give you a list, but you should get a copy from her c/o Iowa Writers' Workshop, U of I, Iowa City, IA 52242. I think it's five bucks, and it's packed with poems.

Doug

```
=====
=====
D A Powell      [REDACTED]
=====
=====
```

Gary Sullivan wrote:

```
>
>Project Newsletter review of the press last issue. ((I think >Katie Leder or
>Lederer wrote it--anyone know who that is?)) )
>
>
>Yours,
>
>Gary Sullivan
>[REDACTED]
>
>-----
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>From: Gary Sullivan <[REDACTED]>  
>Subject: Re: Some "New" Poets  
>To: [REDACTED]  
>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

665. **Henry Gould**

***Re: Spenser, Jarrot, Hightower***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

On Thu, 13 Oct 2039 07:58:29 -0400 Annie Finch said:

>  
>Henry: your anecdote about the 365-line piece reminded me of Spenser's  
>tactics as delineated by Kent Hiatt in the amazing SPENSER AND THE  
NUMBERS  
>OF TIME. That's moving towards what I like to call postmodernism.

Annie, Hiatt's books have been very important for me. They led to a lot of other sources on number symmetries (& a-symmetries) in composition. It can lead to lax writing if you're overdependent on it. But I liked Dale's Keats quotes about the poem having a life of its own that you have to allow for. When the numerical symmetry & the other formal elements come together on their own, then you feel like you're really inside the inner architecture of the poem - in a

building. Especially if you haven't even been counting, until you're finished!  
That's what happened when I woke up in the morning & found I had 13 more  
lines to add. - Henry G.

p.s. while I'm the topic - check out the "center array" symmetry in "Drydock,  
Bilbao" (<http://www.unf.edu/mudlark>) Poster #10).

[↑ Contents](#)

666. **Dale M Smith**

**Re: scoured grapes**

Wed 21 Jan 1998

---

Oh. So there *\*is\** a right way to read Watten.

To: [REDACTED]

Hi Dale, 'Detail and Concept' is a great name for a double act on the tails  
of Penn and Teller. However, and Joel you made me alguy (i meant to type  
laugh) out loud a lot. I'd sort of already decided not to post this reply,  
but in your wake, and very mcu (much) more humbly re:

- > Comes to the history of words.
- > The thought to eradicate
- > In him. The poetry,
- > by
- > Making him think certain ways...

*What history of words does Watten refer to? Is he implying an  
etymological >process? How would that eradicate something (?) in him? Who  
is him? Of  
course, theres no answer to these rhetorical questions because we are  
supposed to know how to read this.*

It's a poem. There is no way through which anyone is supposed to read it, just  
as there never was or is with almost any other poem. I can't think of the excep-  
tions, but someone must have a list of them - somewhere.

What I've often admired about Barrett's work, amongst many admirations it  
generates, is the dark humour discontinuously moving among its surfaces. 'He'  
frequently disturbs any 'got it' mentality by a 'what am i trying to get and what  
might that "got it" tell me once it's "In him", i.e. in my bag?' (both in respect of  
'myself' and in respect of 'him') in the process, thereby debunking exactly what  
this little passage you've so perceptively chosen identifies. Following the narra-  
tive introduction 'Comes to the history of words', ie there is potential character  
here (Thus spake Beowulf, his shining blade - tongue in pocket) 'The thought  
to eradicate / In him. The poetry,' leads directly towards a mud wrestling

between presence and absence more fully played at volume in his 'Under Erasure'.

Read it specifically then:

'The [not A] thought to eradicate'

(releases exactly your critique, in that he is decrying THE thought and encouraging specificities stemming from A thought. He is suggesting that such generalities won't do - they are tied to lazy thinking, which either actively predispositions itself towards or else passively condones attitudes of destruction. This is a poem that critiques the very notion of progress as a fixity to be pocketed and owned).

Read that sentence again as 'The thought - to eradicate - In him.' Becomes a critique of competitive (if not downright warring) male tropes, offering a pithy, wry performance 'doubleness' through self-critique at one and the different time.

s p a c e - let the line 'The thought to eradicate' float, there's a whole lot of space following it and more still to come before the next (however habitually one's eyes might negate it - a materiality of page and book as much as of the marks that articulate such sites), even though the indented alignments of the 'internal' lines in each stanza are 'framed' by the top and bottom. even though the bottom line each time visibly discourages closure . . . . (i notice you left one of the dot dot dots off, what did you mean by that?) 'In him. The poetry, by'

This is a gorgeously ludic toying with the persona of 'male poet', 'In him. The poetry' (that THE again). There's a serious point and a ribbing here. And why, whilst we're at it should we presume that Barrett is not also present throughout. I mean, this work is not being assembled by rote. It is motivated. Each word and each unit of sense is motivational. Sometimes that motivation is one thing cancelling out the next, one building constructing on the site of another's demolition. Sometimes there is a dialectical tension mobilised. Often though a teasing interplay between serious construction and playful undermining of the stasis born out glib satisfaction with knowing, or the supposition of knowing 'how to read it'.

I haven't even got to that last line . . .

And btw i really don't read poetry this way at all, just teasing your sense of coming up empty handed on this one. How does:

'How he, reclining on the limp edge of  
wet dawn, divines rhetorically the stem  
of his life which purports a kissing wind,

baguettes, managerial consistency, and  
he is seen by too many people. It is'

make you feel? It's the opening of O'Hara's 'Hermaphrodite'. (1954?) Or:

'Triangle to Bach  
Is triangle to me - and  
A clown's hat and a lovely hair pie  
(Turn it over in your heads.)

Like I mean you  
Aren't questions, each of you  
Is an answer,  
But you'd gone, all of you afraid'

from Whalen's 'Esprit d'Escalier Rant' (1957)

The 'good' stuff, for me, often unveils such nagging densities. There is no 'how'  
or no 'know how' the reading of negative capabilities.

love and love  
cris

[↑ Contents](#)

667. **Jordan Davis**  
***Who Katy Lederer is***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

A tip of the pin to Lisa Jarnot for including in a handsome number of smart young poet-critics (jeepers, more contemporaries) during her tenure at the PoProjNwsltr. This month's "find" is got to be Loren Goodman, whose review of Kristin Prevallet's Ernstwerk is got to be the funniest thing in poetry land since Exile folded up its little hat. Katy's a poet. She's finishing up her umfah at iowuh. There are gamblers in her family, she used to be in San Francisco, she edits the terrific and well-loved poetry mAgazine called Explosive. Now to switch back to the Newsletter, it is vewy vewy important that you read Lisa's interview with Bernadette Mayer, which if there is any hope for you will set you straight! Finally a poetry interview in which the poets talk like people! About things!

Dale, is it possible that the part of the Stein influence on contemporaneity that bugs you most is the apparent aimlessness? affectlessness? If you dip in to Stein in the middle she can seem aimless and affectless, but this is because she is going very very slowly. Or quickly, same thing. That steindip bugs me when I get it on my likmstik. But no kinds of love are better than others. Which reminds me, don't you wish Bob Dylan was as smart as Lou Reed? Bob doesn't catch up

to Lou until the early 80s, I think, around "Tight Connection to my Heart", but that's only because Lou'd been asleep for about a decade.

Candygram for Mongo,  
Jordan

[↑ Contents](#)

668. **Don Cheney**

***Re: you poets! (yard sales)***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

david,

i just had a garage sale last weekend with a couple of friends. we didn't make a whole lot, probably \$20 after buying lunch for everybody. kinda disappointing as i was hoping the money raised could help offset my son's soccer club fees (and said soccer team is having a garage sale later this month to help do the same thing). just establishing my credentials to say i thought that, if anything, tom's post was pro-garage sale. you DO have to look out when buying things at garage sales that are made up of pieces that are important to the whole (ie puzzles and games). and i thought that this reflected a garage-sale lover's savvy on the part of jesse ("savvy" looks like "sawvy" on my screen).

you say savvy, i say sawvy.

don

*Tom Mandel's post encapsulates the trouble with all anecdotal poetry. I can well imagine such a poem (not that Tom makes that claim for it) being read aloud and the way the audience would nod its heads & sigh acquiescence. Shucks, why bother with yard sales at all, Clem? There's a bound to be somethin' wrong with whatever you buy they-r!*

*(Hey--one way to know you're a redneck is, when somebody knocks on the door and asks if you're having a yard sale).*

*Well, yard sales might be beneath Tom Mandel, de gustibus disputandum (shee-it, this here latin tag's got a piece missin', Blanche! You git it down at that flea-market?!), but I got some GREAT STUFF at the ones I mentioned yesterday. Artie Shaw's "Backbay Shuffle" for one buck! a couple of Nina Simone's for a dollar a piece. All unscratched. The shorter novels of Stendahl for \$3. A sweater I'm wearing as I type this, \$4, an unholey bargain. So don't let Uncle Tom from the nation's capital discourage you, you young uns out here in the U S of A.. Too bad that child's folks don't check the toys out 'fore they takes them home--caveat emptor\* they might oughta think. Uncle Dave.*

*\* preacher says this is what the roman soldiers said when they heard Christ had risen--means "the cave is empty," and by extension "this party's a tile shy of a scrabble game."*

[↑ Contents](#)

669. **syvester pollet**  
**Re: Best New Poet Club**  
*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Miekal--it's a good time to think well of Bern, as he busted his butt (well, femur) and is mending in the hospital. Not the "best/news," but I thought you'd want it. I don't have his hospital address, but he's probably getting his mail: Bern Porter, Institute of Advanced Thinking, 22 Salmond St., Belfast, Maine (ME) 04915. And thanks, though my beard is white, not gray. Sylvester "Poetry is news that stays sewn."

At 12:26 PM +0000 1/21/98, Miekal And wrote:

>I will try my best to think of each & everyone of you as the best new  
>poet, especially those gray beards out there & especialiest the bestest  
>newest poet Bern Porter. Our sole mission is to recuperate the words  
>"best" & "new" in a way that invites participation rather than the  
>>window-shopping critiques that seem to be in wholesale fashion on the  
>poetics list.

>

>Miekal And

>

>best new html geezerwrecker in the hypermedia hippocket

[↑ Contents](#)

670. **Dale M Smith**  
**wanna be (kudos for foust)**  
*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Duh... Broom? You burden the list with \*nothing\* to say.

To: [REDACTED]

I thought Graham Foust's post today was one of the most delightful I've read on this list. It was not overly burdened with "something to say," therefore it had more chance to say itself superbly. Kudos, Graham! And it was a necessary saying.

I am tempted to emulate, though knowing I'll fall far short. Graham's use of the phrase wanna be reminded me of a question (one of several, including "where

does he get that stuff?") stirred up by Dale Smith's recent posts. Usually, a "wannabe" is someone despicable. But a "Langpod wannabe" is surely less despicable than an actual dues-paying Langpod? It's like a langpod is someone with a real small weenie, and a langpod wannabe is someone with an average-size weenie (or even a huge one like GB) who wishes it were shorter, so he could join the club.

So the hierarchy goes TOM CLARK / ED DORN (dead heat)

DALE SMITH (hanging in there, 3rd)

WANNABE LANGPOD (running out of the money)

AUTHENTIC LANGPOD (Pulled up short; shot)

DAVID BROMIGE (suffered oedipal  
castration)

[↑ Contents](#)

671. **bertha**  
**Catskill poets**

Wed 21 Jan 1998

---

Oh, Pierre -- how could you, vis-a-vis Catskill poets -- how could you forget the real Catskills -- Sullivan, Ulster, Schoharie, Delaware County -- we're here, and it's not just a geographical "here" -- we're active. We have Word Thursdays, our reading series and home for poets since 1992, we have Bright hill Press and Out of the Catskills and Just Beyond, the 380 pp anthology in which your poems appeared, along with those of John Montague and Donald Petersen, and Naton Leslie and Jordan Smith and Carol and dick Frost and Ruth Stone, for God's sake -- we're having a great time out here in these here mountains, and it ain't Hudson, or on the Hudson. It's by the Delaware, and the Schoharie, the Susquehanna, etc. etc. and beautiful mountains, etc. and there are many of us. Did you forget?

Bertha Rogers  
Editor in Chief  
Bright Hill Press

[↑ Contents](#)

672. **Gary Sullivan**  
**Re: Who Katy Lederer is**

Wed 21 Jan 1998

---

Thank you Doug & Jordan for Lederer info--I'll definitely check out her mag (& hopefully spell her name right from now on). Thanks, also, Jordan, for the nice

comment about Exile--yes, I'll check out Goodman's review, too--but, the Exile's not dead, just waiting for me to get a more-or-less permanent residence. Didn't I send you the "Corbett" issue? Lemme know; I'll send it gratis (same goes for anyone else interested). Working now on the "Crank" issue: featuring Olson's LETTER TO FIELD AND STREAM, Kostelanetz's THEY STOLE ALL MY IDEAS AND GAVE ME NO CREDIT, & a panel featuring Maya Deren, Ed Dahlberg, Laura Riding Jackson, etc., etc.

Now, Jordan, I LOVE Bernadette (see my cartoon homage, this issue of Rain Taxi), but (putting on my Crank Hat), what is this "talk like people! about things!"? Last night, my friend Fatimah called her family in Nigeria, spoke with them for a half hour in Howsa. Nigeria's a country made up of some 200 tribes, each with its own language. So, not only could I not understand a word she said, but neither would many in her native country--unless they're bilingual. She talked with them about "things," sure, but also about love, troubles she was having navigating the U.S. arts-funding bureaucracy, the exchange rate, the fact that the U.S. won't let her fly direct to Nigeria (she has to fly to France, first--"we" are apparently pissed at the Nigerian government right now). Again: I couldn't understand a word Fatimah said & I bet few regular readers of the Poetry Project Newsletter could've either. That mean she's not "people"? Was it elitist for her not to speak in English so's I could've understood? Is love a thing? The exchange rate? Methinks you maybe confuse "things" with "that-which-I-understand." Perhaps? Well, I need to save my crankiness for the next Exile. Tell you what: I'll read the new PPNewsletter cover to cover if you promise me you'll check out George Steiner's After Babylon.

Ciao for niao,

Gary Sullivan



[↑ Contents](#)

673. **david bromige**

***dale smith reading Langpo--forwarded, because misaddressed originally. There is also a flaw in the address of my piece, switching from Dale Smith as 3rd to DS as 2nd person. Please excuse.***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

To:poetics@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu  
From: [REDACTED] (david bromige)  
Subject:dale smith reading Langpo

*As I hoped it might, Dale Smith's attempt to come to grips with several specific texts reveals the gulf between him and myself, one that he had*



*felt but will now become better able to describe, thereby defusing his panic and rendering him a more likeable human being. And there could be one other, equally valuable, result; but more of that, later.*

*I can't comment on all of his letter today, it is indeed a rich text, but let's see how far we can get before lunch . . .*

*"We hate poetry that has a palpable design on us [Keats]", quoted with approbation by Smith; "The work remains with the reader alone to understand," said with disapprobation, of Silliman.*

*Yet surely these are two ways of saying the one thing? If I am not "a reader alone" with a poem, it must be because the poet is whopping me over the head with some "palpable design".*

*Part of the richness of Smith's text, are its many contradictions. Here's another : speaking of the essays of the Langpos, he writes, "But if they have to justify their practice through another formal medium, their poems cannot be seen to generate sympathetic readings on their own." Well, what was Smith doing, reading Keats's prose justifications for his poetic practice?*

*The idea that an essay or even several essays on one's poetics proves that one's poetry is fatally flawed is not easy to support. There goes Creeley--there goes Olson--there goes Pound--Don't flush yet, there are lots of others . . .*

*"Unexamined assumptions," that was a phrase that kept popping into my head as I read Smith. Delivered, often, with the weight of Gospel. Perhaps, in fact, these unwarranted assumptions \_were\_ received ideas, for him. Perhaps they are culled from the teachings of Tom Clark. They have that familiar ring in my ear.*

*Item, that a poem should have a "crescendo." \_Crescendo\_, a term taken from music, where it implies swelling, an increase in loudness, involves us in the history of words. Crescendi were not always felt appropriate to musical compositions. In part, they signal the end of the music and become a social sign, to let the audience know the show is about over. The final lines of poems appear, often, to have this sole function, especially useful at readings. A poetics that abjures interruptions for politeness is not likely to court the crescendo, which in any case raises certain other objections at this point in the history of esthetics. It implies a faith in linearity which a poet today may be unable to share. For such a poet, to write a crescendo would be an act of bad faith.*

*"Thought is a tool--not the source--of understanding." (The context shows that Smith holds "understanding" to be a goal of a poem). I'd like to ask*

*: If not thought, then what other function leads to understanding? And what \_is\_ "understanding"? We can show another has understood the use of a tool, because he can now hit the nail on the head with the hammer. But in matters poetic, understanding is much less susceptible of proof.*

*And what if understanding were \_not\_ the goal of the poem? "At the end of a Pinter play, a member of the audience has 'understood' when he has given up expecting an explanation" [Hubert & Patricia Dreytfluss, Intro. to Merleau-Ponty's *Sense and Non-Sense*]. In other words, he has learned what questions \_not\_ to ask of a Pinter play. I think that much of the trouble you are having with Langpo is that you haven't learned what questions \_not\_ to put to it. And this is a given, because one cannot learn about how to question a text when starting from a "Gripe" with it. You need to assume that the text is as smart (at least) as you are; you need to lay aside any xenophobia. You need to make yourself open, vulnerable. Don't think of thought as a tool. Or rather, ask yourself, what kind of a tool? Is it today? A wrench? A hammer? A screwdriver? A steamroller? A movie camera? Thought is much more a strobe or universe, an environment, a catastrophe, than a tool, in my experience. A poem might register the dismay of thought, the decay of a thought, a remarkable absence of thought. Ask the poem, not what they told you you should demand of it.*

*Don't ask it to deliver a crescendo then fault it when it doesn't. Don't ask it to emulate Imagism espec. as practiced earlier in his oeuvre by WCW, then blame it when it fails to deliver. Attempt to study it without prejudice.*

*Of course this is impossible. This is what Watten says when he writes, "comes to the history of words." Because words do have a history (called a dictionary, called experience), they will always prejudice thought. But to what extent, depends upon how hard one struggles. I disagree btw that Watten takes us "outside the poem" when he writes that line. He is naming what immediately confronts him--or any one of us--when he sits to write. Thought is forming, but all the names for it are pre-emptive. This procedure (of Watten) strikes me as \_more\_ immediate than Imagism, the poet intercepts the problem even before it can be illustrated with 'concrete' word or phrase.*

*I concur with your summary, "This stanza might mean that the history of words coerce [sic] human thought processes." With such a good start, I'm sure you will find this poem a packed package as you keep on (un)packing it.*

*I think a poet might \_want\_ to use words that 'repel' meaning rather than 'attract' it. That liberate us from the habitual meanings, clear a space, allow somethinhg fresher to constellate (the mind abhors a vacuum).*

*You are off to a good start with the Perelman, too, a working concept to read with, "each line...one could, arguably, see as a mimetic response to the accumulative pressures of urban life." It is when you write "But the idea is expressed soon enough and several stanzas could have been cut to spare the reader without losing the intended impulse of poetic expression" that I disagree, and find hidden assumptions undoing what is there. You know the story about Mallarme and Degas? Degas wants to write poetry, he tells Mallarme. Next time they meet, Mallarme asks how this project is going. "Miserably," replies Degas, "I have all these ideas, but I can't get started." "My dear Degas," the poet replies, "Poems are made with words, not ideas."*

*I don't think a poem exists to convey an idea. Ideas can be deduced from a poem, but foremost is the play of the words, their other a/symmetries; I don't think a poem is necessarily coterminous with its idea. Same for thematic unity. These are historical givens, so they can become historical subtractions, too.*

*On another matter, it's hard to take your recurring complaints about the leisure classes v. us working stiffs. I've been both but I always read and wrote. I mean, to quote the Eagles, "Get over it." If we all had leisure (like in the 60s we knew was going to soon be the case, ha ha, thank you Herbert Marcuse), I suppose there might be a larger audience for writing that, as Langpo, is generous enough to make big demands of a reader. To be a challenge, not a sop for thought. But the notion of cheapening mind to give speed readers short thrills is surely abhorrent to you as well as to me. And I may be unfair in my paraphrase. But you do sound to be tending in that direction. Can you hear that?*

*Many of the finest artists have been persons of independent means. Isn't it amazing that they were able to remember they belonged to humanity nonetheless?*

*Actually, "independent means" allow you to feel the universal conditions you constitute/are up against, of being alive with foreknowledge of your death, whereas slogging away at a job one can let the slog buffer one against such knowledge.*

*I am glad that Joel Kutzsai urged you to this endeavor, Dale, and glad you took him up on the challenge. We are always changed by what we engage with. In what we intensely dislike, is hidden something that is like us--hence the intensity.*

*David*

[↑ Contents](#)

674. **Jordan Davis**  
***Meow (carrying on in public)***  
*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Gary --

Things: monogamy, marriage, the social and poetry (don't all say "put on your whites we're going to the social" at once), autobiography, neurology, xanax, dreams. Mary Mothersill gave a talk entitled "What is a thing?" That was a funny poster to see on a mailbox.

I wasn't questioning your loyalty, Gary -- don't got the power base to do that. I was hoping to bait someone into splitting hairs with my blurbage, and I'm pleased to see it's someone who at least isn't affectless.

Go team --

Jordn

PS FJB yes Belle and Sebastian's good but there were better things things year in both music and poetry -- even The Bible!'s first was better, actually and that was crikey 10 yrs ago -- and look what happened to them, or Morissey for that matter or Lloyd Cole or ...

[↑ Contents](#)

675. **KENT JOHNSON**  
***Hurrahs all around***  
*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Even though I don't have exactly the same take as he, Hurrah for Dale, for speaking out and provoking a very interesting exchange.

And also Hurrah for those who film the strangers fornicating in bed, and then pull back to show the cameras filming the strangers fornicating in bed.

Hurrah for those who show the camera in the mirror filming the cameras filming the strangers fornicating in bed.

Hurrah for the two facing mirrors in which the young post-Language poet with the conference name tag is reproduced forever and ever.

Hurrah for infinity and name tags, for there would be no poetry without them.

Hurrah for Dale again, even though (and I do want to make sure everyone understands this lest I become seen on this list in a poor light!) I don't have exactly the same take.

Hurrah for the Anxiety of Influence in 1998. Now Ron Silliman and Don Byrd can start writing poetic dramas about cathedrals or mandalas.

Hurrah for the Catskill School of Poetry, which apparently exists outside my own mind.

Hurrah for Paris, not as original as La Paz, but better than Providence.

Hurrah for this list, which shows minds in control of their language but not of genre.

Hurrah for that last point. To elaborate: The complete archives of this list will eventually be seen as the great product of Language poetry--a monstrously epic, heteroglossic collage that shows minds in control of their language but (paradox) in blissful ignorance of the cameras filming them, or of the screen upon which their moaning and writhing figures were simultaneously projected.

Hurrah for me who could have spent an extra 20 minutes making that last Hurrah somewhat smarter by elegantly inserting an admission of my own complicity but didn't.

Hurrah for that long-titled tour de force from David Bromige to Dale, full of typical brilliance and faultless sentences, couched and padded in teacherly patience, dripping with anger and violence.

Hurrah for George Bowering's long penis, a penis, apparently, long as a horse's.

Hurrah for David Bromige, who told the list he has an unexceptional penis, and also that he had once been "bi" but no longer, no sirree.

Hurrah for Poems for the Millenium, no question the greatest anthology ever. I wish Yasusada hadn't been taken out at the last minute, but I'll get over it.

Hurrah for Alan Ginsberg.

Hurrah for Alan Sondheim. How possible no one has mentioned him in all this anxiety about the "new"?

Hurrah.

Hurrah.

Hurrah for visual/experimental poets who have goat-farms, and I really mean that.

Hurrah for those who instead of writing a post about the "new" called their radio station to get Jim Hightower on the air.

Hurrah for former members of the Communist Party USA who haven't killed themselves.

Hurrah.

Hurrah for plays whose message is that there is no message. Now we can spend all day in front of our screens, trying to bite each others nipples off and confronting death.

Hurrah.

(hip hip) Hurrah.

[↑ Contents](#)

676. **k. lederer**

***Re: Who Katy Lederer is***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

I'm Katy Lederer! I just joined the list yesterday--

I do edit Explosive Magazine, which features work by wonderful young writers (and usually one or two older writers). It comes out three times a year. The covers are each hand-printed, and each poet is allotted an ample number of pages in which to show off their talents...

If you're looking for a magazine that features a broad range of new poetries and poetics, feel free to send me five bucks at 420 East Davenport Street #2, Iowa City Iowa, 52245.

The fourth issue is going to be out next week and will be featuring lots of great work by: Prageeta Sharma, Rod Smith, Lisa Lubasch, Eleni Sikelianos, Darin De Stefano, Mark Salerno, Leslie Scalapino, Gillian Kiley, Michael Basinski, Travis Ortiz, and Dave Morice.

Past issues have included Lyn Hejinian, Bill Luoma, Ishmael Klein, Greg Fuchs, and many many others...

Yours,  
Katy Lederer

[↑ Contents](#)

677. **Pam Brown**

***THE newest***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Dear Poetics Listees,

At the Calendar Spit "Luncheon with New Poets" last week at Porpoise Point, Hawks Nest in New South Wales, one of the newest younger poets, Chris Trapender, revealed his admiration for his influential cousin, the late Ern Malley to a rapt & responsive audience.

All the best from downunda (I s'pose)

Pam

[↑ Contents](#)

678. **Ben Carrelis**

**Re: *THE newest***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

On Thu, 22 Jan 1998 10:55:56 +1000 Pam Brown said:

>Dear Poetics Listees,

>At the Calendar Spit "Luncheon with New Poets" last week at Porpoise Point,

>Hawks Nest in New South Wales, one of the newest younger poets, Chris

>Trapender, revealed his admiration for his influential cousin, the late Ern

>Malley to a rapt & responsive audience.

>All the best from downunda (I s'pose)

>Pam

God, I wish I could have been there. Not only to enjoy the poetic poipoises, and another GREAT reading by Cris (she hates that H, for some reason - probably connects it with somebody on the list) - but we could have cleared up a lot of these problems about who's important in poetry these days - Cris has that knack of shelling nuts without cracking them - did she learn that in the bush? - Ben Carrelis

[↑ Contents](#)

679. **Henry Gould**

***generation underwear***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Just a quick thought on the language poetry, generational whango that's generated so much "lighgt" hereabouts. Ron & Don miss the energy of the early days. Steve thinks it has to do with material conditions, including publishing. Everybody almost thinks there are more great poets out there now than anybody realizes fully.

Is it possible the key word for these disparate viewpoints is... dare I say it... the political climate. The late 60s possessed a highly intense political climate of war/repression/chaotic freedom/anarchism, a kind of free-form politics on the literary level (OK I'm simplifying! Gimme some slack!!) By the 90s, everybody's OVEReducated about politics; politics is all there is; yet there's no simmering energy; there's a sense of waiting, a void, a boredom, a cynicism, a blandness, a sense of lack of direction. (OK I'm simplifying!) Steve also spoke to this atmosphere in his "Literary Change" ILS essay.

Now politics is really at the heart of poetry. But if the language of politics has led on the one hand to cliché and on the other to a stymied sense of alienation - a Balkanization - one can see that creating a political poetry would be a VERY



DIFFICULT thing to do. Especially since we have a sort of lax oppositional tradition - from Ginsberg down & up in all directions - which is at once ignorant, arrogant, sentimental, and vulgar about the moral/historical actualities of politics - the tremendous terror & grief that can result from unwise, inhumane & callous political decisions. & how evil can come out of good & vice versa... & what it takes to be an ombudsman...

however it is these very human complexities which afford the possibility of a poetry that might stand with the achievements of the past on a human scale.

Now politics is one of those favorite horror topics on this list that lets everybody expatiate at great length and gas on & on & get away from the literary issues & actual works out there. So I will suggest that we not do that. Let's talk about specific poets & what they've done.

I'm sorry I can't talk about anybody more recent than Auden (I AM 94, you know) . Auden is a good example of a slippery figure who can be read as left or right, political or apolitical, depending on your period. But one way to get around that is to see how he uses an accessible language to turn strictly poetic means to political subjects & VICE VERSA. & that part of his accessibility, for me, is his RECEPTIVITY to past poetries, his ability to make them new & relevant, if you will; his sense of play & fun which OPENS UP a poem aesthetically and morally.

Now if we have an exciting poetic scene which is hermetically sealed off from the general public & mass publishing, this is a very odd situation - & rather than bemoaning the fact or vaunting "alternatives" of various kinds, some politically minded poets will see how they can turn it to advantage. Probably, I'm sad to say, a lot of clever socialist types who have no sense of patriotism or national destiny. Then of course we can wait for the next guru, blabmeister, culture fig-newton, what have you, to Rod McKuen us all to another circle of Dantean Boredom... - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

680. **Henry Gould**  
***very quick 2nd thought***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

To crack the nutshell without being crummy, to paraphrase the brilliant Ben Carrelis - what I mean is, maybe the reason Ron & Don can't see much happening in the current scene is that the attack they were part of in the 70s used techniques which because of the very different political climate are inappropriate at the moment - so even though they see their own epigones traipsing along in the new sentence & the new split pea paragraph & the objectivist art item like ever so well they learned from their elders, their elders can see THEIR



OWN TECHNIQUES no longer apply. The weather has changed; the poetry can't read the weather yet. Get out yo antennae, boy-os & gills! - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

681. **R. Gancie**

***sex sex sex gross and levitt's sokalled reasoned discourse***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Since Katha pollitt is a fellow poet, I'm certain that you all read her piece, I'm O.K., You're P.C. in the January 26th, 1998 Nation. According to Pollitt, Paul Forman, a curator of Modern Physics at the Smithsonian here in Washington, wrote "an elegant, erudite and withering review in Science" of "The Flight from Science and Reason," an anthology of essays delivered at Paul Gross and Norman Levitt's Conference on Accepted Science held in New York. Forman had the temerity to point at that the conference had been bankrolled by the wealthy, reactionary and ubiquitous Olin and Bradley Foundations and that the speakers were from the high priced academic hooker list of the National Association of Scholars and therefore its claims to be nonpoliticized had all the efficacy of a Philadelphia bankroll. Levitt and others orchestrated a letter and phone call campaign, a damn sight nastier than this E-mail, to Science magazine. As a result Katharine Livingston, an editor who had worked for Science for 33 years was de facto forced to take early retirement. That's tough for Livingston but after all to paraphrase Lenny Bruce in Father Flotsky's Triumph; "You [she] knew what the gig was when you [she] took it." What I tried to point out in earlier E-Mails is that these here scientists get their bone from of the Military Industrial complex (Olin=ammuntion; "The bullets?---Look in back of my brown slacks."-for real Bruce fans only) and worse. Now Paul Forman and Katha Pollitt have also stated the obvious. Actually, I think their paranoid. But let's not be too quick to negatively diagnose Pollitt; she does write some thoroughly mawkish poetry; that should appeal! P.S. Pollitt can be inconsistent. I'd like to draw attention to one instance. She states that Forman is well equipped to point up the obvious political bias in the Gross-Levitt collection because he has "formidable credentials in the field" e.g. Physics. But physics ain't got shit to do with it. Any chump can see through the lying, stooging gun-for-hire hustle in the Gross/Levitt project. Forman can, Fish can, I can; Christ, I'd wager even Henry Gould can!

[↑ Contents](#)

682. **robert drake**

**Re: jam (packed)... headcount=200+ (fwd)**

Wed 21 Jan 1998

---

"there has been no moment nor movement that has crystallized in anything like the same way poetry did in the early 1970s..."

----- Forwarded message -----

Date: Wed, 21 Jan 1998 15:38:54 -0500 (EST)

From: [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

Subject: jam (packed)... headcount=200+

dear poets, friends, strangers, etc.

hundreds of performance poets from all over north america  
will gather in las vegas for the world's first "poetry jam" from  
monday, march 2nd through thursday, march 5th, 1998. <-- look! the dates!

"jam" will be a 4-night explosion of performance poetry involving:

- \* 3 shows/night -- each poet performs in front of all the others,
- \* a video-shoot -- we'll be filming all of these shows, and
- \* a party -- the natural result when performance poets get together.

we're still nailing down the final details with the hotel,  
but we feel confident that the dates will not change.

the response to jam has simply been overwhelming.  
already, 200+ poets have signed up saying they plan to come.

i've included the list so you can see for yourself it's quite impressive.

i've changed the original plans in order to accomodate the influx.  
we've added a fourth night to what was originally a 3-night event,  
and we'll now be doing 3 shows per night, not the 2 shows planned.  
this doubles the total number of shows we'll do, up from 6 to 12.

still, even with these changes,  
i can only accomodate another 100 poets.

an important aspect of jam is that:  
"everyone gets to hear everyone else,  
and everyone gets to be heard by everyone else."

this manifestation of cooperation is a hallmark of jam,  
as jam is the ying^yang kissing::cousin flip/side of slam.  
some basic attitudes of both slam and jam are exactly the same  
-- promoting performance poetry and building community --

*but where slam uses competition, jam uses cooperation.  
(this doesn't make jam better or worse, just different.)*

*at any rate,  
this cooperative stance means  
we have one performance stage.  
and only one.  
and everyone performs on that stage,  
in front of everyone else.  
(kinda like finals night at slam, but it's all four nights at jam.)*

*so, when you perform, it'll be in front of the 200-300 poets jamming.  
likewise, when those 200-300 poets get their chance to perform,  
you'll be in their audience. (don't come if you don't want to listen.)*

*in other words -- performance-wise --  
it's "one for all and all for one".*

*this non-hierarchical structure also means that  
everyone receives the same amount of stage time --  
so you only get 3 minutes up there.  
but oh, what a glorious 3 minutes!*

*obviously, we can only put up so many poets in 4 nights,  
and our rough figures say that the maximum number is 300.  
(to fit 300 poets in 12 shows, we need to \_average\_ 25/show.)*

*so, since we will \_have to\_ cut off the number of poets at 300,  
we have under 100 slots left. we've already offered las vegas locals  
anywhere from 20-50 of \_those\_, so the spots are going very fast!  
(it took us less than 3 weeks to go from 150 signups to over 200.)*

*the bottom line:  
if you want \_be\_sure\_ you can perform at jam,  
and have your work be included on the historic jam videotape,  
don't delay! e-mail me to sign up today.*

*i'd hate to turn anyone away,  
but i can't break the laws of time and space...*

*oh, if you know other poets who \_don't\_have\_e-mail\_, please  
tell them about jam, and let them know it's final-stretch time.  
i have been using word-of-mouth and e-mail exclusively,  
so some poets are out of the loop. please tell them. thank you.*

*of course, it's ok if you want to just want to come and watch,  
in which case you don't have to get yourself signed up this early.  
(if you look at the names listed below, i think you'll agree that*

*it \_will\_ be a dynamite event to see great performance poetry,  
and indeed, that is the most jammin' reason to decide to come...)*

*but i'm not sending this e-mail to performance poets that i think  
would be content to just sit on the sidelines and watch this circus...*

*-bowerbird*  


*p.s. if you're not signed up, i plan on giving your mailbox a rest.  
(unless you tell me you actually want to get the  
updates that will be going out to the participants.)*

-----  
*included below is the list of people signed up for las vegas.  
(note: since we have only just now finalized the dates for jam,  
some of the people listed below who signed up in the past  
will inevitably have a conflict and be unable to attend,  
so this is \_not\_ a confirmed list of attendees at this time.  
if you're one of the poets signed up below, and you can't make it  
from march 2-5, please let me know immediately via e-mail.)*

*aside from the "quantity" aspect of the large number itself,  
the list is equally impressive from a "quality" perspective,  
what with poets like:*

- \* the #1 individual slammer in the country (boogieman),*
- \* and #5 (jerry quickly) and #6 (monica copeland) too, as well as*
- \* poets from the #1 mouth almighty team (beau sia and taylor mali),*
- \* and a good many other slam notables, such as:*
- \* '97 nationals organizer faith vicinanza,*
- \* last year's haiku champ aaron yamaguchi,*
- \* this year's haiku champ deborah edler brown,*
- \* a number of national-level slammers, from teams such as*  
*los feliz/silverlake, pacific ocean team, los angeles,*  
*seattle, portland, san francisco, santa cruz, chico,*  
*new york, long beach, dallas, albuquerque, cleveland,*  
*syracuse, winston-salem, worcester, and connecticut,*
- \* and well-know performance poets from a number of other places.*

*the names: (remember, all of these are \_tentative\_, pending availability...)*

*mark schaefer \* bowerbird intelligentman \* mack dennis \* g. murray thomas \*  
william mclain \* robin gwynne \* josh millican \* jerry quickly \* milo martin \*  
ben porter lewis \* nathan green \* yvonne de la vega \* gabriel alvarado \* mary  
cahill \* peter coca \* blue \* sean sanneman \* ken scott \* larry jaffe \* noomi  
jaffe \* tony scibella \* rod smear \* friday \* sara raymond \* 25. joe speer \**

*lisa verlo \* rich ferguson \* dawn zummo \* chris tannahill \* john noonan \* martin \* donn deedon \* audrey allen \* laughing larry \* scot walters \* kevin connolly \* yolanda "sister yo" androzzo \* ricardo "crazy" berg \* jasmine rose wolf \* rashawn vaughn \* e. a. lynch \* aaron yamaguchi \* kennon b. raines \* leslie d. hanson \* merilene murphy \* mona jean \* debra fay holton \* davey \* lea \* 50. lob \* kurt \* mike cluff \* julianne miller \* rod boyer \* rita mitzner \* rafael renteria \* michael paul \* claudie \* l. jeanne stern \* larry schulz \* dayve hind \* c. renee foster \* alan cohol \* gene silver \* sheri gregg \* jaimes palacio \* ardinger \* patricia a. bowser \* lorelle \* daphne knox \* eirik ott \* melissa morgan \* jeff jurgens \* estelle childers \* 75. debbie allen \* joseph powell \* katie setzer \* mireille dewitt \* von enemy \* noel franklin \* whitman mcgowan \* margery snyder \* lizzie wann \* bob redmond \* ken hunt \* faith vicinanza \* kenn rodriguez \* clebo rainey \* noemi collie \* chief eagle eye \* carmen vega \* monk \* elizabeth thomas \* paula morasch \* raelene smillie \* joe smillie \* leah smillie \* russell johnson \* tom jessor \* 100. tommy o'riley \* thomas hardy \* megan hardy \* mollie hardy \* neil tigner \* s.a. griffin \* hassan \* jimmy smith \* michael thomas \* glenn b. collins \* drew derr \* jim \* lynda la rose \* kyria abrahams \* caloki \* dafydd mckaharay \* gene boland \* christopher mitchell \* leonard cox \* shawn mercer \* lovehorse cowbell \* isaac rockoff \* hydropods \* gregory gregory \* leslie levy \* 125. brian bywater \* marcus kugler \* don campbell \* eric von meisner \* tommy joe \* bolt \* deborah edler brown \* monica copeland \* mark pomeroy \* sharon smith-knight \* stephanie abraham \* diane dorman \* ruthie schwabel \* toni zabek \* abby \* shane luitjens \* hanif rana \* jon kinney \* leanne \* brett \* aaron gray \* baba ras k \* marie morasch \* rhonda hardy \* moss sherian \* 150. theresa baca \* kim holzer \* julia ann delbridge \* chris vannon \* garland thompson \* christian elder \* mauro monteiro \* carrie \* danny peck \* michael zittle \* alex papanicolopoulos \* kim hedges \* leeann heringer \* boogieman \* j.j. campbell \* tarin towers \* anthony alba \* kevin sampsell \* ritah parrish sampsell \* melody jordan \* frank d'andrea \* mike m. mollett \* rayn roberts \* kelli parrish \* jennifer geran \* 175. allison durrazzi \* russell salamon \* roberto morales \* stazja \* ionut popescu \* deep red \* bill smillie \* tom hardy \* lugo \* beau sia \* taylor mali \* robt o'sullivan schleith \* sherry mcclure \* kelli cole \* john torres \* alex nava \* slam granny \* fidel \* rex \* chuck desimone \* mark boutros \* sean thomas dougherty \* jim ysidro \* michele wright \* bill wright \* 200. cosmo \* nv asl #1 \* nv asl #2 \* nv asl 3 \* nv asl 4 \* nv asl 5 \* hydropod #2 \* 207. nathaniel wolper*

-----  
</communique)  
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[↑ Contents](#)

683. **Pam Brown**

**Re: *THE newest***

*Wed 21 Jan 1998*

---

Ben

And she's trendy too - a gender-fluid doppelganger no less

Pam

At 08:56 PM 21/1/98 EST, you wrote:

>On Thu, 22 Jan 1998 10:55:56 +1000 Pam Brown said:

>>Dear Poetics Listees,

>>At the Calendar Spit "Luncheon with New Poets" last week at Porpoise Point,

>>Hawks Nest in New South Wales, one of the newest younger poets, Chris

>>Trapender, revealed his admiration for his influential cousin, the late Ern

>>Malley to a rapt & responsive audience.

>>All the best from downunda (I s'pose)

>>Pam

>

>God, I wish I could have been there. Not only to enjoy the poetic poipoises,

>and another GREAT reading by Cris (she hates that H, for some reason -

>probably connects it with somebody on the list) - but we could have

>cleared up a lot of these problems about who's important in poetry

>these days - Cris has that knack of shelling nuts without cracking them -

>did she learn that in the bush?

>- Ben Carrelis

>

>

[↑ Contents](#)

684. **John Tranter**

***Lisa Jarnot poems available in Jacket***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

In a recent post, Annie Finch wrote:

"Et al: Would one of the people who has been discussing Lisa Jarnot mind

"posting a representative piece of hers for those who don't have her books?"

You can find five of Lisa's prose pieces from "Sea Lyrics" in Jacket magazine # 2 at

<http://www.jacket.zip.com.au/jacket02/jarnot02.html>

Jacket magazine is free.

from

John Tranter, 39 Short Street, Balmain NSW 2041, Sydney, Australia

tel ( [REDACTED] ) fax ( [REDACTED] )

<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/tranter/3poems-interview.html>

Editor, Jacket magazine: <http://www.jacket.zip.com.au>

[↑ Contents](#)

685. **david bromige**

***KATHA POLLIT, POINT OF INTEREST***

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

On internal and external evidence, like we used to say, maybe Katha Pollit is related to Harry Pollit, the once-upon-a-time British Communist Party leader? Any oil? David

[↑ Contents](#)

686. **Don Byrd**

***Mark Wallace and the Question of the New***

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

The discussion is very rich right now, and there are a number of things I want to say to Mark Wallace and others. However, classes started today, I have a dead line for a little piece of writing on friday, and I am worn out for the day. I am going to get myself a bourbon and listen to the new Marty Ehrlich cd, which I recommend highly.

Don

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd ( [REDACTED] , [REDACTED] )

Department of English

State University of New York

Albany, NY 12222

[REDACTED] (work); [REDACTED] (home); [REDACTED] (fax)

The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

687. **Miekal And**

***A Pothole Named Copernicus***

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

A Pothole Named Copernicus

Unfortunate it seems but true that we, though subject to mass delusions & cravings as ever, are now no longer the same political animal, as once could be content with parti-pris. Not even relict culture lends identity enough: the only thing in all the present maelstrom that i can find to cling to build on or huddle within, is my panic-stochastic adoption of a to me savoury subculture.

“Subculture” isn’t quite the word. That would imply something lesser &, above all, acknowledged as secessionist by the parent culture. Whereas i maintain our glorious center has simply evaporated. What keeps us from noticing this simple fact are the massively concerted facades of media sculsh, psepholatry, taxploitation, & an imperial idiom (already on the fritz). We think in terms of something else. But we don’t have a name for it yet. Within the shells of the old divisions & stereotypes, a new paradigm has blossomed.

Take a gander at the nearest newsstand & behold. Wherefore (you ask) can there ever be snagged, a quorum of Iguana Owners? A glossy & not negligible magazine (/website) sits there leering forth: & i understand, like apple-bonked Newton, that the true groups today are DISPERSED. Maybe they never do assemble all at once in one place. A force, invisible & plenipotent, still orients them, guides, like filings of steel around one pole of a magnetic tropism. I call it a “Blik”.

“Blik” is a way of referring to a group of people by the one quality or predilection they all share. This, their style-philosophy, works for that blik the way a territory used to for tribes. It’s a philosophy because it involves ideas (whether or not they’re defined or even talked about), unlike consumerist fashion; & it’s a style-philosophy because it involves the whole person’s lifestyle, not just a point of view. A blik compels you to seek expression.

What creates a blik? Glamour. A fascination with one specialized mode of being in the world. It can be a type of music, a game, a drug, a hobby, a form of sexuality, a religion, a personality cult, a venerable or self-invented artform, a way of making a living (rarely!); it is anything that gives meaning to your life inexhaustibly & whose contemplation creates a ramified discourse -- standards of a playground for the exercise of free choice, & a dialectical encounter with mediated Necessity. And because all glammers involve the manipulation of symbolic objects (--what “magic” ever was) it is not enough to just “talk the talk”. We are driven to repeatedly transact whatever magical-metaphorical operations reinforce our blixen.

They feed.

Hardly anyone lacks a blik; most of us belong to several. On one hand, the system of blixen has swallowed up all the major preoccupations of humanity-- art, religion, politics--by breaking them down into specialities that fewer & fewer outsiders care to explore; on the other, this system shades off into the



infinitesimal subtleties & infinite variety of “taste”. To keep this term at all meaningful, i want to restrict it to those things you not only care about enough to demand one way & not another, but also have spent time discriminating & studying. Maybe it doesn’t have a newsletter, or conventions to meet others of your ilk at yet; still, these are inherent tendencies--& goals: who will be the first Perfume Critic? Do the Trekkies have a martyr?

We even perceive our predecessors in terms of blixen. Just read a book & become a Druid! Instead of politics-history, culture-history; each century or (in this one) decade a congeries of fads. I don’t know if it’s any falsier. What morality was to the Nienteenth Century, & Politics is to the Twentieth, Blixen will be to the Twenty First: a metalanguage. No one will be able to talk about anything outside it. Clearly, “counterculture” has no place. That’s what they all are.

History is savagely random, but Culture is savagely dialectical. We’re left with the dialectics of blixen. This does not mean nothing. If the Sixties succumbed to irony as much as to consumerism, we seem to be entering, dialectically, a Post-Ironic period (i owe this term to the Dallas poet Melanie Pruitt). Irony only has meaning against an assumed norm; precisely what’s being contested in the current “Kulturkampf”. Governance being left to the Politico-Show Biz blik, that power vacuum consequent became parasitized by sundry pirates flying the colors of the Biblical Fascist blik (you can fill in the rest). But two blixen far more readily corrupt than conquer one another...Farce, Karl, this time. The Work continues.

--Michael Helsem, 6/18/97

[↑ Contents](#)

688. **Miekal And**  
**[Fwd: Re: fly problem]**

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

At first I thought the discussion about visual poets had carried over to the aquaponics list Im on.

by westbyserver.westby.mwt.net (8.8.7/8.8.6) with ESMTP id MAA26837  
for <[REDACTED]>; Thu, 22 Jan 1998 12:39:14 -0600 (CST)  
(Rockliffe SMTPRA 2.1.2) with SMTP id <[REDACTED]> for <[REDACTED]>;  
Thu, 22 Jan 1998 12:48:49 -0600  
via smtpd (for mail.townsqr.com [207.18.224.3]) with SMTP; 22 Jan 1998  
18:41:15 UT  
22 Jan 98 13:41:31 EST

Date: 22 Jan 98 13:36:17 EST  
From: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Re: fly problem  
To: [REDACTED]

Thank you Rebecca:

*For control we used predator nematodes. They look like microscopic "worms" and attack many types of problem insects (fleas, thrips, fungus gnats, etc.). They are unrelated to pest nematodes and do not attack plants.*

Do you know where predator nematodes can be obtained?

Pete T.

-----17FA26CC1F96--

[↑ Contents](#)

689. **KENT JOHNSON**

***Re: Beneath me***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

On Jan. 22, Tom Mandel wrote:

*| Henry Taylor found Stanzas for Irene Leszak (sp?) at a yard sale.*

Iris Lezak. anyone know wht the acrostic says? The most wonderful acrostic in history of American poetry.

By the way, I'm up here at work and haven't checked the news. Is Bill still the President?

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

690. **KENT JOHNSON**

***Re: generation underwear***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

On Jan 21, Henry Gould wrote:

*this is a very odd situation -  
& rather than bemoaning the fact or vaunting "alternatives" of various kinds, some politically minded poets will see how they can turn it to advantage. Probably, I'm sad to say, a lot of clever socialist types who have no sense of patriotism or national destiny.*

Henry, my funny bone is slower than most, so forgiive if I'm not hip that the above is a joke.

anyway, you'll recall that *\_In the American Tree\_*, one of the century's great anthologies of national destiny, is chock-full of clever socialist types.

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

691. **Tom Mandel**

***Beneath me***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

Yard sales beneath me? David?

As Keats so clearly says, it is easy to speak of what a yard sale should be but even easier to furnish your house from more than one -- and more than one house too -- as I have done. But my favorite is to find old tube audio equipment at yard sales. All you who wish you had turntables to play large black vinyl music, you can find them at yard sales. Henry Taylor found Stanzas for Irene Leszak (sp?) at a yard sale. I have a wondrous Minox camera on a slinky chain I found at a yard sale even with its fanning out flash umbrella and two tiny rolls of film or are they sculptures of snails? Because yard sales are locus solus detritus, and detritus is fashion's future the yard sale is a guidebook to the future and past at once. Early saturday morning before the really good stuff is gone the cool bowl in the hands of the woman who pulled up just before you, before that, the moment you're walking up the yard and can see the weird 50's arm-chair in one eye and the mixer with the other, that's when you know. Yard sale equals Eden. I have two Harry Bertoia butterfly chairs, Knoll circa 1959. One I found at a yard sale on Waller street in 1978. You've sat in it for god's sake! The other I found in the alley -- in the alley! -- behind my Tilden street house in 1992. I'm telling you they're a pair. A pair, do you hear me man?

Tom

Tom Mandel

\*\*\*\*\*

Screen Porch \* <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 \* vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22031 \* fax: [REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

692. **Gary Sullivan**

**Re: Meow (carrying on in public)**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

Jordan:

Baiting? Loyalty? Power base? Dude, man, like Didn't I meet you in the Nixon Whitehouse?

Don't bother looking up After Babylon; I fucked up the title: It's After Babel.

Miao, miao,

Gary

[↑ Contents](#)

693. **Tom Mandel**

**Marty Ehrlich**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

Don, \*what\* new Marty Ehrlich CD? What brand bourbon? Remember, poets must talk about "things" (das Ding if they're German poets, natch).

Actually I just want to buy the CD, I'm a scotch drinker at best, Old Pointless my favorite.

Anyway, have I asked? That is, I used to take it with a twist.

Tom

Tom Mandel

\*\*\*\*\*

Screen Porch \* <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 \* vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22031 \* fax: [REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

694. **KENT JOHNSON**

**Re: Marty Ehrlich**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

On Jan 22, Don byrd wrote:

*Oh, and the bourbon--Knob Creek, when for special occasions, Walker Evans (better than JD at a little more than half the price) for everyday.*

Don:

can recovering alcoholics come and visit too?

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

695. **Dale M Smith**

***What evil lurks***

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

David:

Now that I've accepted Joel's request and you have so eloquently pointed out my errors of perception, making me a more decent human being, perhaps you could address your continued resistance to engage the poetry of Tom Clark while smearing his name on a periodic basis. Maybe it's the person, not the poems, that upset you. By the way, if you're looking for proof of life in his poems, check out his most recent, *White Thought*, published jointly by the Figures and Hard Press. Or maybe his book on the trade of otter skin in the early 19th century would appeal to your sensibilities. This book, published by Black Sparrow, actually addresses issues of race, colonization and trade without the vanity of moral assumption, but with the rigor of intellectual and artistic investigation. I think Tom and the Langpods share, in some way, similar impulses, though each exploits those to fit the design and arc of their individual lives.

[↑ Contents](#)

696. **KENT JOHNSON**

***Re: Infamous spellings***

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

On Jan. 23, Jonathan Mayhew wrote:

*I must admit to being a spelling snob, to the extent that I am dismissive of opinions expressed about "Alan Ginsburg" or "Finnegan's Wake" or "The Wasteland" or "Harry Matthews." This is not to say I am immune from error myself, just that the automatic pedantic reflex persists in me.*

Jonathan:

so is it Alan or Allen? God, those "e"s make me crazy.

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

697. **MAYHEW**  
***Infamous spellings***  
*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

Reading Ted Berrigan's lecture on writing sonnets I came across this transcription of a Shakespeare line: "They rightly do inherent heaven's graces." I must admit to being a spelling snob, to the extent that I am dismissive of opinions expressed about "Alan Ginsburg" or "Finnegan's Wake" or "The Wasteland" or "Harry Matthews." This is not to say I am immune from error myself, just that the automatic pedantic reflex persists in me.

Jonathan Mayhew

[↑ Contents](#)

698. **Gwyn McVay**  
***Re: Hurrahs all around***  
*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

And also Hurrah for those who film the strangers fornicating in bed, and then pull back to show the cameras filming the strangers fornicating in bed.

Hurrah for those who show the camera in the mirror filming the cameras filming the strangers fornicating in bed.<<<

Knock knock.

Who's there?

Fornication.

Fornication who?

Fornication like this I should have worn black tie.

G. Mutt

[↑ Contents](#)

699. **David Gitin**  
***Re: Marty Ehrlich (for Don Byrd and Tom Mandel)***  
*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

Erik Friedlander also recorded with Dave Douglas, group I saw live a little over a year ago, worth checking out. The Marty live double opens up the studio Dark Winds album quite a lot.

[↑ Contents](#)

700. **Miekal And**

**[Fwd: RHIZOME\_RAW: Live on the Poetics List: Whose Visual Poetics?]**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

the  
intergalactic  
hypertext time  
machine  
presents

by westbyserver.westby.mwt.net (8.8.7/8.8.6) with ESMTP id CAA08538  
for <[REDACTED]>; Tue, 20 Jan 1998 02:37:43 -0600 (CST)

by gars.gar.no (8.8.8/8.8.8) id JAA02779  
for [REDACTED]; Tue, 20 Jan 1998 09:40:06 +0100 (MET)  
id 34c4636d; Tue, 20 Jan 1998 09:40:06 +0100

Date: Tue, 20 Jan 1998 09:41:52 +0100

From: Knut Mork <[REDACTED]>

To: Miekal And <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RHIZOME\_RAW: Live on the Poetics List: Whose Visual Poetics?

Reply to the message of Sunday January 18, 1998 14:07 +0100

----- Miekal,

*weve been having an interesting & perhaps controversial interaction  
about visual poetry on the poetics list. [...]*

*in order to widen the bandwidth of the list's discussion & scholarship  
on the topic Ive been seeking out relevant works, citations,  
manifestoes, & websites to enter into the discussion. I have created an  
ascii gadget called The Intergalactic Hypertext Time Machine which will  
post all materials that are sent me as an ongoing series of posts.*

You might be interested in the Java applet at

<http://www.gar.no/sec/>

which is an experiment in 'live' visual/morph poetry.

[knut]

-----48C542FAED--

[↑ Contents](#)

701. **Bob Grumman**  
***The Perloff Vizpo Seminar***  
*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

Marjorie Perloff was gracious enough to send me a copy of her Official Syllabus. It is substantially more formidable than the one posted at the Stanford U. website which Luigi-Bob Drake circulated, but for me only a slight improvement. I continue to feel that her seminar is basically a textual poetry course focusing on a few language poets who have used visual devices in their poetry, with a heavyweight genuine visual poet or two like Tom Phillips thrown in for appearance's sake--plus a massive surround of scholarly publications. While not particularly important in itself, Perloff's seminar is annoyingly symptomatic of the treatment we visual poets have been subjected to in this country for too many years.

My attitude toward it is much as I believe the attitude of any language poet would be if visual poetry instead of langpo were the poetry vying for acadomiance with Iowa WorkShop Poetry, and I--as well-known Critic, Professor Bob of, say, SUNY, Buffalo, its own self--made it known that I had decided to teach a seminar on language poetry, and was having Richard Kostelanetz, Crag Hill, Jonathan Brannen, John Byrum, Karl Young, Carol Stetsor, Jim Leftwich, Liz Was and Harry Polkinhorn give readings and visit the class. I would claim that all these people have composed poems as deft in the langpo vein as Perloff's visitors, Charles Bernstein, Susan Howe, Kathleen Fraser, Tom Raworth, Kenneth Goldsmith, Cole Swensen, Diane Ward, Joan Retallack, and Johanna Drucker, have in the vizpo vein (although I have to confess that I privately consider my group's langpo significantly better than the vizpo of Perloff's group's).

And what if I scheduled the following classes:

Week 1 (Jan 7) Introduction and Assignments

Week 2 (Jan 14) The Tradition: Laurence Sterne (my equivalent of Perloff's George Herbert.)

Week 3 (Jan 21): Modernism: Gertrude Stein and E.E. Cummings--my equivalents of Perloff's Apollinaire and Ezra Pound--one unarguably appropriate, one rather strained

Week 4 (Jan. 28) A complete run of O.ARS--which, while certainly not a definitive collection of language poetry, did as much for it as Mary Ellen Solt's anthology of concrete (but not all cases visual) poetry did for visual poetry

The other weeks: works by my visiting poets--and Ron Silliman and Clark Coolidge as my equivalents of Perloff's Tom Phillips and Ian Hamilton Finlay, and Jackson Mac Low, as my equivalent of Perloff's Jackson Mac Low



And what if my list of required and recommended books included the complete run of O.ARS but nothing else most people doing language poetry in this country and Canada would consider even a tenth as close to a central work in the field as it? And what if, after some obscure language poet had lodged a complaint against my list for ignoring just about everyone he knew in the field, I provided a numbly-long Supplementary Reading List that contained the following, among other material:

- (1) a few token references to the best US language poets (and mention of essays by others in some book Bernstein had edited while ignoring his poetry to parallel Perloff's mentioning two essays by others in a book edited by Kostelanetz but not Kostelanetz's Wordworks or vast array of other consequential writings, particularly as a critic)
- (2) Karl Kempton's Black Strokes White Spaces and Crag Hill's Transforms (with a confession that they had no language poetry in them but were worth looking into anyway)
- (3) As many books by Harry Polkinhorn as Perloff has books by Johanna Drucker and, of course, Professor Bob's own book, Of Manywhere-at-Once (which actually has a chapter on language poetry, at least by my definition of it)
- (4) a lot of good stuff from earlier in the century or by people outside North America--i.e., poets and critics too distant to interfere with my attempt re-define language poetry in this country for the 21st century
- (5) Ron Johnson's Book of the Green Man, Kostelanetz's Wordworks, and work by Spencer Selby
- (6) almost nothing that wasn't published by an academic press or the equivalent
- (7) the Electronic Poetry Center (EPC) (<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc>) and the Jacket Website (which I described as the two best sites around for language poetry) along with Karl Young's Light & Dust Website (<http://www.thing.net/~grist/l&d/lighthom.htm>), Miekal And's Joglars Crossmedia Broadcast (<http://www.net22.com/qazingulaza/joglars/index.html>) and QAZINGULAZA (<http://net22.com/qazingulaza/index.html>) sites, and a sprinkling of sites like my own Runaway Spoon Press site (<http://www.interlog.com/~dal/rasp>) that can't be said to be in the fore of the language poetry movement but have not been wholly inhospitable to it.

Would you be bothered, Oh, Hypothetical Language Poet? (Assuming, remember, that your group was as under-recognized as American and Canadian visual poets are.) I suspect you might be.

Postscript: some have wondered that I care what an academic like Perloff does with visual poetry. And I think of the contra-genteel poet Sparrow

demonstrating at the New Yorker's doors in protest of its editorial policy regarding poetry, eventually getting a few of his poems into it. Why should any serious poet want academic recognition, or publication in a magazine like The New Yorker? My answer: I more and more believe that my function as a poet is to bring aesthetic pleasure to as much of the world as I can--to repay all the poets who have given me pleasure. I thus believe that winning a public (not only for myself but for other poets I admire) is as much of a part of being a poet as manipulating words (and the like). This means getting academic and/or commercial acceptance. I don't see any way around it.

As a serious poet, I also want as many people to see my work as possible so that I can benefit from their responses to it. This is even more the case with my criticism. How can I know if what I'm doing is effective if I keep it from all but a few?

Moreover, a grant or two could certainly come in handy. There's nothing wrong with wanting an occasional pat on the back, either.

Many visual poets would disagree with me about academic recognition, grants, and the rest of it. But I'm quite sure they share my irritation with having an art that we've had to practice in near-total isolation for over thirty years in some cases further obscured by a wing of langpo that seems almost completely to miss the lyrical/metaphorical possibilities of visual poetry, focusing instead on typography as a form of cuing or decoration. These others don't want the recognition of the establishment, they just don't want to have dirt kicked at them any more than they already have.

Bob

Grumman

[↑ Contents](#)

702. **Jordan Davis**

***Cloneticinian era***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

Gary --

Baby I was bebe rebozo. Now we know so much better.

Love,

J

[↑ Contents](#)

703. **Miekal And**  
**stacy doris address?**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

anyone got a current address for stacy doris? bkchl me.

[↑ Contents](#)

704. **Gary Sullivan**  
**Re: Surveillance**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

Hi, Miekal:

*For me it has the quality  
of unrequited tease since I havent been able to afford a book of poetry  
for years & only really spend time with works Ive traded for*

Well, I totally understand. But I bet at least some of the folks I mentioned would love to trade works/books with you. I'll send you addresses for anyone you like (same goes for others reading this & interested). Okay? Okay.

Yours,

Gary Sullivan



[↑ Contents](#)

705. **Gwyn McVay**  
**Re: The Perloff Vizpo Seminar**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

But how can teaching Tom Phillips \*at all\*, whatever motives one assumes the teacher has for doing so, be a bad thing?

humid among the monuments,

Gwyn McVay

[↑ Contents](#)

706. **Don Byrd**  
**Re: Marty Ehrlich**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

Tom Mandel wrote:

*Don, \*what\* new Marty Ehrlich CD? What brand bourbon? Remember, poets must talk about "things" (das Ding if they're German poets, natch).*

Marty Ehrlich, Live Wood, with Erik Friedlander on Cello and Mark Helias on bass (2 cds). Wonderful. Oh, and the bourbon--Knob Creek, when for special occasions, Walker Evans (better than JD at a little more than half the price) for everyday.

db

--

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd ([REDACTED], [REDACTED])  
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The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

707. **Mark Weiss**

**(no subject)**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

Jerry and Diane Rothenberg are looking for a sublet in Manhattan for September and October 1998. If anyone out there in listland has a lead please backchannel me and I'll convey the message.

Mark Weiss

[↑ Contents](#)

708. **Jacques Debrot**

**Re: "actually new"**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

Mark Wallace writes:

"Byrd and Silliman must, I think, feel BETRAYED by the work of poets who come after them. Whether justified or not (and I think, of course, that it is not), I can find no cause for celebration in such a feeling."

But a creative use of tradition includes not only translation & transmission --its "re-use" & "recreation" -- but the betrayal of tradition as well. In a sense, the important question is not \*whether\* emerging writers are betraying Langpo, but exactly \*how\* this is being, & can be done -- & without assuming that such a betrayal must necessarily have a reactionary character.

[↑ Contents](#)

709. **Aldon Nielsen**

**Re: Ron Ron**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

"why it's taken fifteen years for a first book"

I assume that's a rhetorical question?

yours,

aldon (twenty years) nielsen

[↑ Contents](#)

710. **Aldon Nielsen**

**Re: scoured grapes**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

At 03:05 PM 1/21/98 CST, you wrote:

>Oh. So there *\*is\** a right way to read Watten.

>

No, but there is a way to send copies of your mag. to people whose poetics list posts you reproduce.

[↑ Contents](#)

711. **david bromige**

**tom mandel on a par with yard sales**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

A public apology to Tom for the doubt I cast yesterday upon his probity as a yard-sale poetry-man. His post today is first class encouragement to get that poetry yard-sale wave rolling across America. I have been enjoying reports from listmates re the ins & outs of the yard sale.(Oh, but Don Cheney, could you pad the profit figure next time? ) (Then again, that was for soccer, not poetry. Try it again just before the World Cup).

Uncle Dave.

[↑ Contents](#)

712. **Bob Grumman**

**Re: The Perloff Vizpo Seminar**

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

Gwyn McVay wants to know how "teaching Tom Phillips *\*at all\**, whatever motives one assumes the teacher has for doing so, be a bad thing?" Teaching Tom

Phillips is fine; the problem, as I think my piece makes clear, is who else Marjorie Perloff is teaching (as visual poets), and who she is not.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

713. **Aldon Nielsen**  
***Los Angeles Reading***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

The next reading in the series at Loyola Marymount University features Juan Felipe Herrera, whose *Mayan Drifter* was recently reviewed in the San Francisco Chron. and elsewhere -- Juan Felipe Herrera has published some of the most interesting poetry of the past two decades, and gives one hell of a good reading -- try to make it:

Juan Felipe Herrera  
reading Thursday Feb. 5 -- 7:30 PM  
Loyola Marymount University  
7900 Loyola Blvd.  
St. Roberts Hall # 366  
Los Angeles

info -- 

[↑ Contents](#)

714. **Jacques Debrot**  
***Re: French disease***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

Mark Wallace, in his excellent post, raises questions about the identity of the "new". For what it's worth, the need for the new seems to me an expression of the mind's need & capacity for self-estrangement -- what Raymond Williams calls "the active struggle for new consciousness through new relationships." Obviously, even the most difficult work will become familiar over time. So that the need for "radical" innovation is the result of a crisis arising from the domesticating assimilation of previously difficult work. I think Silliman is probably right to regard "the French-influenced short abstract lyric" as "the poetry of utter habit." \*But overlooked in these posts is that the onus of habit falls perhaps even more heavily on established writers than on emerging ones.\* And one could or should -- despite its obvious brilliance -- fairly ask what precisely is radically \*new\* about the latest installments of \*The Alphabet\*?

[↑ Contents](#)

715. **John Cayley**

***DIATEST, etc.***

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

*Does anyone on the list know of an internet source from which it would be possible to download the DIATEST, DIASTEX4, and TRAVESTY programs as shareware?*

You could try the URL given in Hartman's \*Virtual Muse\*:

<http://www.conncoll.edu/ccother/cohar/programs/>

or this text manipulation site (haven't been there in ages; might be 404):

<http://www.uio.no/~mwatz/c-g.writing>

[↑ Contents](#)

716. **Miekal And**

***Re: bill bissett reads at SFU Monday, Jan. 26; Special Collections displays works from bissett's 35-year poetry career.***

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

charles watts

can you point us to any online bissett resources?

[↑ Contents](#)

717. **Don Byrd**

***Re: Marty Ehrlich***

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

KENT JOHNSON wrote:

*On Jan 22, Don byrd wrote:*

*Oh, and the bourbon--Knob Creek, when for special occasions, Walker Evans (better than JD at a little more than half the price) for everyday.*

*Don:*

*can recovering alcoholics come and visit too?*

*Kent*

Come. We'll make carrot ginger juice and have some toast from home-made whole wheat bread. Some times, when I am feeling the need for a little extra kick I put some kale with the carrots and ginger. If you do it right it makes

wonderful orange and green layers in the glass. Honeydew melon, apples, and ginger also makes great juice. (Tone in email is difficult: I'm deadly serious.)

Don

--

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd ([REDACTED], [REDACTED])  
Department of English  
State University of New York  
Albany, NY 12222  
[REDACTED] (work); [REDACTED] (home); [REDACTED] (fax)  
The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

718. **Steve Evans**

*the new don ron don the new don ron*

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

...to call to mind a song our society has elected not to let us forget.

But beneath it a less ubiquitous strain:

For the people of that flow  
Are new, the old  
New to age as the young  
To youth  
And to their dwelling  
For which the tarred roofs  
And the stoops and doors--  
A world of stoops--  
Are petty alibi and satirical wit  
Will not serve.

I found cris cheek's message about the recent UK situation more convincing than the claims on Ron and Don's part that the NEA provided negligible assistance in their generation's articulation of a poetry adequate to its situation (a situation that it would be fantasy and self-flattery to call "revolutionary," though some of the art may have aspired to render it more so; the only defense of a viable NEA I've ever encountered has been on social democratic, not social revolutionary, terms, and even these have been driven from public consideration in our epoch of only capitalism). For Ron to pass off assistance to "some book publishers, notably The Figures, Roof and Sun&Moon" as immaterial sounds funny



to me; like saying Duncan, Spicer, and Blaser didn't do much for the Berkeley Renaissance. On the other hand, I do take R & D--and Henry Gould's--point(s) that in the grand scheme of things, other factors made more of a real difference than the NEA. It's just that the books remain when many other of these conditions shift, subside, defy our hopes, etc.

Oppen's lines bring one further thing to mind. The question of how to make it new takes on a different urgency in an established writer, I think, and it must be tempting to displace the crisis onto the young in the form of surly dismissals / loving prods. Has Ron succeeded in making it "really new" in the years since *Ketjak*? I've heard knowledgeable contemporaries, young and old, dispute the question pretty hotly, and the outcome is not every time in Ron's favor.

Like other contributors to this thread, I wish there were time enough for more, but now I've got to return to the extremely melancholy task of boxing up for storage all those NEA-supported poetry books that mattered so little....

Steve

=====

The Impercipient Lecture Series

Steve Evans & Jennifer Moxley

Before 31 January 98:

61 East Manning Street

Providence RI 02906-4008

██████████ OR ██████████

After 1 February 1998

c/o Le Gallou

#9 rue Quinault Paris 75015

██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

719. **Jordan Davis**

**hooey**

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

Kent --

That camera pulling back metaphor, are you really committed to it? It seems kind of weak. That and something Juliana Spahr wrote somewhere reminded me of Michael Snow's *Wavelength* -- in which the camera doesn't pull back -- it just keeps going forward -- in an impossibly slow way -- they don't make lofts like that anymore -- or murder mysteries, for that matter --

Non-combatively,  
Jordan

[↑ Contents](#)

720. **Dale M Smith**

***Re: scoured grapes***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

Workin' hard on that one by gawd. Got a whole new set o' letterpress covers on their way from Boulder. Hold on tight. First tier gets theirs first. Second ones second. And so forth. Very hierarchical I suppose.

For you listees who missed out on the last issue, with A.L.N.et al, you can order copies of the newest Mike and Dale's Younger Poets from:

Michael Price  
766 Valencia Street #2  
San Francisco, CA 94110

Send a check made out to him for \$5.

We'll fill all requests, one sour grape at a time.

To: [REDACTED]

At 03:05 PM 1/21/98 CST, you wrote:

>Oh. So there \*is\* a right way to read Watten.

>

No, but there is a way to send copies of your mag. to people whose poetics list posts you reproduce.

[↑ Contents](#)

721. **KENT JOHNSON**

***The lost tampon***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

Jordan:

Thanks for the questions. I will say this non-combatively: You are too smart for me! I have heard a few times of Juliana Spahr, but I know nothing, really, about the cinema (though I, too, loved Starship Troopers). And I've never heard of Michael Snow or of his movie Wavelength. I like that title, though, because it makes me think of what I think our cyber relationship has more or less been up until now-- not on the same wavelength. But, of course, now that I think about it, that's probably exactly what you meant by mentioning that movie! You see

how it is? This is not easy for me. Nor is it, I imagine, for you. (though in a different way, of course.) Actually, is it a movie or a book?

Jordan, I guess I don't know, all in all, what the hell I was trying to say about the cameras. Something, I suppose, that vaguely seemed to evoke the idea of baring the device, showing the frame, which I think Barrett Watten said once in an essay somewhere about the influence of Robert Smithson on the early Russian futurists. And it somehow seemed to connect, in a suggestive, "renga" sort of way, with the young post-Language poet caught, like a frightened rabbit, between facing mirrors. I know it was weak, but what should I say? We're all here on this earth for such a short time together, doing the best that we possibly can.

But actually, I think this is important too: the thing about the cameras pulling slowly back to show the two people fornicating is from a memory I have of a film by Goddard (or one of those 60's French directors), and I remember being stunned by this when I saw it, it was a truly shocking moment. Wait a second, I remember saying outloud and spilling my soda, that's a camera! But now, of course, most people see something like that and yawn. And their yawning is a pity, but I suspect there's not a whole lot to be done about it.

Don't you agree? I'm trying to connect.

What \_was\_ that movie? I remember it was in b/w and the main protagonist was a boy-poet of some sort in love with two women. In one of those scenes where the camera pulls away to reveal the set (lights, wires, cameras and all), the poet has jsut finished copulating with one of the women he loves, but she had forgotten to remove her tampon, so it has been pushed up far inside her. She is quite calm about the matter, but he immediately calls a friend on the telephone with great excitement to tell him about it. Isn't it amazing?! he says. In the end, the two women fall in love with each other, which French women in the movies always seem to do. Well, I know that sounds terrible, but that's about all I can remember from that movie. Does anyone out there know what I'm talking about?

I don't.

Kent

On Jan. 22, Jordan Davis wrote:

*Kent --*

*That camera pulling back metaphor, are you really committed to it? It seems kind of weak. That and something Juliana Spahr wrote somewhere reminded me of Michael Snow's Wavelength -- in which the camera doesn't pull back -- it just keeps going forward -- in an impossibly slow way -- they don't make lofts like that anymore -- or murder mysteries, for that matter --*

Non-combatively,  
Jordan

[↑ Contents](#)

722. **cris cheek**  
**Re: scoured grapes**  
Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

yes dale there \*is\* a right way to read everything  
you put the book between you knees, kneel and clap  
should leave the mouth free

[↑ Contents](#)

723. **Mark Weiss**  
**Re: the new don ron don the new don ron**  
Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

For the record, when I was first thinking of starting Junction Press I had a chat with James Sherry of Roof and Segue fame (whom I've known since before there were Language Poets, and who has always been very generous to poets and presses of all stripes, even folks like me who are sometimes hostile to his agenda). His take on NEA grants was that if you did four books a year the grant might cover the cost of printing one. Remember that these are matching grants, and they ain't all that big. This was before the huge grants to a few established small presses that served to increase their budgets while maintaining their annual losses intact. Neither Junction nor Broadway Boogie, the mag I did in the early 70's, nor the several long-term reading series' that I've run applied for grants. It's all sweat equity and out-of-pocket, the latter partly restored by sales, and as far as I know it's been ever thus. If the rules changed I suppose I could hire someone else to typeset my book designs, but then I'd have to learn to delegate responsibility, not one of my strong points. What I'm getting at is whether or not you like the books it's unlikely they were generated without a publisher's passionate commitment just because he had the wherewithal, and that commitment finds a way to see books into print regardless of the obstacles. And the NEA, although at times marginally helpful, has been pretty much irrelevant.

*For Ron to pass off assistance to "some book publishers, notably The Figures, Roof and Sun&Moon" as immaterial sounds funny to me; like saying Duncan, Spicer, and Blaser didn't do much for the Berkeley Renaissance. On the other hand, I do take R & D--and Henry Gould's--point(s) that in the*

*grand scheme of things, other factors made more of a real difference than the NEA. It's just that the books remain when many other of these conditions shift, subside, defy our hopes, etc.*

[↑ Contents](#)

724. **Charles Watts**

***bill bissett reads at SFU Monday, Jan. 26; Special Collections displays works from bissett's 35-year poetry career.***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

bill bissett reads this monday, jan. 26, at simon fraser university, burnaby, bc, canada, at 1:30 pm, 126 halpern centre.

Jack Kerouac: You know who's a great poet? I know who the great poets are.

Ted Berrigan: Who?

Kerouac: Let's see, is it . . . William Bissette of Vancouver. An Indian boy. Bill Bissette, or Bissonnette.

Aram Saroyan: Let's talk about Jack Kerouac.

Kerouac: He's not better than Bill Bissette, but he's very original.

(from an interview with Jack Kerouac, The Paris Review, Summer 1968)

To celebrate bill bissett's reading at SFU this Monday, January 26, Special Collections and Rare Books has arranged a display of works by bissett from a career in poetry that spans more than thirty-five years. The display includes published books and broadsides featuring many examples of the poet and artist's unique design and forming a capsulized history of small press publishing in Canada since the mid-sixties. On display are works published by bissett under his own long-time imprint, blewointment press, as well as publications by Weed/Flower Press, Anansi, See/Hear, Very Stone House, Oberon, and Talon-books, one of bissett's earliest publishers and his publisher of record for the past several years. Also shown is a manuscript book of poems, drawings and collages, "The Lion's Den and Other Poems," inscribed from bissett to Warren Tallman and dated 1969. The three-ring binder which contains the book features a collage by bissett on the cover. This work is part of the Warren Tallman Manuscript Archive, and like all the other works by bill bissett on display, is housed in Special Collections and Rare Books, Bennett Library Room 7100. The display is in the foyer of Special Collections on the Library's 7th floor and can be seen Monday through Friday, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., from now through the month of February.

--

Charles Watts

Special Collections & Rare Books  
Room 7100, Bennett Library  
Simon Fraser University  
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6  
Tel: [REDACTED]; Fax: [REDACTED]  
E-mail: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

725. **Robert Zamsky**

**Re: *The lost tampon***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

Kent:

Sorry that I can't help you with the title of the movie you're thinking about -- it sounds great. I was just wondering why it's a shame that viewers today wouldn't be amazed as they were when the film came out. I mean, on the one hand, I can understand the sentiment -- and even share it. Readers/viewers shouldn't loose touch with what was newinterestingfresh in a work from days gone by. We should be able to consider and appreciate how great something was in its time. On the other hand, why? We can never truly appreciate something in its time because we're not there. To see it as it was would mean being where/as it was at its original moment -- a kind of leap back into time. Which, of course, we can't really do (though certain critics would have it that we do some such thing each time we read a work). What I mean is, things change. Of course they do -- as you say, it's inevitable. All I'm saying is that I think not only is this change inevitable, it is in fact desirable. As something is re-experienced in a culture, it gains a kind of cumulative significance, so that what was ground-breaking becomes standard. This, it seems to me, is the process of artistic history, and the understanding of this cumulation of significance is an understanding of the work within (its) history.

Just some thoughts, as I jump back onto the list after a bit of an absence.

rob zamsky

[↑ Contents](#)

726. **Tenney Nathanson**

**Re: *Who Katy Lederer is***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

---

At 04:12 PM 1/21/98 -0500, you wrote:

>A tip of the pin to Lisa Jarnot for including in a handsome number of  
>smart young poet-critics (jeeppers, more contemporaries) during her tenure

>at the PoProjNwsltr. This month's "find" is got to be Loren Goodman, whose  
>review of Kristin Prevallet's Ernstwerk is got to be the funniest thing in  
>poetry land since Exile folded up its little hat.

Hi Jordon. Loren is an ex-Kochie, as you probably know, then slid through here getting an MFA without getting too scathed; a funny and smart poet as well as, apparently, a reviewer.

Tenney ("here" btw is U of Arizona, not Starnet....)

[↑ Contents](#)

727. **Graham W Foust**  
*the age of wire and string*

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

fjb asked about Ben Marcus:

Yes! I'd forgotten (until recently) about that book as well. Saw it in a used bookstore last summer in DC. Too expensive, so I checked it out from the library (then left it on the subway on my way to return it, but confession would be digression).

So yeah, *The Age of Wire and String* is really, as resident alien D. Bromige would say, "a corker." A kind of hyperspace on paper. Delany and Duncan play Dungeons and Dexedrine. "Dig it," as Ben Friedlander would say . . .

Noticed recently during a wild frenzy of re-reading that Marcus was present for the New Co(a)st conference. Check out his piece "Pump and Glow" in the Technique section if'n you have it.

I didn't really associate him with the Lish crew, though. It seemed more "speculative" than that, but speculative by way of the present, for the present (if that can be dug). Also very moving, as in both soap opera and trailer park.

I did have to start it three times, though. The first two tries had me at about page 20 with nowhere to want to go. The charming time, however, saw it catch a brainwave. So give this book a chance, maybe a few, por favor.

Also been very into Martha Ronk's *State of Mind* (Sun and Moon) as of late, and (as a latecomer, and despite the Vendler blurb) Lucie Brock-Broido's *The Master Letters* (Knopf, too).

Listening has consisted of the new Portishead (Sade on smack and in traction), the AC/DC soundtrack to Maximum Overdrive (*Who Made Who*, which I just mistyped as *Who Made Whoaaaaa*), and our own Franklin Bruno's *A Bedroom Community*. Oh, and also the Rolling Stones *Let it Bleed*, because I'm teaching it to my students along with some Greil Marcus (no relation to Ben,

Marcus that is) essays, despite the fact that Tom Mandel think his daddy (Greil's) dresses him (still Greil) funny (which he probably does).

go cat go,

Graham

p.s. as the newest, radicalist poet on the block I propose to saw my left arm off at my next reading (May 15th, Atticus Books, WDC!). This reading will also mark the premier of sections 1-98 of my new long poem, "The Hermit's Guide to Cocktails; or, This is Not a James Tate Poem."

[↑ Contents](#)

728. **Thomas Bell**

***Re: tail wags dog?***

Thu 22 Jan 1998

---

Bob,

In thinking about this issue in the last week, I have come to the conclusion that possibly it's more likely another case of academicians following along behind (albeit only slightly in this case) what's happening out here. Just a glance at what's been posted here should convince most people that vizpo is and was a major event. Perhaps you should take Dr. Perloff's symposium at face value as an attempt to catch up with and study what's going on. In that sense she would welcome your and vizpo's input - I have not seen any thing to contradict this.

I think it would be unfortunate if your words in the last few paragraphs of your post (quoted below) were obscured by argument. tom bell

At 11:44 AM 1/22/98 -0500, Bob Grumman wrote:

>Marjorie Perloff was gracious enough to send

Interesting post on vizpo Bob, but it seems to me that the major difference you point to is one of who is a good vizpoet (?word). This takes it back (a step or two, I think) to frequently aired list controversies such as academy/critic vs. practitioner and langpo vs. something other. I'm not interested in bringing them up again, particularly as they obscure your statements that are of real importance:

*I more and more believe that my function as a poet is to bring aesthetic pleasure to as much of the world as I can--to repay all the poets who have given me pleasure. I thus believe that winning a public (not only for myself but for other poets I admire) is as much of a part of being a poet as manipulating words (and the like). This means getting academic and/or commercial acceptance. I don't see any way around it.*



*As a serious poet, I also want as many people to see my work as possible so that I can benefit from their responses to it. This is even more the case with my criticism. How can I know if what I'm doing is effective if I keep it from all but a few?*

*Moreover, a grant or two could certainly come in handy. There's nothing wrong with wanting an occasional pat on the back, either.*

*Many visual poets would disagree with me about academic recognition, grants, and the rest of it. But I'm quite sure they share my irritation with having an art that we've had to practice in near-total isolation for over thirty years in some cases further obscured by a wing of langpo that seems almost completely to miss the lyrical/metaphorical possibilities of visual poetry, focusing instead on typography as a form of cuing or decoration. These others don't want the recognition of the establishment, they just don't want to have dirt kicked at them any more than they already have.*

Bob

Grumman

[↑ Contents](#)

729. **Steven Marks**

### ***Review of Age of Wire and String***

*Thu 22 Jan 1998*

For those interested, there is a combined review of Ben Marcus's "Age of Wire and String" and "Annotations" by John Keene at my web site. URL is

<http://members.aol.com/swmarks/wsa.html>

Review first appeared in "The Boston Book Review."

Steven

On Wed, 21 Jan 1998, Franklin Bruno wrote:

*Has anyone else here read the other folks I mention (Marcus' -Age of Wire and String- is one of the strangest works I've come across for a while), even with contempt?*

*fjb*

---

Steven Marks

<http://members.aol.com/swmarks/welcome.html>

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[↑ Contents](#)

730. **groberts**

***To the Historian of My New Poet***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

To tell you the truth, entre nous  
I never knew him personally,  
So there's really no reason he  
Should remember me purposively  
In his account of who knew who  
In the unaccountable coincidence  
Of what was once new: enter you.

Gary R.

[↑ Contents](#)

731. **George Bowering**

***Re: Infamous spellings***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

*Reading Ted Berrigan's lecture on writing sonnets I came across this transcription of a Shakespeare line: "They rightly do inherent heaven's graces." I must admit to being a spelling snob, to the extent that I am dismissive of opinions expressed about "Alan Ginsburg" or "Finnegan's Wake" or "The Wasteland" or "Harry Matthews." This is not to say I am immune from error myself, just that the automatic pedantic reflex persists in me.*

*Jonathan Mayhew*

Good on ya, J. We need more such careful eyes and ears.

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

732. **Don Byrd**

***Re: the new don ron don the new don ron***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

Let me say to Mark Wallace that I am neither bored nor betrayed and whatever disappointment about the poetry scene that I might have has much more to do with my own generation than with yours. It's none of my business what you or any one else might do.

There are so many threads going, I'll take them randomly.

1. Ron says that the NEA supported only--what?-- The Figures, Roof, and Sun & Moon. Not true. Those are the presses it supported that interested him, and I assume that is what he means. It supported dozens of presses, the names of which neither of us would recognize and whose books we have never read. One year it also gave individual-artist grants to several Language Poets, but that was it: they had there one panel for poets who did not trace they pedigrees directly or indirectly to Iowa City. Language Poetry managed to get itself identified as the alternative to the academic mainstream, and the NEA and other granting institutions in their wisdom never heard of any one else.

2. If we are placing blames, which seem to be a major activity on this list, the sad state of poetry rests squarely on the shoulders of the poets of my and Ron's generation. Joel Oppenheimer used to say, "If someone is twenty and a poet, it is because s/he is twenty; if some some is forty and a poet, it is because s/he is a poet." If one makes it to sixty, one enters another territory. I remember a talk that Duncan gave in the 70s here in Albany, looking forward to an old age in which he imagined being like Henry James. At any rate, it seems to me that those of us who are now forty to sixty have failed to really establish an identity. It is sad indeed that the easiest way to stir up a lively discussion on this list is to make some broad generalization about LangPo, either positive or negative. This is a term that goes back twenty years. It was introduced about the time of the first Apple computers. By the mid-80s (when did the L=A=N=U=A=G=E book come out?), the documents of the movement were being archived for literary history by the university presses.

3. What are the terms of this failure? If you want to stick it to us, Mark, it is not that we are bored and betrayed.

a. Language Poetry made a major move in calling organicism into question. This was an aesthetic that belonged to romanticism and and was renovated by the New American Poets. That is, the New American Poets recovered organicism from the reactionaries, Eliot and the neo-metaphysicals. The LPs responded: "I hate speech"; "Not the breath-line, the new sentence"; "expose the devices"; "non-referentiality"; etc. It would be possible, I think, to reduce

the various manifestos to a series of commandments, rather like Pound's Imagist Manifesto--that is, plenty to support a few inventive poets to develop an identifiable mode and to leave a mark on poetry after the mode has run from Imagism to Amyism, but it was not sufficient to support an aesthetic in the larger sense. Consider what it took to get from Imagism to the full-blown modernism that supported the work in old-age of Eliot, Pound, H.D., Williams, Stevens, Stein, et. al. Four Quartets, Pisan Cantos, Paterson, and Trilogy are structurally a long ways from "The Station in the Metro." We have not laid the foundations for such a work, I am afraid. There is great work being done, but it suffers from the fact that people are going it alone (it has the problem of what Kenner called "the home made").

The new sentence is supple and exciting form in Ron Silliman's hands, but as a form its rhythmic and larger formal possibilities are limited. Watten's *\_Frame\_*, which is always intellectually inventive, is a torture machine of short, disjunct declarative sentences: S-V-O (stop) S-V-O (stop). The pattern so quickly burns paths in the neurons, deadening a long the way, that a couple of pages seems to me the limit of reading.

And across the board writing suffers from a poverty of connectivity. I would guess that in the intellectual history of the next century, if we manage to survive to have one, this time will be seen not as post-structuralist but the time of triumphant structuralism. Computers are form and the formal invention that powers the MIT Media Lab is unprecedented. But there is hardly a sign of this fact in the discussion of poetics.

b. Information. At the time, the question of how to deal with information became the foremost intellectual issue, poetry emptied itself out. As an initial move in handling the information glut, that is perhaps necessary, but an art form cannot long cut itself off from the prime intellectual issues of its time.

c. Content (the larger sense of information. Knowledge). This from a recent news report:

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Economic growth that continued at a feverish pace in 1997 is outstripping the earth's ability to furnish resources to fuel future growth, the Worldwatch Institute said Saturday. "The global economy as now structured cannot continue to expand much longer if the ecosystem on which it depends continues to deteriorate at the current rate," Worldwatch's "State of the World" report, an annual assessment of mankind's impact on the environment, said. "The challenge facing the entire world is to design an economy that can satisfy the basic needs of people everywhere without self-destructing. The enormity of this task is matched only by its urgency," the report said.

The only poetry that I know that attempts to face this urgency is sentimental and hopelessly naive. Why?

Well, that's the beginning of a response.

Don

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd ( [REDACTED], [REDACTED] )  
Department of English  
State University of New York  
Albany, NY 12222  
[REDACTED] (work); [REDACTED] (home); [REDACTED] (fax)  
The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

733. **henry gould**

***Re: the new don ron don the new don ron***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

On Fri, 23 Jan 1998 00:01:32 -0800 Don Byrd said:

>structurally a long ways from "The Station in the Metro." We have not laid  
>the foundations for such a work, I am afraid. There is great work being done,  
>of what Kenner called "the home made").

I've always felt the homemade is the most avant-garde. Doesn't this  
relate to your concluding paragraph on the politics of the world eco-  
economy?

>

>

>"The global economy as now structured cannot continue to expand much  
longer if

>the ecosystem on which it depends continues to deteriorate at the current  
>rate," Worldwatch's "State of the World" report, an annual assessment of  
>mankind's impact on the environment, said.

>the basic needs of people everywhere without self-destructing. The enormity  
of

>this task is matched only by its urgency," the report said.

>

> The only poetry that I know that attempts to face this urgency is  
>sentimental and hopelessly naive. Why?

>

I tried to start answering this with my post on the rhetoric of political poetry.  
But maybe all the homemakers out there were put off by the Auden reference. A  
hermetically-autonomous art form loses a feel for "urgency" or the "form &

pressure of the time" pretty quickly. There are no easy answers, though rhetoric is the art of fluency, eloquence & persuasion. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

734. **Tom Mandel**

***bourbon***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

Don,

"...Oh, and the bourbon--Knob Creek, when for special occasions, Walker Evans (better than JD at a little more than half the price) for everyday."

"Walker Evans?" I had his photo of Saratoga NY pinned on a wall once. Is this related to the Catskills school of poetry?

Tom

Tom Mandel

\*\*\*\*\*

Screen Porch \* <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 \* vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22031 \* fax: [REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

735. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Re: French disease***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

Fair enuff, Jacques....Altho an ongoing project has a certain continuity (or may) and we might or might not wanna use the same yardstick for it, as for the work of someone in the early stages of finding their footing...

But....A bunch of Atlanta poets were pouring over the Philly Talks among other items last night...And we all agreed that we couldn't make much sense out of this French-influence claim.

Maybe you Jacques could clarify who or what is carrying out this sinister gaullic incursion onto the current poetic scene....Maybe Ron himself...??

Mark P.

On Thu, 22 Jan 1998, Jacques Debrot wrote:

*Mark Wallace, in his excellent post, raises questions about the identity of the "new". For what it's worth, the need for the new seems to me an expression of the mind's need & capacity for self-estrangement -- what Raymond Williams calls "the active struggle for new consciousness through new relationships." Obviously, even the most difficult work will become familiar over time. So that the need for "radical" innovation is the result of a crisis arising from the domesticating assimilation of previously difficult work. I think Silliman is probably right to regard "the French-influenced short abstract lyric" as "the poetry of utter habit." \*But overlooked in these posts is that the onus of habit falls perhaps even more heavily on established writers than on emerging ones.\* And one could or should -- despite its obvious brilliance -- fairly ask what precisely is radically \*new\* about the latest installments of \*The Alphabet\*?*

[↑ Contents](#)

736. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Re: the new don ron don the new don ron***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

I think Don Byrd's long "beginning of an explanation" about his disappointments is a wonderful and eloquent post. I certainly acknowledge the point about the "emptying out" of poetry (like a some cagean buddhic mind)...But it's really exaggerated..Not invalid, but as put quite overstated. The politix in Silliman and Bernstein is real and intense. Susan Howe is certainly the finest poet working today, in the U.S., for my money. Her nexus of historical flutter, collapse and flow, can hardly be said to be empty..

Equally importaintly, Don: Just how were the Pisan Cantos and Paterson less "home made" than the Alphabet, or the Crystal Text, or Melville's Marginalia....If there's a cobbled aspect to U.S. poetry, it stretches throughout the century (or rather, it starts with Dickenson and Whitman).

Mark  
Atlanta

[↑ Contents](#)

737. **Henry Gould**

***Re: the new don ron don the new don ron***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

On Fri, 23 Jan 1998 09:46:40 -0500 Mark Prejsnar said:

The politix in Silliman and Bernstein is real and intense.

>Susan Howe is certainly the finest poet working today, in the U.S., for my

>money. Her nexus of historical flutter, collapse and flow, can hardly be  
>said to be empty..

These are good points, Mark, I don't think anyone would deny them. What I would like to ask (again!) is whether the techniques they've chosen are the only ones available. Obviously if you took all three you'd have a great variety of techniques & literary & para-literary strategies. But what links them is a disruption & renunciation of the clear statement, the direct approach, the traditional phrase, rhythm, stanza, period, and obvious logic. All well & good. But the resulting hermeticism is understandable.

I am well aware that the tenor of my last three posts (& now I will be quiet, folks) seems to contradict what I was saying a few days ago about artistic integrity, Montale's "free man", etc. Montale himself had to deal with critical attacks on his a-politicalness, his supposed hermeticism. Poetry walks the boundary lines. If there's POETRY there - somehow - it will absorb autonomy & immediacy without losing its balance. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

738. **David Zauhar**

***Re: the new don ron don the new don ron***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

On Fri, 23 Jan 1998, Don Byrd wrote:

> It is sad indeed that the easiest way  
> to stir up a lively discussion on this list is to make some broad  
> generalization about LangPo, either positive or negative. This is a term that  
> goes back twenty years. It was introduced about the time of the first Apple  
> computers. By the mid-80s (when did the L=A=N=U=A=G=E book come out?), the  
> documents of the movement were being archived for literary history by the  
> university presses.

\_The L=A=N=G=etc.etc.\_ Book came out in 1984. It slipped out of print for a while then SIU press republished it last year. And as the preface by Bernstein and Andrew points out, the first issue of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E came out almost 20 years ago exactly: February 1978.

Lost in the Archive

DZ

[↑ Contents](#)



739. **Mark Prejsnar**

**Re: the new don ron don the new don ron**

Fri 23 Jan 1998

---

On Fri, 23 Jan 1998, Henry Gould wrote:

*On Fri, 23 Jan 1998 09:46:40 -0500 Mark Prejsnar said:  
The politix in Silliman and Bernstein is real and intense.  
Susan Howe is certainly the finest poet working today, in the U.S., for my  
money. Her nexus of historical flutter, collapse and flow, can hardly be  
said to be empty..*

*These are good points, Mark, I don't think anyone would deny them.  
What I would like to ask (again!) is whether the techniques they've  
chosen are the only ones available. Obviously if you took all three  
you'd have a great variety of techniques & literary & para-literary  
strategies. But what links them is a disruption & renunciation of  
the clear statement, the direct approach, the traditional phrase,  
rhythm, stanza, period, and obvious logic. All well & good.  
But the resulting hermeticism is understandable.*

No they are not the only ones available...Just the ones I personally find most urgent, vital, striking, effective, passionate....

You don't have to like 'em. They represent one of the frames that helps to define my own interests as a poet, reader and editor.

Other ways of writing can be quite interesting, such as your fine poem, Reflections on a Still Life, which I published in the current Misc. Proj. (It's gotten some very positive responses from readers not very close to your esthetic, by the way.) But just as Howe or Coolidge are probably always gonna remain at one remove from your central interests, so your traditional phrase and obvious logic will remain at one remove from mine.

Agreeing to disagree can be productive.

[↑ Contents](#)

740. **Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher**

**Re: the new don ron don the new don ron**

Fri 23 Jan 1998

---

don, that was a nice post!--i take it more as an attempt to survey the context for reception (e.g., ecological) than as a statement re aesthetics per se... though of course "sentimental" and "naive" are/can be aesthetic evaluations...

but your assertions carry political weight--i mean very specifically, in a more partisan sense of the word... my understanding of what you've posted is that

you believe there may be a way for poetic practice to intervene more directly, say, in eco-issues... i like to think so too---that is, w/o being entirely idealistic, that the way(s) we speak and write and so forth have a bearing on how we "make" the world, directly and indirectly and locally (and i'm heedful of that "we")... and i'm certain you don't mean to say that we should all start writing (as some have) about our love of rivers and stars and such (not that i have anything against rivers and stars and such---i'd like to spend more time with same!)...

of course this would suggest attending to certain "empirical" realities, or realities so defined, no?... i am aware of your predilection for moving in directions scientific-technological, and you are aware of mine (and i know, too, that carlo lurks hereabouts!)... but i guess i'm asking how you think contemporary poetic issues might best be situated in light of those realities that you find most pressing?...

i don't think this reduces to "an" aesthetic, or "a" poetic... but i think multiple aesthetix/poetix can be aligned, or practiced, wrt pressing issues (say---though there are many who would object)... after listening to marjorie p last night (here in chicago to discuss, brilliantly, the poetry of frank o'hara wrt the painting of jasper johns) it's also abundantly clear to me that the present moment's understanding of the present moment is hopelessly incomplete---distance brings its own rewards... but i'd greatly appreciate it, as i think others might, if you would hazard a guess or two about what you find to be hopeful directions, b/c it \*does\* seem that you find 'what's goin' on' to be, not uninspired, but ineffective... and while this may comprise a mood (if you will) out of which to write, it may not be sufficient to connecting---however...

best,

joe

[↑ Contents](#)

741. **Bob Grumman**

***Re: tail wags dog?***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

I haven't much to say to Tom Bell's post except that for me a major question is not who're good visual poets, who not, so much as who are genuine visual poets, who are not; I believe many poets discussed in Marjorie Perloff's seminar--perhaps all--deserve discussion; but not as visual poets. As for Perloff's welcoming input from my group, I fear I've yet to see any genuine indication of this.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

742. **d powell**

***Re: The lost tampon***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

KENT JOHNSON wrote:

In the end, the two women fall in love with >each  
>other, which French women in the movies always seem to do. Well, >I  
>know that sounds terrible, but that's about all I can remember >from  
>that movie. Does anyone out there know what I'm talking about?

>

>I don't.

>

>Kent

>

Kent,

Yes, Here is San Francisco we call it "Lesbianism"

Doug

=====

D A Powell

=====

[↑ Contents](#)

743. **hen**

***Re: the new don ron don the new don ron***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

On Fri, 23 Jan 1998 11:45:39 -0500 Mark Prejsnar said:

>No they are not the only ones available...Just the ones I personally find  
>most urgent, vital, striking, effective, passionate....

>

>You don't have to like 'em. They represent one of the frames that helps  
>to define my own interests as a poet, reader and editor.

But I do like them. I like them very much, when they're interesting.

>

>Agreeing to disagree can be productive.

That's one reason I keep piping up. (the other reason has to do with appreciating your gracious praise. It starts with a V & is probably one of the cardinal sins.) - Henry G.

[↑ Contents](#)

744. **Robert J Tiess**

***Book-length Poetry Publishers***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

Can anyone please backchannel me with recommendations for book-length (from 90 - 300 pp), non-vanity poetry publishers? I have an epic and some other works and am extending my market research beyond LMP. I would consider both print and electronic/web publishers. If anyone knows of an agent who would consider poetry (I know most do not), I would appreciate that information as well. Thank you in advance.

Robert  
members.tripod.com/~rtiess

[↑ Contents](#)

745. **Gary Sullivan**

***Response to Don's Post***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

Hello, Don:

Thanks for that post; wow. A response, including a few hairs & heirs to split:

It was actually the Canadian poet Victor Coleman who first said, in print, "SPEECH SUCKS," a poem with that title written circa 1967, 1969, which appeared as the title poem in a collection very early in the 70s. 1969 also saw John Perrault's (sp.?) LUCKY, a language-as-written-thing collection I've never seen mentioned by anyone, despite publisher Kulchur's highly visible presence throughout the 60s & early 70s. I think the New American Poets as speech-based recoverers of organicism isn't quite the case-in-full. Whalen--who generously gave his volumes of Stein to Coolidge when he was through with them--shifts from (more-or-less) "written talk" to (more-or-less) "written thought," mid-sixties. Olson hardly spoke for everyone. Wieners's BEHIND THE STATE CAPITOL, published mid-70s (the writing itself, I think, covering several earlier years, possibly back into the 60s), though filled with richly sonorous poetry, is

also filled with non-verbalizable ("purely" visual) experiments with typography--not to mention lots of collaged things from newspapers, magazines, & Wieners's own photos. There is a sense I get, reading this consciously W R I T T E N book from cover-to-cover, of not mental breakdown (the usual dismissal of the work), but of spoken language being corroded by & in the act of being written down. Which is not to favor the spoken over the written, but to suggest an attention to organicism, to speaking and to writing, to the relationship between these that goes beyond the naive and/or sentimental. Much of the book foregrounds language, exposes the devices, and is non- or at least difficultly-referential. Two subsequent volumes of work in this vein were supposed to appear--but Wieners reportedly shoved pages of these manuscripts beneath car tires in Cambridge one rainy night in response to the lack of response to BEHIND THE STATE CAPITOL. This act suggests that Wieners's intention with the book was overtly PUBLIC, & his destruction of other work written this period & in this vein suggests a perceived failure--he was, in my opinion, too hasty, impatient; BEHIND THE STATE CAPITOL being THE book I, & a number of my poet friends, return to most often when considerations relative to "how to proceed" arise. Wieners is a poet, not an art historian, but my sense is that he was, then, aware of the contemporary landscape, & had fairly clear ideas as to the consequences of certain shifts. He had been, after all, institutionalized, & had his own "organicism" if you will, brutalized by--what else to call it--"a collective mind." (Mob mentality, prejudice, notions of "correct behavior," etc.) The title, BEHIND THE STATE CAPITOL, suggests, if nothing else, his "position." All this to say, I don't see your "going it alone" or Kenner's "home made" as negatives. The shiftings you point to were initially prodded by individuals, not groups. This is not romanticism, but a cold, studied look at the activity, the collective activity, of the human race, & of its consequences. I'd really like to invite you to backchannel me your address so I can send you Daniel Davidson's extension of this project (Dan knew Wieners's work well, though he never wrote publicly about it), CULTURE. This book-in-manuscript absolutely faces the present situation, as you describe it, & does so with intelligence & wit, having been as coldly considered as it was passionately made manifest. There are other writings along these lines, by others, I can send you--none of which has yet surfaced very publicly.

Anyway--I hope the above, hair-splitting aside, suggests more essential agreement than argument with what you say. Your post was the most compelling I've personally seen on this list. Thanks for taking the time to do it.

Yours,

Gary Sullivan



[↑ Contents](#)

746. **Christina Fairbank Chirot**

**Re: Wave length**

Fri 23 Jan 1998

---

In Strangers on a Train, in the famous carousel scene, Hitchcock has the camera moving back on a dolly rail while at the same time zooming "forward"--(the film was made in I believe 1953--Raymond Chanlder worked on the screenplay--)

"baring the device"--among the first and still the best films ever done on this were made in the 1920's--Man with a Movie Camera by Dziga Vertov and The Cameraman by Bustweeer Keaton, in Hollywood--

there was a famous double issue of Cahiers du Cinema in the late 1960s on Russian cinema, poetry, etc, their interrelationships-a lot of it on Vertov--just as Godard was beginning to get interested iin "Kino Eye" writings by Vertov, which had a great influence at the time--(forty years after their appearance in Russia--)

not long after was the huge "Moscou-Paris" show in Paris, of Futurism, Constructivism, Suprematism, etc

that Cahiers issue includes the famous photo of Mayakovsky, Pasternak and Osip and Lili Brik together--staring down the camera--

btw, Kent--it was not Smithson who influenced the Russians, but the other way around--expecially Malevich has a large effect on him--see the essay "Sedimentations of the Mind: Earth Projects"

Smithson notes as well that the work of Edgar Allen Poe's in Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym should be considered--as art criticism appropriate to Smithson's Earth Projects--

(See John Irwin's great book dealing in large part with this work of Poe's, American Hieroglyphs: The Egyptian Hieroglyphs in the American Renaissance John Hopkins UP, I think 1979)

--if you think about it, a good deal of Poe's work is about baring devices/conceling devices/revealing devices, in a dizzying hall of mirrors--

which mirrors show frequently in various of Smithson's projects of the Sixties--including the one in which the mirrors cancel out, so that the "spectator/actor" stadning the in the mirror chamber becomes--invisible!

--dave baptiste chirot

[↑ Contents](#)

747. **KENT JOHNSON**

**Re: Wave length**

Fri 23 Jan 1998

---

Dave:

interesting post. But given your response and the equally nice one from Robert Zamsky, it seems the lost tampon has been taken much more literally than I intended it to be taken. Tongue in cheek, for the greater part, heavy on the irony, even if only comprehensible to myself. And I've done quite a bit of my own

looking into Smithson and also the Russians, so I'm aware of the chronology. Chronology has been such a preoccupation on the list of late.

But then, how do we really know that Malevich (who swore by such things) didn't travel forward (like a camera, in an impossibly slow way) to stand somewhere in Passaic inside one of Smithson's Mirror Displacements, witness the concept of his vanishing, and then \*poof\* reappear back in Moscow, to create the works that later came to influence Smithson's mirror displacements? Time coils in on itself and then slowly sinks back into a dead lake. As Jordan Davis might put it in his marvellously laconic way: you never know.

Hurrah for Malevich.

Hurrah for Smithson.

and Hurrah, above all, for Poe, wiht whom I shared opium one magical afternoon by the Milwaukee River in 1996 (it was lightly snowing). I will not soon forget his parting words of warning, nor his raven form, slowly flapping east toward Baltimore, where he would come to write Pym and then die, misunderstood, rabid, alone.

Kent

*On 23 Jan. David Baptiste Chirot wrote:*

*In Strangers on a Train, in the famous carousel scene, Hitchcock has the camera moving back on a dolly rail while at the same time zooming "forward"--*

*(the film was made in I believe 1953--Raymond Chanlder worked on the screenplay--)*

*"baring the device"--among the first and still the best films ever done on this were made in the 1920's--Man with a Movie Camera by Dziga Vertov and The Cameraman by Bustwever Keaton, in Hollywood--*

*there was a famous double issue of Cahiers du Cinema in the late 1960s on Russian cinema, poetry, etc, their interrelationships--a lot of it on Vertov--just as Godard was beginning to get interested iin "Kino Eye" writings by Vertov, which had a great influence at the time--(forty years after their appearance in Russia--)*

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*Osip and Lili Brik together--staring down the camera--*

*btw, Kent--it was not Smithson who influenced the Russians, but the other way around--expecially Malevich has a large effect on him--see the essay "Sedimentations of the Mind: Earth Projects"*

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*which mirrors show frequently in various of Smithson's projects of the Sixties--including the one in which the mirrors cancel out, so that the "spectator/actor" stadning the in the mirror chamber becomes--invisible!*

*--dave baptiste chirot*

[↑ Contents](#)

748. **k. lederer**

**Re: The new as per young and old... loneliness... Dale Smith**

Fri 23 Jan 1998

---

On Thu, 22 Jan 1998, Steve Evans wrote:

>

> Oppen's lines bring one further thing to mind. The question of how to make  
> it new takes on a different urgency in an established writer, I think, and  
> it must be tempting to displace the crisis onto the young in the form of  
> surly dismissals / loving prods. Has Ron succeeded in making it "really  
> new" in the years since \_Ketjak\_? I've heard knowledgable contemporaries,  
> young and old, dispute the question pretty hotly, and the outcome is not  
> every time in Ron's favor.

>

(Also as to the unfortunate discussion of penis size that went on yesterday...)

(Also as to Dale Smith's critiques of various langpo styles...)

(Also as to the brilliant intro to Jennifer Moxley's Imagination Verses...)

"A language is therefore on the hither side of Literature. Style is almost beyond it: imagery, delivery, vocabulary spring from the body and the past of the writer and gradually become the very reflexes of his art. Thus under the name of style a self-sufficient language is evolved which has its roots only in the depths of the author's personal and secret mythology, that subnature of expression where the first coition of words and things takes place, where once and for all the great verbal themes of his existence come to be installed. Whatever its sophistication, style has always something crude about it: it is form with no clear destination, the product of a thrust, not an intention, and, as it were, a vertical and lonely dimension of thought. Its frame of reference is biological or



biographical, not historical; it is the writer's 'thing', his glory and his prison, it is his solitude..." (Barthes, Writing Degree Zero)

Who wants to be original--alone?

Can (an implicitly stylized) writing ever take the form of a contract between the writer and the reader? Is this what you are asking for, Dale?

Katy

=====

*The Impercipient Lecture Series*  
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[↑ Contents](#)

749. **Henry Gould**

**Re: Wave length**

Fri 23 Jan 1998

---

see Irwin's follow-up book, MYSTERY TO A SOLUTION, to the absolosalute ultimitlutate on "mirrors" (& chess, & identity...)

E.P./E.P.

W.S./W.S.

[↑ Contents](#)

750. **KENT JOHNSON**

**Plagiarism**

Fri 23 Jan 1998

---

Hurrah for Gary Sullivan's fascinating post on Wieners, et.al.

And Hurrah for his stunning revelation, which casts everything in a sudden new light: that the fruit-laden tree of American Language poetry has its beginnings in an epochal short poem that is plagiarized out of Canada.

Or would that be partly to the whole point?

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

751. **KENT JOHNSON**

**Length, without wave**

Fri 23 Jan 1998

---

On 23 Jan. Katy Lederer wrote:

*Also as to the unfortunate discussion of penis size that went on yesterday...*

Katy, you are right, and I do apologize to the list for contributing to that discussion. If a person's penis is as long as a horse's, it is in no way something to joke about.

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

752. **Jacques Debrot**

**Re: Weiners, Ceravolo, et al**

Fri 23 Jan 1998

---

From the perspective of the present day the development of LangPo from the most radical innovations of the New Americans seems inevitable. But this

inevitability is imaginary & Gary Sullivan's remarks about looking to Wieners -- I, myself, would cite Ceravolo just as readily -- "when considerations relative to how to proceed arise" seems extremely suggestive. Perhaps one way to proceed is to consider -- to re-imagine -- what different lines of development New American writing might have taken in moving away from referentiality other than those exploited by LangPo.

[↑ Contents](#)

753. **Safdie Joseph**

***Re: The new; Dale; langpo; tradition***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

It's hard to keep up lately -- did all these various and variously interesting posts about the new vis-a-vis langpo really start when David Bromige asked, innocently enough, if the list (January '98) were pro- or anti- langpo? Did David ever really answer my response to him last week before Dale (and, to a lesser extent, Henry) picked up the ball? I wonder what percentage of time people actually SPEND on the list -- an hour a day? More? This is the first chance I've had to respond to things in a week, other than furtive back-channels . . .

Anyway, a few thoughts about:      1) Langpo. Yes, I agree it's sad when people feel they have to make "large general statements," the distaste for which I suppose begat Dale's readings of the Watten stanza followed by alternate readings by cris and David and Joel. My question about that mini-thread is: when did a poem's capacity to generate multiple interpretations become something of value? Aren't we really going back to *\_Seven Types of Ambiguity\_* here?

I noticed that Ron Silliman, in an essay I generally admired in *\_ILS\_ #4*, had some kind words about the new critics, saying that their "reactionary aesthetic and political worldview" was the only thing really at issue; for many of us, though, the whole project of new criticism was fundamentally unsound (perhaps for reasons of "organicism") and langpo's early resemblance to that project generated suspicion. In the same issue, he says "an issue that continually lurks near the surface (and also near the heart) of almost all language writing is an ambivalence of intention, of intentionality as such." Well, call me a philistine, but I'm a little tired of "texts" that demand such response -- they become too much of an intellectual parlor game and such practice reduces the poem to the level of a jigsaw puzzle. When I think of what I VALUE in poetry, I think of information (and not solely in terms of Don Byrd's valuable example of such); I think of the skillful demolition of linguistic habit, the "dead, stinking dead, usages of the past"; I think of music; I think of truth and beauty; but I never, NEVER think "gee I like this because I think it means one thing but other people might think it means another." (I thought of this while listening to the news

last night and hearing "suborning of perjury is difficult to prove because conversations are abstract -- it's difficult to say what they mean" And if CONVERSATIONS are abstract . . .)

So for me there's something attractive about what Henry calls the poetry of plain statement (forgive me Henry if that's not exactly what you said). Is there anyone on this list who doesn't REVERE early Auden? As another example (and in answer to a request by David Bromige) here's some stanzas from a long poem by Tom Clark, "Early Warning":

43

Driven together by a desire to contend  
Knowing no life but that of rivalry  
They continued to buy and sell each other's souls  
Even in this enclave of fugitives  
Though allegedly they were dedicated to poetry  
Instead it was envy that motivated them  
So that they resembled rabid dogs  
Traveling in a pack with maximum infighting  
The attention of the group turned instantly to any  
Renegade who threatened to outdistance  
The rest, and this outlaw was collectively attacked

44

Mutual reinforcement's the name of the game  
to survive in the "arts" you've got to be a believer  
if not to a school, then to a club,  
a cell, a lodge, a party, a police force,  
only the party standard bearers  
are awarded the laurels of the party  
all non-believers are branded "paranoid" --  
distrustful, dangerously suspicious (i.e., wise  
to the condition of being outsiders); I'm  
(for instance) as ingenuous and naively trusting  
as your average Sudanese mercenary killer.

45

There is no interpretation necessary.  
You got to deal with the man the way  
the man going to deal with you. No hate  
but to relate to history not forgetting  
the mistake of those who'd evade it. Sticks  
and stones will certainly break my brittle  
bones but the stunted drone of the many

poetry clones only makes me laugh and study  
ways to gain a new power over words  
that are so stubborn, to steer them into  
clear and simple sentences is a good lifetime's work.

Qualifications positively leap to the fore. I'm not claiming this is one of Tom's best works; what I'm saying is that, for me, the lack of necessity to "interpret" is sometimes a pleasure in and of itself.

2) The New. I think that the question "Is Ron's alphabet sequence really new?" is an ultimately degrading question. Shouldn't we be asking instead "is it GOOD?" People on this list have called it brilliant but still question its "newness" pedigree: this seems absurd! Granted, one's relation to The Tradition can be transgressive -- it's nice to assume that one would have been right there with Wordsworth and Coleridge in the *Lyrical Ballads* speaking the real language of men, that one wouldn't have been among the Georgian poets Pound held up to scorn in the Imagist Manifesto; as frequently stated in another context, history is written by the winners. But for me, the anxiety of determining if one's work is "truly, truly new" is academic in the worst sense. That way lies fetishism. And again, it focuses attention (only) on the material text rather than the world and its complicated and complicating political environment that may have generated that text, the environment we all return to with hopefully-freshened senses and new understanding once we pick our eyes off the page.

Jacques Debrot wrote not long ago about the "the mind's need and capacity for self-estrangement." Sorry, but it's all I can do not to feel estranged, and I don't think I'd turn to poetry first if I truly wanted to feel such. Much too long a post; my apologies to all for that.

[↑ Contents](#)

754. **KENT JOHNSON**

***Bernstein's Viz Po***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

Bob G:

I was just browsing through the Poetics site and happened upon Charles Bernstein's lush grad seminar syllabus for Fall '97. Section 7 of the syllabus is titled "The Visible Word," and I was wondering if you would check that out and tell us how you see it comparing to Marjorie Perloff's syllabus at Stanford.

You can get there by clicking "Poetics Program" on the home page and then on "Graduate Seminars."

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

755. **Bob Grumman**

***Re: vizzipo seman R***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

Whew, Bill, glad to hear from someone more or less agreeing with me! Ironically, you also embarrassed me because I haven't mentioned your press in any of my posts and should have. Yes, your take is close to mine. And I even have some sympathy for Perloff and Drucker's narrowness as I recognize--always have recognized--how much there is in our little field alone that I'm unaware of, and I do try to search it out. I don't think Perloff and Drucker have yet.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

756. **R M Daley**

***barthesian glory***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

On Fri, 23 Jan 1998, k. lederer wrote:

> On Thu, 22 Jan 1998, Steve Evans wrote:

>

> >

> > Oppen's lines bring one further thing to mind. The question of how to make

> > it new takes on a different urgency in an established writer, I think, and

> > it must be tempting to displace the crisis onto the young in the form of

> > surly dismissals / loving prods. Has Ron succeeded in making it "really

> > new" in the years since *Ketjak*? I've heard knowledgeable contemporaries,

> > young and old, dispute the question pretty hotly, and the outcome is not

> > every time in Ron's favor.

> >

> (Also as to the unfortunate discussion of penis size that went on

> yesterday...)

> (Also as to Dale Smith's critiques of various langpo styles...)

> (Also as to the brilliant intro to Jennifer Moxley's *Imagination*

> *Verses*...)

>

> "A language is therefore on the hither side of Literature. Style

> is almost beyond it: imagery, delivery, vocabulary spring from the body

> and the past of the writer and gradually become the very reflexes of his

[illegible]

> >  
> >  
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>

[↑ Contents](#)

757. **William R. Howe**

**Re: vizzipo seman R**

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

bob g.- as you have known i have been running a press publishing visual and experimental work for the past 5 years (tailspin press), and i have often wondered why it is that people like perloff or drucker are turned to by the world at large for a glimpse of visual and spatial poetics rather than you or bob cobbing or john bennett or ihf or cris cheek or jurgen olbrich or even people like dick higgins or kostelanetz or ono madeline gins or alice hutchins or george brecht or ian breakwell for opines about visual work, and i have largely come to 2 concl lose ions. 1, for the most part visually and spatially weird work tends to have a very small circulation outside of special collections, archives, and personal networks (one of the reasons i am here at buffalo is the collection at the rare books room under bob bertholf and mike basinski), and as a consequence people who are outside of the loop only see what they want to see, or rather what they can see easily, and not what nec goes on in our rather insular world. So, books by drucker about artists books (for instance) carry a great deal of weight because they are highly visible even though they are politically motivated to only ground one-of-a-kinds (which are completely unattainable by most standards and thus she can say whatever she wants about them with



relative impunity) or works coming out of granary (her publisher who also makes the books almost completely unduly expensive) and largely ignores small press visual/art book/objects. On the other hand Perloff's seminar is doing what many of her books do, specifically taking a largely unheard of genre (at least in terms of academic writing) and giving it a rather shallow reading, distilling a group of palatable (for main-stream academic and poetry audiences) practitioners, and presenting them as the end-all-be-all of the field. One of her modes is to show that otherwise acclaimed poets are doing this odd quirky thing too, thus giving credence to her judging this "new" field of research worth partaking. What her work does is expose people to experiment, but in a very conservative and often empty way missing many or even all of the high points and showing only tame and watered down art. I'm not sure what my second reason was.

bill                      h o w                      e

[↑ Contents](#)

758. **RaeA100900**  
***address for Charles B.***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

Dear Charles (or anyone else who can help),

I'm sorry to use the List this way, but my e messages to Charles are bouncing back at me. I'm using the same address I've succeeded with previously... Anyway, Charles, I need to talk to you about your reading here. Please e me - or please someone send me his current address. I'm using [REDACTED]

Sorry,

Rae Armantrout

[↑ Contents](#)

759. **Herb Levy**  
***Re: Nancarrow/Oppen?***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

Hi folks,

Soon after the death of the expatriate American composer Conlon Nancarrow this past summer, several folks on the list were looking for more information on Nancarrow's relationship with George & Mary Oppen during their stay in Mexico City (this had been brought up in an exchange in the Village Voice between Jackson Mac Low & Kyle Gann, following Gann's obit column).

tracked down some additional information on this from Charles Amirkhanian, an SF Bay area composer/text-sound artist/radio producer etc., hope someone finds it to be useful:

*Herb,*

*George and Conlon were close as family. Mary Oppen tells a wonderful story about taking CN to Veracruz to buy blank player piano paper. She, George and Conlon were walking down the street when a tall, gorgeous redhead walked past them. Apparently Conlon was so knocked out by seeing her up close that he nearly fainted, or did faint.*

*George was making furniture or supervising people who did. This is how the Oppens got by.*

*They spent many hours talking politics, of course.*

*Don't have any more anecdotes, unfortunately, except that, from a personal point of view, George and Mary encouraged me to call him when I found out that they had known Conlon. So when Carol and I went to Mexico City in June 1969, we told Conlon by phone that we knew George and Mary and that must have partially smoothed the way for this notoriously hermetic individual to open his doors to us.*

*Bests,*

*Charles*

Now back to the new & improved poetry wars.

Bests,

Herb

Herb Levy



[↑ Contents](#)

760. **Herb Levy**

***Re: Bernstein's Viz Po***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

Uh, Kent's directions didn't work for me, but this seems to be the Web page he's referring to.

<<http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/bernstein/syllabi/textual.html>>

*Bob G:*

*I was just browsing through the Poetics site and happened upon*

*Charles Bernstein's lush grad seminar syllabus for Fall '97. Section 7 of the syllabus is titled "The Visible Word," and I was wondering if you would check that out and tell us how you see it comparing to Marjorie Perloff's syllabus at Stanford.*

*You can get there by clicking "Poetics Program" on the home page and then on "Graduate Seminars."*

*Kent*

Herb Levy



[↑ Contents](#)

761. **Henry Gould**  
***fri. night Poetry Wars***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

A ways back in our current keyboard handball game(s) I mumbled something about language poetry being about the difference between presence & ink, text & voice. A playing-up of the difference, based on a reaction to the shell game of identity-voice-presence-naturalistic-organicism. This particular post is not pro or contra anything. I just want to suggest 2 things: 1) maybe Vico was right: writing, text, MAY AS WELL pre-date speech because speech BEGAN as gesture, "drawing". Ut pictura poesis. So that perhaps there is a synthetic view rather than a binary or trinary view to be had of gesture (performance), voice (speech), and writing (drawing). Which leads me to 2): every ORGANIZED artistic move (vorticism, language poetry, what have you) is, as Gary Sullivan suggested, a latecomer - since THE ORIGINAL WORK OF ART IS SELF-GENERATING, SELF-OVERDETERMINED, INSPIRED, SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL, EXTRAORDINARY-ORDER-CREATING - beyond the "plan" of the artist - & why? BECAUSE IT IS AN ULTRA-CORRELATED SYNTHESIS OF MANY INCHOATE BUT TELEOLOGICAL IMPULSES. It's not the artist's to command (viz. Keats as mentioned...). So a synthetic poetics would ENCOURAGE those syntheses. And recognize when they are losing momentum through mechanical organization or uninspired repetition. I think the flow of several threads hereabouts tends in such a direction. And so we backfile & catalog what has perhaps been obvious for some time... - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

762. **Schuchat Simon**

***Re: Weiners, Ceravolo, et al***

*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

Seems to me that langpo was a crystallization of certain tendencies in the air at the time, most of which had been going on for some time. e.g., I first met Bruce Andrews in 1970, at Michael Lally's house, when Bruce was getting his MA at Hopkins and I was in 11th grade. Michael had found out about Bruce because a work of Bruce's was published (by Tom Clark!) in the Paris Review. It seemed to Michael and myself (and no doubt to Tom Clark) as entirely within the second generation NY school tradition, although Bruce had a much harder edge in terms of what he liked and disliked among contemporaries' writing.

From the NY perspective (I have no idea about SF) it was probably the fortuitous simultaneous presence of Bruce and Charles B in NY mid-70s, plus (as I recollect it) the strong interest of James Sherry, who published alot of proto-language works in ROOF.

There is a distance between what Bob Grenier was writing and what Larry Fagin was writing, but at the time it seemed as though the main distinction was that Larry employed much more sophomoric humor.

What went away or was buried, in NY at least, by langpo, was not Iowa Famous Writers School, but writers like Charles North, Paul Violi, etc. Ann Lauterbach, John Yau, Tony Towle also come to mind. Not that these poets were ignored or disappeared or whatever, but that the limited critical attention available went towards langpo. My own theory, expressed in my earlier post after reading Mailer's Ancient Evenings, is that langpo was a period style, it could represent other things going on in the politics and culture of the time, and could focus attention that way. Also, langpo was extremely commodious (catholic?) in accepting ancestors, whether or not it was as open to contemporaries or acolytes (re somebody's post about cliqueishness in San Francisco).

From a great height, nobody will able to tell any of it apart.

To plunge further, Barrett Watten's writing when I first read it seemed equally mainstream post NY school (Bolinas branch), albeit with a much drier humor than, e.g., Bill Berkson.

And another thing. Poetry is not political anymore because poetry has moved from being "Great Tradition" to "Little Tradition" in Redfield's distinction.

I'm going to have some breakfast now.

[↑ Contents](#)

763. **Bob Grumman**  
***Re: Bernstein's Viz Po***  
*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

Oh, boy, Kent, another chance for me to get further into Bernstein's bad graces!  
Thanks a lot!

Here's what's in the section of Bernstein's fall seminar that Kent brought up:

(Oct. 16) The Visible Word

Johanna Drucker, *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography & Modern Art, 1909-1923* (TL,L)

Georges Jean, Writing, "Documents" section

Drucker PMC interview

ASSIGNMENT: experiment with different visual spacings of Mallarmé or Williams or other poets; do an original visually marked typographic, work, etc.

VISUAL POETRY LINKS:

Tom Phillips web site

Kenny Goldsmith VP Ubuweb

UVa Blake

Blake Digital Text Project

Grenier

FURTHER READING:

Experimental - Visual - Concrete: Avant-Garde Poetry Since the 1960s, ed. K. David Jackson, Eric Vos, and Johanna Drucker (Eduardo Kac's essay on holographic poetry is also at <http://www.altx.com/ebr/ebr5/kac.htm>)

Herbert Spencer, *The Liberated Page*

Willard Bohn, *The Aesthetics of Visual Poetry*

Willard Bohn, *Appolinaire, Visual Poetry, and Art Criticism*

Henry Sayre, *The Visual Text of William Carlos Williams*

Michel Leiris, tr. Lydia Davis, "Alphabet" in *Rules of the Game*

Henry Sayre, Robert Frank, eds. *The Line in Postmodern Poetry*, esp.:

"L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Lines",

Fraser, Hubert Gerald Janecek, *Zaum: The Transrational Poetry of Russian Futurism* (chapter 9)

\_\_\_\_ *The Look of Russian Literature*

Velimir Khlebnikov, *Collected Writings*

Dick Higgins, *Pattern Poems*

Emmet Williams, ed.. *Anthology of Concrete Poetry*

Milton Kolonsky, ed. *Talking Pictures*

I guess I'd have about the same criticisms of it as I do of Perloff's seminar--except that he's obviously only briefly surveying the use of visuality, mostly

peripheral visuality, in textual poetry, not devoting an entire course to visual poetry. Hence, he's not as loudly NOT discussing "my crowd" as Perloff is. So, a minor symptom of the same disease I consider Perloff's seminar to be a larger symptom of.

--Bob

G.

[↑ Contents](#)

764. **David Gitin**  
***Re: Nancarrow/Oppen?***  
*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

Both George and Mary Oppen talked to me about Nancarrow in our conversations from 1968 until George's death. What Charles Amirkhanian said is true, although there are more stories... I am amazed at the 'subjects' that come up on The List, not to mention the responses (flow of heat). Is there something you, Herb, are after here?

[↑ Contents](#)

765. **David R. Israel**  
***(Fwd) postmodernism & Jenny Jones***  
*Fri 23 Jan 1998*

---

submitted w/ an admitted bit of mild amusement (while knowing well enough it's horribly medium-low brow of me to so say); btw, re-saw \*Orlando\* tonight - wow d.i.

*By MARK LEYNER, HOBOKEN, N.J. --*

*JENNY JONES: Boy, we have a show for you today!*

*Recently, the University of Virginia philosopher Richard Rorty made the stunning declaration that nobody has "the foggiest idea" what postmodernism means. "It would be nice to get rid of it," he said. "It isn't exactly an idea; it's a word that pretends to stand for an idea."*

*This shocking admission that there is no such thing as postmodernism has produced a firestorm of protest around the country. Thousands of authors, critics and graduate students who'd considered themselves postmodernists are outraged at the betrayal.*

*Today we have with us a writer -- a recovering postmodernist -- who believes that his literary career and personal life have been irreparably damaged by the theory, and who feels defrauded by the*

*academics who promulgated it. He wishes to remain anonymous, so we'll call him "Alex."*

*Alex, as an adolescent, before you began experimenting with postmodernism, you considered yourself -- what?*

*Close shot of ALEX.*

*An electronic blob obscures his face. Words appear at bottom of screen: "Says he was traumatized by postmodernism and blames academics."*

*ALEX (his voice electronically altered): A high modernist. Y'know, Pound, Eliot, Georges Braque, Wallace Stevens, Arnold Schoenberg, Mies van der Rohe. I had all of Schoenberg's 78's.*

*JENNY JONES: And then you started reading people like Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard -- how did that change your feelings about your modernist heroes?*

*ALEX: I suddenly felt that they were, like, stifling and canonical.*

*JENNY JONES: Stifling and canonical? That is so sad, such a waste. How old were you when you first read Fredric Jameson?*

*ALEX: Nine, I think.*

*The AUDIENCE gasps.*

*JENNY JONES: We have some pictures of young Alex. ...*

*We see snapshots of 14-year-old ALEX reading Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's "Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia." The AUDIENCE oohs and ahs.*

*ALEX: We used to go to a friend's house after school -- y'know, his parents were never home -- and we'd read, like, Paul Virilio and Julia Kristeva.*

*JENNY JONES: So you're only 14, and you're already skeptical toward the "grand narratives" of modernity, you're questioning any belief system that claims universality or transcendence. Why?*

*ALEX: I guess -- to be cool.*

*JENNY JONES: So, peer pressure?*

*ALEX: I guess.*

JENNY JONES: *And do you remember how you felt the very first time you entertained the notion that you and your universe are constituted by language -- that reality is a cultural construct, a "text" whose meaning is determined by infinite associations with other "texts"?*

ALEX: *Uh, it felt, like, good. I wanted to do it again. The AUDIENCE groans.*

JENNY JONES: *You were arrested at about this time?*

ALEX: *For spray-painting "The Hermeneutics of Indeterminacy" on an overpass.*

JENNY JONES: *You're the child of a mixed marriage -- is that right?*

ALEX: *My father was a de Stijl Wittgensteinian and my mom was a neo-pre-Raphaelite.*

JENNY JONES: *Do you think that growing up in a mixed marriage made you more vulnerable to the siren song of postmodernism?*

ALEX: *Absolutely. It's hard when you're a little kid not to be able to just come right out and say (sniffles), y'know, I'm an Imagist or I'm a phenomenologist or I'm a post-painterly abstractionist. It's really hard -- especially around the holidays. (He cries.)*

JENNY JONES: *I hear you. Was your wife a postmodernist?*

ALEX: *Yes. She was raised avant-pop, which is a fundamentalist offshoot of postmodernism.*

JENNY JONES: *How did she react to Rorty's admission that postmodernism was essentially a hoax?*

ALEX: *She was devastated. I mean, she's got all the John Zorn albums and the entire Semiotext(e) series. She was crushed.*

*We see ALEX'S WIFE in the audience, weeping softly, her hands covering her face.*

JENNY JONES: *And you were raising your daughter as a postmodernist?*

ALEX: *Of course. That's what makes this particularly tragic. I mean, how do you explain to a 5-year-old that self-consciously recycling cultural detritus is suddenly no longer a valid art form when, for her entire life, she's been taught that it is?*



JENNY JONES: *Tell us how you think postmodernism affected your career as a novelist.*

ALEX: *I disavowed writing that contained real ideas or any real passion. My work became disjunctive, facetious and nihilistic. It was all blank parody, irony enveloped in more irony.*

*It merely recapitulated the pernicious banality of television and advertising. I found myself indiscriminately incorporating any and all kinds of pop kitsch and shlock. (He begins to weep again.)*

JENNY JONES: *And this spilled over into your personal life?*

ALEX: *It was impossible for me to experience life with any emotional intensity. I couldn't control the irony anymore. I perceived my own feelings as if they were in quotes.*

*I italicized everything and everyone. It became impossible for me to appraise the quality of anything. To me everything was equivalent -- the Brandenburg Concertos and the Lysol jingle had the same value. . . . (He breaks down, sobbing.)*

JENNY JONES: *Now, you're involved in a lawsuit, aren't you?*

ALEX: *Yes. I'm suing the Modern Language Association.*

JENNY JONES: *How confident are you about winning?*

ALEX: *We need to prove that, while they were actively propounding it, academics knew all along that postmodernism was a specious theory.*

*If we can unearth some intradepartmental memos -- y'know, a paper trail -- any corroboration that they knew postmodernism was worthless cant at the same time they were teaching it, then I think we have an excellent shot at establishing liability.*

JENNY JONES *wades into audience and proffers microphone to a woman.*

WOMAN (with lateral head-bobbing): *It's ironic that Barry Scheck is representing the M.L.A. in this litigation because Scheck is the postmodern attorney par excellence. This is the guy who's made a career of volatilizing truth in the simulacrum of exculpation!*

VOICE FROM AUDIENCE: *You go, girl!*

WOMAN: *Scheck is the guy who came up with the quintessentially*

*postmodern re-bleed defense for O. J., which claims that O. J. merely vigorously shook Ron and Nicole, thereby re-aggravating pre-existing knife wounds. I'd just like to say to any client of Barry Scheck -- lose that zero and get a hero!*

*The AUDIENCE cheers wildly.*

*WOMAN: Uh, I forgot my question.*

*Dissolve to message on screen: If you believe that mathematician Andrew Wiles' proof of Fermat's last theorem has caused you or a member of your family to dress too provocatively, call (800)*

*██████████.*

*Dissolve back to studio. In the audience, JENNY JONES extends the microphone to a man in his mid-30's with a scruffy beard and a bandana around his head.*

*MAN WITH BANDANA: I'd like to say that this "Alex" is the single worst example of pointless irony in American literature, and this whole heartfelt renunciation of postmodernism is a ploy -- it's just more irony.*

*The AUDIENCE whistles and hoots.*

*ALEX: You think this is a ploy?! (He tears futilely at the electronic blob.) This is my face!*

*The AUDIENCE recoils in horror.*

*ALEX: This is what can happen to people who naively embrace postmodernism, to people who believe that the individual -- the autonomous, individualist subject -- is dead. They become a palimpsest of media pastiche -- a mask of metastatic irony.*

*JENNY JONES (biting lip and shaking her head): That is so sad. Alex -- final words?*

*ALEX: I'd just like to say that self-consciousness and irony seem like fun at first, but they can destroy your life. I know. You gotta be earnest, be real. Real feelings are important. Objective reality does exist.*

*AUDIENCE members whoop, stomp and pump fists in the air.*

*JENNY JONES: I'd like to thank Alex for having the courage to come on today and share his experience with us.*

Join us for tomorrow's show, "The End of Manichean, Bipolar Geopolitics Turned My Boyfriend Into an Insatiable Sex Freak (and I Love It!)."

\*\*\*\*\*

END

[↑ Contents](#)

766. **robert drake**

**Re: fri. night Poetry Wars**

Sat 24 Jan 1998

henry:

>... every ORGANIZED artistic move (vorticism, language  
>poetry, what have you) is, as Gary Sullivan suggested, a latecomer -  
>since THE ORIGINAL WORK OF ART IS SELF-GENERATING, SELF-  
OVERDETERMINED,  
>INSPIRED, SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL, EXTRAORDINARY-ORDER-  
CREATING - beyond  
>the "plan" of the artist - & why? BECAUSE IT IS AN ULTRA-CORRELATED  
>SYNTHESIS OF MANY INCHOATE BUT TELEOLOGICAL IMPULSES. It's not  
the  
>artist's to command (viz. Keats as mentioned...). So a synthetic poetics  
>would ENCOURAGE those syntheses. And recognize when they are losing  
>momentum through mechanical organization or uninspired repetition.  
>I think the flow of several threads hereabouts tends in such a direction.

i think there's a distinction to be made, between the art on th one hand (self-generating etc, ok) and the artist(s)/social context... a vital artistic movement seems to me (praps somewhat idealized) a number of folks who find themselves mining a similar vein ov exploration, sharing experience, learning & building on each others success/failures. & that's to be contrasted w/ less-than-vital Organized Movements, late- comers & wannabes, yr "mechanical organization or uninspired repetition..."

there've been plenty of examples of folks continuing to do ORIGINAL WORK thru these threads; but i think the debatespark frm ron s. was a bemoanment about th lack "crystallization" of commonallity among those individs? or a lack of articulation of common ground... would you say, henry, that such an crystallization/articulation might (eventually? inevitably?) lead to the mechanical org & uninspired rep that you deplore? but it also adds some Weight (cultural capital)--lack ov which (for some Unorganized & therefore Unrecognized Underdogs) has also been cause fr recent wailing...

lbd

[↑ Contents](#)

767. **J. Kuszai**

***noise channel surf boy stink bomb***

Sat 24 Jan 1998

---

Early in the vizpo debate I felt some sympathy for poor ole neglected Bob Grumman and his cohorts in the "Oh no not more pomo" vizpo biz. But after some thinking, and watching his attacks on well-meaning academic critics and sympathetic and supportive people such as Charles B, I have come to think differently. It is time that Bob stop complaining and start offering an alternative. And if Bill Howe thinks that Marjorie P's and J. Drucker's readings of visuality are so "superficial" (and one might assume that by extension he thinks this of Bernstein as well), then I for one am dying to get schooled in what's so great about Grumman's "crowd." And that all it seems to be to me. Sure, they're neglected. But there are hundreds, if not thousands, of worthy yet neglected writers out there. Mike Baskinski, who may be part of this "crowd" of vizpo biz champions, isn't any less a newcomer to the field than Bernstein's who's "Veil" is a "visual" work published in the late seventies (I think 78) by Miekal And's press Xexoxial (sp?) editions. Mike is someone I have published at least three times with Meow Press, and I even did a short story by his daughter Natalie, who is an upcoming artist and writer at 12. Mike isn't so neglected as the stink here would have one think. I would love to hear what makes this group "genuine" visual poets and which excludes only the "successful" language poets as being dabblers.

It seems to be a proper use of this list-space would be to offer up readings and descriptions of such work that is valued and yet may not have achieved proper recognition. Unlike many of the people Grumman is complaining about, both he and Miekal And, among others, are among the vanguard of artists making use of web publishing as a viable means of getting the word out. If it isn't about achieving "acadominance" (and I'm not sure that isn't the goal) but instead, about becoming known, appreciated, etc., then what better venue than the web for doing that? Since when does having a book mean anything except a warm feeling in your tummy when you sip your afternoon tea...There are plenty of unread books out there. I still think it is about status and sociality, which to me is a terrybull figment of the imagination best done away with. 20 people in a seminar in Palo Alto doesn't constitute an audience. And from what I understand about that program, it isn't as if that group of grad students is going to help sell the rights to Bob Grumman to Disney et al. I wonder how many of them are even on this list, or how many of them even care about the material under discussion. I think Perloff's doing a great service by even bothering with what

often seems to me a lame and superficial medium to begin with (And I have done my share of visual work, by the way). And as far as Drucker being superficial, Bill, or any of the vizpobiz boys, please give me an explanation as to why THE VISIBLE WORD might be seen as "superficial"??

[↑ Contents](#)

768. **groberts**

***Digging my own grave***

*Sat 24 Jan 1998*

---

"Epitaph on a fossilized talon"

Knowing your  
archrival  
to be  
headed for  
archival

might not  
get you far  
nor ensure  
your own  
survival.

I should know:  
these lines  
were  
dead on  
arrival.

[↑ Contents](#)

769. **Miekal And**

***< noise channel> goat boy compost typography***

*Sat 24 Jan 1998*

---

J. Kuszai wrote:

>

> Early in the vizpo debate I felt some sympathy for poor ole neglected  
> Bob Grumman and his cohorts in the "Oh no not more pomo" vizpo biz.

in a list where each of us is endlessly evolving workable affiliations with all those within our range of interests, Im interested in representing countless interests, one of which is visual poetry, another being the text & all its possible extensions....so if there's a l\$a\$n\$g\$u\$a\$g\$e party going on, I wanna be in the middle of the action, & if fluxus makes an event I wanna be a fluxite, & if west

lima wisconsin had poetry slams, I want my words to make you roll in the gutter. as for cohorts, that would be all the groovy & ultragroovy writers on this list including you, Joel...

But

- > after some thinking, and watching his attacks on well-meaning academic
- > critics and sympathetic and supportive people such as Charles B, I have
- > come to think differently. It is time that Bob stop complaining and
- > start offering an alternative.

I think the obvious outcome of the "perloff paradigm" is a wakeup call about how poorly the worlds of visual poetry, hypermedia, performance & installation have been integrated with the readerly world. as for offering an alternative, that is already largely in place & has been in place as far as I can tell since international networking & person-to-person exchanges have been taking place, & that alternative was already in place when I started with xerox sutra in 80. more specifically related to this digital monolith we are all cowering, I think the immediate & accessible alternative is to increase the bandwidth for works of all styles & media, just as I've heard far more about new writers & presses via this list than any other source. as for complaining, we know about complaining, sometimes you just gotta be the bitchard to get things done.

If it isn't about achieving "acadominance" (and

- > I'm not sure that isn't the goal) but instead, about becoming known,
- > appreciated, etc., then what better venue than the web for doing that?

actually Joel you've hit it on the head, since I was thrown out &/or quit college 8 times (8 semesters, 8 attempts, 100% failure) & now about to become a gray-beard with no piece of paper, I'm hoping for an honorary degree or two out there, so I'll have something to show for all my time, in a world where status is a monkish nailbiter, I'm a status seeker.

when in fact I feel like thruout this discussion my intent was to represent the scale & the history of a century long affair with the visual text & in particular an attention to how networking & mail inspired a hyperculture that has a life of its own. & as for the lame & superficial medium begat by the "vizpobiz boys" (& girls), goat compost.

[↑ Contents](#)

770. **louis stroffolino**

**Re: "actually new"**

*Sat 24 Jan 1998*

---

Someone brought up the "New Critics" and the way we can see them as similar to the "langpo"--- Well, what do you think of Todd Gitlin's assertion that

the "beats" also share this.... "Their clubbiness echoed the general withdrawal from political activity; echoed the New Critics' strategy for extracting the literary text from historical context; echoed the do-it-yourself movement, which sent husbands into their basements to muster the small autarkies of leisure time; echoed, overall, the American infatuation with private strategems for social troubles." But then he adds that "among the well-known Beats, Allen Ginsberg was exceptional in skating along the radical edge.....Thus, when the zeitgeist shifted direction, retreat passed out of style, and other beats grew steadily more forlorn, Ginsberg could make the transit into the political sixties with grace....."(pg. 51).

In a related story, the Bernadette Mayer interview in latest St. Marx newsletter is interesting: she attacks doctors, monogamy, talks of her utopia, lizard, and the lack of sex in the poetry scene comparatively today (among other things--like langpo). Good to see a poet still offering lifestyle challenges rather than simply aesthetic..... Chris

[↑ Contents](#)

771. **Bob Grumman**  
***Re: The Perloff Seminar***  
*Sat 24 Jan 1998*

---

I was wondering when I (and the other "vizpobiz boys" out there like Bill Howe) would be properly chopped up by someone on the other side of this question. I'm sorry it had to be Joel Kuszai who decided to be the hatchet man, as I've admired what he's done with Meow Press and elsewhere.

In response I note that Joel went on the offensive, attacking me and my group rather than responding to my mock language poetry seminar and showing how it failed properly to parallel Perloff's seminar. For instance, is Charles Bernstein really more of a paragon of visual poetry than Richard Kostelanetz is of language poetry?

He asks me to offer an alternative. I'm not sure what he means, but I think I've shown what I'd like: more recognition for the visual poets I consider undeservedly disregarded. That would mean, mainly, a proper anthology of current visual poetry; visual poetry seminars that at least mention more than one or two of the group I'm pushing; critical volumes on the visual in poetry that don't prove their superficiality by bypassing almost everyone of importance in the field, and so forth. I might add that I have myself tried to provide an alternative over the years with my Runaway Spoon Press and the few writings on the field that I've been able to get into literary publications.

If Joel is really "dying to get schooled in what's so great" about my "crowd," I suggest he read some of the essays on visual poetry at the Light & Dust Site.

He might even take a look at my book *Of Manywhere- at-Once*, a copy of which is at the SUNY, Buffalo, library. I also have a pertinent essay or two at my *Comprepoetica* site. Better, he might just examine back issues of *Industrial Sabotage*, *Xerolage*, *Score*, *Atticus Review* and other publications of extremely small circulation that I expect he can find at that library, as well, and see for himself what "my crowd" has done.

I don't have time to argue the merits of Charles Bernstein's use of the visual in his work here. I admit that I am not familiar with his "Veil"--though I probably thumbed through a copy the one time I was able to visit Miekal's vizpobiz corporation in Wisconsin. I wonder, though, if it really did more than Mallarme's pre-visual kind of poetry. Even if I were proved all wrong about Bernstein as a visual poet, though, my original position would remain the same: with so many excellent but unrecognized visual poets around, why use a seminar supposedly covering visual poetry to push a near-celebrity in poetry like Bernstein instead of much-less-recognized visual poets like Karl Kempton or Harry Polkinhorn or Jake Berry--etc.? And why make the focus of such a seminar language poets who make some use of visual devices when you can have visual poets who use visual devices to a much greater--and visually-significant--extent?

Some of Joel's other comments are plain silly, like the one about my implicitly hoping one of the grad students in Perloff's seminar might sell the rights to something of mine to Disney. But if ONE person realized through her seminar what was really out there in vizpo, it'd be wonderful!

--Bob G.

Bob Grumman



<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Cafe/1492>

*Comprepoetica*, the Poetry-Data-Collection Site

[↑ Contents](#)

772. **Karen Kelley**

**(no subject)**

*Sat 24 Jan 1998*

---

Hurrah to J. Kuszai for pointing out how often complaints about lack of literary recognition are actually crankiness over a perceived lack of status--

and hurrah to him for noting that status "is a terrybull figment of the imagination best done away with. 20 people in a seminar in Palo Alto doesn't constitute an audience."

That aside, I wonder what the prevailing feeling is re: the web vs. the book as a means for getting the poetic word out?



Karen Kelley

[↑ Contents](#)

773. **KENT JOHNSON**

***The Key Club [or: The Museum]***

*Sat 24 Jan 1998*

---

Is it possible that the generational anxiety vis a vis Language writing expressed by Mark Wallace, Steve Evans, and other impressively smart writers is the logical and inevitable result of younger poets trying to be "new" through an overly narrow reliance on *\_method\_*? While I ask this question tentatively (because I am not exactly steeped in the young turk critics), my sense from perusing the discussion is that this could be at the heart of the "problem".

How so? Young "post-Language" poets, like those represented in the anthology of Joseph Donohue, Ed Foster, and Leonard Schwartz (I'm sorry, I presently can't recall the title), are certainly wonderfully various and talented, and many of them will go on to be widely published and successful. But insofar as that young group (despite protestations) seems increasingly to Language writing as the Key Club is to Kiwanis, might it be due to this: that the horizon of poetic "experiment" and "originality" for this generational group is delimited by a deeply-ingrained set of institutional laws and protocols which (subliminally, for the most part) reduce and relegate aesthetic resistance to the printed page, that is, to strictly compositional method? The Key Club, to put it another way, puts itself in the position of polishing, tweaking, and refining paratactic, asyndetic, and juxtapositional frames of expression without any apparent thought to a sustained exploration of *\_conceptual displacements\_* of institutionalized categories of authorship and the circulation of works.

This is sort of what I meant in my Hurrah post with my perhaps unfair reference to the young post-Language poet with conference name tag caught between two mirrors. It's also what I meant by my reference to Smithsonian's conceptualism, which is so powerful because it is at least a provisional move beyond--and "laying bare" of--the "museum." The Key Club, you might say, is still on guided tour inside the museum.

That's incredibly presumptuous of me to say, of course, and I'm sure the comment will be met with contemptuous silence, or, worse yet, by laconic and insouciant riposte with irony so subtle as to make the spring, at long last, go out of my rubber. But Hurrah for me, anyway, for being reckless and brash within the parameters of my own personal weaknesses and limitations!

\*[But Aha!, someone out there is saying. There *\_is\_* an obvious weakness and limitation in your "argument" --an argument which clearly attempts to make up for its theoretical thinnesses through transparent rhetorical affectations that

are the marks of a latecomer trying to ingratiate himself with powerful poets like David Bromige: For didn't you say (says the person who said Aha) that "Robert Smithson" succeeded in moving outside the museum? In other words, didn't Robert Smithson attribute his works to "Robert Smithson"? So why shouldn't we sign too?]\*

\*[Good question, Jordan. But you see, I said "provisional". Robert Smithson's work, though his example still shimmers and glows like a jagged frag from the Roswell ship, has been slowly sucked, through the keyhole of his own name, back into the museum. In fact, beauty of beauties, there is even something now called "The Estate of Robert Smithson." This is why.]\*

OK, now many of you know that I am involved in an infamous work that deals at least implicitly with some of these questions, so allow me to elaborate on what I mean above through the following quote from an interview where some of these matters are tentatively discussed. And I promise, promise, that I will never, never raise the issue of Araki Yasusada on this list again, unless someone else specifically asks me to, and I'm pretty sure that that won't happen, so don't worry. OK? OK.

Here's the "quote", slightly revised and expanded for my purposes here:

"To what extent are the mechanisms of the 'poetry institution' unconsciously inscribed in the "scandal" the Yasusada has provoked? There is, after all, a very hierarchical market relationship in American poetry, involving publishers, jobs, grants, writing retreats, reading circuits, gossip mills, social events, and so on. All of this is not incidental to the writing and its circulation and evaluation, but the very matrix within which it takes place. In short, it determines, in all sorts of subliminal ways, what counts as good. And the keystone of it all is the function of authorship. Isn't it obvious that without secure, self-centered names to attach to works that the whole institutional edifice touched on above would simply collapse? The Yasusada writings stand, on one level, as a tiny retort to this current order of business--a business which operates as much in the circles of the 'avant-garde' as it does in the 'academy.' The author function is the ideological linchpin that theory has identified, but which 'avant-garde' oppositional creative practice has not yet imagined taking on."

I don't in any way mean that heteronymous gestures like Yasusada are the only path leading out of the museum. To the contrary, Yasusada is quite tentative, awkward, and pathetic in a number of ways, even perhaps, in the current climate, self-defeating. Nor do I necessarily mean that poets everywhere should no longer attribute their personal names to their works. It is inevitable that the great majority always will. What I'm talking about is a true lack of iconoclastic, conceptual panache in new writing. What I'm saying, and to put it in an old fashioned way, is this: as long as the institutionalized mode of authorial

production goes uninvestigated and unchallenged within the 'avant-garde' community itself, the poetic relations of circulation, value, and exchange within it will not be qualitatively transformed. The Key Club will always be the Key Club.

[Interjection: I am sounding very unreasonable to most of you right now: i.e., Can this idiot \_really\_ be saying that we shouldn't take credit for our own poems?]

The challenge, it seems to me, is pretty broad, full of multiple, unforeseen possibilities of experiment ("Alan Sondheim," in his manifold incarnations and disseminations through electric space is one exciting example), and it is a challenge that the Language movement itself opened up with its insistent critiques of the "self" and the "I". (Now, of course, all that seems effectively dead for that older group: witness, for ironic example, the last issue of *Aerial*, which carries on its spine the largest font-size personal name in the history of poetry.)

Is what I'm saying (or trying to say) utopian in the extreme? Yes. Is it unrealizable as wide-open option for individual and collective imaginative praxis? No. Let me end this mother of long posts with the following observation: Along with Smithson the other day, I invoked the Russians, and they are the ones to look to here. Thinkers and poets like Mikhail Epstein, Dmitri Prigov, Alexei Parschikov, Yakov Abramov, Ivan Solovyov, and others, have been seriously working for some time in investigating the creative possibilities of what Epstein has called "hyperauthorship", not at all taking for granted the unwritten law of the name. Post-Language poets reflecting on their position and status should check them out. The promise of cross-cultural 'avant-garde' exchange evoked by the book *\_Leningrad\_* need not only be limited to those who have secured their individual names in the canon by proclaiming with sophistication that the "I" and the "self" is a construction of language.

Leave them behind, young poets, to roll in the deodorized aromas of their own careers and names! Go forward young poets, for the day is young and it belongs to the young! Don't be anxious any more, for that is only a trick of language!

I'll right, I'm losing it here. But seriously, Hurrah for the Russians, misunderstood, libidinal, and alone.

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

774. **J. Kuszai**

***My Bob Grumman***

*Sat 24 Jan 1998*

---

Bob, I'm sorry that you're sorry that I had to decide to be hatchet man on this job. But, I'm also sure that you know how it feels when it is patently obvious

that there is a job that needs to be done. In the absence of a few good men and women to accomplish such a job, one must undertake the activity oneself. And yes, I don't want to be misunderstood on a few accounts here, for while I don't mind being misunderstood most of the time, I don't want you to think that I haven't appreciated, applauded and admired your work with Runaway Spoon, and the like. So kudos to you--your press gets to the heart of the kind of activity which I would seek as the very alternatives to the mainstream/dominant, blah blah blah, poets in power that so aggravates you. What I don't understand is why you want a piece of that pie. The value of the languageblobs (since they've all been lumped together here, it's just one big blob) it seems to me was the creation of a separate economy of poetry production, distribution, etc. We all know the story. When I worked up in the poetry rare books collection (back in 92-93) I catalogued magazines, noting when issues were missing etc. Despite what Katy Lederer says in her review of Meow Press, that was the closest I got to being a part of the largest crime in the 20th century. (I don't have it with me as I don't have a copy of the PPN, so that is a rough paraphrase). The point of this anecdote is that I came to see how the various poets later affiliated with a "movement" such as languageblob poetry found each other from discrete universes and universities often scattered among negligible zines or often, in the case of mags such as Truck, started by David Wilk (I believe while at Yale U), fledgling small startup outfits run on mimeo etc. There was no grand conspiracy to take over anything, just similar tendencies and responses to a set of circumstances as various as the "New American" poetry to the political upheavals at the end of the 60s. Despite whatever feeling you might have about that historical phenom, the point for me has always been the empowerment I felt by that example. And this is exactly what I feel when I run into things like Runaway Spoon, or Abacus, or The Impercipient, or whatever. These moves are extremely important to me. So when I ask you, Bob, for alternatives, it is simply because you and my pal Bill Howe here in the buff, are offering a separate economy of such production and networking. I was always amazed when my fiction writer friend Lara Stapleton, now running a series at the Nuyorican by the way, wanted to send her stories to Playboy, thinking that to be the benchmark for acceptance, fame, blah blah blah (ringing in the ears) for a young fiction writer. I'm surprised, therefore, that your attacks on Perloff aren't addressed to the New Yorker, which it seems, offers a similar standard of "having arrived." My complaint with her--and this goes back to the late 80s, when her story printed in my mag BigFireProofBox (edited with the late Christopher Ide) was cited by the one-and(hopefully)-only Grill Marcus as being "1000 times as punk as the line it attempts to erase." Lara, I thought, thought develop a group of friends, a network of cohorts, working within the "underground" (which I don't romanticize, but which seems to me to be the necessary precondition of ferment out of which serious "change" ((of all flavors)) is bound to occur. Lara disagreed,

although now I think she understands this, and has developed such a group of people whose work she considers "The Shit." (my term not hers, btw)

OK--so that is a giantsized disclaimer to the hatcheting you think I am involved in here. Let me get to a few of your points.

*I was wondering when I (and the other "vizpobiz boys" out there like Bill Howe) would be properly chopped up by someone on the other side of this question. I'm sorry it had to be Joel Kuszai who decided to be the hatchet man, as I've admired what he's done with Meow Press and elsewhere.*

Elsewhere? What the hell have I done?

*In response I note that Joel went on the offensive, attacking me and my group rather than responding to my mock language poetry seminar and showing how it failed properly to parallel Perloff's seminar. For instance, is Charles Bernstein really more of paragon of visual poetry than Richard Kostelanetz is of language poetry?*

I'm sorry I didn't understand your mock seminar, but I truly didn't. And because I'm not interested in splitting hairs over the languageblob poets, but your canon of languageblob poets was pretty much unrecognizable to me. Part of my job as a member of Saddam Hussein's Elite Imperial Guard is to diffuse the reception, dissemination and yayaya of such a canon. I don't buy it and more importantly, I don't read it that way. So given that, your "equation" pretty much didn't work for me. I'm sorry. I got the point, and appreciated what you were trying to do, but because such a "plug-in" doesn't work on my 1988 mac2cx, I couldn't respond. I could have said "huh?" but I felt it best to leave it drop, so to speak.

*He asks me to offer an alternative. I'm not sure what he means, but I think I've shown what I'd like: more recognition for the visual poets I consider undeservedly disregarded. That would mean, mainly, a proper anthology of current visual poetry; visual poetry seminars that at least mention more than one or two of the group I'm pushing; critical volumes on the visual in poetry that don't prove their superficiality by bypassing almost everyone of importance in the field, and so forth. I might add that I have myself tried to provide an alternative over the years with my Runaway Spoon Press and the few writings on the field that I've been able to get into literary publications.*

I think I've addressed this. Kudos again. This is the kind of action that will be properly recognized as people like Bill Howe and myself grow up into properly functioning critical citizens--and there are many more kritik-kids who are looking for something to believe in. So serve it up Sammy.

*If Joel is really "dying to get schooled in what's so great" about my "crowd," I suggest he read some of the essays on visual poetry at the Light & Dust Site. He might even take a look at my book Of Manywhere-*

*at-Once, a copy of which is at the SUNY, Buffalo, library. I also have a pertinent essay or two at my Comprepoetica site. Better, he might just examine back issues of Industrial Sabotage, Xerolage, Score, Atticus Review and other publications of extremely small circulation that I expect he can find at that library, as well, and see for himself what "my crowd" has done.*

I've seen what your crowd has done. I'll go back and read the explanations. Thanks for the tip. Don't hesitate to tell me the answers. I'm terrible on tests!!

*I don't have time to argue the merits of Charles Bernstein's use of the visual in his work here. I admit that I am not familiar with his "Veil"--though I probably thumbed through a copy the one time I was able to visit Miekal's vizpobiz corporation in Wisconsin. I wonder, though, if it really did more than Mallarme's pre-visual kind of poetry. Even if I were proved all wrong about Bernstein as a visual poet, though, my original position would remain the same: with so many excellent but unrecognized visual poets around, why use a seminar supposedly covering visual poetry to push a near-celebrity in poetry like Bernstein instead of much-less-recognized visual poets like Karl Kempton or Harry Polkinhorn or Jake Berry--etc.? And why make the focus of such a seminar language poets who make some use of visual devices when you can have visual poets who use visual devices to a much greater--and visually-significant--extent?*

Tell me more. This is getting closer to what I need to know about what your crissakes gripe is. Obviously Miekal thought enough of the yungin CB to publish him. I guess what I mean by "alternatives" in this space would be to offer up an online seminar, with much lecturing, analysis, and description. I am unable to attend to much of the online material available from my cave in buffalo. Please tell me what the problem is with doing something akin to the "previsual" work of Mallarme...and I'm not trying to offer up Charles as a visual poet, or even a language poet for that matter. Again, he IS the leader of the languageblob poets, so whatever he says goes. But when you put on your decoder glasses, I think you'll find that the blobs are really specks. Whatever power Charles has is potentially a real problem. Your hesitancy (and Bill's) to rip on him is symptomatic of that wierd paranoia about such power.

It also brings up another, related point. As a listmember since the olden times of 1993-94, I've noticed that everytime someone brings up some kind of oppositional or dissenting view with regard to languageblob poetry, it is assumed that we the Coporation for National Poetics will edit, censor, or delete such opinions from the discussion on this listserv. Only once has anyone ever been removed for bad behavior, and the Red Slider affair last summer led to the institution of a few policys (I should say enforcement of already established policies) which aint bad for a list with almost 600 people subscribed and who knows how many actually reading. This list could be moderated, and it isn't. So think about that.



Think about all the private, subset, lists out there which exist because people can't handle all the noise on this channel. But y'all have been great these last weeks, so you'll all receive a candy in your mailbox.

*Some of Joel's other comments are plain silly, like the one about my implicitly hoping one of the grad students in Perloff's seminar might sell the rights to something of mine to Disney. But if ONE person realized through her seminar what was really out there in vizpo, it'd be wonderful!*

But this issue is related to the question of power, status, and the anxiety about where it resides in the poetry world. My question about the Stanford grads is a serious one. Maybe you should find out who they are and canvas them. This has worked in seminars where I was unhappy with the material...perhaps you could send them a series of URLs or a photocopy packet of your own. It is rumored that you have a xerox machine in your house, so that wouldn't be putting you out. But I'm serious about the Disney thing. Since summer, I've been trying to sell Meow Press, it's title list, the whole lot. Only a few offers so far. A subsidiary of Disney (actually a sub sub subsidiary of ABC made me an offer, but it wasn't a full buyout). I have tried to make the press friendly to such a takeover, one which would leave me still doing the design work. I was actually hoping that Messerli or his ilk would have stepped in, as I still have that revolutionary fever, but alas, only some guy named David Milch (sp?) called me looking to see if Charles B. and Ben Yarmonlinsky wouldn't mind having THE SUBJECT done as Simpsons-esque miniseries...

[↑ Contents](#)

775. **Henry**

**Re: fri. night Poetry Wars**

Sat 24 Jan 1998

Luigi, the points you make relate to what hit me after sending that post, which is that "movements" themselves have a certain "synthetic, teleological" energy. I didn't mean to suggest that groups simply generate mechanical repetition. But I think there's a tendency to over-rationalize art movements; the moves or manifestos are always as limiting as they are liberating. Again, I insist that the really great art releases something via a synthetic process in which the rational or strategic will is in abeyance rather than control. Or at least "in collaboration".

I just finished reading PhillyTalks #3. I'm sorry not everybody on the list has access to this; it's a discussion between Ron Silliman & Jeff Derksen, along with some creative work by each. As many of you know (it's been discussed here before) Ron, among other things, gives a historical view on his work in connection with language poetry & what comes after or should. He's also moving &

eloquent about the state of the world (& the US) & the consequent moral issue for writing & poetry. He blames "habit" for what I would call indifference, selfishness, callousness (there are good habits) - the passivity which allows even greater evils to take root. The role of the artist is a prophetic one: to combat complacent habit & challenge mass culture by means of estrangement.

He places language poetry within this tradition but is clear-sighted about its time-bound function (as I tried to point out a couple days ago with the idea that the "elders" themselves see that their own techniques no longer match the current political atmosphere), and he raises the question, why has there been no comparable "90s" "crystallization" of artistic energies? (This has become a provocative issue on the list, as everybody knows following Steve Evans, Mark Wallace, & other's posts.)

I don't think he was aiming to answer the question right then & there, but his approach toward an answer seems in keeping with both his own & Jeff Derksen's general perspective. He says: perhaps it has to do with the decline of the national state & the rise of the global economy (this is a rough paraphrase).

What strikes me in both Ron's & Jeff's statements is how saturated they are with socio-political critique. It is a given that the organization of society as we know it is a kind of irredeemable hell. Derksen refers to a forthcoming essay by Sianne Ngai which purportedly contrasts an aesthetic of pleasure with an aesthetic of "disgust & overdetermination". This is an understandable reaction to a world culture supersaturated with information in the form of "bad news", but I would think (I haven't had a chance to read the essay yet!) it's not enough for a strong aesthetic; the literature of disgust and condemnation might be valid and appropriate, but when it becomes a fashion, a movement, a ruling style, etc., it's a sort of contradiction in terms. The dangers of such an aesthetic would include the tendency to become purely (&self-righteously) rhetorical, as well as to lose a self-critical edge: anything that critiques "the way things are" is justified as "art". I think we are all familiar with this trend in the arts.

By suggesting a socio-political explanation for why a "new crystallization" on a par with language poetry has not yet occurred, Ron is following this trend. & I would argue that the answer to his question - where a new development is to be found - has already been supplied earlier in the dialogue; by Ron himself, when he talks about all art as a "tuning of the senses" via an overdetermination, if you will, of stimulæ; and by Jeff, when he argues that the political impact of estrangement is not supplied so much by disjunction as by "radical \_conjunction\_" - the JOINING of dangerous taboo political contexts within the energy of clear artistic description (& Derksen uses examples from Silliman's own work to illustrate).



I would argue that an aesthetic of pure critique, not firmly grounded in artistic processes, ends up one-sided and rhetorical. As I suggested in a previous post, art is a kind of uncanny energy which spins out of the artist's full control but brings joy in the process - a joy which spreads & subsumes critique & re-orientes everything in its path. This is Whitman's daemonic Laugh coming from the Rockies. It becomes a super-synthesis of speech/drawing/voice/gesture - not a move-in-reaction to previous trends but a kind of perennial activity. It is with such a synthetic approach, giving full weight to the artistic process in itself, which I would posit the current generation is already engaged & which could be "crystallized" in recognizable academic-literary-historical format suitable for framing anthologizing & convertible into deadhead bears if you like. - Henry Gould

p.s. "no poetry after the Holocaust". a human reaction (from a critic). Ron's diatribe against American evils is EXACTLY right. Right as a diatribe. But art built on political critique - it doesn't work. The poets who died in Chile, Russia, Spain, for being poets... they were poets, first of all. Poetry is its own thing - this is the mysterious wonder of it, its limitation and infinity. Only those who understand this limitation can humanize it in the way Ron has; without the human element, of course, it's empty wind, a clanging cymbal, Ivan the Terrible's court jester. We've all seen enough of that.

[↑ Contents](#)

776. **Nuyopoman**  
**Wieners as PerfPo**

*Sat 24 Jan 1998*

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<< Wieners's BEHIND THE STATE CAPITOL, published mid-70s (the writing itself, I think, covering several earlier years, possibly back into the 60s), though filled with richly sonorous poetry, is also filled with non-verbalizable ("purely" visual) experiments with typography--not to mention lots of collaged things from newspapers, magazines, & Wieners's own photos.>>

Saw (heard?) Cecilia Vicuna the other night at "World of Poetry" series (Tuesdays at Biblios, NYC, thru Feb), and was rebounded to a Wieners reading at the Church, must've been in 75? 76? CV was doing something I hadn't heard since that reading (the pews were still there; this was before the fire) -- she read poems in a continuum, with whispered obliiggatti and trilled repetitions as she moved forward and back among the poems to construct the evening's ritual.

JW's was hardly a ritual. More like voicing all transmission waves as they passed through his body. These were the "non-verbalizable" elements of BEHIND THE STATE CAPITOL, verbalized.

Just as Artaud's "No More Masterpieces!" dictum made his "non-performable" "masterpiece/nonmasterpiece" "Jet of Blood" a required piece for all Poets Theaters, the so-called non-verbalizable just set the perf-po's lips aquivering, ready to go at it. I've been eyeing "The Liberties" for a while now, and "Shadow Train."

Bob Holman

[↑ Contents](#)

777. **Joe Ahearn**

**Re: fri. night Poetry Wars**

Sat 24 Jan 1998

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Hi Henry,

*I just finished reading PhillyTalks #3. I'm sorry not everybody on the list has access to this*

So where can I get access to this? Is it online anywhere? Is it orderable somewhere?

*It is with such a synthetic approach, giving full weight to the artistic process in itself, which I would posit the current generation is already engaged & which could be "crystallized" in recognizable academic-literary-historical format suitable for framing anthologizing & convertible into deadhead bears if you like. - Henry Gould*

Thank you for your irony here, Henry. I suppose I am part of this "new generation" and these worries about "crystallization" or not "cystallization" frankly mystify me. ('I have brought the great acorn of crystal / who can lift it?' or whatever EP said.) Why? Well,

a) there is a hell of lot of "crystallization" going on, in that many of the presses and magazines are just as controlled as they ever were by people intent on COW POEMS... and the rest are controlled by the new alternative dominant hegemonic STYLE musheads .. and the rest are controlled by the next newest dominant hegemonic STYLE mushheads... etc.c. etc. etc. layers and layers of mushheads as high as the sky with nothing but accreted centuries of COW POEMS on top, world without end, amen; your CRYSTALLIZATION is my OLIGARCHY:

that is, why worry about artistic cohesion when ten kazillion MFA poets are each writing one million poems a year trying to get into the Paris Review and of the few hundred or few thousand lucky poets who are publishing (me among them), NONE (statistically speaking) are being read anyway? That is, NOMAN

reads with his one good eye as he munches sailors for breakfast and he don't want any avant-garde poetics, son...

b) there really are fewer and fewer places to publish, period, even if one does write COW POEMS

c) i would be HAPPY for an audience of twenty at Stanford including Marjorie Perloff; that is, THE AUDIENCE, what AUDIENCE, if you want an AUDIENCE, there's Mick Jagger, go learn to play guitar

d) goddam it, we're all working ourselves to death making a living--nice cushy academic jobs? forget it... i have to work 52 weeks a year just like every other middle class yahoo tied at the gut to the Great Satan Capitalist Wheel--and we're running our presses--which we get damn little interest in from anyone, especially including the concerned Crystallized graybeards who have already made careers mumbling about theory--and we're raising our kids and GODDAM IT we're in the middle of all this trying to do our own work and further our own educations--yes I do read Raymond Williams at 2 AM after a long workday because THERE IS NO OTHER TIME TO DO IT--and the whole thing is god-damned exhausting trying to write a few dozen NEW poems in the middle of this ongoing pigfuck of a civilization and these MORONS are lamenting the lack of CRYSTALLIZATION, ELAN, great culture-transcending elegant congeries of what bald headed buddhists writing language poems? Please.

I mean at the rate things are going, I won't be suprised when Happy Bill announces that due to problems with bitching, pomposity, and perpetual hair-splitting internecine wars the US will now be IMPORTING all its POETRY from MEXICO, thank you very much, fast cheap and happy little poems good for the balance of payments and those GODDAM MEWLING POETS can just report to Wal-Mart for RE-EDUCATION starting now.

Joe Ahearn speaking,  
Rancho Loco Press  
Dallas  
Crystal Center USA

~~~~~  
~~~~~

[↑ Contents](#)

778. **robert drake**  
**Re: Wieners as PerfPo**  
*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

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bobo--

must be some kinda kozmic echo in here, as the beautiful  
dos-a-dos \_QUIPome/The Precarious: The Art and Poetry of  
Cecilia Vicuña\_ (wesleyan univ. press) just came in th  
mail... prime evidence fr the physical gesture as gestator  
ov posie... wisht i coulda been there w/ ya...

& hey, list, since bob's name just came up:

*What: Bob Holman Chat in the Poetry Super Highway Chat Room*

*When: Sunday January 25, 1998, 2pm (Pacific)*

*How: Click on PSH Chat room from the main PSH page.*

*<http://www.loop.com/~rickpoet>*

*(You need a Java Capable Web Browser)*

*The Poetry Super Highway turns one year old this month and helping us  
celebrate will be New York Poet Bob Holman. Bob's work will be featured as  
Featured Poet this Monday through next Sunday and Mr. Holman himself will  
venture into the Poetry Super Highway Chat Room tomorrow (Sunday January,  
25) between 2 and 3pm (Pacific Time) to meet and greet all who stop by.  
Bob will be discussing the work from his upcoming Spoken Word CD (April,  
Mouth Almighty/Mercury) called "IN WITH THE OUT CROWD."*

lbd

*<< Wieners's BEHIND THE STATE CAPITOL, published mid-70s (the writing itself,  
I think, covering several earlier years, possibly back into the 60s), though  
filled with richly sonorous poetry, is also filled with non-verbalizable  
("purely" visual) experiments with typography--not to mention lots of collaged  
things from newspapers, magazines, & Wieners's own photos.>>*

*Saw (heard?) Cecilia Vicuna the other night at "World of Poetry" series  
(Tuesdays at Biblios, NYC, thru Feb), and was rebounded to a Wieners reading  
at the Church, must've been in 75? 76? CV was doing something I hadn't heard  
since that reading (the pews were still there; this was before the fire) --  
she read poems in a continuum, with whispered obliiggatti and trilled  
repetitions as she moved forward and back among the poems to construct the  
evening's ritual.*

*JW's was hardly a ritual. More like voicing all transmission waves as they  
passed through his body. These were the "non-verbalizable" elements of BEHIND  
THE STATE CAPITOL, verbalized.*

*Just as Artaud's "No More Masterpieces!" dictum made his "non-performable"  
"masterpiece/nonmasterpiece" "Jet of Blood" a required piece for all Poets  
Theaters, the so-called non-verbalizable just set the perf-po's lips  
aquivering, ready to go at it. I've been eyeing "The Liberties" for a while*

now, and "Shadow Train."

Bob Holman

[↑ Contents](#)

779. **Kevin Varrone**

**Philly Readings**

Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

To all those in the Philadelphia area:

5 Corners Reading Series Presents:

LOUIS CABRI

&

RACHEL BLAU DUPLESSIS

Thursday, January 29th, 8 p.m.

At: George's 5th St. Cafe

(Corner of 5th and Gaskill Streets--between Lombard and South)

Phone: 215/ [REDACTED]

(Coming in February: Julia Blumenreich & Ron Silliman)

Hope some of you can make it.

Kevin.

[↑ Contents](#)

780. **Jordan Davis**

**Allied Colloids**

Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

Kent --

Thanks for the kind words, and also for the advice, which ever since Lee Ann Brown's computer spell-checked my name into Jordan Advise, I've been awaiting. There's a huge fire burning down at Chrystie and Delancey as I type this; I hope it's not at Sammy's Rumanian Steakhouse. Your comment that new poetry offers little opposition to anything except a relatively restricted band of previous poetic practice (am I getting this right? my reading comprehension scores were always so-so) (you know Queen Victoria's comparison of Gladstone and Disraeli? with Gladstone she felt as though she'd had dinner with the smartest man in the world; while Disraeli made her feel like the smartest woman in the world) arrived on my machine around the same time Chris Stroffolino's remark about the B Mayer interview in the PPN -- that it's good to see a poet offering opposition not just within the frame (coff coff) of poetic practice but with her

life (and I'm pretty sure I'm not getting that right). I'm going to leave aside the part about which generation had the best sex (nobody, not even the president has such...never mind) long enough to say yes, inasmuch as the traditional avant-garde forms of production and distribution have been withheld from younger poets for lack of credential mastery ear whatever younger poets have gone out and manufactured substitutes -- for writing styles, for subject matter, for reading series, for books magazines pamphlets bumper stickers ugh. You're saying, I take it, that Yasusada is an attempt to wake us up to the possibility that the whole factory of presentation can go fall in a swamp (pronounced so as to rhyme with on-ramp). We know that. Over on the CAP-L list not long ago Al Corn had some other issue maybe somehwaet less sophisticated to argue -- I think it was that the style one chooses is like the house one decides to buy: a colonial, a Cape Cod, an infundibuliform corolla. The thing is, even if it is a sort of boat in the mud, a house doesn't seem like that bad a thing to get, if it can be done. And Joel, I suppose a book is only for the author to have a warm feeling in his tea, as much as a poem is -- but if there's a book, the feeling can go many places at once, which is a goal of the best human commerce, no? Blame is not that interesting. Furthermore publishers, like the beloved, seem to seek out what reflects them at least a little. To mock my own logic, you could say that if we were really going nowhere the language poets didn't go, we'd all have books announced 3 yrs ago from Sun & Moon sure to arrive in stores any year now, and who knows! Isn't it funny when the word "pervert" shows up in poetry? What could be more perverse than to be a poet, and yet, and yet, "perverted acts in pastures" and "beware of boys in tight pants/ they are perverts". Which is (I guess way too obliquely) to say that although the younger writers mentioned all thru this discussion (and I suppose the older ones too) do in fact show up on time for work, hustling through the conventions, passing mss. around all while studying ukelele and ornamental guava freestyle politics and all the other apparently Kiwanis-style secret handshakes, we also have lives (or not), we also have sex (or not), we also play around with conventions of authorship (or we make art). The part you see is (as you are sublimely aware, Kent Johnson) only the part you see.

Which brings me to a technical question -- I understand that Bernadette's against monogamy, but does her cited defense -- that a woman would have to love washing and cooking for it to work -- does that defense at once rile and disappoint anyone else? Seems to me the real argument against monogamy at this late date is not that women are exploitable for household labor (which I don't doubt) but that the rewards for monogamy -- avoiding noxious life-threatening shaming, paper after the first year, rocks on the 2nd anniversary, swivelchair coasters on the 3rd etc -- seem to be dwindling all the time.

Dwindling all the time,  
Your colloid

[↑ Contents](#)

781. **david bromige**  
***pre-emptive hiccup***  
*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

I just watched a family movie dull enough to cause me to drink the fatal martini (the 3rd), in the interests of, y'know, family togetherness. I forget the name : a nice-looking young man murdered people for a living (oh, it was "Grosse Pointe Blank") while reconstituting himself via a highschoolreunion/sweetheart. What made my wife laugh the most is always of interest to me : in this case, when two systems of representation intersect, one where the hero is killing people by whanging lead into their tissue with guns and the other where he is begging her for just one more chance of soft mammal/human consideration/"love", and the director/editor cuts back and forth between both. I always wonder about her, at such times, and therefore, about myself (and then i think hard for all of us). But that isnt what I set out to say.

I only wanted to say (1) that Kent Johnson's posting y-clept "The Key Club" sounds important and so please read it w/o prejudice. I myself intend to address it in some substantial way tomorrow if not too harried by door-to-door professional killers wanting to crash my superbowl party. But/and (2), PLEASE everyone remember some of us have sadly inadequate software so please dont post posts as lengthy as this one Kent just posted. Break them down into 2 or more portions.

Btw, isn't Kent great? Whatever yr disagreements (and he often finds me disagreeable), try to imagine this list w/o him.

David.

[↑ Contents](#)

782. **david bromige**  
***p s***  
*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

well i thot kent's was long until i saw joel's. Have mercy! Not that i didn't enjoy it, once i got my software to download it. Don't y'all think the List is getting hot? If only I weren't subject to one of my megrims right now!

George Bowering  
2657 West 124th St  
Vancouver



NY

Newfoundland

Botswanaland

ICU UCM

Parallel World

The Cosmos

P S : Joel, I'd sooner have my chocolate mint on my pillow

[↑ Contents](#)

783. **david bromige**  
***how grants shape books***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

picking up a thread via Harold Rhenisch from 3 days since (it's been hectic List-wise!), I'd like to mention the Canada Council's program that pays authors royalties for their books that are held in libraries. Half a dozen Canadian libraries (which, shifts) each year are checked, and for each book there written by an author who has signed on with this program, that author receives what is termed a "hit," the value of which varies somewhat from year to year, but so far has approximated CAN \$33. There's a ceiling of CAN\$4,000 per author per year. (So that, for e.g., someone like George Bowering, with his phenomenally long list of titles, must each year hit the ceiling before his output is exhausted).

Too bad, btw, that no such program exists in the USA.

When the program began, no limit was set as to the length of the book. But the program quickly became so costly that the Council had to insist that, henceforth, nothing 48 pp or less could be considered a book. This, they said, was a definition used by UNICEF.

I believe that by this definition, neither Wordsworth's *\_Lyrical Ballads\_*, nor Rilke's *\_Duino Elegies\_* was a book.

Obviously, this must encourage Canadian authors and publishers to make sure their books are at least 48 pp long. Or so one assumes. Perhaps a study has been done on this score. I agree with some recent posts to this List, that comparisons in the matter of physical length are odious to civilized people (I suppose because thereby primacy is accorded to the animal over the civilized), and it is unfortunate to find a governmental agency being forced, via economic necessity, to adopt such an arbitrary standard. Happily, though, to end on the upbeat, no reward is offered for mere length-----4,448 pp warrant no more than 48. David

[↑ Contents](#)



784. **david bromige**

***ps***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

Sorry. I should have written "less than 48 pp". David.

[↑ Contents](#)

785. **Miekal And**

***Re: texas poetry listserv***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

Tim Wood wrote:

>

> Hello all!

>

> We've started the Texas Poetry ListServ. If you're interested in

> discussing poetry in Texas, read on;

what I wanna know is is Jack Spandrift a texas poet, or does he just talk that way?!

[↑ Contents](#)

786. **bertha**

***Re: how grants shape books***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

That term, 48 pages or less, should really have read no more than 48 pages, or fewer than 48 pages.

Bertha Rogers

[↑ Contents](#)

787. **KENT JOHNSON**

***Gladstone here***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

Jordan:

Enjoyed your response.(Seriously folks, and at the risk of seeming obsequious, who has the most delightful prose on the list, JD or DB? It's close.) And Jordan, if I've been invoking your name of late, it's for the most part to feed off the background energy of your ripostes and carry myself forward as best I can. All in jousting spirit.

Long live the Queen.

For what it's worth, though, since you raised the issue, I wanted to say that Yasuda was not at all written to make this or that point at all. To the extent that the work seems to raise issues, that is a secondary and largely accidental (though still possibly interesting, I think) outcome of a work that happened to take a particular and very idiosyncratic form because that's the form that seemed compelled by the writing, and vice versa and so on. In short, though Yasuda's writing may not have achieved the status of "art," as you say, I don't at all think that writing against the grain of "conventions of authorship" on the one hand and "art" on the other is an either/or thing. Actually, a famous philosopher wrote a beautiful and strange book entitled *Either/Or* and a number of other ones under a variety of heteronyms, and he insisted to the end that these characters were the real "authors" of his works, that they were a matter of "thought" and "production." And then Existentialism started. And that, of course, would be just one example.

Finally, I wanted to clarify just one thing about my Key Club metaphor. I said something to the effect that in the absence of real \_conceptual\_ subversiveness and verve, that "the Key Club will always be the Key Club." What I meant is that the Key Club will always be the Key Club and that Kiwanis will always be Kiwanis, albeit with ever changing faces and names. Those current and earnest members of the Key Club will do many good deeds in the image of their sponsors (whom they love and hate simultaneously) and graduate into Kiwanis, where they will grow successful, respectable, and old, and come to feel smug and superior enough to say mildly condescending things about their own underlings in the Key Club. I meant, in other words, that the deeper dynamics of the poetry institution (with all its local "avant-garde" turbulence) would not fundamentally change. There is a sense, I mean, in which cultural "experiment" reduced to method or style is a "good deed" done, ultimately, in the historical interests of the greater episteme.

Episteme? Well, you know what I mean.

Go Pack Go!

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

788. **KENT JOHNSON**  
**Re: texas poetry listserv**  
*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

On Jan. 25, Tim Wood wrote, inviting people to join the Texas Poetry List:

*Almost anything to do with poetry in Texas. That might include discussion of poetry technique, event postings, random reviews and so forth. The list is not for attacking individuals, thou. The list is not moderated, but if*

*you're spotted attacking someone, you'll get warned. If that doesn't work, you'll be unsubscribed and not allowed back. We're pretty easy going, but the list is intended to be a positive force, not a field for ego warfare.*

Dear Tim Wood:

May I suggest you contact Dale Smith, a friend who lives in Austin.

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

789. **Tim Wood**  
*texas poetry listserv*  
Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

Hello all!

We've started the Texas Poetry ListServ. If you're interested in discussing poetry in Texas, read on; there should be plenty of information to get you going. Otherwise, apologies.

Why the list

A lot of interest has been shown in creating a community online for Texas poets. We wanted to create a space where people can discuss their ideas, learn, tell others about their events, review events and hopefully, strengthen poetry in Texas.

What exactly is discussed on the list?

Almost anything to do with poetry in Texas. That might include discussion of poetry technique, event postings, random reviews and so forth. The list is not for attacking individuals, thou. The list is not moderated, but if you're spotted attacking someone, you'll get warned. If that doesn't work, you'll be unsubscribed and not allowed back. We're pretty easy going, but the list is intended to be a positive force, not a field for ego warfare.

What'll happen if you join

You'll be able to send emails to an email address (██████████) that will be forwarded to the other subscribers to the list. In return, you'll receive the emails sent in by the other list participants. You'll also occasionally receive notes about changes to how the list operates. They'll be rare, have a subject line beginning with "ADMIN" and will probably be both boring and slightly important.

Subscribing to the list

You can join the discussion by sending an email with the blank subject line and 'subscribe texaspoetry' and your name in the body (leave the subject blank!) to:

██████████. If your name is 'John Smith', your subscription email might look somethign like:

To: ██████████  
From: ██████████  
Subject:

---

subscribe texaspoetry John Smith

After you subscribe

After you send in your subscription email, you'll receive an automated response telling you how to unsubscribe. What happens after that is up to you. If you want to participate, send your email to: ██████████.

Subject Ettiquette

In a few cases, you can help the other members of our community by beginning the subject line of your email with a phrase, like EVENT.

| Type of Email                               | Begin your subject<br>_____ line with _____ |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Emails on events                            | 'EVENT'.                                    |
| press releases/whatever by major publishers | 'COMMERCIAL'                                |
| Changes to this FAQ & other adminstrativaia | 'ADMIN'                                     |

The last one ('ADMIN') should not be used by anyone but the list trolls chewing on the emails you send in.

Ack, What about my most important question?

Feel free, if the FAQ didn't answer a question clearly (or at all) to send quesitons directly to: ██████████.

Making suggestions on this FAQ

This FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) is preliminary and probably always will be. If you've got suggestions, for now please send them to:

██████████

Changes to this FAQ

We'll send a note to the list with changes to the faq.

[↑ Contents](#)

790. **KENT JOHNSON**  
**Re: texas poetry listserv**  
Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

On Jan. 25, Tim Wood replied to a question by Miekal And:

*what I wanna know is is Jack Spandrift a texas poet, or does he just talk that way?!*

*I don't the answer to that. Although, many poets who live in Texas don't speak like Ross Perot unless they're trying to tweak people who ask 'does he just talk that way' or say 'isn't that so cute'. <grin>*

*One of the more interesting facets of poetry in Texas, is that a significant number of the poets are not native to Texas or the region. But, as often as not, they've lived here as long as anywhere else. This raises interesting questions on identity, geography and culture. Even for those who are native to this region, the mix of major cultural influences, the state's different geographical regions, not to mention the international border and the state's history as a former independent nation, create some really interesting questions in regard to identity.*

*At the same time, just as one's personal life doesn't define one's poetry, I don't believe identity, culture, geography, etc., determine one's poetry. I still have memories of professors who felt that so-and-so's horrible life, bad teeth, heritage explains all their work. I believe that falls in the category of 'people who don't get it'. Both experience and identity are much better used as the starting point for other issues.*

*Tim Wood*

Well said, Tim. Maybe you've been around these parts already before, but if not, why welcome to the Poetics list! New names always bring a breath of fresh air! And do we need a breath around here of fresh air!

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

791. **Bob Grumman**  
**Re: the Perloff Seminar**  
Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

Joel:

I feel that my mock syllabus says most of what I want to say on this subject. If you didn't realize that my "canon" was intended to be "pretty much unrecognizable" to anyone who knows language poetry, I don't know what further I can do for you. The people I named (as a representative group, not a canon) are to

language poetry what the people invited to give readings for Perloff's seminar are to visual poetry.

As for my addressing my attacks to the New Yorker instead of Perloff, if the New Yorker had published a piece on the state of visual poetry in America that overlooked as much of the scene as Perloff's seminar does, I would have attacked it. But I recognize the New Yorker as being in a field too far away from what I'm interested to count for much. Perloff is a different story, which is a big compliment to her, I'm sure.

Otherwise, Joel, although I found your letter entertaining, it was really too dippy-doodle for me to try to respond to in any further detail here.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

792. **Tim Wood**

**Re: texas poetry listserv**

Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

*what I wanna know is is Jack Spandrift a texas poet, or does he just talk that way?!*

I don't the answer to that. Although, many poets who live in Texas don't speak like Ross Perot unless they're trying to tweak people who ask 'does he just talk that way' or say 'isn't that so cute'. <grin>

One of the more interesting facets of poetry in Texas, is that a significant number of the poets are not native to Texas or the region. But, as often as not, they've lived here as long as anywhere else. This raises interesting questions on identity, geography and culture. Even for those who are native to this region, the mix of major cultural influences, the state's different geographical regions, not to mention the international border and the state's history as a former independent nation, create some really interesting questions in regard to identity.

At the same time, just as one's personal life doesn't define one's poetry, I don't believe identity, culture, geography, etc., determine one's poetry. I still have memories of professors who felt that so-and-so's horrible life, bad teeth, heritage explains all their work. I believe that falls in the category of 'people who don't get it'. Both experience and identity are much better used as the starting point for other issues.

Tim Wood

[↑ Contents](#)

793. **robert drake**

***Re: noise channel surf boy stink bomb***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

folks--

it really is quite unfortunate that the discussion around VizPo has deteriorated to "bob g.'s crowd" (how'd you get ownership, bob? homesteaded it, did ya?) vs drs perloff & bernstein. i think there are real issues here, but proprietary claimstaking is hardly th point...

i've had some sympathy w/ bob's initial criticism, or what i took as it's subtext: that mp's visual poetry seminar, as reflected in her syllabus, has an unstated bias towards a particular aesthetic and/or a community of poets, to wit the LangPo "school". i myself have nothing against partisanship, and it's an obvious contradiction for bob to criticize mp's biases only to lobby for biases ov his own... but it's not amiss to point out hidden agendas, and to offer correctives.

by way of data, and in ref to th syllabus in question: surveying the required & recommended reading list of single-author contemporary titles: fifteen authors; 4 of whom appear in *\_in the american tree\_*, 3 in *\_the l=a=n=g=u=a=g=e book\_*, 3 in *\_the art of practice\_*, and 4 in *\_from the other side of the century\_*. insofar as these anthologies might serve as mappings of some "moment or movement", it seems that a large percentage of the emphasised readings are taken from a constrained corpus ov material...

(i'll point out, as an aside, that in almost none of the anthologized work from this moment/movement is the visual component significant enough to merit reproduction in the original graphic format--which suggests either that th visual work by these poets is not considered by their editor/peers to be important, or that the visual component is not central to th aesthetic...).

the anthologies, supplemental readings, and websites certainly go far to balance the picture... (and i'll add another reference for those interested: David W. Seaman's *\_Concrete Poetry in France\_* (ann arbor: umi reasearch press, 1981)). still, both the primary & secondary sources seem largely restricted to university/scholarly sources [what did you expect, bob?]. but there are whole cultures and communities of visual poetry that (i believe conciously) position themselves outside the cultural apparatus of the acadamy--they are nonetheless deserving of attention, especially in the context of a seminar which seems strive for inclusiveness. bob's pointed to some of those sources already, & i'll enlarge: Score, Kaldron, Light & Dust, Xexoxial Endarchy, Luna Bisonte, Generator Press, dbqp, curvd H&z, Red Lines, Ninth St. Labs, Runaway Spoon... anyone who is interested in Visual Poetry really owes it to themselves to check out some of these publishers' offerings.

lbd

[↑ Contents](#)

794. **robert drake**  
***news that stays news...***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

### The Ballad of Sexual Obsession

1

There goes a man who's won his spurs in battle  
The butcher, he. And all the others, cattle.  
The cocky sod! No decent place lets him in.  
Who does him down, that's done the lot? The women.  
Want it or not, he can't ignore that call.  
Sexual obsession has him its thrall.

He doesn't read the Bible. He sniggers at the law.  
Sets out to be an utter egoist  
And knows a woman's skirts are what he must resist  
So when a woman calls he locks his door.  
So far, so good, but what's the future brewing?  
As soon as night falls he'll be up and doing.

2

Thus many a man watched men die in confusion:  
A mighty genius, stuck on prostitution!  
The watchers claimed their urges were exhausted  
But when they died who paid the funeral? Whores did.  
Want it or not, they can't ignore that call.  
Sexual obsession has them in its thrall.

Some fall back on the Bible. Some set out to change the law.  
Some turn to Christ. Others turn anarchist.  
At lunch you pick the best wine on the list  
Then meditate till half past four.  
At tea: what high ideals you are pursuing!  
Then soon as night falls you'll be up and doing.

- Bertolt Brecht

[Translated by Ralph Manheim and John Willett]

[↑ Contents](#)



795. **Tim Wood**

**Re: texas poetry listserv**

Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

*Well said, Tim. Maybe you've been around these parts already before, but if not, why welcome to the Poetics list! New names always bring a breath of fresh air! And do we need a breath around here of fresh air!*

Kent,

Thanks for the welcome. I've mostly been lurking for quite some time. I try and limit my comments to those where I feel like I've got something to add. Between the speed of the posts, my busy schedule and the brain power floating in and out of this list, that's a rarity.

Tim

[↑ Contents](#)

796. **Bob Grumman**

**Re: noise channel surf boy stink bomb**

Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

A brief response to what Luigi-Bob just posted:

(1) I've been using "my crowd"--always in quotation marks--merely quickly to refer to the people in visual poetry to whom I believe Perloff has paid insufficient attention.

(2) I've taken pains to emphasize that I have no problem with any poetry group's being boosted, and I have never hinted that I want "my crowd" (here we are again) promoted INSTEAD of anyone else (except a few I feel need no extra promotion). ALONG WITH everyone else has always been what I've called for.

Otherwise, nice post, L-B.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

797. **Steve Evans**

**Re: news that stays news...**

Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

If it is true that the gift of a volume of Whitman helps shatter the presidency, the \*poetry makes nothing happen\* crowd has some explaining to do. Me, I keep thinking of a line Kevin Davies published a few years ago in \*Thunk\* (Situations, 1995): "Clinton licks tender inner thigh of corporate crud agenda."

[↑ Contents](#)

798. **RaeA100900**

***Gone for awhile...***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

Dear List Members,

My monitor seems to be dying, so, I imagine I will be unreachable by e mail for awhile. Those who need to reach me will need to try the old fashioned way. I'll post to the List again when the problem is resolved.

Rae Armantrout

[↑ Contents](#)

799. **Steven Marks**

***citation help***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

Listfolks:

Does anybody know where I can find information about when a review by Richard Silberg on Anne Carson appeared in Poetry Flash. Online sources? Silberg's e-mail?

Thanks in advance.

Steven

---

Steven Marks

<http://members.aol.com/swmarks/welcome.html>

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[↑ Contents](#)

800. **Jack Spandrift**

***Re: texas poetry listserv***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

| *what I wanna know is is Jack Spandrift a texas poet, or does he just  
| talk that way?!*

Think I answered this query in a previous post. Let me repeat: I was born in North Carolina, have lived peacefully under a pseudonym for several years in Brainerd, MN, and am wanted in seven states, including Texas. Coupla Rangers almost got me once outside Fort Worth, but they were a tad slow on the draw. - Jack Spandrift

801. **Harold Rhenisch**

***Re: the Perloff Seminar***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

Bob,

to your responses, including

>>I've taken pains to emphasize that I have no problem with any poetry group's being boosted, and I have never hinted that I want "my crowd" (here we are again) promoted INSTEAD of anyone else (except a few I feel need no extra promotion). ALONG WITH everyone else has always been what I've called for.<<

you have my support, and puzzlement, too.

Your passion leaves me enthused, but all this talk about Perloff's adequate or inadequate course on visual poetry leaves me puzzled. Why does it matter what she teaches? Visual poetry is not alone in this morass of misdefinition. Every facet of current poetry is misdefined and misdelineated. The whole field is a mess. If we are to make real progress it will come through Miegel's attitude of working outside the academy, and through a total redefinition of what is taught in the academy. Language/visual poets and mainstream/lyrical poets often regard each other with dismissal and suspicion. I think we need new terms of reference, which will show common ground, wiping clear indulgence and confessional bilge on both 'sides'.

I have faith that you are trying to ensure that visual poetry is not misdefined, but I ask again, why does it matter what Perloff teaches? It must only matter if she is the agent of change. I don't think she is, in the sense you mean. The university environment is basically a conservative one, of sifting, of maintaining, of drawing or breaking patterns. With few exceptions, it is not a revolutionary one of seeking out the new. I don't mean this as a criticism.

Perloff's contribution might be to build some sort of vision of where things are going, in which she is able to touch upon some forms of visual poetry. That this grand vision does not touch upon the work vital to you might not be Perloff's problem. It's yours, it's ours, and it's an important problem, but to deal with it it's time to move beyond Perloff. In your context, I have trouble seeing how she is important. Because of her influence? Because there is no alternative, although there should be?

If, as I suspect, you see the humanities as a faculty akin to, say, molecular biology, working on the cutting edge of the new, obsolete tomorrow but built upon day by day, that is perhaps where you should begin, not by attacking Perloff. If

Perloff, as an elite representative of a conservative institution in a conservative state, wishes to write from within her metaphor, and if, as I see it, you stand outside that metaphor, I humbly suggest that you might get farther by redefining Perloff's role, rather than by redefining her course. The course is small change.

I'd be interested in your thoughts.

cheers,

Harold



[↑ Contents](#)

802. **henry**

***Re: the Perloff Seminar***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

On Sun, 25 Jan 1998 13:57:16 -0800 Harold Rhenisch said:

>

>If, as I suspect, you see the humanities as a faculty akin to, say,  
>molecular biology, working on the cutting edge of the new, obsolete  
>tomorrow but built upon day by day, that is perhaps where you should begin,  
>not by attacking Perloff. If Perloff, as an elite representative of a  
>conservative institution in a conservative state, wishes to write from  
>within her metaphor, and if, as I see it, you stand outside that metaphor,  
>I humbly suggest that you might get farther by redefining Perloff's role,  
>rather than by redefining her course. The course is small change.

This paragraph echoes with a roomful of echoes. "Poetry" (discipline) compared with "biology". The cutting edge of biology is the cloning of human beings as objects of scientific curiosity & ambition. I suppose that's what they deserve considering what they're doing to the oceans, rainforests, and "tribal peoples". Academia fully \$\$\$upportive. But academia needs art, like evrybody needs style (Lewis Lapham says literature is now a mode of interior decorating). So we'll keep the remnants alive on the fringes. At least Perloff recognizes change as something invigorating rather than dangerous. & we love her for that, out here in snowbound Buffalo, where the rust belt instills us with memory & resistance. & Grumman is grubbin' along very hard in the same survival-instinct tunnel. - Henry Gould, in Providence

p.s. maybe we could market a line of Perloff Poetry Pups - cute little cloned animals with avant-garde vizhionariesque squatrains attached to their furry gonads...

[↑ Contents](#)

803. **Tim Wood**  
**Re: the Perloff Seminar**  
Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

*literature is now a mode of interior decorating). So we'll keep the remnants alive on the fringes. At least Perloff recognizes change as something invigorating rather than dangerous. & we love her for that, out here in snowbound Buffalo, where the rust belt instills us with memory & resistance.*

Poetry (and art in general) would be much poorer places (sic, yes) without the elements of resistance (political and otherwise) or memory. I'm more than happy to leave the pursuit of assimilation and forgetfulness to the marketing types.

*p.s. maybe we could market a line of Perloff Poetry Pups - cute little cloned animals with avant-garde vizhionariesque squatrains attached to their furry gonads...*

You are truly sick Henry... or is that schizoid  
<grin>

Tim Wood

[↑ Contents](#)

804. **Carl Lynden Peters**  
**Re: the Perloff Seminar**  
Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

*misdefinition. Every facet of current poetry is misdefined and misdelineated. The whole field is a mess. If we are to make real progress it will come through Mikel's attitude of working outside the academy, and through a total redefinition of what is taught in the academy.*

i disagree. abt working outside of the academy. i am a 3rd year Ph.D student in English lit. bill bissett is doing a reading here tomorrow and i just spent all day mounting a show of his stuff based on reproductions and library books. i did this in an office space that's reserved for retired faculty - i did this "inside" the university, in a department where i'm pretty much considered an "outsider." i teach visual poetry and concrete poetry and performance poetry and collaborative poetry in courses on medieval lit., in courses on modern drama, even in "poetry" courses. i'm told i am - and that my approach is - "unconventional," "unorthodox." that's just silly and it's, well . . . my point: there are a lot of us working inside the institution. bill bissett knew early on he wasn't one of those. he is a brave spirit outside. so maybe i am a brave spirit inside. but i wonder how many students, first year & last year, graduate and faculty, will pass by the \_bill bissett Magik Room\_ tomorrow - on their way downstairs to hear him read - and i wonder how many might just stop in, sign th guest book, look around,

feel transformed by what you can do with words. this will happen inside. to tell  
th truth - i dont even know if there even is an inside or an outside. and th word  
"progress" really makes me nervous, but that's another issue for later

carl

[↑ Contents](#)

805. **Harold Rhenisch**

***Re: the Perloff Seminar***

*Sun 25 Jan 1998*

---

Carl Lynden Peters took objection to

> If we are to make real progress  
> it will come through Mikel's attitude of working outside the academy,  
and  
> through a total redefinition of what is taught in the academy.

and wrote

>>and th word

"progress" really makes me nervous, but that's another issue for later<<

Carl, progress towards redefinition and renewal only.

I envy you Bissett and his magik room. Keep up the good work. Just a question:  
having Bissett at SFU, does this change or break down the boundaries set up  
between schools of poetry? Or does it put Visual poetry within that set of  
boundaries? Both are valid. I just want to see more of the former, that's all.

Now, Henry, to your

>>p.s. maybe we could market a line of Perloff Poetry Pups - cute little  
cloned animals with avant-garde vizhionariesque squatrains attached  
to their furry gonads...curiously<<

You betcha! We could stuff the fuzzy little guys with shredded copies of Leaves  
of Grass. There might just be some copies already shreaded in Washington that  
we could get cheap. Of course, the seams might be poorly done, and these little  
scraps of Whitman might come leaking through.

Geez, cloning though. Whew. I thought most poetry was already cloned.

cheers,

Harold Rhenisch

██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

806. **George Bowering**  
**Re: Whitman and presidents**

Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

*If it is true that the gift of a volume of Whitman helps shatter the presidency, the \*poetry makes nothing happen\* crowd has some explaining to do. Me, I keep thinking of a line Kevin Davies published a few years ago in \*Thunk\* (Situations, 1995): "Clinton licks tender inner thigh of corporate crud agenda."*

I can hear Clinton in his southern drawl y'awl now, reciting :

"Lie lax in the door yard, honey."

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

807. **Beth Joselow**  
**Re: POETICS Digest - 22 Jan 1998 to 23 Jan 1998**

Sun 25 Jan 1998

---

Bravo to Don Byrd. Here's to the poetry of urgency.

[↑ Contents](#)

808. **Mark Prejsnar**  
**interpret not!**

Mon 26 Jan 1998

---

This is just basically a few words about Joe Safdie's interesting and thoughtful post...It was predicated on a too-impoverished sense of poetry is doing as an art-activity...The idea that poetry is primarily about paraphraseable "meaning"...Thus the emphasis on "how easy a poem is to interpret", the archaic references to 7 types of etc. etc.

Interesting that right now several exceptionally detailed and substantive threads are going on...Henry and Joe S. and others attacking their idea of langpo while Bob G. and others attack Perloff et al. in the name of vispo. One fascinating aspect of this is, that although both vispo and commonsensepo partisans feel they are attacking a threateningly hegemonic Language camp, they are surely in great tension toward \*each other\* also...Much of the quite

fascinating vispo work I see these days, would certainly offend against Joe's commonsensepo standards!

Mark P.  
@lanta

[↑ Contents](#)

809. **Dale M Smith**

***Re: scoured grapes***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

I always knew it was about a display of reverence...

Cheek wrote:

you put the book between you knees, kneel and clap  
should leave the mouth free

To: [REDACTED]

yes dale there \*is\* a right way to read everything  
you put the book between you knees, kneel and clap  
should leave the mouth free

[↑ Contents](#)

810. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Hurrahpo***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

I think that's a useful and really absorbing (cf. CB) post there, Kent...

Seriously (more or less) I'm glad you made your argument so clearly...Including quoting what I thought was maybe the most interesting and pointed passage in the Doubled Flowering interview...

It would now appear that there are at least four whirling clusters of atoms currently multilogging here,

langpo

vizpo

commonsensepo

yasusadapo (violent dispersal of the institutionally-constituted author)

The list is becoming very dynamic these days..Certainly no longer what the Brits called "pofaced." As we say down south, po' boys all around!

...On a more somber note, I'd like to encourage everyone to get a hold of Doubled Flowering. One of the most compelling and challenging and \*fun\* pieces



of poetic imagination since Ossian. (It's now out from Roof Books) I really don't think anyone will want to miss it...At the very least maybe (like the two alien races in Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy) we can "settle our few remaining differences" and unite to turn on Kent and rend him to pieces! Nothing like a common Araki, er, enemy, right?

Mark P.  
@lanta

[↑ Contents](#)

811. **Susan Wheeler**

***Hiatus***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

I'm leaving all this stellar thinking and asserting for a spell, folks -- thanks, & read you again c. Easter. Still on-line should anyone need to reach me at the is.nyu.edu address.

Susan Wheeler

██████████

voice/fax ██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

812. **William R. Howe**

***vizzipo schtuff***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

joel new quite well that i was working sat from dawn til late and used his opportunity wisely indeed and now i find myself in the possition of needing to respond to many voices instead of just one or two. ill start with saying something about charles seminar as apposed to marjories. cbs day at the beach was meant to be just that and the day was made up of texts that were commonly available or otherwise easily placed on reserve at the graduate library pointing out that many more possibilities were available for perusal at the poetry room (with the special help of m. basinski) this was only ment to be an intro a feeler a taste to bring people back a dealers freebee. mp's seminar is a complete corpus of study and as a consequence it represents an ostensibly organic whole purporting to give an overview of an entire field of production when really what is at stake is a form of political justifacation for the importance of a group of poets whom she has championed for a long time (and i might add i see nothing wrong with her championing of language writing-my poetics would not be possible in its form now without a marxist critic of the materiality and economy of meaning and language) and which has little to do with practicing visual poets here on this continent. Now having said that i think i should say somthing to several peoples

critic of why does this all matter well marjories seminar at s is an important place for forming the ideas and opines of not only her students but her students students. even though this might seem like an extremely paranoid and possibly provincial attitude the fact remains that mp is a loud and lasting critical voice and she has been responsible at least in part for the acceptance of experimental writing in a less than enthused accademic crowd. so what she says and what she teaches and what she does have a bearing on poetics as an endeavor however any of us may feel (her books are published in large quantities and are some of the only books on poetics dealing with experiment widely available and accessible to most readers)insofaras we percieve poetics as a negotiation among practitioners and thinkers (not to say that these are mutually exclusive).

now the next thing i think i should respond to again stems from joels exemplifying Druckers the visible word as a means of engaging visual poetry. and ill admit that taken on its title alone the book seems to be the perfect companion for visual poetry. my problem with this work is not so much as with what it deals with but what it implies for the rest of practitioners. drucker is quite understandably concerned with the conception and production of type. type as object, type as form, type as visual florition. and as a consequence her book is concerned with the evolution of type and the production of art with type. she sees the page still as a jamsian window to narrative to action to theatre and relates the visual to the world of the stage. not as a visual medium in and of itself. she says of marinettis work of the late teens (were he began to use distorted typographic elements) "the typographic elements were no longer incidentally visual, but fully visual . . . the voyeuristic emphasis positions the reader to look into the situation . . . the visual distribution of linguistic elements, into a violent field of revery . . . provided them with a signifying value." language here is still meaningful in a 19th century kind of way. there are truths of both a linguistic and visual nature. in and of itself there is nothing wrong with this reading of this text (or as a corolative of Druckers reading of most of her examples) but what is missing is an appriciation and a reading of text as non-linguistic visual representation. drucker approaches this with a narrative of "at night, in her bed" but fails to see the letters as shape as dream/sex itself. the visible word is a wonderful book on typography and the uses of typography in futurist and surrealist texts but it does nothing in terms of visual collage poetry (two contemporary practitioners are wendy kramer and kapulani [just off the top of my 6 in the morning head]) non-linguistic visual poetry (cristian boks crystalography or pointedly featured on the cover of mps book radical artifice steve mccaferrys carnival secondpanel) non- linguistic visual poetry ([many of which perform these non-linguistic texts verbally] lots o folks aka bob cobbing paula claire ulli freer allison knowles chris cheek lawrence upton john bennet mike basinski john byrum etc) or sculptoral poetry (gary indiana ihf allen kaprow john furnival

etc). so terming the visible word a book on visual poetry is absurd in more ways than one. druckers work surveys typography not visual use of language.

bil  
l  
  
h  
o  
w  
e

[↑ Contents](#)

813. **Mark Prejsnar**  
*art built on political critique*

Mon 26 Jan 1998

---

Henry,  
there is no such thing as "art built on political critique," though there  
\*is\* poetry that is aware of its political character.

All poetry is political.

You may believe that there is poetry which is not political..."but it ain't necessarily so."

Mark P  
@lanta

[↑ Contents](#)

814. **Dale M Smith**  
*Hey Katy*

Mon 26 Jan 1998

---

I wanted to reply to you and somehow lost your post. I remember a long Barthes quote ending in a question, to me, about a contract between writer and reader. My response:

Contact not Contract.

Re: Moxley's book preface, she writes: "Even the love poem agitates the beloved to fall in love with the poet." Now that's the kind of excitement I have in mind for poetry. The writer should give enough to move thought and feeling through someone else. Instead of vain postures and formal orthodoxy, do what it takes to connect to something outside of the self. Arrogant readerly demands might work in Leisure Land (picture musical notation around those words) but most people aren't the least bit interested. It's funny that novels still sell well,

and that audiences attend the theater but poetry more than ever is an isolated art. Maybe there's something for us to learn?

[↑ Contents](#)

815. **henry**

***Re: art built on political critique***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

On Mon, 26 Jan 1998 10:00:59 -0500 Mark Prejsnar said:

>Henry,

>there is no such thing as "art built on political critique," though there

>\*is\* poetry that is aware of its political character.

>

>All poetry is political.

>

>You may believe that there is poetry which is not political..."but it

>ain't necessarily so."

Mark, I think the list has been around this vague corral before. But I never said poetry wasn't political. Fact in earlier post I said politics was at the heart of poetry. What I was saying was: there is something called "poetry", and it's not a reflection, translation, secondary phenomenon based on "thinking", philosophy, political standpoint, etc. & I said, in other words, that I thought the approach to poetry laid out in PhillyTalks #3 seemed too close to such a secondary phenomenon. i.e. "the state of the world is like this (socio-politically speaking) so poetry will do this", etc. It seems too rationalistic & ignores what I see as poetry's sort of constant, perennial attributes & functions.

p.s. also, your brief list of streams (langpo, commonsensepo, vizpo, etc.) doesn't seem to contain the specific "crystal" I was spouting about: an uncommon-sensepo that is a visual-verbal-textual gesture spinning out of control.

- Henry the Virtual Blabologist

[↑ Contents](#)

816. **Maria Damon**

***Re: Wieners as PerfPo***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

at the queer beats symposium lo these 2+ years ago, bruce boone gave a haunting talk about wieners's performances and their transcendent abjection. kevin k, any idea if this essay is in print form yet, or if there are plans for it to be? --md

At 11:11 PM -0500 1/24/98, Nuyopoman wrote:

><< Wieners's BEHIND THE STATE

>CAPITOL, published mid-70s (the writing itself, I think, covering several  
>earlier years, possibly back into the 60s), though filled with richly sonorous  
>poetry, is also filled with non-verbalizable ("purely" visual) experiments  
>with

>typography--not to mention lots of collaged things from newspapers, maga-  
zines,

>& Wieners's own photos.>>

>

>Saw (heard?) Cecilia Vicuna the other night at "World of Poetry" series  
>(Tuesdays at Biblios, NYC, thru Feb), and was rebounded to a Wieners read-  
ing

>at the Church, must've been in 75? 76? CV was doing something I hadn't  
heard

>since that reading (the pews were still there; this was before the fire) --

>she read poems in a continuum, with whispered obliiggatti and trilled

>repetitions as she moved forward and back among the poems to construct the  
>evening's ritual.

>

>JW's was hardly a ritual. More like voicing all transmission waves as they  
>passed through his body. These were the "non-verbalizable" elements of  
BEHIND

>THE STATE CAPITOL, verbalized.

>

>Just as Artaud's "No More Masterpieces!" dictum made his "non-performable"

>"masterpiece/nonmasterpiece" "Jet of Blood" a required piece for all Poets

>Theaters, the so-called non-verbalizable just set the perf-po's lips

>aquivering, ready to go at it. I've been eyeing "The Liberties" for a while

>now, and "Shadow Train."

>

>Bob Holman

[↑ Contents](#)

817. **Maria Damon**

***Re: the Perloff Seminar***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

rhenish writes, among other things:

If we are to make real progress

it will come through Miekell's attitude of working outside the academy, and  
through a total redefinition of what is taught in the academy.

as someone who works "within" the academy to change it, i agree but with some caveats. for those who feel they can live outside systems, my hat's off to you; but i myself can't take the stress, want health insurance, don't want to be 65 without means of self-support and no relief in sight...there's gotta be room for those of us who don't have the energy to do battle with the daily necessities AND flourish creatively. watching what miekal and lyx have to go through --in some ways its a fabulous life, growing your own food, owning your own means of production, and yes if the stock market crashed you'd survive better than any of us who are investing in our "retirement plans" here at Moo U...in many ways i find life outside the system fabulously seductive and non-alienated etc, but i personally, and many like me, don't have the personal fortitude or inclination to do so, tho we can still play a useful role in effecting change. for me, the academy was the path of least resistance, so i took it; it seems to afford me the most leftover energy to do fun stuff. i have my own differences --mostly political -- with m perloff, as she knows, and to an extent we've agreed to disagree. and i don't see anything wrong with bob grumman's wanting recognition; that's part of being a person in society. i guess i don't have a unified point here, but i wanted to bring some more terms into the discussion beyond inside/outside systems or "grumman's being unreasonable v. perloff is being non-representative".

[↑ Contents](#)

818. **R M Daley**

**Re: Hey Katy**

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

On Mon, 26 Jan 1998, Dale M Smith wrote:

> I wanted to reply to you and somehow lost your post. I remember a long  
> Barthes quote ending in a question, to me, about a contract between  
> writer and reader. My response:  
>  
> Contact not Contract.  
>  
> Re: Moxley's book preface, she writes: "Even the love poem agitates the  
> beloved to fall in love with the poet." Now that's the kind of excitement  
> I have in mind for poetry. The writer should give enough to move thought  
and  
> feeling through someone else. Instead of vain postures and formal orthodoxy,  
> do what it takes to connect to something outside of the self. Arrogant  
> readerly demands might work in Leisure Land (picture musical notation  
around  
> those words) but most people aren't the least bit interested. It's funny  
> that novels still sell well, and that audiences attend the theater but poetry

> more than ever is an isolated art. Maybe there's something for us to learn?

>

so dale, you mean theatre, like spice world and titanic? - and novels,  
like judith krantz and um, cold mountain, yeah?

this isnt cultural snobbery per se, to be asking for something that asks more of  
the reader (always, collaborator) than a passive affirmation of usual structures  
of seeing/doing/thinking/going about one's day (ie, falling in love with  
oneself/'the poet' - dont know about you, but i never had a 'poet' write love to  
me, in fact, i'm almost always the only one doing the reading! - go figure)

'writer should give enough to move thought and feeling through ...' - tell me  
what thought is, what feeling is, how a writer (moxley? dale smith?) puts some-  
thing down that reaches that ultimate, indefinable, unmarked territory of uni-  
versal emotion - and i have an mfa program to sell

rd

[↑ Contents](#)

819. **Robert Archambeau**

***NDR #5/Creeley, Howe, More***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Just a note to say that Notre Dame Review #5 is out, with a new 20-page poem  
from Robert Creeley, an interview with Susan Howe, some surprising art by  
Janet Bloch, a Simic poem and more, including the second part of an article on  
Irish experimental poetry by yours truly (deals with work by Catherine Walsh,  
Maurice Scully, and Geoffrey Squires). Steve Tomasula of the Electronic Book  
Review is working on a new web site to accompany the issue which should be  
up soon at

<http://www.nd.edu/~ndr/review.htm>

Cheers

R.A.

--

Robert Archambeau

Department of English

Lake Forest College

Lake Forest, IL 60045

<http://www.lfc.edu/~archamb/>

"There is no remedy for this "packaging" which has supplanted the old  
sensations"

-John Ashbery

[↑ Contents](#)

820. **Joe Amato/Kass Fleisher**

**Re: the Perloff Seminar**

Mon 26 Jan 1998

---

i think maria's onto something important, and that has to do with respect for (which i suppose implies a knowledge of) other folks' lives...

that is, we tend too often to talk in terms of surfaces, b/c any real intimacy is, well, frightening...

if you really wanna know what someone is doing in the classroom, or on the assembly line, or in front of their typewriter, you need to be willing to ask some questions and listen, carefully, for some answers... if you think said context/place of employment/writing zone should/could/must be altered---for the "better," however defined---why then you at least need to understand the terms of said person's engagement with said context... the constraints as well as the possibilities, which around t/here generally fall under the rubric, somehow, of "work"...

the territorialities surfacing of late on this list are provocative, yes, but they're lamentable too... every now and again something bleeds through that, however much i may disagree, seems charged with the urgency of the person-in-the-world, or on-the-planet (which is not merely \*personal\*)... for which i am thankful, b/c i am mself none too good at making my assertions \*felt\* by others...

i wonder whether we can swear our allegiances w/o having to dismantle one another in the process?...

best,

joe

[↑ Contents](#)

821. **Mark Prejsnar**

**Re: the Perloff Seminar**

Mon 26 Jan 1998

---

On Mon, 26 Jan 1998, Maria Damon wrote:

*as someone who works "within" the academy to change it, i agree but with some caveats. for those who feel they can live outside systems, my hat's off to you; but i myself can't take the stress, want health insurance, don't want to be 65 without means of self-support and no relief in sight...there's gotta be room for those of us who don't have the energy to do battle with the daily necessities AND flourish creatively. watching what*



*miekal and lyx have to go through --in some ways its a fabulous life,  
growing your own food, owning your own means of production, and yes if the  
stock market crashed you'd survive better than any of us who are investing*

Believe it or not, some of us belong to the working class and do poetry. This means (at least if you fight hard enough for a union, and/or are lucky) that it's possible to have medical coverage, a wage, etc. Back to the land is not the only alternative to academe!!

Mark P. (for Prole)

[↑ Contents](#)

822. **KENT JOHNSON**

***The ten gallon hat***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Emerging now from last night's post-game funk and can finally speak. My class early this morning was an utter disaster: I started crying in the middle of a lecture on topic sentences. How will I face them now tomorrow? I feel like Clinton.

Anyway, last night I drove up to Monroe, Wisconsin with my foam Cheesehead hat to watch the game at Baumgartner's, a true "bar bar" with all kinds of fish and animals grinning from the walls and not a fern plant in sight. Drank about 15 Diet Cokes. But the reason I'm writing, and it's a stunner, is this: During the second quarter sometime, a portly man, fortyish, in ten gallon hat, bellied up next to me and we got to doing the bonding thing by shouting at the TV through the drunken din. DID YOU SEE THAT?! AW BULLSHIT, COME ON REF! GO DORSEY GO! and so on. At halftime I introduced myself, and he to me. Imagine my surprise when he grabbed my hand and yelled in my ear, HI, I'M TIM WOOD, FROM TEXAS!

I sized him up for a spell, probably cross-eyed with the shock, and then yelled back as loud as I could, ARE YOU THE SAME TIM WOOD FROM POETICS LISTSERV?

WHAT'S THAT AGAIN PARDNER? he yelled.

I SAID, I yelled, ARE YOU THE SAME TIM WOOD FROM POETICS LISTSERV? (Only now does it occur to me that I yelled this twice with a huge piece of foam cheese on my head, and the thought of myself in that act strikes me, frankly, as somewhat disturbing.)

NO, he yelled, I'M FROM TEXAS...WACO, TEXAS... ON BUSINESS.

Anyway, the misunderstanding was a bit awkward (in those non-verbal bar-like ways you can't quite put your finger on), and it sort of short-circuited the visceral flow of our manly camaraderie. By the third quarter, he had pulled back

from the bar to yell at the TV with other cheeseheads, and to leave me pondering over the utterly wild coincidence of it all.

Tim, feel free to post this rather bizarre anecdote on the Texas Poets Listserv as well!

the Pack will be back,

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

823. **Dale M Smith**

***Re: Hey Katy***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Actually, I had that new Bond movie in mind. Maybe Elmore Leonard over J. Krantz though. By the way. There are ways to challenge that don't rely on the formal vomitorium many poets turn to for inspiration these days. But you've got to find that out on your own.

To: [REDACTED]

On Mon, 26 Jan 1998, Dale M Smith wrote:

> I wanted to reply to you and somehow lost your post. I remember a long  
> Barthes quote ending in a question, to me, about a contract between  
> writer and reader. My response:  
>  
> Contact not Contract.  
>  
> Re: Moxley's book preface, she writes: "Even the love poem agitates the  
> beloved to fall in love with the poet." Now that's the kind of excitement  
> I have in mind for poetry. The writer should give enough to move thought  
and  
> feeling through someone else. Instead of vain postures and formal  
orthodoxy,  
> do what it takes to connect to something outside of the self. Arrogant  
> readerly demands might work in Leisure Land (picture musical notation  
around  
> those words) but most people aren't the least bit interested. It's funny  
> that novels still sell well, and that audiences attend the theater but  
poetry  
> more than ever is an isolated art. Maybe there's something for us to learn?  
>  
so dale, you mean theatre, like spice world and titanic? - and novels,  
like judith krantz and um, cold mountain, yeah?

this isnt cultural snobbery per se, to be asking for something that asks more of the reader (always, collaborator) than a passive affirmation of usual structures of seeing/doing/thinking/going about one's day (ie, falling in love with oneself/'the poet' - dont know about you, but i never had a 'poet' write love to me, in fact, i'm almost always the only one doing the reading! - go figure)

'writer should give enough to move thought and feeling through ...' - tell me what thought is, what feeling is, how a writer (moxley? dale smith?) puts something down that reaches that ultimate, indefinable, unmarked territory of universal emotion - and i have an mfa program to sell

rd

[↑ Contents](#)

824. **Charles Watts**

***Re: bill bissett reads at SFU Monday,***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

I don't know of any offhand, Miekal, but maybe Carl Peters does--he's on this list; and I'll ask bill when I see him today.

Charles

>

> charles watts

>

> can you point us to any online bissett resources?

>

--

Charles Watts

Theses and Special Collections

Special Collections & Rare Books

Room 7100, Bennett Library

Simon Fraser University

Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6

Tel: [REDACTED]; Fax: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

825. **Charles Watts**

**Re: bill bissett**

Mon 26 Jan 1998

---

No, Steve, we're not planning a publication based on the exhibit; but I can tell you about the recent issue of Capilano Review featuring bill bissett. It's Series 2, No. 23, Fall 1997. Here are the contents:

Introduction by editor Robert Sherrin; "th pome wuz a storee. . ." by Jamie Reid; "nowun duz it like yu," David McFadden interviews bill bissett; "A Just Measure: breath, line, body in the work of bill bissett," by Sharon Nelson; "'when we get there can I smoke?'" by Susan Musgrave; three poems by bill bissett; "bill bissett: A Writing \_Outside\_ Writing," by Adeena Karasick; "The Continuous Present," by Judith Copithorne; "Truth be told, by any other name, bill bissett," by Kathy Ford; "bill bissett circa 1967/68," by Patrick Lane; "The Flying Eagle," by Maxine Gadd; "Some times," by Renee Rodin; a suite of eight paintings and collages by bill bissett, reproduced in colour; "Composition by Feeled: The Visual Art of bill bissett," by Robert Enright; three more poems by bill bissett; "we ar always on th 401: the use of fiction in bissett's poems," by Carol Malyon; "Vertical Excess: \_what fuckan theory\_ and bill bissett's Concrete Poetics," by Darren Wershler-Henry. The cover features a bissett painting, "th rivr is shak-ing."

The Capilano Review

2055 Purcell Way

North Vancouver, B.C. Canada V7J 3H5

Subscriptions are \$25/year (\$30 for institutions). No evidence of a single issue price, but they are sold on magazine stands; maybe \$12? No indication of an e-mail address or fax number either.

P.S. the full title of Jamie Reid's essay is "th pome wuz a storee nd is th storee: th erlee daze uv blewointment." Blewointment was bill's self-propelled press for twenty years or so.

Best,

Charles

*dear charles,  
thanks for your post re the bb exhibition, sounds great. will you be doing  
a publication? i've heard of a recent issue of capilano review devoted to  
bill but haven't seen a copy. very best wishes on the show.  
steve clay  
granary books  
568 broadway #403  
new york, ny 10012*

--

Charles Watts  
Theses and Special Collections  
Special Collections & Rare Books  
Room 7100, Bennett Library  
Simon Fraser University  
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6  
Tel: [REDACTED]; Fax: [REDACTED]  
E-mail: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

826. **LAURA MORIARTY**

***Re: the Perloff Seminar***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Joe -

- I liked the way your message addressed the delicate ground between the compellingly urgent and the creepily personal -

The visual art discussion was great, especially for its passion and negativity. It seems a very useful function of the list to bring together the anthropologists and their "targets" - so to speak. And very interesting when we question those roles as of course is happening in actual anthropology. It feels and sometimes is a life-and death matter who gets included or discluded - whether you have insurance or not -

And yet, writers' versions of their own histories, poetics and context are often good reading, but are sometimes related only tangentially to what is actually out there -

What is new - What are the uses of the new and how work will be relevant to anyone in 50 or 100 years (or in 5) will not be determined by the same qualities that make certain poetries or poets dominant now. It's the Tennyson/Thomas Higginson syndrome -

(This btw not an attack on Ron (I haven't seen his Philly talk) whose work I continue to find useful - though it is often in a state of resistance or exasperation that I may be using it -)

To respond to Karen Kelley (who I have been trying to backchannel with no luck) about web or print I think that they should exist in tandem and that web, being easy, instant access (once you have it at all) - leads you to the print work of the writer(s) - I see non partly as a series of advertisement for the writers in

it- I like it that the access is international and random - You don't have to stand-  
ing in SPD as I am luckily able to to see new work by Bob Grenier or Mary  
Burger -

Laura

<http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~moriarty/>

[↑ Contents](#)

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827. **LAURA MORIARTY**

***reading, interview,***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

P.S.

I will be doing an interview on the radio possibly with others in the AVEC an-  
thology reading (which is next Saturday the 31st at CleanWellLighted Place for  
Books, 601 VanNess, SF at 7:30 - The other readers are Lissa McLaughlin,  
George Albon and Stephen-Paul Martin -)

The radio thing (very immediate Bay Area) is 1220 AM KBBA (I think) at 4:30  
on this Wednesday (the 28th) - I promise to mention all of your names -

Anyone owing me (or having) a review etc for non should get in touch -I have  
lost some messages in changing emails -

My new address is [REDACTED] - Will resubscribe as soon as I can figure out how  
to filter the list with eudora

The sublime non will be up ASAP

Laura

<http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~moriarty/>

[↑ Contents](#)

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828. **Richard Long**

***More Creeley Work***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

In addition to the Creeley poem mentioned by Robert Archambeau, there's  
other current Creeley poetry (with art by Francesco Clemente) in the latest is-  
sue of The 2River View at

<http://www.daemen.edu/~2River>

You can click on CURRENT ISSUE and go to the table of contents, or you can  
get to the Creeley/Clemente work directly via this link

[http://www.daemen.edu/pages/rlong/tworiver/2RView/2\\_2/poems/anamorphosis.html](http://www.daemen.edu/pages/rlong/tworiver/2RView/2_2/poems/anamorphosis.html)

Richard Long

-----

Richard Long

Daemen College, Amherst, NY 14226

<http://www.daemen.edu/~rlong>

<http://www.daemen.edu/~2River>

██████████ \* FAX ██████████

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[↑ Contents](#)

829. **Harold Rhenisch**  
***Re: the Perloff Seminar***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

>>i wonder whether we can swear our allegiances w/o having to dismantle one another in the process?...

Well posed, Joe.

--Harold

██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

830. **d powell**  
***Re: citation help***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Steven,

The Flash's number is ██████████. I'm pretty sure that their issues are archived, but I don't know where. Joyce Jenkins could tell you though. Doug

=====

=====

D A Powell

██████████

=====

=====

Steven Marks wrote:

>Listfolks:

>

>Does anybody know where I can find information about when a >review by

>Richard Silberg on Anne Carson appeared in Poetry Flash. Online >sources?

>Silberg's e-mail?  
>  
>Thanks in advance.  
>Steven  
>  
>  
>-----  
> Steven Marks  
>  
>  
> <http://members.aol.com/swmarks/welcome.html>  
>-----  
>  
>-----  
>Return-Path: <[REDACTED]>  
>Delivered-To: [REDACTED]  
>Received: (qmail 19948 invoked from network); 25 Jan 1998 >20:32:56 -0000  
>Received: from deliverance.acsu.buffalo.edu (128.205.7.57)  
> by herring.com with SMTP; 25 Jan 1998 20:32:56 -0000  
>Received: (qmail 22793 invoked from network); 25 Jan 1998 >20:32:38 -0000  
>Received: from listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu (128.205.7.35)  
> by deliverance.acsu.buffalo.edu with SMTP; 25 Jan 1998 20:32:38 >-0000  
>Received: from LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU by  
>LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU  
> (LISTSERV-TCP/IP release 1.8c) with spool id 27228453 >for  
> [REDACTED]; Sun, 25 Jan 1998 >15:32:34 -0500  
>Received: (qmail 19607 invoked from network); 25 Jan 1998 >20:32:33 -0000  
>Received: from oak.cc.conncoll.edu ([REDACTED]) by  
> listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu with SMTP; 25 Jan 1998 >20:32:33 -0000  
>Received: from dsys.cc.conncoll.edu by oak.cc.conncoll.edu;  
> (5.65v3.2/1.1.8.2/18Mar96-1233PM) id AA23175; Sun, 25 >Jan 1998  
> 15:32:32 -0500  
>X-Sender: [REDACTED]  
>Mime-Version: 1.0  
>Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN; charset=US-ASCII  
>Message-ID: ><[REDACTED]>  
>Date: Sun, 25 Jan 1998 15:32:32 -0500  
>Reply-To: UB Poetics discussion group ><[REDACTED]>  
>Sender: UB Poetics discussion group ><[REDACTED]>  
>From: Steven Marks <[REDACTED]>  
>Subject: citation help  
>To: [REDACTED]  
>  
>



[↑ Contents](#)

831. **Miekal And**  
***Back to back***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

RaeA100900 wrote:

>  
> Well, I got a new monitor and am back on-line before anyone could even  
> theoretically miss me. I guess my announcement that I would be unavailable  
> was  
> a bit over-stated.  
>  
> Rae A.

ah, but what do we gotta do to get you to delurk, probably just shutup for a couple weeks

miekal

[↑ Contents](#)

832. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**  
***PRIMORDIAL***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

PRIMORDIAL

{k:3} Mail -v [REDACTED]  
Subject: Endless Darkness of this Primordial Age  
Now in this darkest of all Years  
It is a life that brings me Fears  
Against Eternal Wheels Never Steered  
Past violent Faces and their Leers

.  
EOT

{k:4} [REDACTED]... Connecting to gol1.gol.com. via esmtp...

{k:6} [REDACTED]... Connecting to wonderland.gol.ad.jp. via esmtp...

c220 wonderland.gol.ad.jp ESMTP Sendmail 8.8.8/8.8.8/888-980120-P; Mon, 26 Jan 1

998 00:13:14 +0900 (JST)

>>> EHLO panix3.panix.com

at250-wonderland.gol.ad.jp Hello panix3.panix.com [198.7.0.4], pleased to meet y

ou

250-8BITMIME  
250-SIZE 1000000  
250-DSN  
250-ONEX  
250-ETRN  
250-XUSR  
250 HELP  
>>> MAIL From:<[REDACTED]> SIZE=209  
z250 <[REDACTED]>... Sender ok  
>>> RCPT To:<[REDACTED]>  
250 <[REDACTED]>... Recipient ok  
>>> DATA  
354 Enter mail, end with "." on a line by itself  
>>> .  
250 AAA12170 Message accepted for delivery  
[REDACTED]... Sent (AAA12170 Message accepted for delivery)  
Closing connection to wonderland.gol.ad.jp.  
>>> QUIT  
221 wonderland.gol.ad.jp closing connection  
  
{k:16} mail -v [REDACTED]  
Subject: Darkness of Primordial Age  
Now alas the Darkness of the Primordial Age  
is Upon Us; I have brought an endless Rage  
against Dwelling-Place of Deity and Sage:  
it is this War enhanced that I will Wage.  
.  
Cc:  
[REDACTED]... Connecting to local...  
[REDACTED]... Sent  
{k:17}

---

[↑ Contents](#)

833. **hen**

***Re: the Perloff Seminar***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

On Mon, 26 Jan 1998 11:40:18 -0800 LAURA MORIARTY said:

>

>What is new - What are the uses of the new and how work will be relevant  
>to anyone in 50 or 100 years (or in 5) will not be determined by the same

>qualities that make certain poetries or poets dominant now. It's the  
>Tennyson/Thomas Higginson syndrome -

This is one of the central, uncanny things about writing, & like most important things it's probably best not to talk about it. I'm sure all you talkers will agree with me there. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

834. **Bob Grumman**  
***Re: the Perloff Seminar***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Lots of posts to answer, which I'll do rather hurriedly 'cause I AM getting a little tuckered, especially from repeating my few main points, and from trying to keep from becoming de-focused.

Harold R. starts things off for the day by wondering about "all this talk about Perloff's adequate or inadequate course on visual poetry." Answer: all the talk from me is because the course is symptomatic of the Whole World's Indifference (sob) to a kind of poetry I believe in--or, to be a little more fair--a large chunk of a kind of poetry I believe in; also--I'll confess it now--because Perloff's seminar presents a good excuse to publicize that kind of poetry (just as the announcements of the readings done in conjunction with the seminar publicized Perloff's brand of poetry; also, finally, for the wonderfully pure reason that one should always protest anything one conceives as unfair, however small.

The rest of Harold's first post on this today was interesting but peripheral. For instance, that I should spend time on defining Perloff's role rather than her course is an interesting idea, but I consider myself a literary critic, not a poetics sociologist. And I do consider her important. I truly wonder where Ashbury would be, for instance, if not for Vendler. I'm sure he would eventually have emerged, but not as quickly. And it seems to me that Perloff has been one of the main forces behind language poetry's emergence. As for the best way to make a space in the culture of one's time for one's kind of art, I have no idea what it is. I personally have always been extremely private: do the work and let others do the work of finding their way to it. But I more and more think that's doing only half your job as an artist--if you want to communicate--and I do.

Oh, and I don't see the academy as anywhere near the cutting edge, or that it necessarily should be. But it should at least acknowledge the existence of all segments of the cutting edge.

Now, briefly, to Henry Gould, which means wandering far afield. Only to TIME magazine and the like is "the cutting edge of biology," in Henry's words, "the

cloning of human beings as objects of scientific curiosity & ambition." The media no more provides data about real biologists than it does about real poets.

Another brief comment, this in response to Carl Lynden Peters, with whom I tend to agree that working from within the academy is as good a way to go as any. And I'm a natural anti-academic who only started college in his thirties because the government paid him to do so through the GI Bill, and who never got further than a BA. Of course, as a substitute teacher at a high school, I'm now pretty academic.

Great that bissett is getting some recognition. I think it helps make him available, period. I don't care what boundaries others try to put him in so long as they make him available. Read/view his work for what it is, not where it's put by others, including me.

I was pleased to see Maria's quietly sensible post, quite a nice contrast to some of the outbursts this thread has been seeing, including some of mine. I was amused that Mark Prejsnar found something to attack in it, though--unless he was being comic.

Joe Amato was, as always, reasonably reasonable, but he believes (I think) in a density of fair play I'm incapable of; that is, I can't help but point out what I take to be defects regardless of the motives, compensating virtues, problems with logistics, etc. of the person responsible for the defects.

Finally, turning to Bill Howe, what can I say? Except that he should be shot for making a better case for my view than I've been able to.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

835. **RaeA100900**

***Back***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Well, I got a new monitor and am back on-line before anyone could even theoretically miss me. I guess my announcement that I would be unavailable was a bit over-stated.

Rae A.

[↑ Contents](#)

836. **JBCM2**

***Re: fri. night Poetry Wars***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Joe: Read your rant and found myself empathetic with it, with this one difference: I'm not as pissed off as I used to be. This is what happens when the imperialist paradigm is in force; the need to have a hierarchy, hence the ridiculous banter on the network that crystallizes around the one subject that everybody's hip to -- getting published. The truth of the matter has nothing to do with publishing per se; anyone can publish, if only a vanity press. No, here too the hierarchical condition exerts itself; it's not IF one publishes but WHO one is published by. I'm not saying there isn't a genuine love of the art out here, I'm saying that it's subordinate to the institutional demand for honors and a big publishing house.

You might be interested in reading what Carlo Parcelli says on the predictable outcome of such a "crystallization" on-line in FlashPoint Magazine (<http://webdelsol.com/FLASHPOINT/>), and on the political scene on-line in PostMortem (@ <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1848/>).

Joe Brennan

[↑ Contents](#)

837. **Miekal And**

***what night is it at vizago's vertipo***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

I go away for a day & the hum on the line here be outta control. Good to hear the many other voices to be heard & the juxtaposition & timing of various posts is better than TV. I feel like my relation to institutions is being misrepresented. I gladly give workshops, readings, performances, installations, for any institution that asks me, whether it be UM-Gopher, the winnebago nation, or the military & have done so many times in the past....on the other hand I cant picture myself being a tenured graybeard in the martini zone. Living on \$3000/year in no better or worse than 20 times that amount. I do agree with Don Byrd's comment of a week back or so that were in the midst of a cultural crises which mirrors the ecological, social & economic crises that were the privileged generation of. we have to want to sustain abundantly the culture of culture to know how to proceed, how to cultivate the blasted diversity of wildness & value the spontaneous self-organization of poetries layered on poetries. Besides, if no one sees/reads my words in 200 years, how will I sleep at night?

Dr Awkword in Qazingulaza

[↑ Contents](#)

838. **Daniel Zimmerman**

***Re: the Perloff Seminar***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Maria Damon wrote:

>

> i have my own differences  
> --mostly political --with m perloff, as she knows, and to an extent we've  
> agreed to disagree. and i don't see anything wrong with bob grumman's  
> wanting recognition; that's part of being a person in society. i guess i  
> don't have a unified point here, but i wanted to bring some more terms into  
> the discussion beyond inside/outside systems or "grumman's being  
> unreasonable v. perloff is being non-representative".

Maria, I don't care whether you have a 'unified point'--you have a good one. Or, as Rodney King said,... Why shouldn't Perloff foreground her favorite authors working in vizpo? [OK: Bob has a point: perhaps she shouldn't present it as the definitive & comprehensive course on vizpo--but I suspect she has enough sense not to, & wouldn't register much surprise if she acknowledges Bob's objections in her course; why not? She seems pretty fairminded to me, and a great champion of many of the subscribers to this list]. As neither a 'language poet' nor a 'visual poet,' I haven't much stake in this brouhaha, perhaps [?], but \_as\_ a [godawful obscure] poet, I sure hope this sniping dies down before someone gets hurt.

--Dan Zimmerman

[↑ Contents](#)

839. **Aviva99999**

***HUBRISTIC, SIMPLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF VIZPO NEEDS  
COUNTERING***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

The following passage, from UNENDING DESIGN: THE FORMS OF POSTMODERN POETRY, Joseph M. Comte (Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1991), p. 16, seems simplistic and therefore provocative, especially to those of us who know little about "visual" and "sound" poetry. I'd love to hear some responses to this passage, as it seems unnecessarily one-dimensional to me. Anyone interested?

"The concept of a poetic form must respond to the conditions of the modern world and to an understanding of how that world functions. Not all "new" verse forms are equal to the task of confronting reality. Poets may correctly observe that theirs is a printed medium requiring the extended concentration of the

reader; and they may also observe that the audiovisual media that now dominate our culture offer an almost instant gratification that barely requires the attention of its audience at all. Thus some poets have devoted their energies to producing concrete or "visual poetry" that could easily be flashed on a video monitor, or they have composed "sound poetry" that can be chanted like a mantra, recorded, spliced, or broadcast over loudspeakers in some public forum. But in my opinion such poetic forms seem too much to bear the stamp of their reality. They are formal effects that seem not so much devised by the poet as thrust upon him by the exigencies of his condition. They reflect a world that has grown too impatient to tolerate the "defamiliarization," the increase in the "difficulty and length of perception" that Victor Shklovsky argued poetic language ought to pursue. Such forms do not confront or interpret contemporary reality; they submit to it."

[↑ Contents](#)

840. **Aviva99999**

***Susan Howe's Vizzipo post...***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Can someone forward me a copy of this post? I inadvertently wiped it out before reading it...Thanks!

[↑ Contents](#)

841. **Henry Gould**

***Re: the Perloff Seminar***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Now, briefly, to Henry Gould, which means wandering far afield. Only to TIME magazine and the like is "the cutting edge of biology," in Henry's words, "the cloning of human beings as objects of scientific curiosity & ambition." The media no more provides data about real biologists than it does about real poets.

Thanks for filling me in, Bob. Actually, I know some biologists. My brother is a biologist. His specialty is lichen. He's doing a mapping project in the arctic at the moment. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

842. **Henry Gould**

***Re: Back***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

On Mon, 26 Jan 1998 18:23:05 EST RaeA100900 said:

> Well, I got a new monitor and am back on-line before anyone could even

>theoretically miss me. I guess my announcement that I would be unavailable  
>was  
>a bit over-stated.  
>

welcome back, Rae. Have you been crystallized yet? Everyone's annoyed. -  
Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

843. **JBCM2**

***Re: found poem***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Better watch those guache conceits....

Joe

[↑ Contents](#)

844. **Scott Pound**

***Re: vizzipo schtuff***

*Mon 26 Jan 1998*

---

Well done Bill. As one who has traded many quips and folded many bits of paper and fused hips in front of computer monitors and trucked over to Joel's house to do more of the same--with Joel and Bill and others I \_can\_ relate to \_materiality\_ and all the staring and listening it takes to really \_see\_ and \_hear\_ and \_make\_ poetry not merely visual but real. Something.

But the meism of this debate gets tiring after a while. No one has really come out and said why vizpo matters, if it does. For meikal and bob the answer is implicit in their years and years of work. It's hardly for them to say. As Pound used to say to a young McLuhan: "all the answers to your questions are in the first 80 Cantos." Others genuinely wonder, as Joel says, what the fuss is about.

I read much of the growling and pissing, the territoriality that has come to the fore, as a symptom of something worth pursuing in a less ad hominem way because there is a real difference at stake between langpo and the concertistes which explains meikal, bob and company's irritation at the two being conflated in Marjorie Perloff's syllabus.

Aside from the absurd implication that a langpod can't be a vizpot (\_Veil\_ is as worthy a part of the vizpot corpus as anything), there is the question of what separates the two modes of writing. And I would use this rift to raise exactly that question. The term materiality (or some derivative thereof) has been used to describe the work of both the langpods and the vizpots.



In some usages, notably that of Dale Smith's rabid attacks, materiality seems to connote decadence, a kind of super-literariness that entails a high quotient of reflexivity and dialectical highjinx (pace Silliman, Watten, Bernstein). This I would situate as a kind of dialectical materialism in which the material of the poem is the result of putting an obscenely wide lens in front of the poet's gaze on things. This practice explodes (for one) the notion that the work of the poet is one of selection and subtle taste in the fine matters of living. I would cite Ron Silliman's work of the \_Ketjak\_ \_Tjanting\_ period where anything can and does pass through the poem (shitting, waiting for the bus, eating, fucking, etc.). There is the poem's indiscriminate preoccupation with matter as a site of poetic possibility and there is an ironic residue of decadence to that, a Duchampian decadence. I qualify this as dialectical because, in addition to this preoccupation with materiality, there is the supplemental dimension of what is at stake in putting that kind of raw, unformed material IN A POEM. There is paradoxically an extremely high degree of consciousness in that kind of work, the same high degree of consciousness that informs Duchamps ready-mades; as brute and bold gestures, they are nonetheless extremely sophisticated.

There are those that believe Duchamp challenged the sanctity of art with his ready-mades. I believe he did the opposite, he reinforced it, for the same reason that the langpods extending the limits of the poem reinforces that sanctity of the poem as a capacious entity (kinda like Walt Whitman). So you can call that materiality of you want; I regard it as an infusion of matter into the ever-virtual sphere of the poem. Nothing wrong with that in the least, as long as we remember that it is a nominal materiality that is at work there.

Materiality in poetry SHOULD mean works that brush up against the limits not of \_the poem\_ but of the real. That is what the best concrete vizpot does. It does not thematize matter; it challenges the audience to view letters and words as real things with a dimension and duration all their own, not merely as indices in an overdetermined virtual world of meaning.

There is great beauty and courage in work that is willing to forsake the ready-made structure of phonetic literacy and put letters in the service of creating spaces and temporalities that outstrip anything the alphabet was designed to contain and control.

I salute meikal and bob and all the other concretists on this list for their work. I got my eye on you.

It's late (for me) my salt bath is ready. Grind on.

Scott Pound

[↑ Contents](#)

845. **Thomas Bell**

**Carson review**

Tue 27 Jan 1998

---

Seredipitously encountered this reference.

Try <http://members.aol.com/swmarks/reviews.html>  
tom bell

[↑ Contents](#)

846. **Thomas Bell**

**fri night po wars.the new.vizpo.langpo again.**

Tue 27 Jan 1998

---

Luigi, Henry, and

[If I have the time this might be a series of short posts rather than a long post, particularly as I am thinking it through as I write.]

I may be writing here more as a psychologist than a poet (and I am working from a psychhologist's - Marion Milner's - words. She is a psychologist but writing here as a painter so I'm not sure "words" is accurate), but it does seem to me that any new direction or movement in poetry will not be in the area of form or language. The Russians recently mentioned here and the vizpo business seem to support this - I think the importance of vizpo is in its visual dimension rather than its forms - this might be what is problematic in a langpo approach to vizpo.

I. Langpo (or whatever) has opened to clear the detrius in what was accepted as the way it is.

II. The next "movement" will not be one of style or new "avants", but...

I.

Operative (or Operating) words here; OBJECT FRAGMENTARY COMBINING  
IMAGINE DANGER

"It seemed it was possible...to have evaded facing certain facts about the human situation, or only given a superficial acquiescence to them. Otherwise why was it so difficult to feel about, as well as think about, the separateness or togetherness of objects?...Direct sensory was always fragmentary and had to be combined into a whole by the creative imagination....even the perception of a...carrot was an imaginative act, one had to create imaginatively...the unseen other side...to know the truth of people you have to select and combine; to grasp the essence of them...you have to combine all the partial glimpses into a relevant whole. this, however,since it requires imagination, brought me face to face with certain dangers inherent in the nature of imagination.

-----

unk. atr.

>>"\*what is it about language writing and all that has come after it that there  
>>has been no moment nor movement that has crystallized in anything like the  
>>same way poetry did in the early 1970s?\*" For all the anthologies of younger  
>>writers, many of them extraordinarily gifted, what do we find in the way of  
>>work that is actually new? I think this must be the challenge that faces  
>>every younger writer . . . "

Luigi-

>a number of movement/movements that have, if not  
crystallized, at least been strong confluxes of poetic/community energies...  
one significant difference, as i've suggested before, is the lack of critical/  
theoretic attentions either from within or outside... of course, such  
attentions/components are sometimes held as markers of "seriousness"  
(as if, lacking overt critical discourse, there is no critical thought or  
>theoretic underpinning)

Henry

>"movements" themselves have a certain "synthetic, teleological"  
energy...Again, I insist that the really great art releases something  
via a synthetic process in which the rational or strategic will is in  
abeyance rather than control. Or at least "in collaboration"...  
anything that critiques "the way things are" is justified as "art".  
I think we are all familiar with this trend in the arts.

By suggesting a socio-political explanation for why a "new crystallization" on a  
par with language poetry has not yet occurred, Ron is following this trend. & I  
would argue that the answer to his question - where a new development is to be  
found - has already been supplied earlier in the dialogue; by Ron himself, when  
he talks about all art as a "tuning of the senses" via an overdetermination, if you  
will, of stimulæ; and by Jeff, when he argues that the political impact of es-  
trangement is not supplied so much by disjunction as by "radical \_conjunction\_"  
- the JOINING of dangerous taboo political contexts within the energy of clear  
artistic description (& Derksen uses examples from Silliman's own work to illus-  
trate).

I would argue that an aesthetic of pure critique, not firmly grounded in  
artistic processes, ends up one-sided and rhetorical. As I suggested in  
a previous post, art is a kind of uncanny energy which spins out of the  
artist's full control but brings joy in the process - a joy which spreads  
& subsumes critique & re-orientes everything in its path. This is Whitman's  
daemonic Laugh coming from the Rockies. It becomes a super-synthesis of  
speech/drawing/voice/gesture - not a move-in-reaction to previous trends

but a kind of perennial activity. It is with such a synthetic approach, giving full weight to the artistic process in itself, which I would posit the current generation is already engaged & which could be "crystallized" in recognizable academic-literary-historical format suitable for framing >anthologizing & convertible into deadhead bears if you like. - Henry Gould

II.

later, or tomorrow or?  
tom bell

[↑ Contents](#)

847. **Thomas Bell**

***Part II, fri.night po's etc***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Brief digression (or succession) on the psychology of phonemics and graphemics, the visual, and social upheaval, suggesting that vizpo is the logical heir of langpo?

Excerpts from Reuven Tsur's "Picture Poems...

<http://www.tau.ac.il/~tsurxx/>

"Granted that poetic language draws attention to itself more than nonpoetic language, one must make a stylistic distinction between poetic styles in which this is more, and those in which this is less conspicuous. In non-manneristic styles, classic or romantic for example, the transition from the signifiant to the signifié is relatively smooth, in spite of all. The phonetic patterns in these styles are perceived as some pleasant fusion of sounds in the back of one's mind. In manneristic styles, such as metaphysical or modernistic poetry, language tends to direct attention back to the signifiers more conspicuously. To put my argument briefly, in poetic language we are more aware of the separateness of the signs than in nonpoetic language; and within poetic language, we are more aware of their separateness in manneristic than in, e.g., romantic poetry.

"We listen to a stream of abstract phonetic categories, made amenable to the resolving power of the human ear by parallel transmission. At the same time, at a lower level, and subliminally, we may attend to the rich, precategorical acoustic information, which may affect the perceived quality of poetic language in a variety of ways. For our present business, one thing is important: there is a subtle interplay in the background, on a very minute scale, between this rich, precategorical acoustic information and the fine-grained semantic components. Obviously, owing to the differences propounded above, such interplay cannot take place between the visual design superimposed upon the line arrangement and the patterns of signs at the phonetic, semantic, syntactic and thematic levels.

"Some contemporary critics hold, following Dr. Johnson, that blank verse and vers libre are "often only verse for the eye". This is a misconception. Just as the graphic arrangement on the page presents the lines as perceptual units to the eye, the intonation contours heard in the reading of poetry present the lines as perceptual units to the ear. Such contours are the result of the interaction of the intonation contours required by prose rhythm with those that articulate the line. It is assumed that the listener decodes these contours in terms of the intonation contours from whose interplay they arise. In fact, the main function of the graphic arrangement on the page is to give the reader instructions concerning the intonation contours appropriate to the lines. In this respect, the verse lines with the white space around become rather transparent graphic signs of phonological entities: just as the letters on the page signal phonemes, the verse lines surrounded by white space signal intonation contours (cf. Tsur, 1977: 119; 1992 a: 174-175). They only begin to compete for the reader's attention and reassert their warring identity, when they are foregrounded by some "mannerist" device: acrostic, or some mimetic arrangement.

"I propose to offer a model alternative to Tynjanov's, drawn from Sypher (1955: 6), who speaks of four stages of Renaissance style, the first two of which are relevant to our present business: A provisional formulation (Renaissance), and a disintegration (Mannerism). We might suggest that in the first stage, that of the "provisional formulation", the art-consumer (reader, listener, spectator) tends to attend away from the individual devices to the architecture of the whole, whereas in the second stage he is forced to attend back to the isolated devices, with possible serious damage to the architectural structure of the whole. In Melchiori's phrasing (1966: 138), "the total effect is frequently lost sight of, or is reached through accumulation rather than through a harmonious disposition of structural parts", whereas "details are worked out with a goldsmith's care". A similar disintegration has been observed by Curtius (1973: 274) toward the end of the Latin Middle Ages: "A danger of the system lies in the fact that, in manneristic epochs, the ornatus is piled on indiscriminately and meaninglessly. In rhetoric itself, then, lies concealed one of the seeds of Mannerism. It produces a luxuriant growth in Latin Middle Ages". A similar story can be told,

mutatis mutandis, about the disintegration of romanticism, after a provisional formulation, into the ensuing various types of mannerism.

"The discontinuity of manneristic devices in general, and of picture poems in particular, throughout the history of literature, can be accounted for, then, by a model suggesting an internal dynamics of alternating periods of provisional formulation and of disintegration, in which "the centre cannot hold".

"There seems to be general consensus as for the artificiality of the graphemic patterning of picture poems, as compared to the relative naturalness of the various kinds of phonetic patterning prevalent in all kinds of poetry. But only very few people do ask why graphemic patterning should be less natural than phonetic patterning; and even fewer people give an answer to this question based on Liberman's findings concerning the unique nature of speech. It should be noticed that Liberman's conception is tailor-made for explaining this relative unnaturalness. At the same time, the general consensus as for the relative unnaturalness of graphemic patterning might serve as weighty evidence in favour of Liberman's conception of speech perception, as opposed to the received view.

"I still owe an explanation why mannerism tends to occur during "periods of great social, political and ideological upheaval, when more than one scale of values prevail". I have elsewhere discussed at considerable length (e.g., Tsur, 1987: chapter 9; 1992 a: chapter 15), the cognitive functions fulfilled by such typical metaphysical devices as the metaphysical pun and conceit, and used these functions in an effort to explain the effects of those devices on the readers. The gist of my argument is that the metaphysical pun and the metaphysical conceit are adaptive devices turned to an aesthetic end. In a socio-cultural situation in which disintegration exceeds the degree that could be handled by cognitive integrating devices deployed by e.g. romanticism, one must cope with emotional disorientation by resorting to some more effective adaptive devices. As a first orientation device, one might check whether one's adaptation mechanisms are properly tuned. When one is shocked out of tune with one's environment by the clashing emotional tendencies of the grotesque, of the metaphysical pun, or of the metaphysical conceit then, as suggested by Sypher, one tries to readjust himself so as to regain aesthetic distance. In the course of this, our own coping mechanisms with the environment, and especially the linguistic mechanisms involved in this process, become perceptible to ourselves. Some similar process of disorientation and readjustment may be at work when the

reader attempts to integrate the visual design superimposed upon the verse lines with the rest of the poem, at least in the most extreme instances.

#### ABSTRACT:

Picture Poems; Concrete Poetry; typographic patterning; literary history; Mannerism; Metaphysical Poetry; signifier-signified; Cognitive Poetics; calligrams; phonetic patterning.

[Back to Home Page](#)

[Back to Article](#)

Reuven Tsur

Picture Poems:

Some Cognitive and Aesthetic

Principles

#### Abstract

This paper explores some cognitive and aesthetic principles concerning picture poems. It conceives of language as of a hierarchy of signs: the graphemic string signifies a phonological string which signifies units of meaning which signify referents in extralinguistic reality. Our linguistic competence urges us to reach the final referents as fast as possible. Poetic language draws attention to itself, that is, to the hierarchy of signifiers. In manneristic styles there is a greater awareness of the separateness of signifiers than in non-manneristic styles; hence their witty or disorienting effect. While rhyme, metre, alliteration impose additional patterning upon the phonological signifiers, picture poems, acrostich, and some other manneristic devices impose additional patterning upon the graphemic signifiers. When alliterations are turned into puns, they become manneristic patterning of the phonological signifier. It is argued, by analogy with synaesthesia, that stable characteristic visual shapes obstruct smooth perceptual fusion; and based on speech perception, that speech sounds are special in our cognitive economy, and visual patterning cannot achieve the naturalness of their patterning. That is why visual patterning is not admitted in non-manneristic styles. Cognitive poetics suggests that in the response to poetry, adaptive devices are turned to an aesthetic end. In a universe in which "the centre cannot hold", readers of poetry find pleasure not so much in the emotional disorientation caused by mannerist devices, but rather in the reassertion that their adaptive devices, when disrupted, function properly. This is one reason for mannerist styles to recur in cultural and social periods in which more than one scale of values prevail.

Keywords: Picture Poems; Concrete Poetry; typographic patterning; literary history;

Mannerism; Metaphysical Poetry; signifier-signified; Cognitive Poetics;



calligrams;  
phonetic patterning.

[Back to Home Page](#)

[Back to Article](#)

Original file name: Picture Poem abstract - converted on Wednesday, 18 June 1997, 07:03

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[↑ Contents](#)

848. **Marjorie Perloff**  
***Re: The Perloff Seminar***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

I feel like Alice in Wonderland--curiouser and curiouser--as I read these posts about "my" seminar, mostly totally speculative.

All the sinister things attributed to me and to the course seem to have nothing to do with reality. So here's a little reality check, gang.

the Stanford English dept, as Maria, a star graduate well knows, is not given to having many grad courses in poetry: mostly it might be Pound & Eliot, sometimes (Al Gelpi), Black Mountain, sometimes (gil Sorrentino)--Williams and very occasionally the Objectivists. John Felstiner teaches courses that include Lowell, Bishop, etc.

There has never been a course in visual poetry, concrete poetry, sound poetry or any thing similar in the 10 years I've been here. Most of my colleagues don't know what "concrete poetry" is, never mind post-concrete, materialist poetics, or any related item. One of them asked me what an artist's book is.

In these circumstances--quite typical, by the way--I thought it might be fun to organize a course that would stress the visual elements in poetry and look at some of the new work. So I picked representative texts from Apollinaire and Pound on down, beginning with the CALLIGRAMMES and Pound's ideograms. I could have easily picked 10 alternate lists. For instance: I'm sorry I'm not doing Duchamp whose visual poetics are very important to me. I picked Darren Werschler-Henry because I think NICKELODEON is an exciting, innovative book but I might just as well have picked Christian Bok's CRYSTALLOGRAPHY, which I love. I chose books that I find interesting. I do think as the professor, that's my right. Courses are not advocacy forums but designed to TEACH.



So who is Bob Grumman to tell me my course is not REALLY about visual poetics? What does this mean? If Bob teaches a course than obviously he can choose his texts. He might not choose the OUT OF EVERYWHERE anthology which I love (and which certainly has visual poems in it--see the Diane Ward, for example) and that would be his privilege. But obviously any course is personal; there's no such thing as "coverage".

I hope this is the end of this thread because I find it so counterproductive. And also coercive: how can anyone tell anyone else what works they should/must teach?

Marjorie Perloff

[↑ Contents](#)

849. **Miekal And**  
**[Fwd: IM98 update2]**

Tue 27 Jan 1998

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by westbyserver.westby.mwt.net (8.8.7/8.8.6) with SMTP id BAA23447  
for <[REDACTED]>; Tue, 27 Jan 1998 01:07:11 -0600 (CST)  
From: "Vittore Baroni" <[REDACTED]>  
To: <[REDACTED]>  
Cc: <[REDACTED]>, <[REDACTED]>, <[REDACTED]>,  
<[REDACTED]>, <[REDACTED]>  
Subject: IM98 update2  
Date: Tue, 27 Jan 1998 08:18:21 +0100  
INCONGRUOUS MEETINGS 1998 (IM98)  
Update n.2  
January 1998

UNSUSCRIBE: if you do not want to receive anymore these bi-monthly updates, simply answer to this e-mail with "STOP IM98".

THANKS: to Joel S.Cohen/Ragged Edge Press for printing a bunch of IM98 leaflets; to the magazines P.O.Box, ANNA and AMANITA (e-mail mag) for spanish translations; to TAM/IUOMA <<http://www.geocities.com/Paris/4947/>> and VIVA LAS VEGASTAMPS <<http://www.stampo.com/meeting.html>> for posting the invites in their web sites. The meetings that have already taken place are omitted from this version of the IM98 list, a complete documentation will be included in the final catalogue-calendar.

TO THE TOP

WHEN: whenever two or more networkers meet in 1998.

WHERE: any mountain top.

WHAT: whenever two or more networkers meet in 1998, on any mountain top ,

there an IM98 takes place.

WHO: a convocation by H. R. Fricker.

WHY: to be on top.

#### INTERNATIONAL TAX FORM DAY

WHEN: on the day the taxes are due.

WHERE: in every Country where taxes are paid.

WHAT: rip the tax form in tiny pieces and throw it in the water-closet while reciting lines from "The Divine Comedy".

WHO: Umberto Principi/MAGAM.

WHY: to wait for the tax collector and pay also the additional taxes...

#### I SANTINI DEL PRETE MEETING

WHEN: from January 1st to December 31st 1998.

WHERE: anywhere but preferably in a train station.

WHAT: choose a person with whom you will create an intense common feeling, identifying yourself with I Santini Del Prete (lit."the priest's saint holy pictures", a duo of railwaymen-performers). Send a photo to R. Del Prete, C.P. 133, 57013 Rosignano Solvay, Li, Italy. Catalogue in 1999.

WHO: a project by Franco Santini and Raimondo Del Prete.

WHY: you are I Santini Del Prete!

#### FRIDAY THIRTEEN

WHEN: on Friday 13th February, March and November 1998.

WHERE: a place of normality (like a town square).

WHAT: all participants will shout abusive remarks to normal passers-by.

WHO: minority groups (race, gender, disability).

WHY: to make everyone else feel crap for a moment, before going on unaffected by the meeting. To try and raise a sense of oneness.

#### PIG DADA MEETING

WHEN: on February 28th, 1998, at 3pm.

WHERE: "De Rinck" cultural center, 7 Place de la Vaillance - Dapper Heidsplein 7 and Kapittel straat 11, 1070 Anderlecht, Bruxelles.

WHAT: all about pigs. Pig show and mail art event and performances.

WHO: expoporc. Baudhuin Simon.

WHY: to oink oink together.

#### WORLD-WIDE RESISTENCE DAY

WHEN: 28th February, 1998.

WHERE: at OVUM Gallery, Azara 3744, Montevideo, Uruguay.

WHAT: a lemon-tree growing in a rock.

WHO: Clemente Padin, C.Correo Central 1211, 11000 Montevideo, Uruguay.

WHY: to testify the fight in bad conditions.

### LET'S TAKE THE GREASE OFF

WHEN: Saturday 21st March 1998.

WHERE: in front or sending to the head office of the italian political party Forza Italia, Viale Monza 137, 20125 Milano.

WHAT: participate by mailing or attending in person with a bottle of soap for dishes. Replace the soap label with the wording "Sgrassiamo l'unto" (let's take the grease off).

WHO: a call from Mauro Ceolin and Abbot area .

WHY: Silvio Berlusconi is certain to be the champion of the "religion of freedom", he said he is "the Lord's Anointed", let's take the grease off!!!

### A MEETING OF INCONGRUOUS WALKERS

WHEN: on April 1st 1998, around midday.

WHERE: next to the best known public urinal in your town (or the next thing to a public urinal you can find).

WHAT: keep walking in circles around the urinal, making your walk more and more bizarre, bring dada manifestos to read, rip and eat while walking, try to socialize with other funny walkers that may turn up on the occasion.

WHO: a multiple announcement by Luther Blissett.

WHY: to forget the nth multiple of Duchamp's "Fountain" and to remember Monty Python's Ministry of Silly Walks.

### MEETING ON THE GATE

WHEN: April 2nd, 1998, hr. 6 PM.

WHERE: Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco.

WHAT: a walk across the Golden Gate Bridge.

WHO: John Held, Jr. & friends.

WHY: a birthday celebration for Max Ernst.

### BOB KAUFMAN POETRY DAY

WHEN: April 18th, 1998.

WHERE: Albany, NY, USA, in various locations to be announced.

WHAT: poetry readings, readings of Bob Kaufman's poems and original work by local poets.

WHO: Dan Wilcox/Poetry Motel Foundation (280 S. Main Ave., Albany NY, 12208-2301 USA).

WHY: to commemorate Bob Kaufman's birth on april 18, 1925 and to celebrate National Poetry Month.

### ANTI-TIME NEOIST DAY

WHEN: 6th June 1998, at 6pm.

WHERE: wherever two Monty Cantsins meet.

WHAT: destroy the clocks and watches of the planet with a flaming iron.

WHO: Frater Rudolph Von Prden-heim.

WHY: Ahora Neoismo Siempre!

#### A MID-YEAR'S DREAM MEETING

WHEN: on June 30st 1998, at midnight.

WHERE: anywhere you rest your head.

WHAT: concentrate your mind on meeting someone in dream, then set an alarm clock to ring at midnight and go to bed early: on waking up, write down what you remember of your oneiric meeting.

WHO: Vittore Baroni/E.O.N., who will publish your dreams in the IM98 catalogue.

WHY: to find a place where dreams can meet.

THERE'RE ONLY TWO SEASONS IN MAINE,

WINTER AND THE 4TH OF JULY

WHEN: July 4th, 1998.

WHERE: 216 Post Road, Bowdoinham, Maine 04008 USA.

WHAT: build a fascinating snowman and ice sculptures. Conclude with a snow ball fight followed by fireworks.

WHO: Carlo Pittore.

WHY: time is fleeting: waste not, want not.

INTERSPECIES X-COMMUNICATION WHEN: on July 5th, 1998. WHERE: underwater, in the wild prairie, in the country fair... WHAT: establish a peaceful form of communication with a non-human lifeform (fish, bird, insect, plant, whatever). Document this communication. WHO: Mister Bizarro, renegade pimp for the Church of the SubGenius™. WHY: to find new terraqueous allies, on the day the Xists will land on this planet.

#### MORANDI CONSPIRACY MOVEMENT

WHEN: July 20th, 1998.

WHERE: at Artestudio/Afterstudio, via San Bernardino 88, 24028 Ponte Nossa, BG, Italy.

WHAT: all networkers can visit and consult materials about the "Morandi Conspiracy Movement".

WHO: Emilio Morandi.

WHY: to testify belonging to the family of independent artists, no more isolated, and the continuity of the researches in the network.

THE REVOLUTION HAS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE DAY WHEN: September 18th 1998 (from 0 to 24 hr). WHERE: any fucking where. WHAT: on this day everyone will behave as if the revolution had already happened. There will be no good ones and bad ones, no judgement, no restraint and no violence (remember? It has already happened). In the full respect for the others, everyone shall behave as it pleases him/her. Bring your own condoms, drugs and music. The

key number will be 39. WHO: all the persons that, like Sergio Messina/Radio-Gladio, believe that any real change will begin within one's own body/mind.  
WHY: to prove that anything is still possible.

#### ARS LONGA VITA BREVIS

WHEN: December 31st 1998.

WHERE: in front of the Museum of Museums, Bouckaerstraat 8, 8790 Waregem, Belgium.

WHAT: R.I.P.

WHO: Johan Van Geluwe/A.R.T. (Art Recycling Terminal).

WHY: L'art pour l'art / Mort pour l'art / L'or pour l'art.

#### A-WAKE FOR THE MAIL ART SPIRIT

WHEN: on December 31st 1998, from dusk till dawn.

WHERE: in front of the Art Museum of your town (or the nearest Art Museum).

WHAT: all networkers will meet and light candles, incenses, crackers, burn money or perform other impromptu incongruences, waiting for the insidious 6661 reversed.

WHO: anonymous multiple invite.

WHY: a-wake for the survival of the "mail art spirit" of open, uncompetitive, ethereal, unruly & free exchange.

NOW INVENT YOUR CONVOCATION - ORGANIZE AN INCONGRUOUS MEETING IN 1998!

#### INCONGRUOUS MEETINGS 1998 (IM98)

(im-personal invite)

Yes, ANOTHER WORLD-WIDE DECENTRALIZED COMMUNICATION PROJECT Is about to be unleashed on an unsuspecting planet. You waited enough for it, now here it is, close at hand:

#### 1998: A YEAR OF INCONGRUOUS MEETINGS

in-con-gru-ous adj. (L. incongruus) not congruous

a - lacking harmony or agreement; incompatible.

b - having inconsistent or inharmonious parts, elements, etc.

c - not corresponding to what is right, proper or reasonable; unsuitable; inappropriate.

You have done the hard work already, congressing and lecturing in 1986, re-congressing and networking in 1992, so relax: NOW YOU CAN HAVE FUN.

Participation in the IM98 is open and free to all: mailartists, netsurfers, musicians, shopkeepers, shoplifters, aliens, subgenii, rabbits, rabbis, you-name-it. There is not a single sound reason to meet again but there are all the incongruous reasons in the world, IF YOU CAN JUST THINK UP ONE: so keep working-

sleeping-consuming or FIND A THEME, ORGANIZE AN IM IN 1998 and take part in as many IM proposed by others as you wish/can.

IT IS AS EASY AS THAT:

organize+participate+document (if you care to),  
then send your incongruous documentation to  
E.O.N., via C. Battisti 339, 55049 Viareggio, Italy  
to be included in a free for all Conclusive IM98 Calendar-Catalog.

Nothing and everything may happen at an Incongruous Meeting, so share gibberish and memories, follow your ethereal instinct and start a brand new correspondence.

it goes by six+six+six:

MAC 86 (Mail Art Congress 1986)

+ 6 =

DNC 92 (Decentralized Networker Congress 1992)

+ 6 =

IM 98 (Incongruous Meetings 1998)

So, can we live so far apart for more than 6 years?

DUPLICATE, IMPROVE, REWRITE freely and DISTRIBUTE widely all the texts in this message.

TRANSLATE and ADJUST the IM98 invite in your own language and CIRCULATE it in your country. DESIGN A LOGO, SUGGEST A CONVOCAION, CREATE A (RUBBER)STAMP, INVENT A SLOGAN FOR THE INCONGRUOUS MEETINGS OF 1998.

INCONGRUOUS MEETINGS 1998

Title:

·  
WHEN:

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WHERE:

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WHAT:

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[illegible]

## ORGANIZE+PARTICIPATE+DOCUMENT

677

moment), and most novels sell about as well as a book of poems -- under 200 copies. BUT there is an upper end possibility and of course the ever-present potential of "optioning" the book to Hollywood. Out of how many novels published, how many get to be part of Oprah's book club?

That is why somebody like Kathy Acker, writing and self-publishing her early books a chapter every month, seems so startlingly heroic, even 25 years later. It's far better I think to decide to write well and worry about the genre and "acceptance" after.

Recent examples of same would be, say, the Letters of Mina Harker or Laura Moriarty's stunning fiction *Cunning*.

Thinking of Trout Fishing in America as a poem,

Ron

[↑ Contents](#)

851. **Henry Gould**  
***Re: vizzipo schtuff***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

The conjunction of Scott Pound & Tom Bell's posts (2 people actually agree on something on this list?) re: "vizpo" is interesting. The appeal of the physical hieroglyph, not assimilable into a virtual reality of structured information (Our World Today) is understandable; is it sort of like the romantic's ruin or fragment? or like the imagist's image, taken to its futurist limit.

a book I just bumped into that might be of interest is Vincent Sherry's *Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and radical modernism* (Oxford UP, 1993); I haven't read it but it seems to hinge on a concept of the visual as in opposition to the aural. (I guess this was one of Lewis's big ideas.)

Tom Bell's psychological angle seems important too. Think of Olson's focus on the physical local in front of his eyes as a "clue" (fragment, ruin, unassimilable matter) - a thread, a nail, leading to the "resolution" of the mystery. Within the mesmerizing charisma or strange attraction of the poetic field. I think these movement-building sturm & struts need to remember that perhaps the most absolute unassimilable fragment is the individual experience of the artist; what is mesmerizing about the field and what is compelling about the fragment is not its pure materiality or even its unassimilableness but the fact that it beckons TOWARD assimilation - it's a clue; and maybe only a clue to beauty. (a beauty that may, gosh, end up being political too.)

Fragments & collages are always in-relation with the forms & correlations they deny/adumbrate. Dere iz no ezcape four hyou, hyou arr unter mie contrrolll!!!



- Henry Gould, a splinter

[↑ Contents](#)

852. **Maria Damon**  
***Re: the Perloff Seminar***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

At 12:45 PM -0500 1/26/98, Mark Prejsnar wrote:

>On Mon, 26 Jan 1998, Maria Damon wrote:

>

>>

>> as someone who works "within" the academy to change it, i agree but with  
>> some caveats. for those who feel they can live outside systems, my hat's  
>> off to you; but i myself can't take the stress, want health insurance,  
>> don't want to be 65 without means of self-support and no relief in  
>> sight...there's gotta be room for those of us who don't have the energy to  
>> do battle with the daily necessities AND flourish creatively. watching what  
>> miekal and lyx have to go through --in some ways its a fabulous life,  
>> growing your own food, owning your own means of production, and yes if  
the

>> stock market crashed you'd survive better than any of us who are investing  
>

>Believe it or not, some of us belong to the working class and do poetry.

>This means (at least if you fight hard enuff for a union, and/or are  
>lucky) that it's possible to have medical coverage, a wage, etc. Back to  
>the land is not the only alternative to academe!!

>

>Mark P. (for Prole)

i do believe you, and i think it's cool. for me, the academy was the logical  
choice, since i was a faculty brat and was used to it; it wasn't some exotic bas-  
tion to be penetrated and acculturated to.

[↑ Contents](#)

853. **David Clippinger**  
***gustaf sobin***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Could someone please back channel me Gustaf Sobin's address.

Thanks,

David Clippinger

[↑ Contents](#)

854. **Dale M Smith**

***Popularity of the novel debunked***

Tue 27 Jan 1998

---

"It's far better I think to decide to write well..."

That is the problem with poets and novelists. Still, as a popular form, novels maintain an element of respect and a sense of accesability. Poetry does not have the same cultural place. It appears elitist and out of touch in ways that challenging and difficult novels don't. Toni Morrison and T. Pynchon manage to sell books that are well received. I think because of their historical and ethical examinations they tap a vein of interest in the public. Regardless, there is a demand for novels, not for poetry. I think the rows and rows of novels at Barnes and Nobles, not to mention those hideous cartoons of dead writers, reveal the way in which the book industry is responding to this demand. Of course, those publishers are confused, because they don't know what to sell and novelists aren't doing a much better job than poets. Still, it's Content that will engage. Not formal, lamrof, mrfoal, lamrof challenge. Expedient execution of subject matter is key. Dale.

To: [REDACTED]

Somebody here was expressing how the novel continued to have an audience (ditto theater), while poetry was becoming progressively more isolated.

I want to say hogwash. Last time I checked, there was still just one novel being published for every 6,000 written (compute that into human effort for a moment), and most novels sell about as well as a book of poems -- under 200 copies. BUT there is an upper end possibility and of course the ever-present potential of "optioning" the book to Hollywood. Out of how many novels published, how many get to be part of Oprah's book club?

That is why somebody like Kathy Acker, writing and self-publishing her early books a chapter every month, seems so startlingly heroic, even 25 years later. It's far better I think to decide to write well and worry about the genre and "acceptance" after.

Recent examples of same would be, say, the Letters of Mina Harker or Laura Moriarty's stunning fiction Cuning.

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Ron

[↑ Contents](#)

855. **MAYHEW**

***the whole world's neglect***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Take everyone interested in poetry in this society--say those who know the name of a single living poet. This is a small percentage, surely.

Now reduce the number to those whose interest in poetry is more significant--they might actually own a few books and follow the work of a few poets--a somewhat smaller percentage.

Now take those, within this already small group, whose interest is primarily in experimental or avant-garde work; language poetry and the like. What percentage of the above percentage are we talking about? Judging by the poetry selection at the local border's, this will be a low number.

Now take from this group those whose interests are further specialized, say, the devotees of visual poetry. A somewhat smaller sub-group, to say the least. As the number of people decreases, the frustration understandably mounts. The middle-brow poetry fans have their Bill Moyers and Donald Hall, while we must be contented with Marjorie Perloff, who at least places this work into a more public discourse via the academy.

What is my point? I am just trying to provide a somewhat broader perspective. That "noone listens to poetry" is the underlying problem here. This does not diminish its value or significance--but neither is this value in inverse proportion to its audience.

Jonathan Mayhew

[↑ Contents](#)

856. **Bob Grumman**

***Re: The Perloff Seminar***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

This is a reply to Marjorie Perloff's deft post.

1. My remarks about Marjorie Perloff's seminar were not speculative but based on the syllabus she sent me. That syllabus indicated what poets she was having visit her class, what poets each class was supposed to be about, and what books and other data-sources she thought her students might find useful. I'm sure her seminar is covering more than that, and bravo if it actually touches on the group of people I've been so repetitiously claiming she is ignoring.

2. Marjorie Perloff is to be commended for being far in advance of the great majority of other English professors in the country regarding the newer poetries. That should not put her beyond criticism.

3. As I've said before, I agree that college courses are "not advocacy forums but designed to TEACH." The problem is, as Marjorie Perloff must know, that they also serve implicitly as advocacy forums; they explicitly act as accessibility-granting, publicizing forums. Furthermore, Marjorie Perloff's course is only one, but among the first college courses devoted to visual poetry, and since she is a big name teaching it at a bigtime college like Stanford, there is a more than slight possibility that it will serve as a model for others. It will also tend to influence what goes into the anthologies of the future, which I consider important. Such anthologies are what makes work available to be discovered.

4. I doubt that I ever said or implied that I didn't think Marjorie Perloff's course was "REALLY about visual poetics," only that it covered a lot less of the field than I felt it ought to. Why would it have hurt her to add five or ten titles of books by visual poets she finds uninteresting to her list of twenty or thirty or more supplementary materials? She could have protected her reputation for knowing the good from the bad by noting that she thinks little of them but that perhaps one or two of her students might get something out of them. If I taught a course in visual poetry or poetics, I would emphasize much different poets than Marjorie Perloff is--but I would not ignore her favorites altogether. I would definitely have works by a reasonable number of them on any list of supplementary data-sources I listed.

5. Finally, I've all along NOT been telling Marjorie Perloff what to teach, only what to at least mention the existence of.

Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

857. **Henry Gould**

***Re: Perloff debate***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

I AM SO SORRY to write TOO MUCH to this list. I am a list hog. Nevertheless another brief wooden nickel on this issue.

People jump on Grumman for criticizing Perloff's syllabus. Who is immune from criticism? The academy IS powerful. It's a machine. Marjorie Perloff is a friend of poetry because she has a gusto for new, experimental writing. That is just terrific, no doubt about it. But let's look at the "down side". Isn't there something of a conflict of interest, a sort of nepotism, for a working scholar-critic to promote the work of living artists who ALSO depend on the academy for readings, jobs, fellowships & the like? Perloff of course is not alone. Nor is poetry alone (this happens in all the arts, I guess). I don't want to pick on anybody, especially for getting into contemporary work. But where do you draw the line between criticism and blurbs? I thought avant-garde meant

challenging. The best way to be challenging is to challenge yourself. By standing on your own 2 feet. No cozy relationships, no buddy-buddy, no easy praise, no networking, no po-biz, no bullshit. That's the ideal. It requires a modicum of silence, exile & cunning, doesn't it? HOW MUCH OF WHAT WE ARE DOING IS A SMALL PRESS VERSION OF THE NAME GAME? (get out your flagellation- cat o'nines, everybody) (the only absolution is to actually look into some stuff, get into it, read it, understand it, research it, dig into it)

- Henry Gould, a chip off the old block

p.s. I can hear all the replies already. "There is nothing wrong with pushing as hard as you can the work you believe to be excellent & moves you & & ...."

[↑ Contents](#)

858. **Bob Grumman**

**Re: HUBRISTIC, SIMPLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF VIZPO NEEDS COUNTERING**

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Thanks to Aviva for posting something about visual poetry that I suspect Marjorie Perloff would agree with me on. If the passage Aviva quotes from Joseph M. Comte's UNENDING DESIGN: THE FORMS OF POSTMODERN POETRY alleging that visual poets are competing with sound bites is representative of his over-all view of contemporary visual poetry, he needs a lot of help. The passage is also stupid for dealing with the presumed motives of some (unnamed or exemplified) poets rather than their actual work. It's not worth further attention.

I'm glad to see, by the way, that the threads on vizpo are now so active, and contain so much of interest--besides all the annoying mess-up-your-opponent debating tactics instead of addressing issues. There are now too many posts for me to deal with. I'm also getting worn out, I have to admit. I did want to throw in one reaction to a post whose sender I now forget: it is that I don't think many people in visual poetry see it as any next step forward from language poetry but as a series of steps begun some time before language poetry, and continuing, unremarked-upon, simultaneously with language poetry (cross-fertilizing with it from time to time).

That's all from me, probably for the rest of the day. --Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

859. **J. Kuszai**

**CALL FOR WORK**

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

CALL FOR WORK -- SMALL PRESS COLLECTIVE

A loosely defined group of editors gathered around a website have been charged collectively with seeking work for a new online publication space. There are many fine examples of such web-publishing and THE SMALL PRESS COLLECTIVE hopes to add to that. Each editor controls a section of the site and there may be overlap as well as divergence of interest, between editors and within editors. I don't think any of the other editors are on this list, except Graham and myself, although Taylor Brady might be. So this is a public call for submissions to this forum. Eventually there will be a paper edition, excerpting from the on-line work.

What I'm hungry to find:

Criticism in the vein of BAD SUBJECTS, a e-zine collective based in Berkeley, I believe. That would be politically and social relevant criticism about popular culture, theory, etc.

Criticism in the GOOD new Formalist vein: readings of texts, explanations of technological advances in new work by younger writers, or new work by older writers. These readings can/should be value-laden.

Criticism in a classic Materialist sense: readings of texts should invoke all of the attendant norms of dialectical materialist critical behavior, or inaddendant ab-norms...

Creative Writing: poetry, journal entries, fiction, non-fiction creative essays. Writing must be written with words and written by a person. No found poems puhleeze! [writing is defined as text files]

Art Work: pictures of all sorts. Pictures may be abstract or representational and must be considered artwork by the artist. [art is defined here as .gif or .jpeg files]

Please write to me and tell me before you send work. I will scan artwork if that is a problem. Work can be sent on disk to my snail address or sent as an attachment. Text files should be in a pre-6 format for either Mac or PC, although if that is impossible, please let me know.

please forward this, doc.

Joel Kuszai  
co-editor  
Small Press Collective  
PO Box 527  
Buffalo, NY 14226



<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~kuszai>

"Shop at Meow! You'll holler for more!" -- Nick Cave  
"Grossly over-rated" -- Alan Greenspan

[↑ Contents](#)

860. **Eric Blarnes**

***the key***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

THE KEY (IS THE FLEA)

a formulaic ode in tractor-trailertylic hexametres

for Marquis Louis Fortinblatt-Hohenzollern du Pwints

"Expedient execution of subject matter is key,"\*

quoth splendiferous Louis the 16th to the flea -

aloft in voluminous hammock at Versailles,

fleas under his legs, mosquitoes in the sky,

unable to read LIAISONS DANGEREUSES

for all the nipping at his privateuses.

"Bring me a heavier novel!" cried the King,

unable to withstand said cruel sting

a moment longer. They brought him DON QUIXOTE,

which forthwith he deployed upon his pinky

(the 3rd) - and thus, expediently, my dear Marquis,

saved France from another flea-bitten monarchy.

- Eric Blarnes

\*from Dale Smith posting to Poetics List, 1.27.98

[↑ Contents](#)

861. **Maria Damon**

***Re: vizzipo schtuff***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

so, like, i'm not really completely sure what visual poetry is, though i have a pretty good idea, is it stuff like concrete poetry? or like hannah weiner's WEEKS, as opposed to her We Teach Silent? i guess it's like bob cobbing, whom cris cheek introduced me to at the XCP conference. what about bpNichol, whose Martyrology book 6 i'm looking at for the first time and adoring? some is visual some not? was the United States of Poetry visual poetry cuz it relied so heavily on the visual for its effect? is American Sign Language visual poetry cuz you have to See it, not Read or Hear it? is kamau brathwaite's later work, where he uses the "sycorax video style" visual poetry (though not as visual as,

say, bob cobbing or r grenier), whereas the earlier work, which only put "foreign" words in italics, but in which line breaks (a visual effect) were central to his overall effect, is *\*not\** visual poetry? i guess it's like any category --when you really examine it you see how porous it is, tho there's a general consensus about what constitutes the critical mass of "vispo" stuff. or maybe not, no consensus, evidenced by the buzz on this list.

[↑ Contents](#)

862. **Maria Damon**

***Re: vizzipo schtuff***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

scott pound wrote among other things: There are those that believe Duchamp challenged the sanctity of art with his ready-mades. I believe he did the opposite, he reinforced it, for the same reason that the langpods extending the limits of the poem reinforces that sanctity of the poem as a capacious entity (kinda like Walt Whitman). So you can call that materiality of you want; I regard it as an infusion of matter into the ever-virtual sphere of the poem. Nothing wrong with that in the least, as long as we remember that it is a nominal materiality that is at work there.

Materiality in poetry SHOULD mean works that brush up against the limits not of *\_the poem\_* but of the real. That is what the best concrete vizpot does. It does not thematize matter; it challenges the audience to view letters and words as real things with a domension and duration all their own, not merely as indices in an overdetermined virtual world of meaning... etc

\*\* this is really interesting and very well put. this is the kind of pithy insight i love to parade in front of my classes as an example of the heart of debates around contemp. poetry. thanks scott.--md

[↑ Contents](#)

863. **Robert Hale**

***No Robots***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Bob Grumman wrote:

"Furthermore, Marjorie Perloff's course is only one, but among the first college courses devoted to visual poetry, and since she is a big name teaching it at a bigtime college like Stanford, there is a more than slight possibility that it will serve as a model for others. It will also tend to influence what goes into the anthologies of the future, which I consider important. Such anthologies are what makes work available to be discovered."



The assumptions here are pretty big -- that students are like robots, that they will not become interested in vispo and explore it on their own and find out more. Also, that courses modeled after Perloff's will take the same stand.

No doubt that some students will take what they get and leave it, but others will explore the genre on their own (I know I did with other genres). As far as future courses and anthologies go, I get the message from Perloff that resources are slim enough and that she had to go with what she knows.

Let's put some faith in the students and see what happens.

[↑ Contents](#)

864. **Dale M Smith**  
*the whole world's neglect*  
Tue 27 Jan 1998

---

Poetry's got little to do with anything today. I'm not talking about specialized, hermetic stuff. I'm talking about volume. The public. Mainstream values and perceptions. Not because I want to cater to that group, but to acknowledge the real insignificance of poetry compared to other still vital forms. I realize that the novel is more adaptable in a commercial sense, which is really the only sense in which this society deals with anything. But poetry used to market itself in vital and pressing ways. Not everyone's read the Cantos, but a lot folks know who Pound is. And Ginsberg. If nothing else, poetry used to make the public uncomfortable. But poets aren't saying anything worthy of controversy. So. Open the NYTimes review of books and read about the newest from Dildo Dawson. Yee Haw!

To: [REDACTED]

Take everyone interested in poetry in this society--say those who know the name of a single living poet. This is a small percentage, surely.

Now reduce the number to those whose interest in poetry is more significant--they might actually own a few books and follow the work of a few poets--a somewhat smaller percentage.

Now take those, within this already small group, whose interest is primarily in experimental or avant-garde work; language poetry and the like. What percentage of the above percentage are we talking about? Judging by the poetry selection at the local border's, this will be a low number.

Now take from this group those whose interests are further specialized, say, the devotees of visual poetry. A somewhat smaller sub-group, to say the least. As the number of people decreases, the frustration understandably mounts. The middle-brow poetry fans have their Bill Moyers and Donald Hall, while we must

be contented with Marjorie Perloff, who at least places this work into a more public discourse via the academy.

What is my point? I am just trying to provide a somewhat broader perspective. That "noone listens to poetry" is the underlying problem here. This does not diminish its value or significance--but neither is this value in inverse proportion to its audience.

Jonathan Mayhew

[↑ Contents](#)

865. **pritchpa**

**Re: Perloff debate**

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Henry expresses a laudable - but forgive me for saying so - naive faith in the idea of rugged individualism with the quaint phrase "standing on his own 2 feet." Show me, please, the person who has lived that has done this and I'll forthwith eat my Bronco jersey. There ain't no such animal, old chum. Here we are, engaged in this electronic medium of debate and exchange, subscribing to the attempt to foster a new expression of poetic community, and against this appears the goofy idea - the queer utopian notion - of trying to peddle the infiddle as Island: monadology rearing its gorgon maw again oh cut it out please. In my experience, people who proffer the bootstrap theory have very little real world experience and by that I mean, mixing it up with the brethren in the business world, the money world, the school world, the so-called professional world, that is, the world of compromise and action of which the field of cultural production is but a part. If they're at all successful, count on a field of unmarked (i.e. unacknowledged) graves -

Where do you draw the line between criticism and blurbs is a good question, though. My answer would be: if it's written by a friend, it's a blurb; if it's written by a not-friend, it's criticism. It's all a name game, old thing - merit is the least transparent and translatable of values, unless you're Terrell Davis, that is. Silence cunning & exile was the motto of the same writer who kept up a near constant epistolic litany of demands, entreaties, etc., for the favor of publishers, the assistance of friends and even used pairs of shoes.

Patrick Pritchett

-----

From: Henry Gould

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Perloff debate

Date: Tuesday, January 27, 1998 9:31AM

I AM SO SORRY to write TOO MUCH to this list. I am a list hog.  
Nevertheless  
another brief wooden nickel on this issue.

People jump on Grumman for criticizing Perloff's syllabus. Who is immune from criticism? The academy IS powerful. It's a machine. Marjorie Perloff is a friend of poetry because she has a gusto for new, experimental writing. That is just terrific, no doubt about it. But let's look at the "down side". Isn't there something of a conflict of interest, a sort of nepotism, for a working scholar-critic to promote the work of living artists who ALSO depend on the academy for readings, jobs, fellowships & the like? Perloff of course is not alone. Nor is poetry alone (this happens in all the arts, I guess). I don't want to pick on anybody, especially for getting into contemporary work. But where do you draw the line between criticism and blurbs? I thought avant-garde meant challenging. The best way to be challenging is to challenge yourself. By standing on your own 2 feet. No cozy relationships, no buddy-buddy, no easy praise, no networking, no po-biz, no bullshit. That's the ideal. It requires a modicum of silence, exile & cunning, doesn't it? HOW MUCH OF WHAT WE ARE DOING IS A SMALL PRESS VERSION OF THE NAME GAME? (get out your flagellation- cat o'nines, everybody) (the only absolution is to actually look into some stuff, get into it, read it, understand it, research it, dig into it)

- Henry Gould, a chip off the old block

p.s. I can hear all the replies already. "There is nothing wrong with pushing as hard as you can the work you believe to be excellent & moves you & & ...."

[↑ Contents](#)

866. **Charles Watts**

***Re: bill bissett reads at SFU Monday,***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Miekal and all,

I did quickly browse around on netscape and came up with the following:

[http://130.179.92.25/canlitx/Framed\\_Version/CanlitF.html](http://130.179.92.25/canlitx/Framed_Version/CanlitF.html)

This is the "framed version" of the Canadian Literature Archive, via the Canlit homepage from U. Manitoba. The Canlit homepage url is

<http://canlit.st-john.umanitoba.ca>

If you try the first url and land on the Canlit Archive page, you can scroll down and click on "Canadian Writers on the Web," scroll down the other frame past such as David Arnason, Margaret Atwood, Henry Beissel, etc., till you get to bill. You'll find when you click on his name that a nice photo appears; the

bissett site is under construction, so there isn't much on him or his work, but more is promised, and they do have some poems of his on audio if you're set up for sound.

I gather that Dennis Cooley and David Arnason are supervising the Canadian writers' homepage; you can find e-mail addresses for both if you want to direct specific questions about the site or specific writers.

| *charles watts*

| *can you point us to any online bissett resources? >*

--

Charles Watts  
Theses and Special Collections  
Special Collections & Rare Books  
Room 7100, Bennett Library  
Simon Fraser University  
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6  
Tel: [REDACTED]; Fax: [REDACTED]  
E-mail: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

867. **Miekal And**  
**Nitpick Pearl Off**

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Douglas wrote:

>

> Bravo Marjorie!!  
> I've never seen so much ado about the syllabus of someone  
> else's course! I've found it all so pointless. Those that  
> disagree should teach their own courses, or write their  
> own articles, or produce their own work. The constant  
> cavilling, nit-picking commentary is really quite disgusting.

Mr M

It is revealing that you term a much needed discussion of visual poetry's relation to poetics, academics, economics, distribution & media "disgusting"....if you read the well over a 100 posts carefully (think I've read each in detail), very little of the posts concern themselves with the infamous Perloff syllabus, tho many use it as a relevant & pointed metaphor for the politics of the literary machine.... No one has condemned MP's work as a teacher or writer & if I'm recalling correctly most of us have spoken how highly we regard her work. This discussion has been conducted with respect to all parties involved....I feel like

there has truly been a spirit of looking under the rug, saying what isn't being said, & overall I find these posts most provocative & have been disseminating compilations of various post on visual poetry to a number of other lists in order that the discussion goes cross channel, outside this cozy little enclave.

Mr A

[↑ Contents](#)

868. **henry**

***Re: Perloff debate***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Thank you, Patrick, for your post. I can't quite tell if you're being ironic, tongue-in-cheek, or not. But whether or no, I think by getting it all backwards you go backwards to the heart of things.

Your characterization of the worldly world of "cultural production" makes me laugh. Is this what Emily Dickinson meant when she said Publication = Prostitution, or something to that effect?

I don't know about other people's methods, but when I'm involved with a poem the idea of having anything venal or collaborative to do with anybody else is distracting, to say the least. & I see the buddy system & po-biz as a positive danger to independence, standards, and taste. Doesn't this go for any vocation, just about? Why is literature any different? Mandelstam: "there are 2 kinds of literature, official and unofficial. The 1st is trash; the 2nd, stolen air." Beware that your slimy blurbs eat you alive in the trashbin of your own making.

Stolen air. This is a definition of poetry. It's not the "worlds" of commerce, business, etc. etc. that you mentioned - it's their sanction or their judge. (By the way, I consider my fairly broad experience OUTSIDE the literature game to have its plus & minus aspects - one of the positive being the armor it provides. My approach is not naive whatsoever; actually, I think yours is - if you were not joking).

It is possible to write poetry, send it to journals & publishers, write essays, and find friends, allies and supporters, without sucking up, bullshitting, and betraying your principles. You may become a highly-acclaimed false prophet & bad poet eventually - or you may languish in honest obscurity. But you don't have to be a dog.

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

869. **groberts**

**Re: vizzipo schtuff**

Tue 27 Jan 1998

---

Maria's mention of bpNichol and her remark that "visual poetry" is like any category-- when you really examine it you see how porous it is>> among her other useful comments open up the doors which have been slammed shut in all the discussion of marginalization and canon, and for this I am grateful even if the vizpo thread has carried on for longer than most. Much has been said about visual poets, but I would also like to hear more about artists who use poetry. Blake and Patchen are obvious examples, as are so many Chinese painter-poets. The line of difference between visual poets and textual artists is not something that I can draw, though if I were foolish enough to try I would probably start with the matter of whether Herriman's dialogue balloons in Krazy Kat contain poems, and then look at Philip Guston's poem-pictures. In 1994, I was lucky enough to catch a small exhibit of these at the Addison Gallery in Andover, Mass. Don't know if the catalogue from Univ of Washington Press is still in print, but it rewards repeated thumbing through. The collaborations with Clark Coolidge, are especially good, and provide another look at the obscene materiality of representation which Scott Pound has underlined. One of my favorite lines in them addresses several issues about writing alluded to in the vizpo thread: "To draw is to make be/more than one start....." But alas tapping buttons cannot convey the art of these inscriptions, which for all their coarseness hold onto the hand-made grace of Twombly's graffiti. Are there other such poem-pictures in which not typography but drawing predominates? Perhaps some of the visual poets already named draw their poems, but would someone be willing to name them again for those of us not familiar with their work. The theoretical questions about whether fonts are drawings, whether collage is a kind of drawing, whether icons are texts, etc., do not need to be answered in advance of the preliminary sorting that I am asking for, I hope....though I would find the asking of such questions at least as interesting and important as the inclusion/exclusion aspects of the topic.

Gary R.

[↑ Contents](#)

870. **William Marsh**

**Re: Part II, fri.night po's etc**

Tue 27 Jan 1998

---

tom -- i'm wondering what you think of all this, particularly the stuff below on "lines as perceptual units" and "intonation contours"

At 11:43 PM 1/26/98 -0600, tom bell wrote:

Reuven Tsur:

>"Just as the graphic arrangement on the page presents the  
>lines as perceptual units to the eye, the intonation  
>contours heard in the reading of poetry present the lines as perceptual  
units  
>to the ear. Such contours are the result of the  
>interaction of the intonation contours required by prose rhythm with those  
>that articulate the line. It is assumed that the listener  
>decodes these contours in terms of the intonation contours from whose  
>interplay they arise. In fact, the main function of the  
>graphic arrangement on the page is to give the reader instructions  
>concerning the intonation contours appropriate to the lines.  
>In this respect, the verse lines with the white space around become rather  
>transparent graphic signs of phonological entities:  
>just as the letters on the page signal phonemes, the verse lines surrounded  
>by white space signal intonation contours (cf. Tsur,  
>1977: 119; 1992 a: 174-175). They only begin to compete for the reader's  
>attention and reassert their warring identity, when  
>they are foregrounded by some "mannerist" device: acrostic, or some mimetic  
>arrangement.

while i'm a bit intrigued by the "warring identity" suggested in the last line, this all seems a bit simplistic and narrow to me / what kind of "reader instructions," for example, are given by a one-word or one-letter line -- how would either be "intoned" in accordance with "intonation contours required by prose rhythm," the latter itself a suspect qualification / i think there's something to be said for thinking of lines as "contours" (for ear or eye) but the idea of lines as "transparent graphic signs for phonological entities" seems widely off the mark / even contradictory, for how can graphic signs be "transparent" in any sense? / seems to me that as "perceptual units" (accepting that terminology) letters, words and lines are continuously \*shape-shifting\* between phonological and graphic contours -- seen/heard in a wavy dance that joins eye and ear / also, the spatial relationship implied by "verse lines with white space around" seems to go to the hear-it of the matter: why not white space \*overlayed\* or \*imprinted\* with verse lines to suggest the space was there first as a visual field before the lines were drawn on

this takes the passage perhaps too far out of the "picture poem" focus the rest is concerned with, but i couldn't get past these early equations

bill

-----

William Marsh

PaperBrainPress  
Voice & Range Community Arts  
National University



http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh  
snail: 1860 PB Dr. #4  
San Diego, CA 92109

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[↑ Contents](#)

871. **k. lederer**

***Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Rachel,

Yes. I completely agree with you. The Barthes quote was, of course, a response to two issues on the list:

1. "Where are all the "new" young writers?" and
2. Dale Smith's critiques of langpo

So yes, theoretically, according to Barthes, everyone is "new"--alone, original. The issue you raise about the glorification of the "original" writer--of style--is the critique I was hoping to launch against the older langpo types who criticize young writers for being unoriginal. These older thinkers (among them Tuma, Silliman etc) are wanting something "new" from a group of young writers--perhaps they don't want new styles, per se, but new politics-- But even still, I find such demands strange (and hypocritical) coming from thinkers who claim to believe that poetry should counteract fascism--aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, sexual etc. I've always taken this belief to mean that the emphasis is on political awareness via or in regards to the practice of writing--the insistence that anybody can write and thus participate in the larger socio-cultural discourse(s). I never really bought Silliman et al, though, because it seemed to me that they did in fact want that special kind of glory that comes with being a star--with being an "original" writer--a "brilliant" intellectual. In my view, writers like Lyn Hejinian, Carla Harryman, and Leslie Scalapio are far more true to the "tenets" of langpo that have to do with "socialist" approaches to writing--writing as participation in the sociopolitical, rather than as glorification of the individual through the lyrical display of sensitivity and accumen. Such a charge has been launched at Silliman et al by a lot of people--but I just wanted to say that I agreed with your point--and that this was the same point I was trying to make in an effort to admonish those older writers who believe it their place to "scold" us younger writers about originality. It seems to me that



the fact that young people are writing (and thus engaging in the body politic as well as the body aesthetic) should be enough--that these older writers should just face the fact that their own stated poetics in some sense preclude them from making aesthetic judgement about young writers... Similarly, though, the point you make also serves to critique Dale's points about langpo, because Dale is demanding that langpo writers fulfill some sort of socio-aesthetic contract between themselves and their audience that, according to Barthes, is impossible to fulfill because of the very solitude of the writer--regardless of what his or her stated goals about style may be... I hope I'm making sense here. I suppose I just think that bad reviews (of young writers, of langpos) are a waste of time. That what is fruitful is a discussion of those styles that, perhaps, bridge some kind of gap enough to make us feel a little bit less "solitary"--both intellectually and aesthetically... That what is most interesting to hear about is how someone's style strikes us as more than individual (though not necessarily "universal")-- It just seems so "easy" to disagree with styles that seem far from our own--

Yours,  
Katy

[↑ Contents](#)

872. **Douglas**  
***Re: The Perloff Seminar***  
*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Bravo Marjorie!!

I've never seen so much ado about the syllabus of someone else's course! I've found it all so pointless. Those that disagree should teach their own courses, or write their own articles, or produce their own work. The constant cavilling, nit-picking commentary is really quite disgusting.

Douglas

Marjorie Perloff wrote:

>

> I feel like Alice in Wonderland--curiouser and curiouser--as I read these  
> posts about "my" seminar, mostly totally speculative.

>

> All the sinister things attributed to me and to the course seem to have  
> nothing to do with reality. So here's a little reality check, gang.

>

> the Stanford English dept, as Maria, a star graduate well knows, is not  
> given to having many grad courses in poetry: mostly it might be Pound &

- > Eliot, sometimes (Al Gelpi), Black Mountain, sometimes (gil
- > Sorrentino)--Williams and very occasionally the Objectivists. John
- > Felstiner teaches courses that include Lowell, Bishop, etc.
- >
- > There has never been a course in visual poetry, concrete poetry, sound
- > poetry or any thing similar in the 10 years I've been here. Most of my
- > colleagues don't know what "concrete poetry" is, never mind post-concrete,
- > materialist poetics, or any related item. One of them asked me what an
- > artist's book is.
- >
- > In these circumstances--quite typical, by the way--I thought it might be
- > fun to organize a course that would stress the visual elements in poetry
- > and look at some of the new work. So I picked representative texts from
- > Apollinaire and Pound on down, beginning with the CALLIGRAMMES and
- > Pound's
- > ideograms. I could have easily picked 10 alternate lists. For instance:
- > I'm sorry I'm not doing Duchamp whose visual poetics are very important to
- > me. I picked Darren Werschler-Henry because I think NICKELODEON is an
- > exciting, innovative book but I might just as well have picked Christian
- > Bok's CRYSTALLOGRAPHY, which I love. I chose books that I find
- > interesting. I do think as the professor, that's my right. Courses are
- > not advocacy forums but designed to TEACH.
- >
- > So who is Bob Grumman to tell me my course is not REALLY about visual
- > poetics? What does this mean? If Bob teaches a course than obviously he
- > can choose his texts. He might not choose the OUT OF EVERYWHERE an-
- > thology
- > which I love (and which certainly has visual poems in it--see the Diane
- > Ward, for example) and that would be his privilege. But obviously any
- > course is personal; there's no such thing as "coverage".
- >
- > I hope this is the end of this thread because I find it so
- > counterproductive. And also coercive: how can anyone tell anyone else
- > what works they should/must teach?
- >
- > Marjorie Perloff

[↑ Contents](#)

873. **Dale M Smith**

***the key***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Hear, Hear Blarnes. Thaht's a fust rate example of sweet lyruk radiance. Come ovah some tiime for a cool mint julep.

youhs troolee,  
Stet Luvrhyme

To: [REDACTED]

THE KEY (IS THE FLEA)

a formulaic ode in tractor-trailertylic hexametres

for Marquis Louis Fortinblatt-Hohenzollern du Pwints

"Expedient execution of subject matter is key,"\*

quoth splendiferous Louis the 16th to the flea -

aloft in voluminous hammock at Versailles,

fleas under his legs, mosquitoes in the sky,

unable to read LIAISONS DANGEREUSES

for all the nipping at his privateuses.

"Bring me a heavier novel!" cried the King,

unable to withstand said cruel sting

a moment longer. They brought him DON QUIXOTE,

which forthwith he deployed upon his pinky

(the 3rd) - and thus, expediently, my dear Marquis,

saved France from another flea-bitten monarchy.

- Eric Blarnes

\*from Dale Smith posting to Poetics List, 1.27.98

[↑ Contents](#)

874. **Joseph Conte**

***Jed Rasula***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

I'd ask Jed Rasula if I could, but does anyone listward have a full bibliographical citation for his recent American Poetry Wax Museum?

You can reply to me back channel.

Joseph Conte

--

Joseph M. Conte  
Associate Professor and  
Director of Graduate Studies  
Department of English  
306 Clemens Hall  
SUNY at Buffalo  
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██████████ x1009  
FAX: ██████████

<http://writing.upenn.edu/~jconte/>

[↑ Contents](#)

875. **Miekal And**  
***Re: The Perloff Seminar***  
*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Aldon Nielsen wrote:

>  
> I deeply resent the fact that nobody has denounced any of my syllabi.  
> Surely this is a sign of . . . something.

aldon

youre a hoot

[↑ Contents](#)

876. **Henry Gould**  
***Re: vizzipo schtuff***  
*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Guston is great. I didn't know about these collaborations with Coolidge.

Maine poet John Tagliabue has done some neat poem-painting collaborations with his wife Grace over the years. The poems swirl into watercolors.

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

877. **Miekal And**  
***The World's Largest Popcorn Ball***  
*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Real life visual poetry can be found at

The World's Largest Popcorn Ball

<http://www.mcs.net/~sjboyle/bigball.htm>

[↑ Contents](#)

878. **KENT JOHNSON**

***Pores of genre***

Tue 27 Jan 1998

---

On Jan 27, Maria Damon wrote, helpfully, on the "visual poetry" discussion (excerpt):

*so, like, i'm not really completely sure what visual poetry is, though i have a pretty good idea, is it stuff like concrete poetry? .... i guess it's like any category --when you really examine it you see how porous it is, tho there's a general consensus about what constitutes the critical mass of "vispo" stuff. or maybe not, no consensus, evidenced by the buzz on this list.*

Gary Robert's post picked up nicely, too, on this issue of cross-genre porousness.

I thought I'd re-post here Clemente Padin's eulogy for Edgardo Antonio Vigo (originally forwarded by Robert Drake early last December). Padin, from Uruguay, is one of the leading figures in the "visual poetry" movement on a world scale, and the Vigo tribute confirms, I think, that Maria and Gary are right about the "porousness" of the "visual" designation. Padin's piece *\_also\_* confirms quite eloquently, if confirming is needed, that the field of current work that tends to be discussed on this list is only a small and local corner of "forward-looking" poetic practice and possibility-- indeed, compared to the decidedly genreless spaces which poets (that most porous of words) like Vigo inhabit, our corner may well strike future observers as relatively institutionalized and staid.

It's a good thing, and who could argue otherwise, that someone like Marjorie Perloff has used her seminar as a tentative window onto a too-little known dimension and tradition of language practice; it is also a good thing, as I see it, that Bob Grumman has stuck his neck out to say (twenty times or so) that Marjorie's syllabus is only a snippet from a very rich and underappreciated international current of poetic-semiotic labor-- a current whose constant inventiveness in the face of obscurity and scorn is evoked (somewhat movingly, at least to me) in Padin's post below.

Bob has said that a number of the poets on Marjorie's syllabus have a relatively peripheral relationship to this visual-conceptual tradition and I don't see how anyone could argue with that. Marjorie herself, I think, would agree. If Bob now can say that his protracted point-making has been, at bottom, a tactical and comradely intervention (one which has done, Bob, a worthy job), probably those who wish to can now pull up chairs to a more theoretical discussion of the "visual"? A few posts have already moved in that direction. I, for one, am eager to learn more.

Here is Padin's memorial to Edgardo Antonio Vigo:

-----

Forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED] (Clemente Padin)

To: [REDACTED]

Date: 97-12-03 05:29:31 EST

Please, pass on this text:

EDGARDO ANTONIO VIGO: Aspiration to Freedom

Clemente

Padin

Edgardo Antonio Vigo, aged 70, died in La Plata, the city of his birth. Vigo was an engraver, experimental poet, conceptualist, constructor of "objects-without-use" and "oddmachines," a constant innovator whose only recently discovered work keeps on surprising, given the almost ineffable character of his projects. He also cultivated forms that until now have been considered sub-artistic or simply not thought of as "art" in the vernacular sense of the term, such as mail art and experimental poetry.

In Vigo's work can be seen influences of Marcel Duchamp—we recall Vigo's film *Blanco sobre Blanco* (White on White), shown on the spectators' backs, and the "ready-mades" he constantly sent his friends—and, above all, of Macedonio Fernandez, not only in his irreverent attitude but also in his long and contradictory titles and paratexts. From both, Vigo took the ludic attitude of play, making the spectators participate and desacralizing the work of art through manipulation and co-creation, to the point that he preferred to speak of the "creative-constructor" instead of the "spectator," trying to make of artistic creation a multiple act, not something individual and solitary.

Born in La Plata in 1927, Vigo enrolled in the School of Fine Arts of the La Plata University in 1950 and, in 1953, he went on a scholarship to France where he met the Venezuelan artist Jesus Soto and came into contact with the international avant-garde. In 1954, on returning to his country, Vigo exhibited wooden objects that already foretold his later tendency towards an art of popular participation. He was an important magazine editor, publishing *Diagonal Cero* (1961) and *Hexagono 70*, which featured "novísima" poetry—what he liked to call visual poetry—together with the subsequent *Nuestro Libro Internacional de Estampillas y Matasellos* (Our International Book of Stamps and Postmarks) with original stamps and postmarks by artists from around the world (artistamps and rubber stamps). These are considered paradigmatic of what is known today as "artists' books." In 1965 Vigo exhibited his first "useless machines," such as the *Palanganometro Mecedor para Criticos de Arte* (Palanganometer Rocking Chair for Art Critics) and the *Bi-Tri-Cicleta Ingenua* (Ingenuous Bi-Tri-Cycle) that was

heaped with vernacular criticism, initiating a long silence that lasted until the 1990s. But, the alternative scene in France, 1967, published his *Poemas Matematicos Barrocos* (Mathematical Baroque Poems) and the next year his *Poemas Matematicos Incomestibles* (Mathematical Inedible Poems) (an object enclosed between two empty tuna cans soldered together). Also, in 1968, in La Plata there appeared his first traffic light, *Manejo de Semaforos* (Bunch of Traffic Lights). This consisted of analyzing from the aesthetic and creative point of view the traffic signals located in the intersection of First and Sixtieth Avenues in La Plata. Presenting an anonymous and useless element in its specific function (stressing an ironic urban commentary) this project sought to initiate a specific dialogue with an abstract content. The public invited to participate were to develop their ideas using the minimal keys given by the artist, who wasn't there. The proposal was to subtract out all prejudicial contact in order to generate an action in freedom.

In issue 11 of the magazine *Los Huevos del Plata* (1968) there appeared Vigo's New Avant-Garde Poetry in Argentina and experimental poems by Jorge de Luxan, Carlos Ginzburg, Luis Pazos, and his own. Here is found the second break with the lyric tradition in Argentina (the first was in the 1930s, under the sign of Ultraism).

From the mid-60s, Vigo was a proponent of conceptualist tendencies in Latin America, above all the Conceptualism applied to undoing the mechanisms and instrumentation of the work of art and its relation to its spectators, not the Conceptualism of Kosuth's "Art is the definition of art." Vigo emphasized the self-referential qualities of the work that not only promoted ambiguity (the possibility of extreme polysemy) but also the possibility of the choice of the spectator in the final selection of meaning, causing him to be considered as co-author of the work itself. Vigo's project in this sense was crystallized in *Poetry to and/or Realize*, through which he tried to get the spectator to participate in the "constructive activation with which it is possible for the consumer to pass over to the category of creator" (From *Process Poetry to Poetry to and/or Realize*, Diagonal Zero, La Plata, 1970). Vigo continued with the *I Expo de Proposiciones a Realizar* (I Expo of Propositions to Realize) in 1971, which took place in the *Cayc*, Centro de Arte y Comunicacion (Art and Communication Center) of Buenos Aires, where, together with works received from all around the world, were brought together the artists Wladimir Dias-Pino (creator of Brazilian *Process/Poem*), Guillermo Deisler (the late Chilean visual poet), and the Uruguayans Francisco Accame (musician and sound poet), and myself.

On one of his first visits to our country, Vigo realized-during the "Exhibition of Avant-Garde Publications" organized by the magazine *OVUM 10* in the Hall of the University of the Republic on September 30, 1970, the proposal "Demagogic Poem," a parody of the election process. Votes were cast in an urn with a

round opening. The ballots were nothing but forms distributed by the performer in which the participant-creator was asked to express whatever he wanted, and then Vigo put the ballots, not folded but rolled up in the form of cylinders, into the special container.

At the beginning of the 1970s, Vigo joined the new currents of mail art, becoming one of its most regular creators until the day of his death. The military dictatorship of his country struck hard, causing one of his sons to disappear. Because of this disgraceful act, Vigo's work took on a strongly political character such that his contacts with foreigners were augmented, spreading the word about the brutal repression and crimes against humanity of this ferocious dictatorship. From this period came his work *Trelew* (1974), in memory of the 16 revolutionaries assassinated in the Trelew jail in southern Argentina on August 22, 1972. On each page of the book is a representation of each fallen body. From those sad moments Vigo lent his talent to the mobilizations of the "Mothers of the Plaza of May" (his collective visual poem "Sembrar la memoria" [To Seed Memory] was emblematic, realized in the large popular event "Everyone or No One" that the group "Ezcombros" organized in La Plata on December 9, 1995). In his last years, Vigo's work turned towards the light; he exhibited individually in the Tan Telmo Foundation (1991), where he had a retrospective show of his major works. In 1994, he was selected to form the Argentine section to the XXII Biennial of Sao Paulo, Brazil, thereby achieving world recognition in this area.

To conclude, allow me to include these words of Vigo's taken from his public declaration of 1968, "An Art to Realize," that will give us a more accurate idea of his project:

"Towards a touchable art that breaks in the artist the possibility of the use of "rotten" materials to the extreme that they produce the alienation of the hand of the observer -simple form of perception- that will stay in this position without the "epidermal" participation of the thing. Through use of "base" materials and for a delimiting quotidian context of the content. A touchable art that rejects the possibility of satisfying an "elite" that the artist has been forming to his regret, a touchable art that can be located in any home and not enclosed in Museums and Galleries. An art with mistakes that alienates the exquisite. Taking advantage to the maximum of the aesthetic of "surprise," through "occurrence" -primary act of creation- to be converted -already in for the masses form- into involving movements or for individuality congruence of intentionality-, in attitude. An art of expansion, of atrape for the ludic way, that facilitates active participation of the spectator, the absurd way. An art of signaling so that the quotidian escapes to the unique possibility of the functional. No more contemplation without action. No more exhibition without presentation. Where inert



material, stable and fixed, takes its movement and necessary change so that the image is constantly modified. Finally: a contradictory art."

Only with some difficulty have I been able to touch on all or even some of the facets and dimensions of this indefatigable creator, barely able schematically to redeem Vigo's attitude towards art and the society in which he lived and suffered. This artist subjected himself only to his own rules. All his life he was guided by ideas having to do with freedom. His work will last as long as there exists in people this desire for liberty that he tried to keep fresh by confronting the split of choosing between the various possibilities of signification (including that of altering meaning) that his works offered, thereby concretizing through that choice our deepest nature: the aspiration to freedom.

Montevideo, Uruguay, November 12,  
1997

-----  
frat  
ernally,

Clemente Padin  
C.Correo Central 1211  
11000  
Montevideo  
URUGUAY Fax (598) 2 915 94 17

[↑ Contents](#)

879. **Scott Pound**

**Re: HUBRISTIC, SIMPLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF VIZPO NEEDS  
COUNTERING**

Tue 27 Jan 1998

---

*"The concept of a poetic form must respond to the conditions of the modern world and to an understanding of how that world functions. Not all "new" verse forms are equal to the task of confronting reality. Poets may correctly observe that theirs is a printed medium requiring the extended concentration of the reader; and they may also observe that the audiovisual media that now dominate our culture offer an almost instant gratification that barely requires the attention of its audience at all. Thus some poets have devoted their energies to producing concrete or "visual poetry" that could easily be flashed on a video monitor, or they have composed "sound poetry" that can be chanted like a mantra, recorded, spliced, or broadcast over loudspeakers in some public forum. But in my opinion such poetic forms seem too much to bear the stamp of their reality. They are formal effects that seem not so much devised by the poet as thrust upon him by the exigencies of his condition. They reflect a world that has grown too impatient to tolerate the "defamiliarization," the increase in the "difficulty and length of perception"*

*that Victor Shklovsky argued poetic language ought to pursue. Such forms do not confront or interpret contemporary reality; they submit to it."*

I'm not sure if Joseph would stand by this paragraph today. He might.

I say:

Poetic form is NOT \_a concept\_, even though most critics must treat it as one in order to say much about it, AND since when is it the job of form to reflect an \_understanding\_ of the world?

Taken together, concepts and understanding are devices that seek to hypostatize the world, arrest it, frame it, put it under glass. They're the critic's tools NOT the artist's.

Better to hear Nietzsche out: "understanding kills"

It's bewildering to me how a poem could \_too much bear the stamp of [its] reality\_, as if that meant such work was too real, not dead enough yet, to be bothered with.

\_his condition\_?

\_contemporary\_ reality?

Who's?

Where?

Here comes the world,

turn off the tv.

Interrrrrrrrrrrrpreeeeeeeeeeeeeet iiiiiiiiiiiittttt!

[↑ Contents](#)

880. **Maz881**

***Re: vizzipo schtuff***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Dear Spound,

You post kind of jibes with my theory of what langpo is if we may say it is something, adds up to something, and we are probably better off saying not. But since I've sort of enjoyed everyone's reductivity lately, I will join y'all. Langpo is a theory of vizpo. Langpo fails as material writing. I've never read a langpo poem that made me feel the materiality, free floater, what not, of the signifier. Material writing is impossible. The best you get in this slant from langpo is a self-referential grunty fen, which is an idea of the material, a theory for doing vizpo. But good vizpo is material something, not exactly writing. but what you said Scott.

BillL

Date: Mon, 26 Jan 1998 23:06:18 -0500

From: Scott Pound <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Re: vizzipo schtuff

Well done Bill. As one who has traded many quips and folded many bits of paper and fused hips in front of computer monitors and trucked over to Joel's house to do more of the same--with Joel and Bill and others I \_can\_ relate to \_materiality\_ and all the staring and listening it takes to really \_see\_ and \_hear\_ and \_make\_ poetry not merely visual but real. Something.

But the meism of this debate gets tiring after a while. No one has really come out and said why vizpo matters, if it does. For meikal and bob the answer is implicit in their years and years of work. It's hardly for them to say. As Pound used to say to a young McLuhan: "all the answers to your questions are in the first 80 Cantos." Others genuinely wonder, as Joel says, what the fuss is about.

I read much of the growling and pissing, the territoriality that has come to the fore, as a symptom of something worth pursuing in a less ad hominem way because there is a real difference at stake between langpo and the concertistes which explains meikal, bob and company's irritation at the two being conflated in Marjorie Perloff's syllabus.

Aside from the absurd implication that a langpod can't be a vizpot (\_Veil\_ is as worthy a part of the vizpot corpus as anything), there is the question of what separates the two modes of writing. And I would use this rift to raise exactly that question. The term materiality (or some derivative thereof) has been used to describe the work of both the langpods and the vizpots.

In some usages, notably that of Dale Smith's rabid attacks, materiality seems to connote decadence, a kind of super-literariness that entails a high quotient of reflexivity and dialectical highjinx (pace Silliman, Watten, Bernstein). This I would situate as a kind of dialectical materialism in which the material of the poem is the result of putting an obscenely wide lens in front of the poet's gaze on things. This practice explodes (for one) the notion that the work of the poet is one of selection and subtle taste in the fine matters of living. I would cite Ron Silliman's work of the \_Ketjak\_ \_Tjanting\_ period where anything can and does pass through the poem (shitting, waiting for the bus, eating, fucking, etc.). There is the poem's indiscriminate preoccupation with matter as a site of poetic possibility and there is an ironic residue of decadence to that, a Duchampian decadence. I qualify this as dialectical because, in addition to this preoccupation with materiality, there is the supplemental dimension of what is at stake in putting that kind of raw, unformed material IN A POEM. There is paradoxically an extremely high degree of consciousness in that kind of work, the same high

degree of consciousness that informs Duchamps ready-mades; as brute and bold gestures, they are nonetheless extremely sophisticated.

There are those that believe Duchamp challenged the sanctity of art with his ready-mades. I believe he did the opposite, he reinforced it, for the same reason that the langpods extending the limits of the poem reinforces that sanctity of the poem as a capacious entity (kinda like Walt Whitman). So you can call that materiality of you want; I regard it as an infusion of matter into the ever-virtual sphere of the poem. Nothing wrong with that in the least, as long as we remember that it is a nominal materiality that is at work there.

Materiality in poetry SHOULD mean works that brush up against the limits not of \_the poem\_ but of the real. That is what the best concrete vizpot does. It does not thematize matter; it challenges the audience to view letters and words as real things with a dimension and duration all their own, not merely as indices in an overdetermined virtual world of meaning.

There is great beauty and courage in work that is willing to forsake the ready-made structure of phonetic literacy and put letters in the service of creating spaces and temporalities that outstrip anything the alphabet was designed to contain and control.

I salute meikal and bob and all the other concretists on this list for their work. I got my eye on you.

It's late (for me) my salt bath is ready. Grind on.

Scott Pound

[↑ Contents](#)

881. **Maz881**

***Re: HUBRISTIC, SIMPLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF VIZPO NEEDS  
COUNTERING***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Dear Aviva,

Mr. Acounte should have taken into account that shklovsky was including the russian futurist project (visual and sound poetry) when he (V.S.) wrote those (now hackney'ed) lines.

BillL

Tagline = "Last night I dreamt of some bagel" --Madonna, Spanish Lullabye  
----- """"""They are formal effects that seem not so  
much devised by the poet as thrust upon him by the exigencies of his condition.  
They reflect a world that has grown too impatient to tolerate the "defamiliariza-  
tion," the increase in the "difficulty and length of perception" that Victor

Shklovsky argued poetic language ought to pursue. Such forms do not confront or interpret contemporary reality; they submit to it. """""" -Comte

[↑ Contents](#)

882. **d powell**

***Re: the whole world's neglect***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

That "noone listens to poetry" is the underlying

>problem

>here.

>Jonathan Mayhew

I tried to listen to visual poetry but the only sound it made was a kind of crumpling...er, crinkling

This is merely my fact, not a concrete opinion.

Doug

=====  
=====

D A Powell

=====  
=====

>-----

>Return-Path: <[REDACTED]>

>Delivered-To: [REDACTED]

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>18:46:49 -0000

>Received: from deliverance.acsu.buffalo.edu (128.205.7.57)

> by herring.com with SMTP; 27 Jan 1998 18:46:49 -0000

>Received: (qmail 9420 invoked from network); 27 Jan 1998 17:40:56

>-0000

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> by deliverance.acsu.buffalo.edu with SMTP; 27 Jan 1998 17:40:56

>-0000

>Received: from LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU by

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> (LISTSERV-TCP/IP release 1.8c) with spool id 27364863

>for

> [REDACTED]; Tue, 27 Jan 1998

>12:40:53 -0500

>Received: (qmail 21242 invoked from network); 27 Jan 1998

>17:40:47 -0000

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> with SMTP; 27 Jan 1998 17:40:47 -0000  
>Message-ID: <[REDACTED]>  
>Date: Tue, 27 Jan 1998 11:35:17 CST  
>Reply-To: UB Poetics discussion group  
><[REDACTED]>  
>Sender: UB Poetics discussion group  
><[REDACTED]>  
>From: Dale M Smith <[REDACTED]>  
>Subject: the whole world's neglect  
>To: [REDACTED]  
>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

883. **pritchpa**

***Re: Perloff debate***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

My dear Henry, let it not be said that you ever passed up a chance to grab the moral high ground. Imagine my relief on learning that I don't have to be a dog! "Attention New York: cancel those dozen long-stems to Alice Quinn!" Cronyism is what's deplorable when others are able to use it to their advantage but great when it works to one's own.

I don't know where the kind of independence you envision exists - I'm not even sure what it's an independence from: but this idea of freedom from the influence of those Bad and Corrupt Publishers and Evil Successful Writers I'll hazard to guess has more to do with an anxiety about "contamination" than anything else. As if we all of us wrote in carefully sealed hermetic containers - "Oh MY Soul, Oh MY Inspiration - back off Jack!" Personally I welcome the enthusiasms, the tastes, the excesses of writers I know: they challenge me to grow and, I hope, flourish, though that remains to be seen.

The fact of the matter is that poetry exists and must thrive in the context of those heartless things, i.e. publishers, magazine editors, printers, critics, other writers, even the mail carrier gets a piece of the action, and the attempt to moralize about this situation merely has the effect of warping and decontextualizing any serious discussion about it. Exactly who are you attacking here - or is everyone on the List to be tarred with the same swift brush? It's well and good to rail against those with no integrity but if you go on in that vein you run the risk of demonizing a lot of people who are simply up against it like you and me and

everyone else, trying to make tough decisions and worried to death about screwing up their jobs, their lives, etc.

Born yesterday,  
Patrick Pritchett

-----

From: henry  
To: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Perloff debate  
Date: Tuesday, January 27, 1998 1:14PM

I see the buddy system & po-biz as a positive danger to independence, standards, and taste.

It is possible to write poetry, send it to journals & publishers, write essays, and find friends, allies and supporters, without sucking up, bullshitting, and betraying your principles. You may become a highly-acclaimed false prophet & bad poet eventually - or you may languish in honest obscurity. But you don't have to be a dog.

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

884. **Aldon Nielsen**  
***Re: The Perloff Seminar***  
*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

I deeply resent the fact that nobody has denounced any of my syllabi. Surely this is a sign of . . . something.

[↑ Contents](#)

885. **Miekal And**  
***Nibprick Perl Oft***  
*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Ze Z

Vg vf erirnyvat gung lbh grez n zhpu arrqrq qvfphffvba bs ivfhny cbrgelf eryl-  
gvba gb cbrgvpf, npnqrzvpf, rpbabzvpf, qvfgevohgvba & zrqn "qvftfhgvat"....vs  
lbh ernq gur jryy bire n 100 cbfgf pnershyyl (guvax Vir ernq rnpu va qrgnvy),  
irel yvggyr bs gur cbfgf pbaprea gurzfyirf jvgu gur vasnzbhf Creybss flyynohf,  
gub znal hfr vg nf n eryrinag & cbvagrq zrgncube sbe gur cbyvgvpf bs gur yv-  
grenel znpuvar.... Ab bar unf pbaqrzraq ZCf jbx n n grnpure be jevgre & vs Vz  
erpbpyrpgvat pbeerpgyl zbfh bs hf unir fcbxra ubj uvtuyl jr ertneq ure jbx.  
Guvf qvfphffvba unf orra pbaqhpgrq jvgu erfcrpg gb nyy cnegvrf vaibyirg....V

sriry yvvr gurer unf gehyl orra n fcvevg bs ybbxvat haqre gur eht, fnlvat jung  
vfag orvat fnvq, & birenny V svaq gurfr cbfgf zbfq cebibpngvir & unir orra qr-  
frzvzngvat pbzcyvngvbaf bs inevbhf cbfg ba ivfhny cbrgel gb n ahzore bs bgure  
yvfgf va beqre gung gur qvfphffvba tbrf pebff punaary, bhgfvqr guvf pbml yvg-  
gyr rapynir.

Ze N

[↑ Contents](#)

886. **d powell**

***Another Mondegreen that comes to mind***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

Maz881 wrote:

<Tagline = "Last night I dreamt of some bagel" --Madonna, Spanish Lullaby  
I always thought she was saying, "Last night I dreamed I saw Pedro"

Doug

=====  
=====

D A Powell

=====  
=====

[↑ Contents](#)

887. **d powell**

***Re: The Perloff Seminar***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

Aldon Nielsen wrote:

>I deeply resent the fact that nobody has denounced any of my >syllabi.

>Surely this is a sign of . . . something.

>

Aldon,

I categorically denounce all syllabi. In fact, I categorically denounce all plurals  
in English that are declined as if still Latin. Once a word becomes English, it  
should behave accordingly. Ergo, I supplant syllabi with syllabuses; fungi with  
funguses, ominbi with omnibuses, pie with pusses and spaghetti with spaghet-  
tuses. This is not specific to your course of course but please accept what  
crumbs of indignance I am able to offer at this point.

Doug

=====



=====

D A Powell

=====

=====

[↑ Contents](#)

888. **Thomas Bell**

***Part III, fri. po wars, digr on www vs. print***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

from e-correspondence with Ted Warnell, quoted with permission:

"Input via hyperlinks... process of readers actions/reactions/ interaction with the presentation... creativity after the fact, or, re-creation of the meaning/the work in the reader's mind -- subjective. If so, this is an important concept, central to all art, I think. The Web offers new means to realize this idea, means of objective as well as subjective realization.

"The Poem by Nari work there is an actualization/realization of the meaning of Mark's paper, 'Surf-Sample-Manipulate...'. The PbN work is constructed from both the content and code that is virtually/ conceptually/literally his paper. That's probably obvious. .... Given my understanding of the ideas expressed so eloquently by Mark Amerika, this work and future works attempt to move beyond the mechanics of surf-sample... to explore the meaning of surf-sample... and to create new meaning partly from the process (mine and the viewers - subjective), and also from the structure/restructuring of the source material (fixed plus dynamic at run time, subject to Web browser variables, etc., beyond my knowing - objective) . Use of quotes (you mentioned) in these works exist as 'cues' to the reader, providing (I hope) a subtle direction for interpretation without imposing meaning... links to source material (sometimes, not always) provide additional opportunity for viewer participation, much as your goals, I think.

"Subjective/objective is of current great interest...

"About a current fascination with new and glitz... I agree with your evaluation of 'art on the Web' at this time, and I see this as a natural and necessary stage in the development of the Web as creative medium/media. We all go through it at the start -- a need to explore and experiment with the medium to see what it can do, what we can do with it. This is how I view much of the 'art' currently on the Web, (including much of the work of Poem by Nari), more a technical exercise than an aesthetic expression. Eventually, of course, we get past all of this, and then begin to work *\*in\** the medium (or the media that is the Web). I am seeing more of this now -- aesthetics beyond the technical. I see it in your work -- Winter is decidedly not glitzy. The use of hand drawn material brings a very

personal/human touch to this work (takes the viewer beyond a purely digital reference) -- my perception -- is this your intention?

[↑ Contents](#)

889. **Thomas Bell**

***Part IV fry nite po wars***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Milner again

"I had always assumed in some vague way that outlines were 'real'... looking at objects around me. When really looked at in relation to each other their outlines were not clear and compact, as I had always supposed them to be, they continually became lost in shadow... how was it possible to have remained unaware of this fact for so long? Second, why was such a great mental effort necessary in order to see the edges of objects as they actually show themselves...

"I noticed that the effort needed in order to see the edges of objects as they really look stirred a dim fear, a fear of what might happen if one let go one's mental hold on the outline which kept everything in its place; and it was similar to that fear of a wide focus of attention

"the outline represented the world of fact, of separable touchable solid objects; to cling to it was therefore surely to protect oneself against the other world, the world of imagination.

[↑ Contents](#)

890. **Daniel Zimmerman**

***Re: The Perloff Seminar***

*Tue 27 Jan 1998*

---

Well, geez, Aldon: post 'em! Ya can't feel left out till ya try to feel left in. You know you can trust in the fairmindedness of this list: no one'll predenounce ya. Ya gotta be in it to spin it.

Dan

Aldon Nielsen wrote:

>

> I deeply resent the fact that nobody has denounced any of my syllabi.

> Surely this is a sign of . . . something.

[↑ Contents](#)

891. **Thomas Bell**

**Re: vizzipo schtuff**

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

At 11:06 PM 1/26/98 -0500, Scott Pound wrote:

>

>Materiality in poetry SHOULD mean works that brush up against the limits  
>not of \_the poem\_ but of the real. That is what the best concrete vizpot  
>does. It does not thematize matter; it challenges the audience to view  
>letters and words as real things with a dimension and duration all their  
>own, not merely as indices in an overdetermined virtual world of meaning.

>

>There is great beauty and courage in work that is willing to forsake the  
>readymade structure of phonetic literacy and put letters in the service of  
>creating spaces and temporalities that outstrip anything the alphabet was  
>designed to contain and control.

>

Didn't want these words buried at the end of your post and possibly missed.  
Nice.

What you are talking about is one of the benefits I've been reaping in  
adding the viz to my work.

tom bell

[↑ Contents](#)

892. **Thomas Bell**

**Re: Part II, fri.night po's etc**

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

At 11:46 AM 1/27/98 -0800, William Marsh wrote:

>tom -- i'm wondering what you think of all this, particularly the stuff  
>below on "lines as perceptual units" and "intonation contours"

>

>At 11:43 PM 1/26/98 -0600, tom bell wrote:

>

>Reuven Tsur:

>>"Just as the graphic arrangement on the page presents the  
>>lines as perceptual units to the eye, the intonation  
>>contours heard in the reading of poetry present the lines as perceptual  
>[skip]

>this takes the passage perhaps too far out of the "picture poem" focus the  
>rest is concerned with, but i couldn't get past these early equations

>  
>bill  
bill,

You could ask Dr. Tsur - this material is on the web.

My take, though, is that yes, it is somewhat simplified - he is a psychologist and we do tend at times to simplify things literary, and I think he probably is not aware of vizpo and most likely other modern focuses on visual space in poetry. "Reader instructions" is a bit of jargon which might be better put as "reader suggestions" - an idea I've been playing with in some degree in my so-far-basic attempts to give the reader some choice in hyperlinks to follow as opposed to following the authors trails.

Your questions about "transparency" of graphic signs and the shape- shifting of phonetic/graphemic units are, I think, important ones that I don't think Dr. Tsur has resolved - they may not be resolvable in any simple manner and worth a pause in reading. These are issues I have been playing around with in my own way through collage, distortion of shapes, and clarity of words and ideas vs. obscurity, indecipherability of same on various backgrounds and the way the larger .gifs swallow or wipe out meaning or distort the apparent 'reality' of what is/was said verbally by the language, words, sounds, etc. I certainly don't have answers to any of these questions, but you can see some of my 'play' with these things on my sites. Will send URLs if you don't have them.

You do raise some interesting issues - thanks for the interest. tom bell

[↑ Contents](#)

893. **Karen Kelley**

***Allen/Alan***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Can't remember if it's Allen or Alan?

Interestingly, Euphorbus, litmag out of Princeton, got the Allen right, but spelled his last name "Ginsburg." And to make matters worse, the poem refers to Marilyn Monroe's "butocks." Maybe academia isn't really all we're cracking it up to be.

Karen

[↑ Contents](#)

894. **Harold Rhenisch**

***Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Katy Lederer wrote:

>>It seems to me that the fact that young people are writing (and thus engaging in the body politic as well as the body aesthetic) should be enough--<<

I hope you don't mind me stepping in here, Katy, but I have so many questions. First: enough for what? That young people are so engaged is wonderful, necessary, admirable, deserving of support and celebration, yes, but...enough for what?

>> that these older writers should just face the fact that their own stated poetics in some sense preclude them from making aesthetic judgement about young writers...<<

In what sense? I don't follow you. We're all students. With all respect, that includes Pearlman and Perloff and Bernstein and Bowering. That's good.

What's more, I'm 40. That's neither particularly old nor particularly young. Does that mean I can make no aesthetic 'judgements', on those poets older or younger than myself? Does it follow as well that young writers can make no aesthetic 'judgements' on my work or on that of my elders? What use would such a stratification serve?

>> I just think that bad reviews (of young writers, of langpos) are a waste of time.<<

Why would they be more or less a waste of time than bad reviews of any other writers or schools of poetry?

>> That what is fruitful is a discussion of those styles that, perhaps, bridge some kind of gap enough to make us feel a little bit less "solitary"--both intellectually and aesthetically...<<

Splendid!

>> That what is most interesting to hear about is how someone's style strikes us as more than individual (though not necessarily "universal")--<<

Ah, so you're remarking that bad reviews in general are fruitless, that you'd rather see energy go towards making bridges than towards carving ravines? Great!

>>It just seems so "easy" to disagree with styles that seem far from our own--<<

Yes, too easy.

regards,

Harold Rhenisch

██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

895. **George Bowering**

***Re: Perloff debate***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Mr Grumman's attack on Perloff reminds me of all those socialist parties that were always attacking one another for not being the right kind of socialists. Why not go after the cement-heads who wont bother to read any interesting poetry at all? I would certainly advise any students I might have to enrol in Perloff's course instead of some course about dullard poets. The figures on her list sound (\*and look!) pretty interesting to me. What's the complaint? I never get up the nerve to teach Zukofsky (well, not much) but I am sure glad someone does. Quartermain does. I am not going to jump on him for teaching Zuk instead of Reznikoff.

George Bowering.

2499 West 37th Ave.,  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
Canada V6M 1P4

fax: ██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

896. **Marcella Durand**

***Re: Allen/Alan***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

A recent propoganda letter enclosure from Academy of American Poets for some reason mentioned "Allen Ginsburg"

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From: Karen Kelley

Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 1998 1:15 AM

To: ██████████

Subject: Allen/Alan

Can't remember if it's Allen or Alan?

Interestingly, Euphorbus, litmag out of Princeton, got the Allen right, but spelled his last name "Ginsburg." And to make matters worse, the poem refers to Marilyn Monroe's "buttocks." Maybe academia isn't really all we're cracking it up to be.

Karen

[↑ Contents](#)

897. **henry gould**  
**Re: vizzipo schtuff**  
*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

When I was a kid my mother called my brother "the eyes" and me "the ears". Had to do not with the way we looked but how we used these senses. Some people do seem to be more psychologically "attuned" to visual art and its effects, others to sound. Some lucky people to both. But the "poetry wars" might keep this in mind... - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

898. **Henry Gould**  
**(no subject)**  
*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

On Tue, 27 Jan 1998 17:51:00 -0600 pritchpa said:

>My dear Henry, let it not be said that you ever passed up a chance to  
>grab the moral high ground. Imagine my relief on learning that I don't  
>have to be a dog! "Attention New York: cancel those dozen long-stems to  
>Alice Quinn!" Cronyism is what's deplorable when others are able to use  
>it to their advantage but great when it works to one's own.

Don't relieve yourself too soon, Patrick. You're barking up the wrong fire hydrant (i.e. "we're all cronies here"). Nobody grabs the moral high ground. We're talking about conditions under which poetry is made. And if you think running with the pack is going to get you somewhere, think again. They're headed for the dumpster.

>

>I don't know where the kind of independence you envision exists - I'm  
>not even sure what it's an independence from: but this idea of freedom  
>from the influence of those Bad and Corrupt Publishers and Evil  
>Successful Writers I'll hazard to guess has more to do with an anxiety  
>about "contamination" than anything else. As if we all of us wrote in  
>carefully sealed hermetic containers - "Oh MY Soul, Oh MY Inspiration -

Actually, I've never been aware of any influence of Publishers on my work in any way shape or form. Writers, yes - as writers, not as pimps. I'm worth more than you can ever afford, & besides, I'm independent!

Academics fawn over their pets. Publishers suck up to academics (they order their books for courses). Your contemporaries want to have a good time being "writers". Do you want to write for any of these people? I write for love, love, love. Love is strong as death; jealousy as cruel as the grave.

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

899. **dw**

***Re: a sound and vision nexus***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

I would like to second what I think I hear Bill Howe saying about the distinction between the material and the physical aspects of production, without claiming that one sort of poetry is a subset of the other. I would offer in a similar vein that some work that is highly visual is also in a way diagrammatic, not unlike avant-garde styles of musical scoring, and may take the notion of scored speech as an act of mapping. The interest in all this I suppose would be a of relatively formal/conceptual order, sifting, sorting, gridding, making few claims as to the content itself, but discovering meaning and use value. The foregoing is the vein that I would associate with the langpo--vispo nexus.

Vispo qua vispo (setting the diagrammatic to oneside for the moment) has gone through its own performative history--one in which the act of registering the mark on the page becomes one of the many performance aspects. It tends in the modern form to forefront collage, bricolage, --with an eye to some holographic sense of the fullness or texture of the piece. It is resolutely non additive. Non syntactic I might say--as the visual arts in general seem non-syntactic unless you are as a reader determined to narrativize all visual productions. I think of how a text (like the Bible) can be sacred to an "illiterate" shaman priestess (Maria Sabina), of how hieroglyphs or runes have an untranslatable wholeness that is lost when phoneticized, linearized. I think this notion of wholeness as an experiential fact of physical performance, be performance a registration of marks in the sand or on the page or a shouting of gutturals on a ridge top is probably in fact just too spooky and unreal for a sensible material poetics like langpo and that is why there is so much at stake in this devbate for some writers/artists. I will go so far as to suggest that main drive for much vispo qua vispo has been a desire to experience in performance a touch of the sacred--that the ephemeral fact of performance is crucial to the multimedia zeitgeist and that the tendency has been to move away from temple building eternalizations of the sacred to a



performative whole of feeling it on the fly of seeing it in samisdat and other instrumental forms always wanting somehow to produce more in different ways whether the quality of the surface is degraded or slick--the situating of the artist's physical being in a way that allows production becomes crucial.

So how does the split boil out then: on one side emphasizes physical production of material objects even as those objects themselves become more ephemeral, for this kind of vispo production is meaning; for langpo though the emphasis is on the materiality of meaning production and in its visual form langpo will seem more a mapping of surfaces than a making, using, enacting of them--and will even seem to violate the little bit of sacredness that can still be attached to production and that is why there is so much at stake in this debate for some of the respondents.

Don Wellman

[↑ Contents](#)

900. **Maria Damon**

***Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

katy l writes, among other things: In my view, writers like Lyn Hejinian, Carla Harryman, and Leslie Scalapio are far more true to the "tenets" of langpo that have to do with "socialist" approaches to writing--writing as participation in the sociopolitical, rather than as glorification of the individual through the lyrical display of sensitivity and accumen.

\*\*\*\* this brings up an interesting point i've been wanting to ask POETIX about for some time. while katy doesn't make it explicit, gender is an obvious subtext here. my experience is that, though i was first attracted to "language poetry" or whatever my understanding of it was some years ago by reading women -- hejinian, scalapino, waldrop, mayer, berssenbrugge, etc, and i started teaching them. i'd barely heard of bernstein, silliman i knew by name only (and because i knew he was involved w/ the socialist review), and watten's theoretical polemics in the anthologies i found somewhat turgid, perelman i knew not at all except that he was mentioned by jameson. however, when i started going to conferences on the poetry circuit (as opposed to the cult studs circuit) i met...bernstein, perelman, watten, etc. i found them quite delightful, not at all the disembodied hyperintellectuals i'd imagined. but scalapino, hejinian, etc, were nowhere to be seen. i still haven't met them. i have met rachel blau dp and joan retallack at conferences, and i did see susan howe years ago speaking about emily dickinson, and was blown away, but believe it or not i had no idea she was a poet at the time (mid -80s). i imagine this has something to do with

who teaches and thus has a travel stipend, etc. and i imagine that this, in turn, has to do with traditional divisions of labor as much as with taste (some people may not WANT to teach at a u, i'm aware, like ron s). while the u of mn has by now brought out kathleen fraser, mei-mei b and myung-mi kim (the latter two while i was away on sabbatical, typically enough; and the former without any knowledge that she participated in a certain style of writing). i know this is to some extent because i went to stanford when it was just crawling out from under its yvor winters legacy (marjorie and i overlapped for only a year i believe), and minnesota isn't exactly a mecca for writing communities, and the university, already pretty impecunious, is pretty much the most conservative cultural institution in the state, and that 's saying a lot; plus very hierarchical, so that it wasn't until after i'd been there 7 years that i even had the clout to suggest we bring anyone out...so anyway...anyway, what i'm saying is, while i'm aware that there are other factors in my not having met the people who first piqued my interest in experimental writing, it seems significant that, even having been on the academic po-conf circuit for a few years now my initial inspirants haven't been represented as thoroughly as their male counterparts. any ideas?.

[↑ Contents](#)

901. **Jacques Debrot**

***Re: Material/Physical***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Am I alone in thinking that the term "materiality" is often used in too reductive a sense? Koestler once made the telling point that in a cosmos where sub atomic particles go forward and backward in time, where light is both a particle & wave, that "material" is something almost imaginary.

The distinction between physicality & materiality -- quite apart from the context of visual poetics, or how the body/language divide was played by the New Americans & the Language poets -- seems very suggestive to me. An essay of John Yau's has been kicking around in my head for a couple of days in which he speaks of a type of artistic \*scale\* for which "the determining factor was the human body, not as something that could embrace an immense vista or chart a seemingly unlimited expanse, but as something contingent, doubtful, and questioning . . . Is it possible," he asks, "to privilege neither body (seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling) nor mind (remembering, conceiving, and dreaming) and still make art?" This seems relevant to poetry as well, & suggestive somehow of a kind of constantly shifting perception of the physical & material without the binarism that frequently occurs in LangPo & the New American poetry.

[↑ Contents](#)

902. **Maria Damon**

**(no subject)**

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

At 8:17 AM -0500 1/28/98, Henry Gould wrote:

Academics fawn over their pets

\*\*\*

hey now, yr painting w/ very broad strokes. writing for love love love is great  
great great, some of us academix do that too, baby baby baby. carry on --

[↑ Contents](#)

903. **groberts**

**Re: a sound and vision nexus**

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

"Poetry is Waiting"

At the start of this poem, you will stop up your ears.

At the start of this poem, you will stop up your.

At the start of this poem, you will stop up.

At the start of this poem, you will stop.

At the start of this poem, you will.

At the start of this poem, you.

At the start of this poem.

At the start of this.

At the start of.

At the start.

At the.

At.

For.

For the.

For the rest.

For the rest of.

For the rest of this.

For the rest of this poem.

For the rest of this poem, I.

For the rest of this poem, I will.

For the rest of this poem, I will keep.

For the rest of this poem, I will keep my.

For the rest of this poem, I will keep my mouth.

For the rest of this poem, I will keep my mouth shut.

[↑ Contents](#)

904. **Dale M Smith**

***Contracting the Populace***

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

Howdy Y'all. It was a late night on the Texas poetry list. Me and Henny Cowntow got into a showdown over the contractual agreements between writers of the famous 'horseshoe' genre of Tx poetry vs. the Flat Bed Ford theory of visual presentation. But somewhere around 3 in the morning, Buffalo Pouty sent me an article he copied from the eeCONomist. One excerpt reads:

"Contemporary poetry is often obscure or self-referential, neither scans nor rhymes nor tells a story, is impossible to memorise, is often about the act of writing poetry itself, is humourless, and can be more like a puzzle than a poem... Ironically, as poetry has become less significant as a cultural form, more of it has been produced."

I told Buffalo he was loco as a cooked goose. Folks down here just don't get high ideals or give a sympathetic god damn about formal gestures. You gotta practically pry Larry McMurtry off their face. But the ideas expressed on this Texas poetry list will surely bring'em round. Hell. The Economist is practically a Communist publication! What do they know?

[↑ Contents](#)

905. **William R. Howe**

***a sound and vision nexus***

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

this discussion of vizzzipoe has made me want to articulate (even in this brief kind of way) some of my thoughts on not only what constitutes vizzzi work but more over what i see as a more basic asthetic drive behind vizzz. one of the roots of langpo production was (/is?) a desire to make visible the materiality of language and thereby be able to address linguistic economy and economies of meaning through a programmed disfunction of standard (or maybe more normative) meaning and sense making. through transforming the way in which we see meaning per se we are able to percieve qualities of language otherwise made invisible or transparent by our trained linguistic prejudice to see textual language as immediate communication. these newly visible qualities of language are in many cases what make language poetic (rhythm sound oddness shape etc)but by no means do the language poets have a monopoly on revealing languages otherness. fiction writers like federman bs johnson and steve katz were engaged in this project in the 60s. and one could make a case for dada zaum and the like to have been doing this before wwii. here though i would like to switch tact a bit and instead of talking about the materiality of language i would like to talk about the physicality of language which may seem like a bit of

a slim distinction but bear with me on this. sound and visual poetry is concerned with the physicality of language and communication. the physicality of the act the physicality of the fact the physicality of text (whatever that might be). so a poetics of sound and vision is poetics of physicality rather than one of materiality. the distinction is that in the case of language poetry there is a concerted effort to examine economies of meaning making and in visual and sound biz it is the object of the work itself which is under investigation rather than an investigation of the means of production. the physicality of a sound text by cris cheek both on the page and in the flesh is an examination of the nature of both communication outside of normative linguistic structures and what it means to produce one type of expression from another (sound from vision). steve mccafferys carnival works not so much because it is a huge piece of paper covered in courier but because it isn't a huge piece of paper covered in courier. bps cartoons and alphabetic fixations work because they incorporate a plethora of visual and linguistic elements into a plexus of meaning making outside of normative linguistic patterns (ie words). john currys little bits and things work the same way. and i could go on. so when i was down on Druckers visible word as being too concerned with typography i was objecting not to examination of typography in general but to her seeing type as a means of articulating the visual at the expense of other meaning making strategies in visual work. it seems important in looking at visual and sound texts to see them as a whole from the object of the book/the physical performance down through to the grain of the paper the type of ink the face of any type the shoes being worn the arrangement of hands the syncopation of breathing the jumble of language etc. one of the reasons that this debate is so longwinded is that language poetry (certainly as evidenced by the early new york [nuf said] and baltimore folks [ie kirby malone chris mason and the rest of the coacid/epod clan]) works within the boundaries of visual and sound poetry (and sometimes i am tempted to see language poetry as a subset of visual and sound poetry) although by no means does it cover the spectrum of visual and sound work. So marjories silly bus looks more like a language poetry anthology than a visual poetry one even though all of the work she is looking at contain strong visual experimentation. what she misses though is the rest of visual poetry miekals ball of popcorn.

bi  
ll  
ho  
we

[↑ Contents](#)

906. **J. Kuszai**

***I am chicken banana***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Maria Damon wrote:

>

> kathy writes, among other things:

> In my view, writers like Lyn Hejinian, Carla Harryman, and Leslie

> Scalapio are far more true to the "tenets" of langpo that have to do with

> "socialist" approaches to writing--writing as participation in the

> sociopolitical, rather than as glorification of the individual through the

> lyrical display of sensitivity and accumen.

>

> \*\*\*\*

> this brings up an interesting point i've been wanting to ask POETIX about

> for some time. while kathy doesn't make it explicit, gender is an obvious

> subtext here. my experience is that, though i was first attracted to

> "language poetry" or whatever my understanding of it was some years ago by

> reading women --hejinian, scalapino, waldrop, mayer, berssenbrugge, etc,

my experience to Maria's is extremely similar, except that I discovered Susan Howe first and then came to these other women writers. Because of this, and certain takes on the "sociopolitical" (K. Lederer) and linguistics, I have always felt that 70s movement towards (not of) "langwedge" poets was one whose most "genuine" players were women, meaning that they were the "best" poets of that "scene." Therefore, I have never understood the arguments that langouedge poetry was some kind of guy thing. Certainly that raises many structural and social issues which are sadly at play in the society at large. But I also felt that this argument tended to elide the serious artists whose work had become crucial to me, and that it demeaned those women who felt otherwise from this perspective. I've found this to be true in grad school as well. But this isn't Maria's point and is kind of an aside.

And I came to language poetry standing in Powell's books in pdx and found that they stocked all the new poetry. Browsing I learned a lot. I found Susan H's work because it to me seemed to offer a possibility of "speech" in the post-speech era. Oppen first gave me tools to recognize again "the world" (out there as opposed to solipsistic interiority) and from Susan I was gathered by wings. Of course I said that this led me to others after, and that moment of transition from being an Oppen-head to being a Susan Howe-head was a very difficult and personally frightening moment of excited transition to....speech? I think of "Speeches at the barriers" by S.H. or her phrase "fragmentary narrative enclaves" or the first lines of Elizabeth Robinson's poem "Flower":

All that I can say is that I feel  
something I am a warrior  
It is speech And all the parts of me  
are hunting All the particles  
are eating at air  
The parts of words eat at bits of  
sweets because they cannot be the bearers  
of anything else  
This was something I had to say and  
it was better than pursuit

That Katy mentions that these writers are demonstrating the socialist tenets of language writing is interesting. I'd like to hear more about this as I think it offers a fascinating possibility for discussion. What is the value of those political claims today? What are the political-venues for these discussions about poetry?

Maria continues:

> anyway...anyway, what i'm saying is, while i'm aware that there are other  
> factors in my not having met the people who first piqued my interest in  
> experimental writing, it seems significant that, even having been on the  
> academic po-conf circuit for a few years now my initial inspirants haven't  
> been represented as thoroughly as their male counterparts. any ideas?.

It would be interesting to make a list of that group of writers. How many of them received PhDs? How many rec'd PhDs and then went on to pursue academic positions? How many did pursue academia but with only an MA or MFA? or less...I wonder also if isn't (hopefully) changing with respect to the current (?) generation.?? yeah, any ideas?

[↑ Contents](#)

907. **louis stroffolino**

***Re: Material/Physical***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Hello Jacques---Yau's terms may be useful, the SPIRIT of Yau's terms are definitely worth exploring in poetry. I (and I think many other poets on this list) attended the opening to the show from which Yau's essay comes from. It is worth attending (Apex Art C.P. 291, Church St., NYC---until 2/7), not just to get a sense of Yau's curatorial eclecticism in the art world, but also to consider the possibility of the relations between painting and poetry again, or between

painters and poets--a connection that i personally would like to see more of,  
Anyway, i'm writing on the fly so I bye.....chris

On Wed, 28 Jan 1998, Jacques Debrot wrote:

*Am I alone in thinking that the term "materiality" is often used in too reductive a sense? Koestler once made the telling point that in a cosmos where sub atomic particles go forward and backward in time, where light is both a particle & wave, that "material" is something almost imaginary.*

*The distinction between physicality & materiality -- quite apart from the context of visual poetics, or how the body/language divide was played by the New Americans & the Language poets -- seems very suggestive to me. An essay of John Yau's has been kicking around in my head for a couple of days in which he speaks of a type of artistic \*scale\* for which "the determining factor was the human body, not as something that could embrace an immense vista or chart a seemingly unlimited expanse, but as something contingent, doubtful, and questioning . . . Is it possible," he asks, "to privilege neither body (seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling) nor mind (remembering, conceiving, and dreaming) and still make art?" This seems relevant to poetry as well, & suggestive somehow of a kind of constantly shifting perception of the physical & material without the binarism that frequently occurs in LangPo & the New American poetry.*

[↑ Contents](#)

908. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**

***Nikuko, Mistake***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

-

Nikuko mistakes Julu for the Doctor Script

Nikuko searches for Help

Nikuko's anger fills the world

Script started on Wed Jan 28 11:04:48 1998

warning: could not update utmp entry

\$ ./julu

Open your mouth...

Ah... speak... speak...

Jennifer, what do they call you, when they call you... doctor, they call me doctor



Are you dressed as doctor, they call me doctor? Is doctor, they call me doctor  
dressed as you? Are you in your flower, are you in your flesh, ah don't answer...  
Ah...

Is Julu wearing your ... , are you wearing your frock?  
yes, I'm wearing my white lab coat

I love your feelings, doctor, they call me doctor ...  
Would doctor, they call me doctor mind you partying?

Being thrusts me beneath or within your frock!

What do you call your contrary flower?  
I need help, why I am writing you

Your body parts, mine, in a dark list, list them...  
one by one, each on a line alone, typing Control-d when done.

My name is Nikuko

I live in Fukuoka

Please help me

My anger takes over the world

There is nothing but anger

My name is Nikuko

I need help, why I am writing you calls forth florid breast, eating, excreting  
memory. confusing the thrusting, I need help, why I am writing you is, thrust-  
ing, yes, i'm wearing my white lab coat? ... breast is There is nothing but anger  
here, its breast?

Are you becoming close to Jennifer's I need help, why I am writing you?

You must help me, my name is Nikuko

Wait! I need help, why I am writing you and 24613 are gone forever!

For 3 contrary days, I have been rich Julu ...

and it has taken you just 1.733 minutes turning Jennifer ...

my-skin-for-you...:yes, my beautiful flower:belonging:skin: Would belonging  
mind you partying, my-skin-for-you..., with us? Your contrary pale is in my pro-  
truding eyelid Ah, womb eaten by julu-of-the-open-arms and julu-depressed

I need help, why I am writing you:yes, i'm wearing my white lab coat:doctor,  
they call me doctor:I live in Fukuoka:My name is Nikuko Your florid My name is  
Nikuko is in my thrusting There is nothing but anger Devour florid My name is  
Nikuko julu-of-the partying I need help, why I am writing you!

\$ exit

script done on Wed Jan 28 11:06:55 1998

[↑ Contents](#)

909. **Henry Gould**

**(no subject)**

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

On Wed, 28 Jan 1998 08:55:50 -0600 Maria Damon said:

>At 8:17 AM -0500 1/28/98, Henry Gould wrote:

>Academics fawn over their pets

>\*\*\*

>

>hey now, yr painting w/ very broad strokes.

this is what academics are for, isn't it? Pinning down broad strokes to a narrow edge. Don't take it personally, Maria - unless it applies. - Henry

[↑ Contents](#)

910. **MAYHEW**

**A few unrelated points**

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

1. It is Conte-- not "Joseph Comte"

2. If it is nepotistic for scholar/critics to to promote living writers, as Henry Gould suggests, then the clear alternative would be to promote dead ones who no longer depend on the academy for fellowships and the like, though I suppose that the heirs of these dead writers might also have a financial stake in the promotion of their work. Or should we write in a way that disguises the fact that we find the work of our contemporaries vitally interesting to us, in order to avoid this promotion?

3. If anyone knows of any studies of the dialectic between redundancy and concision in theories of poetic form and meaning please back-channel.

Jonathan Mayhew

Department of Spanish and Portuguese

3062 Wescoe Hall

University of Kansas

████████

████████

[↑ Contents](#)

911. **Dale M Smith**

***Bombs, Away***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

By the way, I think that the Yasusada Poems are well received, not because of the potential 'scandal' but because the poems have a specific context and reveal a complex emotional range. The narrative elements are also compelling, framing the poems. The subject matter is rich, the formal expression mysterious and tender. These poems attempt to reveal suffering, a rarity in many poems these days. I can't wait to see the movie. I guess the book will have to do for now. It's great to see something in print by a poet who can tell a story. What happened to the story?

[↑ Contents](#)

912. **Gary Sullivan**

***Response to Maria's Question***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Hello, Maria:

If I'm not mistaken, you went to Stanford in the 80s. At that time, an hour or so north of you, the women you mention (& more) were, to me anyway, more visible than their male counterparts: When I lived in San Francisco (1983-1991), the very first reading I went to was Dodie Bellamy (at SF State), I also saw Lyn read with Tom Raworth, and Lyn reading with Carla Harryman (from "The Wide Road"), Carla reading with someone else (can't remember who) and Leslie Scalapino at an AIDS benefit. Others I saw read were Norma Cole, Gordon, Cole Swenson, Kathy Acker (a couple times), Beverly Dahlen, Colleen Lookingbill (she was in a reading/discussion group w/me & several others), Bernadette Mayer. I saw Perelman read with Creeley once, and Rodefer a couple of times, but never got the chance to see Ron read, nor Barry, nor Alan Davies, nor Bruce Andrews, nor Bernstein (saw him read in Minneapolis, much later). The Susan Howe reading, some months--maybe even a year or two--after I left town, was legendary, mainly for its attendance, apparently more people came to that than to Alice Notley (who I saw read a month or two before we left town). Lyn was pretty much the most visible of that general crowd, to my peers, largely because we were all collecting Tuumba Press books, and My Life won whatever the award is that S.F. State gives out or administers, so it was looked to as something "important" beyond what personal use we might make of it. Also, Scalapino, in good part due to her publishing O Books. We were aware of In the American Tree, and the New Directions Language Poetries, but didn't bother with them much because we had most of those texts in chapbooks, magazines, perfect bounds & even manuscripts (great used bookstores, not to mention

network of poets, in the bay area, as you'll recall), & being kind of snobby (I speak for myself alone here), wanted the "higher groove factor" items--the First Eds, bay-bay, if often slightly foxed. In Minneapolis, the readings I went to (or organized) were Acker/Baraka/Hentoff, Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge/Myung Mi Kim, Kathleen Fraser, Charles Alexander/Spencer Selby, Charles Bernstein, George Albon, Cheri Hickman, Diane Glancy, Johanna Drucker, Michael Lally, Nico Vasilakis, Norma Cole, me, Erik Belgum, Jonathan Brannen, you (at an XCP post-pub reading), Elizabeth Burns (at same), Samuel Delany, Curt Anderson, Anselm Hollo--a few more men than women, but not really that many more.

My sense is that you didn't, at the time, venture up to San Francisco/Berkeley/Oakland much while at Stanford, where all of this activity was taking place. I remember that you told me you saw first not the actual cartoon-poets cover I did for SPD, but the thing projected on a screen during a lecture Watten was giving at some conference. So, your initial introduction to many poets, poetry & even ephemera (!), seems to have taken place through an academic filter--via conferences, panels, & so forth. I mean, you tell us in your post as much, and I mention all of the above to support what you're saying: the activity of the last 10, 20 years has not been inordinately "male": in fact, has increasingly shifted from male to female. But that word "filter"--I use it to foreground the idea I have that the quality of academic activity is, or has been, generally, that of filter, & so what's read through it is read through it. Living in San Francisco & experiencing poetry through readings & less formal gatherings is also a filter, the limit of being in a particular place at a particular time, though a less opaque filter, especially since many of the activities now in discussion at conferences etc. took place there. I mean the writing itself, & the interaction/experience/confluences that gave rise to the writing. So, in answer to your question, more questions: Do you find academia to be largely male-driven or -informed? Do you find women to be resistant to it, or hesitant to participate in its culture? I can't tell from here. My e-address is Columbia, but as you know, I'm merely an office worker, & don't participate much with anything/anyone here, save the friendly people at Butler Library. There are, though, I do notice, many more male history professors in the department than female. There are many more men posting to this list than women, & I assume that to mean more male access to e-mail, & a lot of that seems to be guys working in or attending universities. (Mostly w/more significant roles than mine ((office grunt)).)

Maria, you are that rare tenured academic whose energies are divided between the filter of the academy and the thing under the microscope--you've not only brought out poets to read at UMN, but have collaborated with Miekal And, & published creative as well as lit crit writings. My sense--and please tell me I'm wrong if I am--is that this hasn't always been the case, that your move to find some confluence between both has been tenuous, gradual. So that, a decade or

so ago, while going to Stanford, you didn't participate with the living activity taking place an hour or so north of you, but now, you seem very much involved in what's taking place among writers not only in Minneapolis, but elsewhere as well.

Just received Joel's post--& agree that younger women poets today do seem more actively involved in the filter than before: I don't have to reiterate the list of names of younger poets that pop up frequently on this list--but to say that some are grads of Brown, Buffalo, Bard & even a few "non-B" universities. (My sense, not having seen it yet, is that the forthcoming Talisman anthology of under-40 poets will draw much work from "B" university grad gals--& would add another semi-academic B, Boulder ((Naropa)). Certainly this was the case of the o.blek New Coast volumes. 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.) So, your movement toward some interaction between the two "worlds" seems to happen at a time when there is, in fact, a general movement, among women, toward establishing connections between them. I wonder if, over time, we'll see more women represented at conferences, sitting on panels, work by more women under discussion at same. & because of your position, your interest & your energy (which, okay, does tend to flag in Jan, Feb & March, given those often brutal winters!), you would seem a good person to begin to actively work toward your goal. So, another (not rhetorical) question: What more, at this point in time, might actively be done to help promote this (besides waiting for all the old white guys to fade off into Club Emeritus)?

Gary Sullivan



[↑ Contents](#)

### 913. **Henry Gould**

#### ***Re: A few unrelated points***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

On Wed, 28 Jan 1998 10:33:51 -0600 MAYHEW said:

>

> 2. If it is nepotistic for scholar/critics to to promote living writers,  
>as Henry Gould suggests, then the clear alternative would be to promote  
>dead ones who no longer depend on the academy for fellowships and the  
>like, though I suppose that the heirs of these dead writers might also  
>have a financial stake in the promotion of their work. Or should we write  
>in a way that disguises the fact that we find the work of our  
>contemporaries vitally interesting to us, in order to avoid this  
>promotion?

Why don't you ask Emily Dickinson. Enjoy the pie - I'm just here to remind you, in an uppity, independent way, that it's probably bad for your teeth. I hear Helen Vendler's are falling out all over Boston. See you in the cafeteria... - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

914. **acgold01**

***Nielsen's Neglected Syllabi***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Aldon, your syllabi are master constructions of hegemonic exclusionism etc etc. I mean look at them--they leave out just about everyone who's not on them. Nuff sed.

[↑ Contents](#)

915. **david bromige**

***The xtian right co-opting Aliens***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Ginsburg, Ohio

[↑ Contents](#)

916. **Maria Damon**

***(no subject)***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

At 11:13 AM -0500 1/28/98, Henry Gould wrote:

>On Wed, 28 Jan 1998 08:55:50 -0600 Maria Damon said:

>>At 8:17 AM -0500 1/28/98, Henry Gould wrote:

>>Academics fawn over their pets

>>\*\*\*

>>

>>hey now, yr painting w/ very broad strokes.

>

>this is what academics are for, isn't it? Pinning down broad strokes

>to a narrow edge. Don't take it personally, Maria - unless it applies.

>- Henry

i pet my fawns, i fret over my pawns, my pawns rise up against me, threatening my petting power, my pets paw me, my Paw mauls me, my Maw pulls me, and everything is very personal in this awdipal, audible, edible and oedipal mawlstrom of petting and pawing. academe is a veritable orgy of petting and

fawning, pawning and cloning, clowning and self-abasement up to the ceiling, or eyeballs, whichever comes first. no harm done, hennipoo.

[↑ Contents](#)

917. **Maria Damon**  
***Re: Nikuko, Mistake***  
*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

o i adore this!

At 1:13 AM +0900 1/29/98, Alan Myouka Sondheim wrote:

>-

>

>

>Nikuko mistakes Julu for the Doctor Script

>Nikuko searches for Help

>Nikuko's anger fills the world

>

>

>Script started on Wed Jan 28 11:04:48 1998

>warning: could not update utmp entry

>\$ ./julu

>

>Open your mouth...

>

>Ah... speak... speak...

>

>Jennifer, what do they call you, when they call you... doctor, they call

>me doctor

>

>Are you dressed as doctor, they call me doctor? Is doctor, they call me

>doctor dressed as you? Are you in your flower, are you in your flesh, ah

>don't answer... Ah...

>

>Is Julu wearing your ... , are you wearing your frock?

>yes, I'm wearing my white lab coat

>

>I love your feelings, doctor, they call me doctor ...

>Would doctor, they call me doctor mind you partying?

>

>Being thrusts me beneath or within your frock!

>

>What do you call your contrary flower?

>I need help, why I am writing you  
>  
>Your body parts, mine, in a dark list, list them...  
>one by one, each on a line alone, typing Control-d when done.  
>My name is Nikuko  
>I live in Fukuoka  
>Please help me  
>My anger takes over the world  
>There is nothing but anger  
>My name is Nikuko  
>  
>I need help, why I am writing you calls forth florid breast, eating,  
>excreting memory. confusing the thrusting, I need help, why I am writing  
>you is, thrusting, yes, i'm wearing my white lab coat? ... breast is  
>There is nothing but anger here, its breast?  
>  
>Are you becoming close to Jennifer's I need help, why I am writing you?  
>You must help me, my name is Nikuko  
>Wait! I need help, why I am writing you and 24613 are gone forever!  
>  
>For 3 contrary days, I have been rich Julu ...  
>and it has taken you just 1.733 minutes turning Jennifer ...  
>  
>my-skin-for-you...:yes, my beautiful flower:belonging:skin:  
>Would belonging mind you partying, my-skin-for-you..., with us?  
>Your contrary pale is in my protruding eyelid  
>Ah, womb eaten by julu-of-the-open-arms and julu-depressed  
>  
>I need help, why I am writing you:yes, i'm wearing my white lab  
>coat:doctor, they call me doctor:I live in Fukuoka:My name is Nikuko Your  
>florid My name is Nikuko is in my thrusting There is nothing but anger  
>Devour florid My name is Nikuko julu-of-the partying I need help, why I am  
>writing you!  
>  
>\$ exit  
>  
>script done on Wed Jan 28 11:06:55 1998  
>  
>  
>

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[↑ Contents](#)



918. **Henry Gould**

***pumping poetry***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Apologies to Joseph Mayhew. I don't mean to be flippant about the Academy's valiant social service in supporting those fascinating deserving artists of today with fellowships, residencies, honors & awards, book sales, and so forth. Really, where would poetry be without you? How callous of me to forget that you're really doing them not only a favor but a necessary service by writing about the ones you really care about, instead of all those rich dead poets with their trust funds. Where indeed would poets live, breathe & compose without you? Some starving garret, no doubt. Joseph, for all us contemporary poets out here, good & bad, fascinating & dull, important & lightweight, let me say: thank you. - Henry Gould

p.s. Joe, where do I do my tricks? In the Freshman Lounge?

[↑ Contents](#)

919. **Christopher W. Alexander**

***while you were @ lunch...***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Announcing the 3rd issue of n/formation, i.e., winter 1998 (long awaited by a few folks on this list — apologies all) featuring plenty o' poems pomes vizpo and other work by

- \*Mark Peters
- \*Tom Bell
- \*Linda V. Russo
- \*Brian Young
- \*Brian Staker
- \*William Marsh

all to be had for the low, low price of nada @  
<<http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>>  
(see under "current").

as always, current'y accepting submissions for the next issue; query me @ the address below, or just send it in, I don't bite (supporting .wpd up to version 7 & .doc Office 97, plus .gif .jpg you name it, & .txt files as always). paper copies (eww, those things?) can be sent to me snail-mail.

best, Chris

..

Christopher W. Alexander etc. / nominative press collective

email: [REDACTED]

snail-mail: P.O. Box 522402 / Salt Lake City UT 84152-2402

press/zine site: <http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>

[↑ Contents](#)

920. **Thomas Bell**

***Part Vfri night po wars vizpoetc***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

operative words: OBJECT ACTION BODY

Marion Milner (Joanna Field) again:

"My whole relationship with other people as well as objects, works of art, nature, music, could depend upon what I did with this imaginative body rather than with my concentrated intellectual mind. And the main thing about this capacity seemed that, although obviously an aspect of the mind, it did feel like a body, in that its essential quality was this sense of extension in space. It always had a more or less spatial shape, even when to do with music, in contrast with the more intellectual capacities of the mind concerned with reasoning and argument, which seemed somehow above or abstracted from existence in space.

"Although not fully understanding just what this thing was that could be so spread out I tried deliberately using it by setting myself exercises in seeing 'action' in nature....that chair I am looking at, it seemed to be rearing its back, throwing forward its seat, straddling its legs, full of aggressive defiance.

[↑ Contents](#)

921. **Thomas Bell**

***Re: computer access and political poetry***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Reality bite: anecdotal info re recent talk here. Got an email from one of the organizers of a protest vizpo exhibition in Chile. They are doing this despite difficult and limited access to a computer. tom bell

[↑ Contents](#)

922. **LAURA MORIARTY**

**Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo**

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

Maria & Joel -

Many of the women you mention do not in fact have doctorates and haven't sought them - Some write critically but not as often as the male writers in the scene have - It has not constituted a central concern of their work - The writers you mentioned do often travel to various colleges and u's - (I hear their reports -- but more rarely participate in conferences - ) For many women the model for the writing life has not been the academic career as it has for some men - This is also true for many men - You will not run into Kit Robinson, Steve Benson, Alan Davies, Peter Seaton etc at many conferences though all have been to a few - except maybe Peter - I think the main difference here is the tenor (or existence at all) of the critical writing and the degree to which that gains a writer a reputation that allows "her" to be hired at a u or to want to be - Davies for example often writes critically but possibly not in an academically legible style -

One of the reasons I started non was to encourage that kind of engagement from writers whose criticism is not always noticed - Leslie for example has published a book of it - She teaches at two colleges, travels constantly - but not usually to academic conferences -

I think there is an interesting difference here and one that is not only along gender lines -

Laura Moriarty

<http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~moriarty>

[↑ Contents](#)

923. **k. lederer**

**Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo**

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

On Tue, 27 Jan 1998, Harold Rhenisch wrote:

*Katy Lederer wrote:*

*It seems to me that the fact that young people are writing (and thus engaging in the body politic as well as the body aesthetic) should be enough--<<*

*I hope you don't mind me stepping in here, Katy, but I have so many questions. First: enough for what? That young people are so engaged is*

*wonderful, necessary, admirable, deserving of support and celebration, yes,  
but...enough for what?*

Harold: As per this point: Yes. You're right. This is a vague statement. I suppose that it's a reaction against the snippet of a discussion I caught (I believe it was Ron Silliman who said it...) wherein (I believe Ron Silliman, or someone of that stature) replied to Steve Evans' annoyance at his criticisms of younger writers by saying that he was "prodding us." I guess that the cattle herding sense I got from the statement made me feel condescended to--that the fact that young writers are writing at all should be "enough" when it comes to the "expectation" that more established (not just older) writers might feel it is their place to have of us. I realize that the history of literary discourses is replete with examples of fruitful prodding of younger (less established) writers by older writers--but as a woman, and also as a person shaped in many ways by a more democratically structured academy, as well as a far more heterogenous one, I feel that perhaps it is fair to question this mode of or means toward literary "production." If Silliman et al feel that young writers are mimicking the langpos and/or others, then perhaps they should think about the incredibly powerful role their own pedagogy (I think this is an obvious point) is playing in this mimicry. Perhaps the best way to cultivate "new" or "original" voices is to leave young writers alone with their generally limitless funds of inspiration and writerly drive. The fact they they are writing at all will probably lead at least some of them into something "interesting"... I don't think that prodding is what is required...

\*

>that these older writers  
> should just face the fact that their own stated poetics in some sense  
> preclude them from making aesthetic judgement about young writers...<<  
>  
> In what sense? I don't follow you. We're all students. With all respect,  
> that includes Pearlman and Perloff and Bernstein and Bowering. That's good.  
>  
> What's more, I'm 40. That's neither particularly old nor particularly  
> young. Does that mean I can make no aesthetic 'judgements', on those poets  
> older or younger than myself? Does it follow as well that young writers can  
> make no aesthetic 'judgements' on my work or on that of my elders? What  
use  
> would such a stratification serve?  
>

Yes. I'm not saying that aesthetic judgements aren't unavoidable and moreover kind of fun, really. I also agree that the stratification of writing communities shouldn't be made according to age--or perhaps any other category. I agree completely. I'm simply responding, again, to

Silliman et al's attitudes toward "younger" writers--an attitude rooted in these very types of (agist, sexist, intellectualist) stratifications.

As for the judgment thing--it just seems--inappropriate?--to me that Silliman et al (Tuma etc) would deign to make judgements about "my generation." From my perspective, most of the more established writers in any kind of community see only a small fraction of what's produced by the younger writers. Many of the best young or emerging writers I know don't yet publish--or don't care to. Some are incrdibly shy--or unassuming--whatever--and aren't necessarily "in the faces" of more established writers. People like Spahr and Jarnot and Moxley have been born and bred in front of the noses of such figures as Bernstein, Silliman, Waldrop(s) etc. These writers are all terrific--but maybe some of the more established writers who are complaining on this list should look a little farther afield than their own MFA Programs--

\*

*I just think that bad reviews (of young writers, of langpos) are a waste of time.<<*

*Why would they be more or less a waste of time than bad reviews of any other writers or schools of poetry?*

They're not more or less a waste of time than bad reviews of any other writers or schools of poetry.

Thanks for the provocative questions--

Yours,

Katy

[↑ Contents](#)

924. **Bob Grumman**

***Re: a sound and vision nexus***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Maybe my taxonomical gears are worn out or something, but I can't immediately figure out what kind of poem this dopey thing ("Poetry is Waiting") by G. Roberts is, but I LOVE it!

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

925. **Joseph Conte**

**Re: POETICS Digest - 26 Jan 1998 to 27 Jan 1998**

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Bob Grumman sez:

"Thanks to Aviva for posting something about visual poetry that I suspect Marjorie Perloff would agree with me on. If the passage Aviva quotes from Joseph M. Conte's UNENDING DESIGN: THE FORMS OF POSTMODERN POETRY alleging that visual poets are competing with sound bites is representative of his over-all view of contemporary visual poetry, he needs a lot of help. The passage is also stupid for dealing with the presumed motives of some (unnamed or exemplified) poets rather than their actual work. It's not worth further attention."

Well, I enjoy being misidentified for one. Misunderstood for another. And largely unread (as a poetry "critickkk" I daresay I'm read far less than the poets complaining on this list about how little they're read; kudos, Jonathan Mayhew).

Frankly, I missed Aviva's quotation from Unending Design, but I'm glad she at least read. Obviously Bob Grumman hasn't, but it doesn't prevent him spouting off about how much help we all require.

I second Marjorie. She's done a tremendous service to the academy and to visual poetics by devoting an entire seminar to that work, and what does she get for her trouble?

You know, don't you.

Joseph Conte

--

Joseph M. Conte [REDACTED] x1009

Associate Professor and FAX: [REDACTED]

Director of Graduate Studies

Department of English

SUNY at Buffalo

Buffalo, NY 14260-4610 <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~jconte/>

[↑ Contents](#)

926. **David Benedetti**

**agreement**

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

I have to agree

[↑ Contents](#)

927. **pritchpa**

**(no subject)**

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Oh Henry. Or should I say, "Oh Dr. Lydgate." Or better still, "Oh Dorothea." This has gotten boring. Let's both try to calm down. Thing is I don't disagree with any of what you're saying about why one writes a poem - that's all rather Obvious - I just find the way you say it pompous and self-promoting - the very things you seem to be inveighing against so vehemently. If there's a poet or critic on this List who doesn't write "for luv" let him or her stand up now..... You see anyone? I don't. But if you want to keep tilting at that windmill then by all means, go ahead.

Pax,  
Patrick Pritchett

-----

From: Henry Gould

To: [REDACTED]

Date: Wednesday, January 28, 1998 7:17AM

On Tue, 27 Jan 1998 17:51:00 -0600 pritchpa said:

>My dear Henry, let it not be said that you ever passed up a chance to  
>grab the moral high ground. Imagine my relief on learning that I don't  
>have to be a dog! "Attention New York: cancel those dozen long-stems to  
>Alice Quinn!" Cronyism is what's deplorable when others are able to  
use  
>it to their advantage but great when it works to one's own.

Don't relieve yourself too soon, Patrick. You're barking up the wrong fire hydrant (i.e. "we're all cronies here"). Nobody grabs the moral high ground. We're talking about conditions under which poetry is made. And if you think running with the pack is going to get you somewhere, think again. They're headed for the dumpster.

>

>I don't know where the kind of independence you envision exists - I'm  
>not even sure what it's an independence from: but this idea of freedom  
>from the influence of those Bad and Corrupt Publishers and Evil  
>Successful Writers I'll hazard to guess has more to do with an anxiety  
>about "contamination" than anything else. As if we all of us wrote in  
>carefully sealed hermetic containers - "Oh MY Soul, Oh MY Inspiration -

Actually, I've never been aware of any influence of Publishers on my work in any way shape or form. Writers, yes - as writers, not as pimps. I'm worth more than you can ever afford, & besides, I'm independent!

Academics fawn over their pets. Publishers suck up to academics (they order their books for courses). Your contemporaries want to have a good time being "writers". Do you want to write for any of these people? I write for love, love, love. Love is strong as death; jealousy as cruel as the grave.

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

928. **MAYHEW**  
***pumping poetry***

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

I don't know how I became "Joseph Mayhew," perhaps by correcting the spelling of Joseph Conte's name.

The point is not that poets should feel grateful for critics who promote their work, but that it is unrealistic to expect them not to. From what purist position does the charge of nepotism spring?

Jonathan Mayhew  
Department of Spanish and Portuguese  
3062 Wescoe Hall  
University of Kansas

██████████  
██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

929. **Steve Evans**  
***All silences unintended***

Wed 28 Jan 1998

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Just to note that I'll be unsubbing today.

The e-ddress in the "from" line above will be active for about another 24 hours.

Backchannels can be directed to a new, currently active account

<██████████>.

o        r        i        a        t        n        m        u        a        t        s        u        o  
o        o        s

==--==--==--==--==--==--==--==--==

The Impercipient Lecture Series  
Steve Evans & Jennifer Moxley

Before 31 January 98:  
61 East Manning Street



Providence RI 02906-4008  
[REDACTED]

After 1 February 1998  
c/o Le Gallou  
#9 rue Quinault Paris 75015  
[REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

930. **Mark Prejsnar**

***Re: Bombs, Away***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

It is actually, an anti-story...no, a post-story. A post-master-narrative (a slave narrative?)

On Wed, 28 Jan 1998, Dale M Smith wrote:

*By the way, I think that the Yasusada Poems are well received, not because of the potential 'scandal' but because the poems have a specific context and reveal a complex emotional range. The narrative elements are also compelling, framing the poems. The subject matter is rich, the formal expression mysterious and tender. These poems attempt to reveal suffering, a rarity in many poems these days. I can't wait to see the movie. I guess the book will have to do for now. It's great to see something in print by a poet who can tell a story. What happened to the story?*

[↑ Contents](#)

931. **k. lederer**

***Re: Explosive Magazine #4 is available***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

The new issue of `E x p l o s i v e   M a g a z i n e` is now available:

Featuring work by: Lisa Lubasch \* Prageeta Sharma \* Rod Smith \* Michael Basinski \* Eleni Sikelianos \* Darin De Stefano \* Gillian Kiley \* Albert Flynn DeSilver \* Mark Salerno \* Travis Ortiz \* Leslie Scalapino \* Poetry Comics by Dave Morice \* covers by David Larsen....

Back issues include: #2: Rob Fitterman \* Mary Burger \* Lyn Hejinian \* Bill Luoma \* Greg Fuchs \* Jen Hofer \* Kelly Flynn \* Lytle Shaw... #3: Lee Ann Brown \* Rachel Daley \* Brett Evans \* Max Winter \* Nick Regiacorte \* Hoa Nguyen \* Alice Notley \* Douglas Oliver \* Deborah Treisman \* Tina Celona \* Brendan Lorber \* Adam DeGraff...

Issue #5: "S p e c t a c u l a r E m o t i o n" will feature: Tan Lin \* Pam Lu \* Juliana Spahr \* Josh May \* Emily Wilson \* Martin Corless-Smith \* sound collage by Alex Cory... others...

All issues are five dollars.

A full subscription, including issues #2 and #3, is \$45 (up to issue #10).

Checks should be made payable to Katherine Lederer and sent to:

420 East Davenport #2

Iowa City, IA 52245

██████████

For those of you in Iowa City: There will be a publication party on Saturday, January 31st at 8:00 pm @ 420 East Davenport #1. The party will feature readings by: Marvin Bell \* Josh Bell \* Jorie Graham \* Jen Hofer \* Gillian Kiley \* Lisa Lubasch \* Dave Morice \* Nick Twemlow \* Emily Wilson \* and Max Winter...

Please come! Call ██████████ for information...

[↑ Contents](#)

932. **Christopher W. Alexander**

***While you were out...***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Announcing the 3rd issue of n/formation, i.e., winter 1998 (long awaited by a few folks on this list — apologies all) featuring plenty o' poems pomes vizpo and other work by

\*Mark Peters

\*Tom Bell

\*Linda Russo

\*Brian Young

\*Brian Staker

\*William Marsh

all to be had for the low, low price of nada @  
<<http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>>  
(see under "current").

as always, current'y accepting submissions for the next issue; query me @ the address below, or just send it in, I don't bite (supporting .wpd up to version 7 & .doc Office 97, plus .gif .jpg you name it, & .txt files as always). paper copies (eww, those things?) can be sent to me snail-mail.

best, Chris

..

Christopher W. Alexander etc. / nominative press collective

email: [REDACTED]

snail-mail: P.O. Box 522402 / Salt Lake City UT 84152-2402

press/zine site: <http://choengmon.lib.utah.edu/~calexand/nonce/>

[↑ Contents](#)

933. **Scott Pound**

***Re: Material/Physical***

Wed 28 Jan 1998

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*Am I alone in thinking that the term "materiality" is often used in too reductive a sense?*

Yes, i agree, even though I used the term in my last post; it's used most often as a catch-all phrase for self-reflexivity which annoys me because reflexivity is an act of consciousness, not of matter.

But i like the root of the word and i think there's some use in using it, if you have the time to separate out what you don't want. The other alternative, substituting another word like physicality, doesn't really seem to solve the problem.

But terminology's terminology, it wears out, people put them on their head and their feet and before you know they're no damn good for anything anymore.

Physics and Biology are a different matter all together, they scoff at thingy matter, try to flee from what I recently saw in print as "the tyranny of matter" for reasons that are specific to that field. But the virtuality of sub-atomic physics is something we have lived with in language for many many years. What was post-structuralism if not a kind of quantum linguistics?

my alphabet did this to me, please make it stop.

Scott Pound

[↑ Contents](#)

934. **Christopher Reiner**

***The Gentle Instructor***

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

To everyone who tried to access LITPRESS.COM this week and could not, I apologize. A little trouble with the server. It's fine now.

Also, I'm happy to announce that an online version of Nick Piombino's The Gentle Instructor (from his book, Light Street) can be found at the site, at this address:

<http://www.litpress.com/instructor.html>

The terrific illustrations are by Toni Simon.

LITPRESS.COM features a weekly list of new publications from a variety of presses publishing innovative contemporary literature. If you're an author or publisher, and you'd like to have your book listed, check out the site for further info.

<http://www.litpress.com>

Thanks,  
Chris Reiner

[↑ Contents](#)

935. **Bob Grumman**

***Re: HUBRISTIC, SIMPLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF VIZPO NEEDS  
COUNTERING***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

For Joseph M. Conte, here's the passage from your book that was posted, and to which I perhaps too hastily responded:

"The concept of a poetic form must respond to the conditions of the modern world and to an understanding of how that world functions. Not all "new" verse forms are equal to the task of confronting reality. Poets may correctly observe that theirs is a printed medium requiring the extended concentration of the reader; and they may also observe that the audiovisual media that now dominate our culture offer an almost instant gratification that barely requires the attention of its audience at all. Thus some poets have devoted their energies to producing concrete or 'visual poetry' that could easily be flashed on a video monitor, or they have composed 'sound poetry' that can be chanted like a mantra, recorded, spliced, or broadcast over loudspeakers in some public forum. But in my opinion such poetic forms seem too much to bear the stamp of their reality. They are formal effects that seem not so much devised by the poet as thrust upon him by the exigencies of his condition. They reflect a world that has grown too impatient to tolerate the "defamiliarization," the increase in the "difficulty and length of perception" that Victor Shklovsky argued poetic language ought to pursue. Such forms do not confront or interpret contemporary reality; they submit to it."

To Joseph I confess that since you do use "some" to refer to the poets doing visual and sound poems as the literary equivalent of sound bites, you may not be saying, "some poets--the ones who do visual and sound poetry," as I first thought (and which the context supports), but "some poets who do visual and sound poetry do it superficially," etc., perhaps I did misinterpret you. Perhaps

you were only chastizing bad visual poets and sound poets rather than all visual and sound poets.

As for the help you might need, I did say that you needed it IF the passage supplied was representative of your book as a whole (so far as visual and sound poetry are concerned). I continue to hope it isn't since, at best, the passage deals only with an irrelevant minority of the people in currently in visual and sound poetry.

--Bob G.

--Bob G.

[↑ Contents](#)

936. **dbkk**

***next week at Small Press Traffic***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

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Small Press Traffic presents:

Thursday, February 5, 7:30 p.m.

<sup>3</sup>Fragments Of A Disorderd Devotion<sup>2</sup>:

Robert Duncan<sup>1</sup>'s Legacy Today

Norma Cole, Michael Davidson, Diane di Prima, Robert Glück, Barbara Guest, Thom Gunn, Fran Herndon, Susan Howe, Nataniel Mackey, Michael McClure, Duncan McNaughton, Michael Palmer, Jerome Rothenberg, Aaron Shurin, Mary Margaret Sloan, David Levi Strauss, Susan Thackrey and others

Robert Duncan, who died ten years ago on this very date, is the subject of our gala reading at the New College Theater, the very site where he so often spoke himself as director of the Poetics Program. These are walls haunted by a great spirit! This event--organized by Norma Cole, Michael Palmer and Susan Thackrey--celebrates the life and work of Robert Duncan, and his influence on poetry and poetics today. Duncan (1919-1988) was an arts activist, political organizer, teacher, editor, theorist, early gay liberationist, critic, typist, rebel, playwright, controversialist, neuromancer, art writer, <sup>3</sup>Black Mountaineer,<sup>2</sup> visual artist, essayist, publisher, aesthete, dandy, conscience and wizard. He was one of the architects of the Berkeley Renaissance, the Poetry Center at San Francisco State University, the <sup>3</sup>San Francisco Renaissance,<sup>2</sup> the <sup>3</sup>New American Poetry,<sup>2</sup> the Berkeley Poetry Conference of 1965, and the Poetics Program at New College. Above all he was one of the towering poets of the 20th Century. His major books, still in print, include *The Opening of the Field*, *Bending the Bow*, *Roots and Branches*, and two volumes of *Ground Work*. Tonight some of his

friends, admirers, students, and others with a <sup>3</sup>disorderd devotion<sup>2</sup> to RD read from his work in celebration of a great American legacy. Expect surprises!

New College Theater  
777 Valencia Street  
\$5

-----  
Friday, February 6, 7:30 p.m.

Charles Alexander  
Scott Bentley

Charles Alexander's books of poetry include *\_Hopeful Buildings\_* (Chax Press, Tucson, 1990) and *\_arc of light / dark matter\_* (Segue Books, New York, 1992). He is the founder and director of Chax Press (Tucson). Ron Silliman writes, "Charles Alexander pushes the envelope of what is possible in writing even further, to the ends of the universe. And beyond. . . This is the most sensuous, intelligent, rewarding writing I've read in ages."<sup>2</sup>

Scott Bentley has for the past ten years been a <sup>3</sup>freeway flying teacher of writing,<sup>2</sup> at present teaching both at California State University at Hayward and at Canada Community College. Scott is the author of three books: *\_Edge\_* (Birdcage Chap Books, 1987), *\_Out of Hand\_* (Parentheses Writing Series, 1989), and *\_Ground Air\_* (O Books, 1993). His writing is limber, smart, sexy and perverse, a feather tickling the neck of a Christmas goose, an almanac for amorists, a prescription Rx for the valentine blues.

New College Theater  
777 Valencia Street  
\$5

[↑ Contents](#)

937. **Keith Tuma**

***Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Katy wrote:

*Rachel,*

*Yes. I completely agree with you. The Barthes quote was, of course, a response to two issues on the list:*

- 1. "Where are all the "new" young writers?" and*
- 2. Dale Smith's critiques of langpo*

*So yes, theoretically, according to Barthes, everyone is "new"--alone, original. The issue you raise about the glorification of the "original" writer--of style--is the critique I was hoping to launch against the older langpo types who criticize young writers for being unoriginal.*

*These older thinkers (among them Tuma, Silliman etc) are wanting something "new" from a group of young writers--perhaps they don't want new styles, per se, but new politics--*

Katy--

Er, older thinker here. I'm sure that Ron Silliman has a good few years on me. As far as I know I am not on record in any public space articulating any views concerning the "originality" of "young writers." I did send something off to a journal a month or so ago, a short essay which makes a few passing remarks concerning some of the questions pertaining to generational conflict that show up on this list and elsewhere, so I guess what's previously been conversation motivated by curiosity may eventually show up as fragments in print. If I were to make a more pointed statement about something as amorphous as younger or younger-than-Ron "generations" I'd begin, as Steve Evans did and as I do in passing in this forthcoming text, with the status of the institutional apparatus. I'd want to talk not just about the end of NEA funding but also about the declining cultural capital of poetry in the university (among other subjects). While what Gary Sullivan says about younger women attuned to the proclivities of this list finding jobs in academia seems right to me, this occurs against the background of diminished space for poetry (of whatever variety) in the university. In the 8+ years I have been at my current university, to use a local example, we have hired something like 15 literature faculty. None of them does any work at all on any variety or "period" of poetry, nor do they read it very much I think. People such as Alan Golding, Maria Damon, Joe Amato, Aldon and many others on this list pay attention to new writing in non- or extra-academic settings because we are interested in it but also at some cost. I'd want to add--recognizing I can't speak for all of these people-- that the border space that we are more or less able and privileged to occupy in moving between academic and non academic poetry communities also has its advantages. It might allow us to speak back to methodological regimes in the university; it might portend the kind of future outlined a while back in Miekal And's provocative but unremarked post. But one thing seems fairly certain for the near future: "younger poets" have had some of the ground cut out from under them and will have to find other ground. Intersections of performance and cultural studies offer one academic possibility; there are others in and beyond the academy. Turf for any kind of contemporary poetry in the American academy is not that old in the first place and we could argue about how solid or productive it's been in the past. "Originality," in any of its senses--as meaning a new return to known or obscured origins and models, as invention of modes more consciously (or

promoted and received as more consciously) without precedent--interests me very much both as a question and in practice. I do of course have opinions about the work of a variety of younger poets, and this matter of "originality" might enter into them in a range of ways. For instance, I'll wonder about the interest in New York School pasts in such and such a poet while comparing his or her work with some likely models from among those pasts and thinking about their fate in varieties of langpo-identified practices and the critical narratives aimed at legitimating or promoting them. But neither sense of the word is the sole criterion in any evaluation or mapping that might be going on in this bewildered head. And the head is indeed bewildered swimming among prolific and diverse work from very many poets coming onto the scene(s). While I am reluctant if not loathe to make generalizations capacious enough to refer to "younger writers," I do understand the need for them--or at least their attraction and their possible functions, coming from whatever direction--and am periodically fascinated by the activity of watching them gain currency and provoke counter-narratives. I might even commit some narratives to writing some day. It does seem to me entirely likely, following Miekal and others, that what emerges with any force as "the new" will have to re-think the apparatus, academic and otherwise, perhaps beginning with the big e. I wonder what generations mean on the e. Maybe Joe Amato knows. Or even "information"--thinking back to a remark by Don Byrd critical of his own and Ron's "generation." I suspect that what Don meant by "information" was something like "proposition" or "synthetic vision" as he was talking about urgency and imminent ecological disaster (and as he did I thought about Allen Fisher's work). Perhaps this was before you signed on.

*But even still, I find such demands strange (and hypocritical) coming from thinkers who claim to believe that poetry should counteract fascism--aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, sexual etc. I've always taken this belief to mean that the emphasis is on political awareness via or in regards to the practice of writing--the insistence that anybody can write and thus participate in the larger socio-cultural discourse(s).*

You'll have to alert me to where such claims have been made and with such a mobile definition of fascism. And what's hypocritical about saying what one thinks of specific younger writers? You mean that it's just not nice for Ron or anybody else to be critical? One famous old fascist used to write about how it wasn't necessary to respond to "the young" as I remember; Ron does seem to be violating that decorum. Perhaps he's been too eager to generalize, I don't know (I haven't read "Philly Talks"). His criticism, even if it is dismissive, indicates at least some engagement. It will end up circulating the news about poets, whether or not they're admired by Ron. With 600+ readers on this listserv, simply mentioning or discussing a "young writer" would go a ways toward reaching a significant portion of the readers prepared at present to engage the



work. Even here we "participate in the larger socio-cultural discourse" like it or not.

*I never really bought Silliman et al, though, because it seemed to me that they did in fact want that special kind of glory that comes with being a star--with being an "original" writer--a "brilliant" intellectual.*

Well I'm told the sidewalk's ready for Ron in Hollywood. All that's left is for him to dip his paws in the concrete. I've never met him, but I'm assuming he has paws. It's early evening here today and he hasn't dipped his paws into this conversation.

*In my view, writers like Lyn Hejinian, Carla Harryman, and Leslie Scalapio are far more true to the "tenets" of langpo that have to do with "socialist" approaches to writing--writing as participation in the sociopolitical, rather than as glorification of the individual through the lyrical display of sensitivity and accumen.*

Lots of acumen in these three writers, not so much lyric in RS I think.

all best and adios,  
Keith

[↑ Contents](#)

938. **Harold Rhenisch**  
**disagreement**

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

I have to disagree

[↑ Contents](#)

939. **Thomas Bell**  
**Re: Material/Physical**

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

Why stop there?

solve et coagula: 'solve et coagula is primarily an attempt to give birth to a new life form: half digital, half organic.

<http://www.gar.no/sec/secconcept.html>

At 09:27 AM 1/28/98 -0500, Jacques Debrot wrote:

>Am I alone in thinking that the term "materiality" is often used in too  
>reductive a sense? Koestler once made the telling point that in a cosmos  
>where sub atomic particles go forward and backward in time, where light is  
>both a particle & wave, that "material" is something almost imaginary.  
>

>The distinction between physicality & materiality -- quite apart from the  
>context of visual poetics, or how the body/language divide was played by the  
>New Americans & the Language poets -- seems very suggestive to me. An es-  
say  
>of John Yau's has been kicking around in my head for a couple of days in  
>which he speaks of a type of artistic \*scale\* for which "the determining factor  
>was the human body, not as something that could embrace an immense vista  
or  
>chart a seemingly unlimited expanse, but as something contingent, doubtful,  
>and questioning . . . Is it possible," he asks, "to privilege neither body  
>(seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling) nor mind (remembering,  
>conceiving, and dreaming) and still make art?" This seems relevant to poetry  
>as well, & suggestive somehow of a kind of constantly shifting perception of  
>the physical & material without the binarism that frequently occurs in LangPo  
>& the New American poetry.  
>  
>

tom bell

[↑ Contents](#)

#### 940. **William Burmeister Prod**

##### **Re: Perloff debate**

Wed 28 Jan 1998

---

A late chime in but nevertheless here goes:

*naive faith  
in the idea of rugged individualism with the quaint phrase "standing on  
his own 2 feet." Show me, please, the person who has lived that has done  
this and I'll forthwith eat my Bronco jersey. There ain't no such  
animal, old chum.*

If at any moment one examines the act of creation of the poem and applies the uncertainty principle then yes, Otherwise... The very act of observation in this case disturbing the experiment is the only justification for the above statement.

*Here we are, engaged in this electronic medium of  
debate and exchange, subscribing to the attempt to foster a new  
expression of poetic community, and against this appears the goofy idea  
- the queer utopian notion - of trying to peddle the indefiddle as  
Island*

Oh what's the difference: an infinity of island individuals or an infinity of poetic communities (happening now;always will)? Only an economy of scale. And thanks for that too. The only recourse in a society that abhors schools of

thought and clings to a false idea of individualism, which has been bastardized with a materialist conformism, is "rugged individualism." Note that it is only rugged because this individual suffers terribly at his/her own hands where there is much wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth, and not because there is an eschewing of poetic influence.

*In my experience, people who proffer the bootstrap theory have very little real world experience and by that I mean, mixing it up with the brethren in the business world, the money world, the school world, the so-called professional world, that is, the world of compromise and action of which the field of cultural production is but a part. If they're at all successful, count on a field of unmarked (i.e. unacknowledged) graves -*

Either way there is a field of unmarked graves. Only in the world of institutionalized poetry (of which almost no one on this list appears to be a part of), there is no tomb of the unknown poet. On this list, we see do see tombs of unknown poets (or memorials) that are as eloquent as stones placed on a mere mound of dirt. And curious the appearance of \*action\* in this context. Check out Federico Garcia Lorca's thought on this (and Americans) in "A Poet in New York." Essentially, the American idea of action didn't shuck and jive very well with that of the Andalusian poet (and I agree with the latter). I mean the (north) American idea of action (in the context of the real world of business, money, po-business, etc) is impoverished spiritually, and is little more than action for action sake. Lorca said that the busy upwardly mobile New York types didn't have to "fight" for what they believed in (that they didn't internalize the struggle). So it was that they were living someone else's life and speaking with someone else's words. Given that non-idea of action, I choose against action, which although it may sound like an old, worn out poetic impulse, it is timeless as such. This doesn't mean that I am going to quit my job, but that my soul is not for sale (or compromise).

William Burmeister

Was actually waiting to see if this would become another discussion of individuality vs the collective (or something like that). Almost did there.

[↑ Contents](#)

941. **Henry Gould**  
**(no subject)**

Wed 28 Jan 1998

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On Wed, 28 Jan 1998 14:26:00 -0600 pritchpa said:

>Oh Henry. Or should I say, "Oh Dr. Lydgate." Or better still, "Oh

>Dorothea." This has gotten boring. Let's both try to calm down. Thing is

>I don't disagree with any of what you're saying about why one writes a  
>poem - that's all rather Obvious - I just find the way you say it  
>pompous and self-promoting - the very things you seem to be inveighing  
>against so vehemently. If there's a poet or critic on this List who  
>doesn't write "for luv" let him or her stand up now..... You see anyone?  
>I don't. But if you want to keep tilting at that windmill then by all  
>means, go ahead.

Patrick, I'm really glad you agree with me. You began by scoffing at the idea that a writer might have a personal stake in originality or self- respect that might possibly be threatened by nepotism, back-scratching, the buddy system, groups in general; you thought it was naive that these things might influence the scene. But you've come around - that's the main thing, and I don't give a flying buffalo chip what you think of my style. Pax. I'm a pompous hypocrite - a list hog - so be it. The main thing is, you've come around. I'm surprised others haven't said what you've said more often - I think it's because everybody on the list is really nice (except for me & maybe that Bowering guy down in Canada). Self-serving - that's the least of it! Nobody ever knows, much less tells, the whole truth. The truth is I MARRIED into poetry, REMARRIED WAY OUT of poetry, and have been having poetic affairs (or trying to) IN poetry ever since! It's worse than Plath-Hughes, only the writing's better & nobody's died yet (me & Berryman just counted the other day). Ask Gwyn or Susan - they've actually read my stuff. (Gwyn - don't say anything before consulting my lawyer - let me give you his # - 612-000-00hh - he's that bearded guy in the lumberjack shirt & fur hat - Wayne McCornhusk - you've seen him on TV). Probably it's familiar already to 8% of the younger generation and 53% of the older generation, but it makes a helluva narrative, Dale. - Henry Gould (more creepily personal than ever!)

[↑ Contents](#)

942. **Henry Gould**  
***Re: pumping poetry***  
*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

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On Wed, 28 Jan 1998 14:50:31 -0600 MAYHEW said:

>

>The point is not that poets should feel grateful for critics who promote  
>their work, but that it is unrealistic to expect them not to. From what  
>purist position does the charge of nepotism spring?

Sorry about the Joseph, Jonathan.

Keith Tuma's (& Steve Evans's) perspective on the diminishing support for poetry (how far can it drop?) makes this whole debate seem absurd & solipsistic.

Along with KL, GS, and many others' contributions to reality, specifics, & what's out there.

All this I grant. Now I'll address your question.

The purist position I maintain is that poets themselves should judge what meets their standards - both in their own writing and in the contemporary scene. And that there are powerful (relatively speaking) people willing & able to talk ABOUT poetry (critics, scholars, writing teachers, program directors, journalists, even a few poets - especially on the Poetics List - especially ones whose names start with H) ad infinitum and ad nauseam. By powerful I mean able to set syllabi, award grants, publish reviews, advise on careers, organize anthologies, and so forth.

So? you say. What do you expect? Look at all these people interested in poetry - ready to talk about it! Shouldn't we be grateful? Or as you say - accept reality - stop being paranoid? Bitter? Jealous, maybe?

No. I will maintain against all comers: for the makers of poetry, all that - all the po-biz - is nothing but pure, total, stinking bullshit. Because in the making of the poem - in the arena of composition, where I began this whole thread - anything smacking of P.R., officialdom, status, laurels, power, criticism, scholarship, imitation, reward, theory, tradition, expectation, desire, ambition, calculation, professionalism, money, connections, savvy, guile, cronyism, prestige, politics, apprenticeship, nepotism, deals, friends, gossip (anything, actually, other than death or taxes) is - or it better be - irrelevant, or the poem is fake, DOA. And don't tell me those things aren't out there. I'm not THAT unrealistic. And pardon me: I write poems. I know just, just how abject that sounds to every certified tenured intellectual. The funny thing is they're not going to get it; they don't MAKE poems. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

943. **Karen and Trevor**  
***Fourteen Hills Fall/Winter 1997***

*Wed 28 Jan 1998*

---

Announcing the publication of the Fall/Winter 1997 issue of *Fourteen Hills: The SFSU Review* featuring a conversation with Dorothy Allison.

Poetry by: Laynie Browne, Tom Clark, Aja Couchois Duncan, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Amy Gerstler, Sherlyn Jimenez, Mark Latiner, Toni Mirosevich, Emily Murphy, Shelia E. Murphy, Sianne Ngai, Naomi Shihab Nye, Eugene Ostashevsky, Jocelyn Saidenberg & Brian Strang, Ron Silliman, Gustaf Sobin, Kristine Somerville, Elizabeth Treadwell, and Eric Zuckerman.

Fiction by: Adrian Baker, Dodie Bellamy, Elsa Dixon, Jahmae Harris, Gordon Lish, Laura Moriarty, Jay Prefontaine, Noelle Sullivan, and Marianne Villanueva.

The issue is \$7 and you may order through Small Press Distribution, [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. E-mail [REDACTED]

The Fourteen Hills publication celebration and reading will be on February 18 from 6-8PM at The Poetry Center at San Francisco State University. Come, eat, drink, and hear great readings!

Questions? Call us! [REDACTED] Or write:

Fourteen Hills

Creative Writing Department

San Francisco State University

1600 Holloway Ave

San Francisco, CA 94132

[REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)

944. **david bromige**

*hypocrisy in the young, originality in the old*

Thu 29 Jan 1998

---

i just felt like saying that.

[↑ Contents](#)

945. **Juliana Spahr**

*maria's questions*

Thu 29 Jan 1998

---

This is reductive and I'm not complaining (yet). This is just a gander at a factual answer.

I feel like Maria's questions are because most of the criticism tends to be about male writers or tends to define the scene so as to give more attention to the male writers. And as a critic you, Maria, read the critical books and saw mainly men. Think about it: Hartley, Nealon, Altieri, Conte, McHale, Monroe. (Perloff's work is some sort of exception here and things are changing some--Perelman's book might show some evidence of this.) It is not that these people don't talk about women writers but just that more time has been spent defining various poetries as products of male agency. (The story that L=A=N=G started the movement; the story that "I HATE SPEECH" started the movement; the story that Kit Robinson and Bob Perelman were doing some typing one day: these are

all stories that place men as active agents; the parallel stories that Hejinian was doing Tuumba and that Scalapino was doing O and Fraser was doing However have not been written as much.)

[↑ Contents](#)

946. **Henry Gould**  
***no subject - the subject***

*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

I am afraid that in the wee hours of the haunted night I have not articulated my defense with the adequacy it deserves (besides, I was drawn away from work on my 632-line ODE TO A SALTY TARMAc BY THE SEA, in loose petroglyphs).

Jonathan Mayhew is correct, the charge of "nepotism" against critics who promote living artists is without merit. Let's use a different word: corruption. The critic who adds careerism and favoritism to the work of criticism is corrupting literary values for everyone. If I could, I would symbolically cleanse the temple of the moneychangers. To critics or poets who feel uneasy with the extremity (or perhaps obviousness?) of this position, let me set your mind at ease: all I'm saying is, do your job. Unless enthusiasm, gusto, interest, admiration and so forth are tempered with dispassionate judgement, the critic is NOT doing the job. Just give me an independent critic, that's all I ask. There must be a couple of them out there. The rest is a circus, a joke, a mirage, a distortion, ersatz. That's what I've been saying all along.

Careerism & favoritism have their influence on the general audience for poetry. But what got me started on this is the danger of careerism, literary politics, and favoritism on the actual practice of making poetry. Every poet who cherishes their own work - takes what they're doing seriously - walks an imaginary tightrope with every line. Every line is the next step forward in a total project. Not everyone will agree, but for me this is partly what lineation, concision, and rhythm are about. I said it best in a poem written over 15 years ago called "Hieroglyph", the last stanza of which I will take the liberty to quote:

And it was only later, as we watched  
his dry wooden boat slip underground,  
that we understood the clean framing  
of intention, the straight crossbeams  
of its execution, that house of his  
a kind of sounding board for praise.  
Working across the tightrope of the  
roofline was his way of walking on air.

If critics took their own work as seriously as some poets take theirs, maybe the audience out there would take poetry more seriously too.

- Henry Gould

(o.k., "embattled, marginalized, avant-garde" scholar-poet-critics out there, tell me about how it's "all means necessary" in this great battle, and we have to do more than simply read, listen, study, and state our case... & I'll go floss now... send me the conference minutes, please...)

[↑ Contents](#)

947. **Maria Damon**

***Re: Response to Maria's Question***

*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

At 12:33 PM -0500 1/28/98, Gary Sullivan wrote:

>Hello, Maria:

>

...

So, in answer to your question, more questions: Do

>you find academia to be largely male-driven or -informed?

yes.

Do you find women to be resistant to it, or hesitant to participate in its culture?

hard to generalize; i think it has as much to do with life opportunities, formal and informal support systems (the "oldboy network" etc), and traditionally gendered divisions of labor (a heterosexual couple meets in a doctoral program; the guy's "career" progresses as the woman's gets put on hold as she does the childcare, or she takes a job as an adjunct; admittedly this follows an older model than is now followed, but it marked the academy just earlier enough so that those guys are now full professors and in administrative positions; it'll take another 10 years or so before they retire, and of course, the gov't waived the mandatory retirement age for academics a few years ago) --as with preferences. of course there are plenty of people who want nothing to do w/ academia, both men and women --as a choice. but it's also true that there's a funneling that goes on; lots of women in masters' programs, mfa programs, etc, fewer in phd programs, tho often more than half of an incoming class will be women; fewer still graduate w/ their doctorates; fewer still get tenure-track jobs. both men and women have every reason to be disgusted by academia, but how is it slimmer than, say, the corporate world, or the world of heterosexual reproduction, or the public service sector --none of these is mutually exclusive of course but one finds one's energies weighted toward one or the other.

I can't tell

>from here. My e-address is Columbia, but as you know, I'm merely an office

>worker, & don't participate much with anything/anyone here, save the friendly



>people at Butler Library. There are, though, I do notice, many more male  
>history professors in the department than female. There are many more men  
>posting to this list than women, & I assume that to mean more male access to  
>e-mail, & a lot of that seems to be guys working in or attending universities.  
>(Mostly w/more significant roles than mine ((office grunt)).)

yes, see above comment. i think there's a funneling effect; there're probly  
plenty of women students, but as you go up the ranks, there are fewer.  
needless to say this isn't only true for white chicks like myself, in fact  
we are more represented in the upper reaches of academe than people of  
color of any gender. the conference where i saw retallack and du plessis  
featured only one speaker of color (male) and among the couple of hundred  
registrants, i think 3 or 4 people of color.

>

>Maria, you are that rare tenured academic whose energies are divided be-  
tween

>the filter of the academy and the thing under the microscope--you've not only  
>brought out poets to read at UMN, but have collaborated with Miekal And, &  
>published creative as well as lit crit writings. My sense--and please tell me  
>I'm wrong if I am--is that this hasn't always been the case, that your move to  
>find some confluence between both has been tenuous, gradual. So that, a  
decade

>or so ago, while going to Stanford, you didn't participate with the living  
>activity taking place an hour or so north of you, but now, you seem very much  
>involved in what's taking place among writers not only in Minneapolis, but  
>elsewhere as well.

this is true in a way, with reference to this particular scene. i did take  
workshops with levertov et al down at stanford, and picked people to be on  
my doctoral committee who would let me do what i wanted --i.e. write as  
luridly and lyrically as i do given the constraints of academic writing.

in general my slowness to be out as a "writer" has more to do with  
self-consciousness and self-protectiveness; for example, i would never be  
doing the collaboration w/ miekal except that \*he\* suggested it; i would  
never have participated in the rengas that ran rampant here if i'd thought  
of them as "serious" writing. which in my case does have to do w/ gender,  
but inflected somewhat differently from the above discussion.

>

[↑ Contents](#)

948. **Maria Damon**

***Re: next week at Small Press Traffic***

*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

shucks, wish i cd be there!

At 3:50 PM -0800 1/28/98, [REDACTED] wrote:

>Small Press Traffic presents:

>

>Thursday, February 5, 7:30 p.m.

>

>"Fragments Of A Disorderd Devotion":

>Robert Duncan's Legacy Today

>

>Norma Cole, Michael Davidson, Diane di Prima, Robert Glück, Barbara Guest,

>Thom Gunn, Fran Herndon, Susan Howe, Nataniel Mackey, Michael McClure,

>Duncan McNaughton, Michael Palmer, Jerome Rothenberg, Aaron Shurin,

Mary

>Margaret Sloan, David Levi Strauss, Susan Thackrey and others

>

>Robert Duncan, who died ten years ago on this very date, is the subject of

>our gala reading at the New College Theater, the very site where he so

>often spoke himself as director of the Poetics Program. These are walls

>haunted by a great spirit! This event--organized by Norma Cole, Michael

>Palmer and Susan Thackrey--celebrates the life and work of Robert Duncan,

>and his influence on poetry and poetics today. Duncan (1919-1988) was an

>arts activist, political organizer, teacher, editor, theorist, early gay

>liberationist, critic, typist, rebel, playwright, controversialist,

>neuromancer, art writer, "Black Mountaineer," visual artist, essayist,

>publisher, aesthete, dandy, conscience and wizard. He was one of the

>architects of the Berkeley Renaissance, the Poetry Center at San Francisco

>State University, the "San Francisco Renaissance," the "New American

>Poetry," the Berkeley Poetry Conference of 1965, and the Poetics Program at

>New College. Above all he was one of the towering poets of the 20th

>Century. His major books, still in print, include \_The Opening of the

>Field, Bending the Bow, Roots and Branches\_, and two volumes of \_Ground

>Work\_. Tonight some of his friends, admirers, students, and others with a

>"disorderd devotion" to RD read from his work in celebration of a great

>American legacy. Expect surprises!

>

>New College Theater

>777 Valencia Street

>\$5

>  
>-----  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

949. **Maria Damon**

***Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo***

*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

laura moriarty writes:

...  
>

*I think there is an interesting difference here and one that is not only  
along gender lines -*

can you say more about this, laura?--m

>

[↑ Contents](#)

950. **rsillima**

***Old Poets Home***

*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

At home today with pneumonia (a relapse), I feel nearly as old as Katy Lederer makes me sound. (Having broken a rib coughing makes it worse -- try not to be funny for awhile, folks, cause it hurts to laugh.)

I'm intrigued at the responses I've gotten to that "prod" (more a nudge of the elbow than the cattle model, thank you) as well as to variant, almost parallel discourses hereabouts re visual poetry and the questions of academic and/or pedagogic styles that have been swirling hereabouts.

Here are some thoughts from the rocking chair of the Home for Not Yet Retired Poets:

Jeff Derksen made the point during our shared talk at the Writers House that the larger sense of writing as a project that so many of us old fart langpods seem to have had may have been a direct (or indirect) relation to our experiences vis a vis the Vietnam War -- and, as I've noted elsewhere, language poetry (so called so called), is indeed unimaginable without Vietnam (every male poet, for example, had the direct experience of their government trying to get them killed for several years, for no intelligible reason whatsoever). The idea of a poetry that could change the world (however much hubris may have been

involved) was a direct consequence of a world that need very much to change just to survive.

What is missing today, Jeff either suggested or else made evident through implication -- I've not seen a transcript -- may be the social condition as such. The social precondition, literally. There is no such social fact as the Vietnam conflict now (and the alternatives, global warming, the Gulf War [and redux], or the crisis of Clinton's pants, show precisely the gap). To expect contemporary young poets to come up with a larger Project in a social vacuum is an unfair expectation.

I'm ready to buy a fair portion of that argument. It resonates, as they say.

Here I think the collapse of the American (and European) left post the fall of Communism, big C, is very worth considering. For decades, many on the left (me among them) had been saying that the biggest impediment to the advance of the left was the presence of those various Stalinoid states. Now they go away and instead of a renaissance of western left discourse, we get nearly total silence, combined with a little confused muttering.

Now it may be that we are simply in the midst of a breath, a pause, as the left listens finally to the silence left in the wake of the old Eastern Bloc, and that after an appropriate period (10, 20 years?), it will take up again, now freed from the constraints of those perverse but "actually existing" examples.

Obviously, such a discourse will have some specific tasks that are already clear:

To account for the problem of Stalinism and socialism-in-one-nation

To account for the problem of totalitarianism, per se

To explain how Marxism's explanatory capacity gives way to the problem that Marx envision "one world" at least two centuries too soon -- and thus during an industrial capitalist phase, when ultimately if it ever shows up (and it may not, since it offers so much to the powers that be to keep it from happening) it will be in a virtual or post-virtual world

To reexamine the problem of the nation as such (followed by classes, races, gender)

To reexamine the possibility of discourse to impact the world under such circumstances. (It is in this light that I am looking closely these days at Steve Johnson's application of Althusser to the internet via his book and the mag Feed, plus Manuel Castell's books on the information society, very very closely.)

To reexamine what liberatory movements might then look like, and the relationship of poetry thereto.

Just for starters.

I'm sorry if Ms. Lederer feels that the approach I've taken is ageist and intellectualist (this is a new one). A lot of poets simply don't read younger writers or, if they do, seem to make relatively little out of what they read. My goal is to take younger writers absolutely seriously and to make demands of them exactly as I do my peers (viz my comments to Bob Perelman re his book published in the ILS issue devoted thereto) and my elders. I feel certain that there will be those who not only rise to what I imagine to be the occasion, but who completely surprise me and force me to rethink and redefine the terms of the entire situation. That's what I'm waiting anxiously to read.

As for my "stature," at a little under five foot ten, I am at least taller than Paul Blackburn was by several inches. But compared with Olson or Kit Robinson, this is an index that makes me nervous...

Ron Silliman

[↑ Contents](#)

951. **William Marsh**

**Re: Part III, fri. po wars, digr on www vs. print**

Thu 29 Jan 1998

---

tom bell quotes:

*from e-correspondence with Ted Warnell, quoted with permission:*

*"About a current fascination with new and glitz... I agree with your evaluation of 'art on the Web' at this time, and I see this as a natural and necessary stage in the development of the Web as creative medium/media. We all go through it at the start -- a need to explore and experiment with the medium to see what it can do, what we can do with it. This is how I view much of the 'art' currently on the Web, (including much of the work of Poem by Nari), more a technical exercise than an aesthetic expression. Eventually, of course, we get past all of this, and then begin to work \*in\* the medium (or the media that is the Web). I am seeing more of this now -- aesthetics beyond the technical. I see it in your work -- Winter is decidedly not glitzy. The use of hand drawn material brings a very personal/human touch to this work (takes the viewer beyond a purely digital reference) -- my perception -- is this your intention?"*

important point here, tom, and one which i agree with / with much web art out there today, i often can't get past the "spectacle", a term which seemed to have a lot of bearing in critical discussions of kinetic art in the 60's / i agree that here we are (again) exploring new technical possibilities in art / "aesthetics beyond the technical" is the challenge both for theory and in practice / perhaps beginning with a trace of praxis in visual-kinetic art in mid and late-mid century

and investigating how web-sculpting moves out of and beyond that / also the legacy of visual-concrete / an interesting nexus or convergence, which to me takes on new meaning in the visual-textual space of the computer: both static and kinetic / motile...

bill

-----  
William Marsh  
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San Diego, CA 92109  
-----

[↑ Contents](#)

952. **dbkk**  
***the older gals***

Thu 29 Jan 1998

---

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.

[↑ Contents](#)

953. **William Marsh**  
***Re: Explosive Magazine #4 is available***

Thu 29 Jan 1998

---

Katherine

put me down for one! / send it along to address below and the check will cross in the mail (lest you need \$ up front) / haven't seen your mag yet, but looking forward

all best,  
bill marsh

-----  
William Marsh  
PaperBrainPress  
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National University  
[REDACTED]  
http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh  
snail: 1860 PB Dr. #4  
San Diego, CA 92109  
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[↑ Contents](#)

954. **William Marsh**  
***Re: Material/Physical***

*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

At 05:22 PM 1/28/98 -0500, you wrote:

>What was poststructuralism if not a kind of quantum linguistics?

i like that / conversely, wasn't all of quantum mechanics predicated on Blake's  
"Jerusalem"?

bill

-----  
William Marsh  
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[↑ Contents](#)

955. **Christopher Reiner**  
***Gentle Instructor***

*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

Hmmm. I guess I spoke too soon about the problems with the litpress internet server being solved. Apologies to those who tried and couldn't get through, and thanks to those who wrote to let me know.

When it's up again, I'll let you know.

--Chris R.

[↑ Contents](#)

956. **Joseph Conte**  
***Re: Grumman re-contextualizes***

*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

Thanks are in order to Bob Grumman--at the expense of bandwidth--for recontextualizing his comments and my writing as it was cross-posted to this list. I did say "some" poets working in aural/visual media c. 1988 (when I wrote the quoted passage), and though I had specific authors in mind, I won't provide examples now, as then.

J. Spahr forwarded a critique from the ever-worthy CAP-L in which I was pilloried for not having an appreciation of Web-based poetics. But the graphical interface for the Internet being nary five years old (as Loss Glazier can confirm), I apologize for not being prescient about it ten years ago.

In fact I'll be working with hypertext poetries and the EPC in a course on Multimedia Literature next fall.

It's already a commonplace about discussion-list traffic that statements ripped from their context are frequently misinterpreted.

Joseph Conte

--

Joseph M. Conte  
Associate Professor and  
Director of Graduate Studies  
Department of English  
306 Clemens Hall  
SUNY at Buffalo  
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██████████ x1009  
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[↑ Contents](#)



957. **Miekal And**  
**Re: Grumman re-contextualizes**  
*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

what's CAP-L?

[↑ Contents](#)

958. **David Israel**  
**non-viz**  
*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

Here in lurk-&-skim mode betimes, all the tawk of fizpo -- or rather vizpo -- could make one hanker for invisible po, maybe a synonym for the legendary wordless stuff that, alas, nobody has recited in my hearing or to my certain comprehansion.

However, am thinking it might go something like this:

[ darkarkarkarkark ]

(or maybe nyet)

d.i.

[↑ Contents](#)

959. **k. lederer**  
**Re: The Key Club, Apologies to Tuma--**  
*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

On Sat, 24 Jan 1998, KENT JOHNSON wrote:

- > Is it possible that the generational anxiety vis a vis
- > Language writing expressed by Mark Wallace, Steve Evans, and other
- > impressively smart writers is the logical and inevitable result of
- > younger poets trying to be "new" through an overly narrow reliance on
- > \_method\_? While I ask this question tentatively (because I am not
- > exactly steeped in the young turk critics), my sense from
- > perusing the discussion is that this could be at the heart of the
- > "problem".
- >
- > How so? Young "post-Language" poets, like those represented in the
- > anthology of Joseph Donohue, Ed Foster, and Leonard Schwartz (I'm
- > sorry, I presently can't recall the title), are certainly wonderfully
- > various and talented, and many of them will go on to be widely
- > published and successful. But insofar as that young group (despite
- > protestations) seems increasingly to Language writing as

> the Key Club is to Kiwanis, might it be due to this: that the horizon  
> of poetic "experiment" and "originality" for this generational group  
> is delimited by a deeply-ingrained set of institutional laws and  
> protocols which (subliminally, for the most part) reduce and relegate  
> aesthetic resistance to the printed page, that is, to strictly  
> compositional method? The Key Club, to put it another way, puts  
> itself in the position of polishing, tweaking, and refining  
> paratactic, asyndetic, and juxtapositional frames of expression  
> without any apparent thought to a sustained exploration of  
> \_conceptual displacements\_ of institutionalized categories of  
> authorship and the circulation of works.  
>  
> This is sort of what I meant in my Hurrah post with my perhaps unfair  
> reference to the young post-Language poet with conference name tag  
> caught between two mirrors. It's also what I meant by my reference to  
> Smithson's conceptualism, which is so powerful because it is at least  
> a provisional move beyond--and "laying bare" of--the "museum." The  
> Key Club, you might say, is still on guided tour inside the museum.  
> ....  
> The author function is the ideological linchpin that  
> theory has identified, but which 'avant-garde' oppositional creative  
> practice has not yet imagined taking on."  
> iconoclastic, \_conceptual\_ panache in new writing. What I'm saying,  
> and to put it in an old fashioned way, is this: as long as the  
> institutionalized mode of authorial production goes uninvestigated  
> and unchallenged within the 'avant-garde' community itself, the  
> poetic relations of circulation, value, and exchange within it will  
> not be qualitatively transformed. The Key Club will always be the Key  
> Club.  
>  
> The challenge, it seems to me, is pretty broad, full of multiple,  
> unforeseen possibilities of experiment ("Alan Sondheim," in his  
> manifold incarnations and disseminations through electric space is  
> one exciting example), and it is a challenge that the Language  
> movement itself opened up with its insistent critiques of the "self"  
> and the "I". (Now, of course, all that seems effectively dead for  
> that older group: witness, for ironic example, the last issue of  
> Aerial, which carries on its spine the largest font-size personal  
> name in the history of poetry.)  
>  
> Leave them behind, young poets, to roll in the deodorized aromas of  
> their own careers and names! Go forward young poets, for the day is

> young and it belongs to the young! Don't be anxious any more, for  
> that is only a trick of language!

>

> Kent

>

Dear Tuma et al.,

My apologies for some of my attributions in my last message. I think that this is the post to which I was primarily responding. I just got on the list a week ago, and this was one of the first posts I received... I think almost all of the above is pretty off...

Yours,  
Katy

[↑ Contents](#)

960. **s. kaipa**

***Re: As-Am poetics***

Thu 29 Jan 1998

---

I was wondering if anyone has an in-depth (or even cursory) knowledge of "Asian American" (i realize the loadedness of this word and don't mean to instigate much by this kind of categorization, but . . .) experimental poets or "language" poets. Anything about this topic would be of interest to me--any names that I could try to track down or any articles written on the topic of AsAm exp/lang poets.

Thanks.

Summi

[↑ Contents](#)

961. **k. lederer**

***Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo***

Thu 29 Jan 1998

---

On January 28 Keith Tuma wrote:

> Katy--

>

> Er, older thinker here. I'm sure that Ron Silliman has a good few  
> years on me. As far as I know I am not on record in any public space  
> articulating any views concerning the "originality" of "young writers."  
... the status of the institutional apparatus. I'd want to talk not  
> just about the end of NEA funding but also about the declining cultural

> capital of poetry in the university (among other subjects). While what  
> Gary Sullivan says about younger women attuned to the proclivities of this  
> list finding jobs in academia seems right to me, this occurs against the  
> background of diminished space for poetry (of whatever variety) in the  
university...But one thing seems fairly certain for the near future:  
"younger poets" have had some of the ground cut out from under them...

>

Keith:

Let me just say that I didn't meant to single you out at all--as old  
or anything else. I felt like I had to name some specific sources of  
current critiques of young writers (see my other message of today...  
apologies.)

As per what you state above. I think this is a little bit off. Yes. Perhaps poetry  
has suffered a reduction in the number of faculty devoted to teaching it--but I  
would have to argue that this has been made up for by the incredible prolifera-  
tion of college-level writing workshop and MFA programs. In the past forty  
years--and I think this cannot be denied--poetry has become a larger presence  
in the academy. Personally, as a writer, I prefer this kind of increase. Poetry is  
too often thought of as the stuff of the past--workshops encourage young people  
to actually participate in it as an artform rather than as the object of study.

\* \* \*

Tuma:

> You'll have to alert me to where such claims have been made and with such a  
> mobile definition of fascism. And what's hypocritical about saying what  
> one thinks of specific younger writers? You mean that it's just not nice  
> for Ron or anybody else to be critical?..... His  
> criticism, even if it is dismissive, indicates at least some engagement.  
> It will end up circulating the news about poets, whether or not they're  
> admired by Ron. With 600+ readers on this listserv, simply mentioning or  
> discussing a "young writer" would go a ways toward reaching a significant  
> portion of the readers prepared at present to engage the work.

Keith--

I don't think my definition of fascism is so very mobile:

The American Heritage defines it as "A system of government marked by a to-  
talitarian dictator, socioeconomic controls, suppression of the opposition, and  
usually a policy of belligerent nationalism and racism..."

A fascist is defined as: "A reactionary or dictatorial person..."

I'm not about to say that any of the langpos--or any other poets--are true fas-  
cists. But there is no question in my mind that some of them have been

belligerent.... some have the privilege of exercising socioeconomic controls etc... (not to mention any kind of prestige factor is garnering readings, good reviews etc....)

But I suppose the real issue is the work. I suppose that I may have gone off a little bit because I would practically die for some of the "young writers" working today--that I want people to keep their hands off of their work so that they can continue to write the great work that they're writing... I "need" their poems and get freaked when I feel like anything--cultural, critical, or otherwise--might get in the way of it.

Or let me put it this way. Didn't Pound once say something along the lines of "It doesn't matter who writes the great poems, as long as they are written"? It seems to me that some writers might be better off being lauded--some perhaps not--but that (and this is intuitive to a degree) criticism (publically stated) is going to preclude more "great" poems than it is going to encourage.

\* \* \*

Tuma:>

> Well I'm told the sidewalk's ready for Ron in Hollywood. All that's left  
> is for him to dip his paws in the concrete. I've never met him, but I'm  
> assuming he has paws. It's early evening here today and he hasn't dipped  
> his paws into this conversation.

Keith--

Again apologies for being brash. I must say that I have this attitude mainly because of things I've heard--that 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...

I do think it's terrific when more experienced writers and thinkers engage with less established minds and works--really terrific. I just question the necessity of any order of pronouncement when it lands on the head of person who has just begun to explore their potential--

All best regards,  
Katy

[↑ Contents](#)

962. **KENT JOHNSON**

***Silliman's rib***

*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

Ron:

Could you post some more info re: your intriguing mention of Steve Johnson's "application of Althusser to the internet"? Title of book and some more about his mag Feed, which some of us haven't heard about?

And I'm curious: in what sense is it a pressing task that the left now "account" for Stalinism and the ways the doctrine of "socialism in one country" was used to justify that barbarous monstrosity? Trotsky wrote *The Revolution Betrayed*, which is the key work, and there's been mountains written and theorized from a Marxist angle since then. Or are you saying that history has proven Trotsky and his followers almost completely right on the question of Stalinism and that we need to read them now? Just a curious old trot here who spent a good many hours of his youth selling *The Militant* outside factory gates in Milwaukee...

But before anything, Ron, take care of that venerable rib. Don't forget that you are an "actually existing" (poetically speaking) Adam to many!

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

963. **Henry Gould**

***Re: Old Poets Home***

*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

I like Ron's Big Thinking (even though he ignores whatever I have to say about the limits of his "aesthetic"). It reminds me of Edwin Honig. I don't think Ron's as old as Ed yet. But they both think a lot about Vietnam (maybe because Edwin fought in France in WW II even though the FBI kept trying to have him recalled because since he was a Jew from Brooklyn & had been to a couple "anarchist" meetings in the 30s he was considered a Commie). Now that we're about to test our new missiles (much more accurate!) in Iraq we remember "the more things change..."

I guess I would say your blind spot Ron is the idea that the "movement" (a lot of big Langpo readings in SF - men & women! in the late 70s) was So Much Better & Real & Great & Happening & Important than what's happening now. As far as I'm concerned your movement was a failure as political poetry. Wake up & smell the coffee, old guy. Poetry will be political when it does a little better as poetry. A place to start would be to shuck these generational reminiscences & scattered pigeon-like name-droppings that go by the name of "scholarship" or

"criticism" or "the academy". It's a circus - there's the clown act, & then there's the tightrope. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

964. **Aldon Nielsen**  
***younger and used ta be younger poets***  
*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

just for the record . . . when I arrived in the Bay area back around '87, "older" poets widely regarded as Language poets were among the warmest with their welcome -- despite their having had no reason to have heard my name from anybody -- Lyn Hejinian, Ron Silliman, Kit Robinson, Bob Perelman, Carla Harryman, and others I do not mean to insult by forgetting to name them at the moment, have over the years since been really unselfish in their encouragement -- quite a contrast to the "is this anyone important enough for me to have to worry about" look I've seen in the eyes of so many writers over the years --

AND, while I have not been checking out anybody's IDs, I believe I've met any number of interesting poets 35-45 in SF who were not likely to be run off by anybody -- Shauna Hannibal and Giovanni Singleton, whose work I've learned of this year, certainly seem to be writing worthwhile work in that city

[↑ Contents](#)

965. **Dean A. Brink**  
***Re: As-Am poetics***  
*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

---

I don't know of anything specifically on Asian American experimental poetry, besides a long review article I wrote last year on Myung Mi Kim's *The Bounty*.  
<http://www.w-link.net/~dean/interpoetics/bountyre.html>

Some of the positions taken in the introduction to *Premonitions* might provide a point of reference. Because of the lack of secondary sources, if you are serious about writing on this topic you might consider tracking down the poets you are interested in and interviewing them.

s. kaipa wrote:

*I was wondering if anyone has an in-depth (or even cursory) knowledge of "Asian American" (i realize the loadedness of this word and don't mean to instigate much by this kind of categorization, but . . .) experimental poets or "language" poets. Anything about this topic would be of interest to me--any names that I could try to track down or any articles written on the topic of AsAm exp/lang poets.*

*Thanks.*

Summi

--

dean brink



interpoetics - poetry of Asia and the Pacific Rim  
[www.w-link.net/~dean/interpoetics/index.html](http://www.w-link.net/~dean/interpoetics/index.html)

[↑ Contents](#)

966. **Dean A. Brink**

***Re: As-Am poetics***

*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

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*Thanks.*

*Summi*

--

dean brink



interpoetics - poetry of Asia and the Pacific Rim  
[www.w-link.net/~dean/interpoetics/index.html](http://www.w-link.net/~dean/interpoetics/index.html)

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*I was wondering if anyone has an in-depth (or even cursory) knowledge of "Asian American" (i realize the loadedness of this word and don't mean to instigate much by this kind of categorization, but . . .) experimental*



*poets or "language" poets. Anything about this topic would be of interest to me--any names that I could try to track down or any articles written on the topic of AsAm exp/lang poets.*

*Thanks.*

*Summi*

--

dean brink



interpoetics - poetry of Asia and the Pacific Rim  
[www.w-link.net/~dean/interpoetics/index.html](http://www.w-link.net/~dean/interpoetics/index.html)

[↑ Contents](#)

967. **Aldon Nielsen**

***Re: Silliman's rib***

*Thu 29 Jan 1998*

and if I might plug some related readings -- if anyone is going to read Trotsky I would also like to suggest several writings of C.L.R. James, Raya Dunayevskaya and Grace Lee Boggs --

Notes on Dialectics  
State Capitalism and World Revolution  
Facing Reality

and from France --

Cornelius Castoriadis had much of value to say on these subjects -- While attending the MLA in Toronto I heard that Castoriadis had just died in Paris --

Blackwell's Castoriadis reader has several relevant texts, written before he decided for psychoanalysis!

[↑ Contents](#)

968. **Steve Shoemaker**

***reasons, raisins & prunes***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

Hey, i just found out (see end of following post) that Kit Robinson is tall. Which i guess explains the basketball poems. Now that's why i subscribe to this list!  
steve

At 09:03 AM 1/29/98 -0600, you wrote:

>At home today with pneumonia (a relapse), I feel nearly as old as Katy

>Lederer makes me sound. (Having broken a rib coughing makes it worse -- try  
>not to be funny for awhile, folks, cause it hurts to laugh.)

>

>I'm intrigued at the responses I've gotten to that "prod" (more a nudge of  
>the elbow than the cattle model, thank you) as well as to variant, almost  
>parallel discourses hereabouts re visual poetry and the questions of  
>academic and/or pedagogic styles that have been swirling hereabouts.

>

>Here are some thoughts from the rocking chair of the Home for Not Yet  
>Retired Poets:

>

>Jeff Derksen made the point during our shared talk at the Writers House that  
>the larger sense of writing as a project that so many of us old fart  
>langpods seem to have had may have been a direct (or indirect) relation to  
>our experiences vis a vis the Vietnam War -- and, as I've noted elsewhere,  
>language poetry (so called so called), is indeed unimaginable without  
>Vietnam (every male poet, for example, had the direct experience of their  
>government trying to get them killed for several years, for no intelligible  
>reason whatsoever). The idea of a poetry that could change the world  
>(however much hubris may have been involved) was a direct consequence of a  
>world that need very much to change just to survive.

>

>What is missing today, Jeff either suggested or else made evident through  
>implication -- I've not seen a transcript -- may be the social condition as  
>such. The social precondition, literally. There is no such social fact as  
>the Vietnam conflict now (and the alternatives, global warming, the Gulf War  
>[and redux], or the crisis of Clinton's pants, show precisely the gap). To  
>expect contemporary young poets to come up with a larger Project in a social  
>vacuum is an unfair expectation.

>

>I'm ready to buy a fair portion of that argument. It resonates, as they say.

>

>Here I think the collapse of the American (and European) left post the fall  
>of Communism, big C, is very worth considering. For decades, many on the  
>left (me among them) had been saying that the biggest impediment to the  
>advance of the left was the presence of those various Stalinoid states. Now  
>they go away and instead of a renaissance of western left discourse, we get  
>nearly total silence, combined with a little confused muttering.

>

>Now it may be that we are simply in the midst of a breath, a pause, as the  
>left listens finally to the silence left in the wake of the old Eastern  
>Bloc, and that after an appropriate period (10, 20 years?), it will take up

>again, now freed from the constraints of those perverse but "actually  
>existing" examples.  
>  
>Obviously, such a discourse will have some specific tasks that are already  
>clear:  
>  
>To account for the problem of Stalinism and socialism-in-one-nation  
>  
>To account for the problem of totalitarianism, per se  
>  
>To explain how Marxism's explanatory capacity gives way to the problem that  
>Marx envision "one world" at least two centuries too soon -- and thus during  
>an industrial capitalist phase, when ultimately if it ever shows up (and it  
>may not, since it offers so much to the powers that be to keep it from  
>happening) it will be in a virtual or post-virtual world  
>  
>To reexamine the problem of the nation as such (followed by classes, races,  
>gender)  
>  
>To reexamine the possibility of discourse to impact the world under such  
>circumstances. (It is in this light that I am looking closely these days at  
>Steve Johnson's application of Althusser to the internet via his book and  
>the mag Feed, plus Manuel Castell's books on the information society, very  
>very closely.)  
>  
>To reexamine what liberatory movements might then look like, and the  
>relationship of poetry thereto.  
>  
>Just for starters.  
>  
>I'm sorry if Ms. Lederer feels that the approach I've taken is ageist and  
>intellectualist (this is a new one). A lot of poets simply don't read  
>younger writers or, if they do, seem to make relatively little out of what  
>they read. My goal is to take younger writers absolutely seriously and to  
>make demands of them exactly as I do my peers (viz my comments to Bob  
>Perelman re his book published in the ILS issue devoted thereto) and my  
>elders. I feel certain that there will be those who not only rise to what I  
>imagine to be the occasion, but who completely surprise me and force me to  
>rethink and redefine the terms of the entire situation. That's what I'm  
>waiting anxiously to read.  
>  
>As for my "stature," at a little under five foot ten, I am at least taller

>than Paul Blackburn was by several inches. But compared with Olson or Kit  
>Robinson, this is an index that makes me nervous...

>

>Ron Silliman

>

>

[↑ Contents](#)

969. **Matthew Hart**

***Re: Old Poets Home***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Ron et al:

forgive me that i'm drunk enough to say this.

by which i mean, jeff didn't say this, \*you\* did -- the coincidence of an earlier conversation about a line from bob perelmam ("is My Lai short for 'My Life'") serves as a reminder. whilst jeff devoted much time to a critique of the strategic (or rather, tactical) problematic of the "group" aesthetic, he didn't appear to offer any kind of sociological explanation for the what i suppose i'll have to get used to calling the "langpod" phenomenon. time to quote, like one of mr. gould's nefarious critics:

According to [REDACTED]:

>

> Jeff Derksen made the point during our shared talk at the Writers House that  
> the larger sense of writing as a project that so many of us old fart  
> langpods seem to have had may have been a direct (or indirect) relation to  
> our experiences vis a vis the Vietnam War -- and, as I've noted elsewhere,  
> language poetry (so called so called), is indeed unimaginable without  
> Vietnam (every male poet, for example, had the direct experience of their  
> government trying to get them killed for several years, for no intelligible  
> reason whatsoever). The idea of a poetry that could change the world  
> (however much hubris may have been involved) was a direct consequence of  
a  
> world that need very much to change just to survive.

this all reminds me, ron, of the final line of one of your essays -- "disappearance of the word"; an essay i still value very much, especially as it introduced me to marx's wonderful "18th brumaire." what was it you invoked then: "the social revolution cannot take its poetry from the past . . . but only from the future?" this is the point of your \*philly talks\* piece as i understand it; and whilst i agreed with you at the time about the strategic value of the group formation, it

seems invidious to co-opt jeff's somewhat courageous resistance of your terms in this manner.

stop me before i repeat myself as farce,

matt hart.

[↑ Contents](#)

970. **k. lederer**

***Re: younger and used to be younger poets***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

I agree that there are a number of very kind language poets-- I also agree that SF is absolutley packed with terrific young writers: Darin De Stefano, Alex Cory, Pam Lu, Renne Gladman, Mary Burger, Lauren Gudath and so on...but almost all of these (Shauna Hannibal is, I believe, under thirty--and is, I don't think, not over 35--) are under 35. From my perspective, when I lived in that area (between 1990 and 1995), most of the newer writers were somehow or another associated with New College or Berkeley--there was a pronounced absence of comparable writers over 35. Some of these, I believe, were a tad reclusive---and some, like Drew Gardner--moved away while I was there. But the overwhelming majority of them seemed to have left long before. When I first visited New York, I was shocked at how many of the interesting writers and thinkers of that scene were in their thirties, among them: Eleni Sikelianos, Rob Fitterman, Bill Luoma, Douglas Rothschild, Lisa Jarnot, Juliana Spahr and on and on. There was no comparable group in Sf to speak of....

Regards,

Katy

On Thu, 29 Jan 1998, Aldon Nielsen wrote:

*just for the record . . . when I arrived in the Bay area back around '87, "older" poets widely regarded as Language poets were among the warmest with their welcome -- despite their having had no reason to have heard my name from anybody -- Lyn Hejinian, Ron Silliman, Kit Robinson, Bob Perelman, Carla Harryman, and others I do not mean to insult by forgetting to name them at the moment, have over the years since been really unselfish in their encouragement -- quite a contrast to the "is this anyone important enough for me to have to worry about" look I've seen in the eyes of so many writers over the years --*

*AND, while I have not been checking out anybody's IDs, I believe I've met any number of interesting poets 35-45 in SF who were not likely to be run off by anybody -- Shauna Hannibal and Giovanni Singleton, whose work I've learned of this year, certainly seem to be writing worthwhile work in that city*

[↑ Contents](#)

971. **Pierre Joris**

**Re: Silliman's rib**

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

hmm, Ron, I know what you mean when you say that there hasn't been serious left discussions since the downfall of the East European versions of communism. And, one shouldn't forget to add, the downfall of various attempts at socialism — Moscow- or other- styled — in various "Third World" countries. (The most horrid of such experiences being the events in Algeria today).

And yet it also seems to me that there has been a major increase of marxist or marxistoid discourse in the great sandbox of US academia, much of it fashionably post-althusserian, much of it also — & maybe due to the fact that that american hackademy's discourse's hold on reality is so very slim — rather stalinist, i.e. a very vulgarian totalitarianism hiding below the surface sophistication.

Although for the time being ensconced in academia, I certainly don't feel much desire to be involved with that kind of rehash- discourse, and wonder if the 10 / 20 years' time out isn't unavoidable — even if deplorable, given the situation. Except for specific, local actions of resistance and intervention that don't demand a long-term strategy.

Pierre

--

=====  
pierre joris 6 madison place albany ny 12202  
tel/fax [REDACTED] email: [REDACTED]  
<http://www.albany.edu/~joris/>  
-----

"What often prevents us from giving ourselves over to a single vice is that we have several of them."

— La Rochefoucauld

=====

[↑ Contents](#)

972. **Pierre Joris**

**Re: Silliman's rib**

Fri 30 Jan 1998

---

Yes, let's hear it for Castoriadis — any Frenchman (well, by adoption) who hasn't been pecked to stardom yet by the Great American Graduate Department, can't be all bad. And indeed, Castoriadis is truly worthwhile read.

Pierre

Aldon Nielsen wrote:

*and if I might plug some related readings -- if anyone is going to read Trotsky I would also like to suggest several writings of C.L.R. James, Raya Dunayevskaya and Grace Lee Boggs --*

*Notes on Dialectics  
State Capitalism and World Revolution  
Facing Reality*

*and from France --*

*Cornelius Castoriadis had much of value to say on these subjects -- While attending the MLA in Toronto I heard that Castoriadis had just died in Paris --*

*Blackwell's Castoriadis reader has several relevant texts, written before he decided for psychoanalysis!*

--

=====

pierre joris 6 madison place albany ny 12202

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-----

"What often prevents us from giving ourselves over to a single vice is that we have several of them."

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[↑ Contents](#)

973. **David Israel**

**Re: As-Am poetics**

Fri 30 Jan 1998

---

Summi Kaipa asks,

<< I was wondering if anyone has an in-depth (or even cursory) knowledge of "Asian American" . . . experimental poets or "language" poets. Anything about this topic would be of interest to me--any names that I could try to track down . . . >>

One name worth mention is that of Arthur Tse -- who is (I believe) a second generation (i.e., born in US, from parents born elsewhere) Chinese/American poet based in Santa Fe. I liked his book *River/River*. More lately, a more prolix little volume entitled *\*Archipelago\** was published by Copper Canyon Press --which unfortunately I've not yet taken time to peruse.

Also to mention: John Yau (New York-based, when last I knew); he has much work (e.g., *\*Hotel Sayonara\**) published by Black Sparrow Press.

Both could likely fit within definitions of "experimental". (I doubt if either poet would dub himself a language poet per se.)

Also to consider: web-based concrete-poetry experiments (etc.) from Sounding Gourd (a.k.a. Dajuin Yao -- a Chinese writer/artist/musician living in Berkeley) -- see: <http://www.sinologic.com/webart/> (note -- as appears after several intro-screens -- the "English" toggle-option, which is worth using if one doesn't have a Chinese font on one's browser)

best,  
d.i.

[↑ Contents](#)

974. **Pierre Joris**

***Re: references, please***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Tom Mandel wrote:

*... There were some  
"experimental" poets and writers of a different tendency who later moved  
(David Levi Strauss comes to mind), and whose publishing efforts (e.g.  
ACTS) subsided and whose writing slowed down (I haven't seen anything by  
Levi in a long time, but he may be writing other than poetry).*

Tom -- Levi is well & alive in the Mid-Hudson Valley (or in Kent's terms he joined the Catskill school) & writing much excellent art criticism, some of it in easily accessible places like *The Nation*.

((& sorry, Bertha, for leaving the real mountain people out but that was just Kent's description of us as the Catskill school -- I should have corrected his misapprehensions -- we're just lowly Hudson Valley bottom-feeders & shld thus rightly be known as the MHVBF school --



happy trails

Pierre

--

=====

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<http://www.albany.edu/~joris/>

-----

"What often prevents us from giving ourselves over to  
a single vice is that we have several of them."

— La Rochefoucauld

=====

[↑ Contents](#)

975. **Bob Grotjohn**

***Re: As-Am poetics***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

The essential Asian American experimental work is Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's  
\*Dictee\*. See also Walter Lew's \*Dictee for Dicte.\* And \*Writing Self, Writing  
Nation\*, essays on Dictee edited by Elaine Kim and Norma Alarcon.

Other poets to try:

Tan Lin, \*Lotion Bullwhip Giraffe\*

Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge (sp?), various work. There is an interview with  
her in a recent issue of The Asian Pacific American Journal.

Myung Mi Kim, \*Under Flag\*, \*Duras\* (out yet?)

Lawson Fusao Inada, various poems in \*Legends from Camp\* and \*Drawing  
the Line\* might be considered experimental if not langpo

Juliana Chang has an essay in a last year's issue of MELUS. She makes connec-  
tions between language poetry and Asian American poetry, though I can't re-  
member if she does it in that essay.

--

Bob Grotjohn

[↑ Contents](#)

976. **Tom Mandel**

***references, please***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Ron Silliman writes:

"To reexamine the possibility of discourse to impact the world under such circumstances. (It is in this light that I am looking closely these days at Steve Johnson's application of Althusser to the internet via his book and the mag Feed, plus Manuel Castell's books on the information society, very very closely.)"

...references please!

Katy Lederer--who has a lot of interesting stuff to say--has it wrong in her vision of Language poets driving other experimental writers out of SF, I'm happy to say. I can't think of a single case. There were some "experimental" poets and writers of a different tendency who later moved (David Levi Strauss comes to mind), and whose publishing efforts (e.g. ACTS) subsided and whose writing slowed down (I haven't seen anything by Levi in a long time, but he may be writing other than poetry). But, in this case, it was the death of Robert Duncan, around whom the whole effort was centered, that changed their world, not anything any of us did or said.

More accurately, Language poetry inspired a lot of other experimental poets, some of whom became part of the tendency others just friendly to it: I'm thinking of David Bromige, Lyn Hejinian (who was about 35 and had a few books out already when she moved down from Willits to Berkeley to join the fun), Kathy Fraser, and others.

Above all the vision of Ron Silliman as a fascist or as driving anyone away from anywhere, if that's what Katy meant to suggest, is strictly ridiculous. It doesn't accord at all with Ron's openness, friendliness, wide circle of acquaintance, etc.

Certainly there were others who had a reputation for difficult personalities, but were any of them more difficult than Robert Duncan? Life is full of contradictions and conflict, yes? Generosity of mind and achievement do not rule out a difficult even imperious personality, not in my experience at least.

Tom Mandel

Tom Mandel

\*\*\*\*\*

Screen Porch \* <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 \* vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22031 \* fax: [REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

977. **Gwyn McVay**  
**Re: Material/Physical**  
Fri 30 Jan 1998

---

Blake was only ripping off Mahayana Buddhism--dig the crazy rap in the Heart Sutra about "form is emptiness, emptiness is form," and then read about subatomic particles drifting in & out of existence, & there you go.

On Thu, 29 Jan 1998, William Marsh wrote:

*At 05:22 PM 1/28/98 -0500, you wrote:  
What was poststructuralism if not a kind of quantum linguistics?  
  
i like that / conversely, wasn't all of quantum mechanics predicated on  
Blake's "Jerusalem"?*

*bill*

-----  
William Marsh  
PaperBrainPress  
Voice & Range Community Arts  
National University  
[REDACTED]  
*http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh  
snail: 1860 PB Dr. #4  
San Diego, CA 92109*  
-----

[↑ Contents](#)

978. **Nada Gordon**  
**driven**  
Fri 30 Jan 1998

---

Hisashiburi desu ne. . .

I've just re-subbed to this list after a year or more of being unsubbed thinking I was going to hear about something new, but I've tuned in to find people are still writhing anxiously about language poetry hegemony.

k. lederer wrote:

*I must say that I have this  
attitude mainly because of things I've heard--that 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...*

Katy, whose version of the narrative is this? Exactly who are these "people who know"? I'm 34 (so do I fit your category of "an entire generation"?) and was in the thick of that scene for much of the 80's until I found myself in Tokyo in '88.

Certainly I was not \*driven out\* by criticism from any of that number of primarily male writers! (torches!) Who's granting them that power? Who's so sensitive as to be driven out of a city by criticism? I don't remember any of them being critical of me, just encouraging. Maybe they thought I was an acolyte? Dunno, I didn't feel like one. There may, I confess, have been moments when I fancied myself a baby-language-poet-in-training, but that was a passing phase -- I quickly realized the limits of that self-characterization. I do remember learning a lot.

Yes, that scene \*was\* sometimes joyless and constricting and abstruse, socially clumsy or flushed with its own importance (the foregoing modifiers could all apply to this list, couldn't they). Still, I and other young writers were choosing to be around the language poets' whoosh of intellectual energy. No one forced us to be there, and no one drove us out. Most of the other young writers I hung out with at the time went back to their hometowns or towards new opportunities, as I did -- San Francisco's miniscule and overcrowded when it comes to job-hunting time. Might be worthwhile to have a look at the economics & demographics of this claim of "young poet flight."

A memory (1983?):

I remember Colette Lafia and I were taking a night class at SFSU from Barry (Watten) on the Russian Formalists. He was driving us home (not driving us \*out\*), and she and I were talking in the back seat about the class. He turned around from the front seat and said, frustratedly, "I'm really having a hard time getting you guys to understand what 'form' is" (not his exact words).

and I'm still puzzling over that, what is form?

For me that's more interesting to think about than generational power and poetry "politics."

And isn't it a good teacher whose question still resounds fifteen years later?

nada (gordon)

[↑ Contents](#)

979. **Nada Gordon**

***Copies of AYA still available***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

I still have twenty-one copies of AYA left, a one-time-only (maybe) magazine published by myself (Nada Gordon), Andrea Hollowell, and Ewan Colquhoun out of Tokyo.

Contributors include:

Benjamin Friedlander  
Alan Davies  
Hiraide Takashi  
Eric Selland  
Eleni Sikelianos  
Cid Corman  
Colleen Lookingbill  
Ewan Colquhoun  
Lori Lubeski  
Andrea Hollowell  
Avery Burns  
Nada Gordon  
Terayama Shuji  
Masaya Saito

with real Japanese endpaper

all for only \$5.00

or 500 yen (a better deal with the current exchange rate)

to get your copy, e-mail: [REDACTED]

and send a check with a little extra for postage

yoroshiku

[↑ Contents](#)

980. **Mark Prejsnar**

***the revolution will be poeticized***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Ron Silliman brings up so much important stuff about politix, that it's hard to respond adequately....

I don't wanna dismiss the basic truth, that "social reality" is a central component of what we do or don't do politically and socially...

But I've always been a rather egregious example of what on the left is called a "voluntrist." No that doesn't mean I help out at my local hospital gift shop without pay; it means I think that the most fundamental part of getting something done is will, determination. It's more important that (now I'm gonna get real polemical, from many folks' point of view) that we develop socialist and revolutionary (also seriously feminist and anti-racist) values, than that some external \*thing\* come along, like Vietnam, and swat us on the side of the head. I hasten to add the obvious: Ron S. has been a model of consistency, energy, eloquence, and bullheadedness in representing the socialist edge, in theory and in practice as a public intellectual and in his practice as a poet. Indeed in all these respects, has been a model for me. But I don't think the political \*kick\* the culture needs, and that we as poets need, is gonna come from unexpected happenings. Thus evocations of the Vietnam era make me uncomfortable. It's gonna come from both our practice in our work as poets and from all of us working to build popular movements with what time we can spare outside our work. For me, it has usually been the labor movement plus a number of more specific attempts to at least inject the beginning of social democratic ideas into the immediate sphere of shared discourse, the place where working people like myself encounter Ted Koppel and all those shambling corpses... (Recently, the Independent Progressive Political Network, the Greens, the New Party and the Labor Party, all with many faults but with a chance of reaching the public sphere with slightly left ideas...)

In fact, from my point of view as a poet, it seems like political values live, as part of the body of the work, when they are most internally generated and intensely worked within the soul, within the mind. Whether the left poet we are talking about is (to name some of my long-time models) Vallejo, or Eluard, or Brecht,...or Silliman or Bernstein or Harryman or Muller. The sixties and Vietnam triggered a whole lotta terrible political poetry precisely \*because\* there was an unmediated response to an event that was considered \*other\* and wasn't linked to all the human problems involved with trying to live and develop political values in the core of one's own life..

Mark P.  
@lanta

[↑ Contents](#)

981. **MAYHEW**  
*pumping poetry*  
Fri 30 Jan 1998

---

Henry Gould makes some good points. As for poetry as business, promotion and the like, "I too dislike it," which is why the poems I write go straight into

my drawer. How we could have a distribution system free of the corruption he decries I have no idea, and would appreciate suggestions for real reform.

Jonathan Mayhew  
Department of Spanish and Portuguese  
3062 Wescoe Hall  
University of Kansas

██████████

██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

982. **Bob Grotjohn**

***Re: As-Am poetics***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Juliana Chang's essay is in MELUS 21.1 (Spring 1996): 81-98

Trinh T. Minh-ha, various work, is worth a look for theory.

Lisa Lowe, "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity" \*Diaspora\* 1 (Spring 1990): 24-44. Possible relation to experimental poetics.

\*Amerasia Journal.\* Asian American Poetry Issue. 20.3 (1994). A good place to start; various writers positioning themselves.

--

Bob Grotjohn  
Mary Baldwin College  
Staunton, VA 24401

540/

██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

983. **Joseph Conte**

***CAP-L***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Miekal And asked for information on the Contemporary American Poetry list, or CAP-L, a somewhat more conservative (others would argue "mainstream") discussion list for poetry.

If you want to subscribe (and I un-subbed a while back) I think you can send a message to ██████████ with the message text:

subscribe cap-l  
end

If you've got the time to wade through ... well, never mind.

Joseph Conte

--

Joseph M. Conte

██████████ x1009

Associate Professor and

FAX: ██████████

Director of Graduate Studies

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306 Clemens Hall

SUNY at Buffalo

Buffalo, NY 14260-4610

<http://writing.upenn.edu/~jconte/>

[↑ Contents](#)

984. **Tim Yu**

***Re: As-Am poetics***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Summi:

Tan Lin has done some really interesting work ("Lotion Bullwhip Giraffe"--someone correct me if that's wrong--is out from Sun & Moon) that's appeared in a number of Asian-American litmags. Of course, there's John Yau's work, which isn't "language" per se but definitely has to come into any consideration of As-Am experimental poetry. The anthology "Premonitions" from Kaya Press is also something you should look into.

This whole question of Asian-American/experimental poetry interests me too. I've had some trouble reconciling my interests in both sides of this term; so much of what passes for As-Am poetry seems like the same safe, tired, personal-lyric formula with a few of the major terms changed around to signal its Asian-ness (trips to Chinatown for baseball games w/dad, etc., a fixation on food--apparently all we Asian-Americans do is cook and eat and have our parents teach us traditional dishes). But then how does the Asian-American "identity" of an author work into something that's less obviously personal/narrative? (I suppose that the whole debate can get absorbed as material for the work; I get the feeling that Yau's done interesting things with that, but I'm not familiar enough with him to say.)

Anyhow, hope this helps.

Tim Yu

[↑ Contents](#)



985. **pritchpa**

***Re: maria's questions***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Good point Juliana. This is indeed an oversight. Hank Lazer goes a good ways toward addressing it in *\_Opposing Poetries\_* which I highly recommend to all and sundry. His chapters on Hejinian, Howe and above all on Rachel Blau DuPlessis aim for a much-needed restoration of the scales. I've already decided to write my senior thesis on the growth of contemporary/experimental women poets, which will, I hope form the nucleus of my PhD. dissertation (whenever the hell that happens - wish it were now). I intend not only to examine Howe, Fraser, Dahlen, DuPlessis, Hejinian, Armantrout and other female poets more or less associated with Langpo, but to focus on Mayer, Notley and Waldman, too. And maybe their younger heirs. This is a large ticket to fill I know. But I like thinking big. And I frankly think much of the most interesting writing being done today is being by women.

Patrick Pritchett

-----

From: Juliana Spahr

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: maria's questions

Date: Thursday, January 29, 1998 12:06AM

This is reductive and I'm not complaining (yet). This is just a gander at a factual answer.

I feel like Maria's questions are because most of the criticism tends to be about male writers or tends to define the scene so as to give more attention to the male writers. And as a critic you, Maria, read the critical books and saw mainly men. Think about it: Hartley, Nealon, Altieri, Conte, McHale, Monroe. (Perloff's work is some sort of exception here and things are changing some--Perelman's book might show some evidence of this.) It is not that these people don't talk about women writers but just that more time has been spent defining various poetries as products of male agency. (The story that L=A=N=G started the movement; the story that "I HATE SPEECH" started the movement; the story that Kit Robinson and Bob Perelman were doing some typing one day: these are all stories that place men as active agents; the parallel stories that Hejinian was doing Tuumba and that Scalapino was doing O and Fraser was doing However have not been written as much.)

[↑ Contents](#)

986. **KENT JOHNSON**

***A World to Win***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

In wake of Ron's Nursing Home post and responses, a conference some may be interested in attending or sending panel proposals to (accepted through March 2):

"A World to Win: From the \*Manifesto\* to New Organizing for Socialist Change"

Speakers include Stanley Aronowitz, Manning Marable, Stephen Jay Gould, Frances Fox Piven, numerous others.

March 20-22, NYC, organized by the CUNY Grad Center,  
web site at [www.soc.qc.edu/ssc](http://www.soc.qc.edu/ssc)

[↑ Contents](#)

987. **David Zauhar**

***Re: references, please (D. Levi Strauss***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

On Fri, 30 Jan 1998, Pierre Joris wrote:

*Tom Mandel wrote:*

*"experimental" poets and writers of a different tendency who later moved (David Levi Strauss comes to mind), and whose publishing efforts (e.g. ACTS) subsided and whose writing slowed down (I haven't seen anything by Levi in a long time, but he may be writing other than poetry).*

*Tom -- Levi is well & alive in the Mid-Hudson Valley (or in Kent's terms he joined the Catskill school) & writing much excellent art criticism, some of it in easily accessible places like The Nation.*

I know Acts is long gone, but when it folded (due to funding cutbacks if I remember correctly) David Levi Strauss was still planning a special issue called something like *\_The R.D. Book\_*, devoted to Duncan. Anyone know if that actually came out? (if it did, then DLS stiffed me on my subscription). Speaking of Acts: Anyone have a copy of the Spicer special issue they are willing to let me borrow? (I'll pay postage both ways) It apparently sold out rather quickly.

Dave Zauhar

[↑ Contents](#)

988. **aerialedge**

***a posting to poetics***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Re Ron's post yesterday:

I'd differ with Jeff Derksen by asserting that there are LOTS of projects, plural, among younger writers. That the L=A=N=G thang jelled into a singular recognizable project is contestable. Nevertheless, if as Mr Watten writ "Identity is the cause of war" perhaps "we" don't want one. This may be a possibility because of the multiplicity of influences available. The rather incredible amount of engaging writing available just within the Pound-Stein-Williams etc. tradition allows for such a variety of trajectories among younger poets & within a single author's work that it will take quite a bit of retrospect before "a project" could be identified. That this is the case does not mean that Anselm Berrigan, Edmund Berrigan, Sherry Brennan, Lee Ann Brown, Mary Burger, Steve Carll, Susan Clark, Kevin Davies, Jordan Davis, Tim Davis, Buck Downs, Patrick Durgin, Heather Fuller, Peter Gizzi, Judith Goldman, Lisa Jarnot, Andrew Levy, Bill Luoma, Jennifer Moxley, Melanie Neilson, Sianne Ngai, Hoa Nuyen, Julie Patton, Lisa Robertson, Lisa Samuels, Chris Stroffolino, Juliana Spahr, Rodrigo Toscano, Mark Wallace, Liz Willis, &&& are not engaged in serious critical explorations which are shared & which inform each others work. The work of the writers on the above list cannot reasonably be reduced to the epithet "bland abstract lyric," it just can't. Rather one might say that the context is wider, the number of influences being drawn on & the insistence on the contingency of any given mode is greater, that's all. This feeling that the context of the writing is wider (which it is) may be a response to the obvious fact that the context for actual political action-- for response at that level, has been shattered. Macropolitically, the corporations have won. The evidence of these writers, I think, is that micropolitically, they definitely have not. What that counts for I cannot say, it is certainly a valid kind of resistance-- most recognizably to overly codified modes of thinking about what poetry (i.e. communication) is/can be within educational institutions & for that reason is strongly allied to the continuing project of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E. Tho it perhaps can/will have larger influence, so one hopes.

I've pointed this out before but will say again, another major difference is the economic circumstance of this group. Re this question witness just the book titles Edge has recently issued: *They Beat Me Over the Head With a Sack*, *Nothing Happened and Besides I Wasn't There*, perhaps this is a rescue fantasy, & forthcoming, *Marijuana Softdrink*. It is my contention that there is much \*NEW\* (superscript tm) in this gen & it is informed by a stunning listening in to an entire tradition which includes L=A=N=G coupled with economic circumstances which often do not allow for the kind of lengthy critical explication one might wish for. Or one might not. I'm not troubled really by giving primacy to the poetic, if a writer's truly concentrated on their work which genre they've chosen at the moment is not the point. It's a matter of the degree of creative engagement, & there's plenty of that. I would define "creative" to include

"critical" by the way. & it may be that identifying "a project" with the amount of discursive critical writing being done is precisely the mistake. It's understandable that this might be thought in the wake of or midst of L=A=N=G but it may be, um, wrong.

Rod Smith

[↑ Contents](#)

989. **dbkk**

### ***Missing generation***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

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 . . .

[↑ Contents](#)

990. **henry gould**  
***Re: pumping poetry***  
*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

On Fri, 30 Jan 1998 08:46:56 -0600 MAYHEW said:

>Henry Gould makes some good points. As for poetry as business, promotion  
>and the like, "I too dislike it," which is why the poems I write go  
>straight into my drawer. How we could have a distribution system free of

>the corruption he decries I have no idea, and would appreciate suggestions  
>for real reform.

The individual & group circus contortions poets go through to get attention (both the "Language Poets" and myself are very good examples); the incestuous and truly mystifying monopoly amalgamations of theory, criticism, scholarship, and poetry that go on in the academy; the disdain & disinterest displayed in humanities departments (of all places) for poetry; and the shell game/sell game/name game that goes on in bookstores & journals... none of these things are going to go away. Who would want them to, really? We all love the circus, don't we? (When the acts don't make us scared or nauseous.) Ah, blessed literary spite...

But I think these symptoms & effects might be lessened or relieved by a strong independent criticism. I propose the formation of a World Union of Independent Critics. The 1st principle would be that they would never meet as a group; the 2nd that they would write about their personal friends only in a special conversational genre called "Buddy Chats". The 3rd principle would be that these critics would care enough about poetry without being poets themselves (I mean "full-time" poets) to do the following things in a very serious way:

1. These critics would educate themselves about poetry as a general field stretching around the globe, running back to the origins of humanity, and subject to new developments.
2. They would specialize in one or two areas for deep exploration.
3. They would interest themselves in the poetry of their own region, and dedicate themselves to seeking out "unknown" and new work, or disregarded old work.
4. They would cast an amused but cold eye on the maneuvers - personal, political, aesthetic, professional, promotional - on poets & poetry groups, always measuring new work & young poets within a framework or awareness of DEVELOPMENT. I.e. a dialectical sense: new young poets produce stunning revolutionary work: how does it relate to the past? what kind of individual development/apprenticeship are they going through? do they have staying power? By the same token, the critic would look at strong, established and productive poets, and ask: are they changing? getting any better? repeating themselves?
5. They would publish the results of their investigations, explorations, responses, and theories in a modest format available to everybody.
6. They would keep a respectable distance from conflicts of interest, tendentious promotion, and favoritism, by means of a proud dedication to their OWN endeavor: an independent criticism interested in measuring the values of what passes for literature and sharing them with the general public. Isn't this all we

ask from any profession? Why are literature and poetry, poets and scholars, exempt from basic rules of order regarding tendentious polemic and mystifying "theoretical" promotion? The uses of "names" as a substitute for the thing itself? Those little blurbs look so innocuous... they're poison, poison!!!!

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

991. **aerialedge**

***Bridge Street Reading Feb 1***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Announcing a Good Old Fashioned Avant Garde Hoedown

Sunday, Feb 1st, 8 PM @ Good Ol' Bridge Street Books

MILES CHAMPION

TIM DAVIS

& BRIAN KIM STEFFANS

Miles Champion, author of *Compositional Bonbons Placate* published by Carcanet, is one of England's most touted young poets. He reads FAST. Wow, really fast. Tim Davis, author of *Analogy Guild* and *A History of N=A=R=R=A=T=I=V=E Film*, likes to chew on tinfoil. He's also an editor at *New Directions*. Brian Kim Steffans, editor of *Arras*, & author of the forthcoming *Roof Book Free Space Comix*, goes to Atlantic City and puts down a dime.

It's at

Bridge Street Books

2814 Pennsylvania Ave NW

Washington, DC

ph [REDACTED]

BYOE (Bring Your Own Ears)

[↑ Contents](#)

992. **Maria Damon**

***Re: Grumman re-contextualizes***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

At 2:45 PM -0500 1/29/98, Joseph Conte wrote:

>

>J. Spahr forwarded a critique from the ever-worthy CAP-L in which I was  
>pilloried for not having an appreciation of Web-based poetics. But the  
>graphical interface for the Internet being nary five years old (as Loss  
>Glazier can confirm), I apologize for not being prescient about it ten



>years ago.

>

>In fact I'll be working with hypertext poetries and the EPC in a course

>on Multimedia Literature next fall.

>

>It's already a commonplace about discussion-list traffic that statements

>ripped from their context are frequently misinterpreted.

>

>Joseph Conte

>--

hey joe; yeah, anyone can take any fragment of anything and use it in ways not intended; the problem w/ exemplification in general, as b. perelman astutely pointed out recently. funny thing about cap-l; i didn't realize they were open to new technologies. glad to hear it.

[↑ Contents](#)

993. **Maria Damon**

**(no subject)**

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

- Henry Gould (more creepily personal than ever!)

\*\*\*

hey, i thought moriarty's "creepily personal" was directed at \*me.\* whew.--md

[↑ Contents](#)

994. **Maria Damon**

**Re: pumping poetry**

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

hen rites:

... And pardon me: I write poems. I know just, just

how abject that sounds to every certified tenured intellectual.

The funny thing is they're not going to get it; they don't

MAKE poems. - Henry Gould

\*\*

now henry-kins, in general i admire your fighting spirit and purism, when you stick to the issues and refrain from ad hominem and ad feminam generalizations. it's fine to set high and intransigent standards for yourself; but who are you to judge the motives of others? this kind of macho poetico-darwinism (if you can't hack it alone against the crowd, yr don't deserve to draw breath etc) -- loses its credibility. the fact that you write poems does not sound abject to me,



or, probably, to joe conte, jonathan mayhew (hi jonathan), etc. but it \*does\* sound as if you need to get some sleep or something.--md

[↑ Contents](#)

995. **Harold Rhenisch**

***Re: Originality in the young, hypocritical stance of the old, machismo***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Thanks for the reply, Katy. I can only agree with the clarity and generosity of your response and your passionate yet measured defense of supported, rather than challenged, creation, and I appreciate your statement "I feel that perhaps it is fair to question this mode of or means toward literary 'production.'", meaning the cattle prodding of younger writers. The vital word here is 'question', as opposed to 'prod' or 'expect' or 'challenge' or 'judge'. Judgement is pretty sad if it gets in the way of learning or teaching, and learning and teaching, if they are cross-generational, should be working both ways.

My personal project with the list at the moment is to try to understand just why the poetry scene is so stratified. Whatever language poetry and visual poetry I've read over the last 20 years has been, to me, no different than any other kind of poetry, and now I discover that it's considered very different indeed. Well, I can't see a difference.

Mind you, I don't have a problem with Silliman's requests for a new poetics of the Left, but I don't see it as having anything to do with the heirs of his tradition. Things change and go off into unexpected directions, but when they do so, they often leave other opportunities unexplored. There is, in other words, everything right about asking for a new poetics of the Left, just as there is everything right about extending Silliman's tradition any way anyone sees fit.

regards,

Harold  


[↑ Contents](#)

996. **Catherine Daly**

***young poets, etc.***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

The more tests there are for belonging to a group, the fewer members. Over time, the original tests for belonging become less relevant, and there is attrition, as original members of the group begin to fail the tests/not care/etc. Sometimes the remaining members become more strident in their membership

demands, as in the Republican Party. Some people don't like that sense of "belonging".

Women are more socially mobile than men.

The idea that reviews be positive is absurd (in that way, it's kind of fun to imagine). Reviews are mostly pr nowadays. Let's keep throwing in the analysis.

31 the 28th,  
Catherine Daly



[↑ Contents](#)

997. **Gary Sullivan**

***Re: Response to Maria's Question***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Hello, again, Maria:

Many kind thanks for answering some of my questions. But it's really the last one that I think might be most relevant, so I'll re-ask it: Given what you & others have said w/respect to academia: What, specifically, now, could you ACTIVELY DO to help further nudge things forward, toward balance? Is there a way you might be able to use, for instance, the Talisman anthology Dodie and/or Kevin mentioned (hi Kevin & Dodie!), like, create an event there at UMN to somewhat coincide w/its publication? (I realize it would be difficult to get something approved & planned for March or April.) I bet many of the academics & non-academics on this list would be willing to participate in that, or anything else for that matter. Though I agree with Henry Gould that the art-product, & significant advancements of same, is made manifest, largely, by the individual, I'm also intrigued by Don Byrd's take, similar to Henri Lefebvre's meditation on cities, which makes a distinction between "product" (the home-made) and "oeuvre" (the culturally- or communally-produced), and privileges the oeuvre. So, again: What, specifically & generally--above & beyond the writings on Kaufman, Women of the Beat Movement, etc. you've already done--can you do toward ensuring the oeuvre of the academy reflects gender & racial balance?

Yours,

Gary

[↑ Contents](#)

998. **k. lederer**

**Re: Apologies, wish list**

Fri 30 Jan 1998

---

Dear Silliman Joris, Hisashiburi et al.,

Let me say that I've been on this list about a week. It's been really terrific as I'm a little bit isolated in some intellectual senses in Iowa--

I'm a little bit baffled (perhaps baffled isn't the right word--) by the number of responses that insist on correcting facts and setting social issues straight. I mentioned two or three names in a couple of posts replete with much larger questions and issues (ie, how to nurture young talent, how poetry has changed in the last forty years institutionally, what style might be...) and found a number of people who honed in on facts and reputations that they thought were misrepresented...

I have nothing against "language poets"--Lyn Hejinian was probably the kindest and most nurturing teacher I have ever had--In fact, my original post was a lengthy Barthes quote about style--and was a defense of langpos--

I suppose that I'll stick to the theoretical in future posts--

Yours,

Katy

*On Fri, 30 Jan 1998,  
Nada Gordon wrote:*

*Hisashiburi desu ne. . .*

*I've just re-subbed to this list after a year or more of being unsubbed thinking I was going to hear about something new, but I've tuned in to find people are still writhing anxiously about language poetry hegemony.*

*k. lederer wrote:*

*I must say that I have this attitude mainly because of things I've heard--that 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...*

*Katy, whose version of the narrative is this? Exactly who are these "people who know"? I'm 34 (so do I fit your category of "an entire generation"?) and was in the thick of that scene for much of the 80's until I found*

myself in Tokyo in '88.

*Certainly I was not \*driven out\* by criticism from any of that number of primarily male writers! (torches!) Who's granting them that power? Who's so sensitive as to be driven out of a city by criticism? I don't remember any of them being critical of me, just encouraging. Maybe they thought I was an acolyte? Dunno, I didn't feel like one. There may, I confess, have been moments when I fancied myself a baby-language-poet-in-training, but that was a passing phase -- I quickly realized the limits of that self-characterization. I do remember learning a lot.*

*Yes, that scene \*was\* sometimes joyless and constricting and abstruse, socially clumsy or flushed with its own importance (the foregoing modifiers could all apply to this list, couldn't they). Still, I and other young writers were choosing to be around the language poets' whoosh of intellectual energy. No one forced us to be there, and no one drove us out. Most of the other young writers I hung out with at the time went back to their hometowns or towards new opportunities, as I did -- San Francisco's miniscule and overcrowded when it comes to job-hunting time. Might be worthwhile to have a look at the economics & demographics of this claim of "young poet flight."*

*A memory (1983?):*

*I remember Colette Lafia and I were taking a night class at SFSU from Barry (Watten) on the Russian Formalists. He was driving us home (not driving us \*out\*), and she and I were talking in the back seat about the class. He turned around from the front seat and said, frustratedly, "I'm really having a hard time getting you guys to understand what 'form' is" (not his exact words).*

*and I'm still puzzling over that, what is form?*

*For me that's more interesting to think about than generational power and poetry "politics."*

*And isn't it a good teacher whose question still resounds fifteen years later?*

*nada (gordon)*

[↑ Contents](#)

999. **k. lederer**

***Re: Missing generation***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Kevin,

That was a totally great post--it's funny because here at Iowa there is also a rather pervasive discourse regarding the "dropping out" of young poets--

Marvin Bell et al periodically remind us that "even here, in the belly of the poetic beast etc..." only about one out of every four of "us" will be writing in 20 years--

Some of the younger poets I know also talk about this--

Anselm B. and I have had some interesting discussions about it, Hoa, Dale, etc...

The interventions of death, though, have not been discussed much in my circles--sobering thing to think about--

Thanks again for the post--it was thought-provoking

Love,

Katy

[↑ Contents](#)

1000. **Henry Gould**

***Re: a posting to poetics***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

On Fri, 30 Jan 1998 11:14:42 -0500 Rod Smith said:

>

>I've pointed this out before but will say again, another major difference is  
>the economic circumstance of this group. Re this question witness just the  
>book titles Edge has recently issued: \_They Beat Me Over the Head With a  
>Sack\_, \_Nothing Happened and Besides I Wasn't There\_, \_perhaps this is a  
>rescue fantasy\_, & forthcoming, \_Marijuana Softdrink\_. It is my contention  
>that there is much \*NEW\* (superscript tm) in this gen & it is informed by a  
>stunning listening in to an entire tradition which includes L=A=N=G coupled  
>with economic circumstances which often do not allow for the kind of lengthy  
>critical explication one might wish for. Or one might not. I'm not troubled  
>really by giving primacy to the poetic, if a writer's truly concentrated on  
>their work which genre they've chosen at the moment is not the point. It's a  
>matter of the degree of creative engagement, & there's plenty of that. I  
>would define "creative" to include "critical" by the way.

Length is not a criterion. Neither is "economic circumstances" an excuse. That sounds like a cop-out, Rod. (Or a kind of blurb outfit for romantic "short abstract french-cut lyrics by youngsters".) But I agree that CONCENTRATION ON YOUR WORK (critical or creative or cri/cre) is the thing. And a ratio of more good poetry to less bad criticism is all to the good. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

1001. **KENT JOHNSON**

***The Pump***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Henry:

Good show there below. However, both as a matter of principle and in order to help ensure that the "Independent Critics" do not quickly fall prey to the very ills they would courageously set out to do battle against ("conflicts of interest, tendentious promotion, favoritism, the uses of 'names' as a substitute for the thing itself," etc), I would offer this additional qualification (sic) to your little manifesto: This new "school" of critics will only present critical considerations under a continuously shifting array of heteronyms, with each critic limited to the use of a particular "name" for only three attributions; subsequent to three attributions, a "new" critic must be created. Don't you think? As they say, those who critique should set the example. Or, as the good book says, let he who is without sin remove the log from his own eye, or something like that.

Thus, this new society of critics would be called "The World Union of Independent and Apocryphal Critics." However, the fact is that such a group would be a Johnny-come-lately sort of thing, for there is already the recently formed and, yes, "actually existing" International Society of Transpersonal Authorship, which includes a number of critics, poets, fiction writers, and philosophers who write roughly under the conditions I have outlined above. Most of these writers are currently Russian, though other nationalities are already on board.

By the way, that was one hell of a beautiful stanza, poet. What moved your hand to brand it with your own name?

Kent (my name in the game, so you see my point?)

ON JANUARY 30, HENRY GOULD PROCLAIMED:

The individual & group circus contortions poets go through to get attention (both the "Language Poets" and myself are very good examples); the incestuous and truly mystifying monopoly amalgamations of theory, criticism, scholarship, and poetry that go on in the academy; the disdain & disinterest displayed in humanities departments (of all places) for poetry; and the shell game/sell game/name game that goes on in bookstores & journals... none of these things are

going to go away. Who would want them to, really? We all love the circus, don't we? (When the acts don't make us scared or nauseous.) Ah, blessed literary spite...

But I think these symptoms & effects might be lessened or relieved by a strong independent criticism. I propose the formation of a World Union of Independent Critics. The 1st principle would be that they would never meet as a group; the 2nd that they would write about their personal friends only in a special conversational genre called "Buddy Chats". The 3rd principle would be that these critics would care enough about poetry without being poets themselves (I mean "full-time" poets) to do the following things in a very serious way:

1. These critics would educate themselves about poetry as a general field stretching around the globe, running back to the origins of humanity, and subject to new developments.
2. They would specialize in one or two areas for deep exploration.
3. They would interest themselves in the poetry of their own region, and dedicate themselves to seeking out "unknown" and new work, or disregarded old work.
4. They would cast an amused but cold eye on the maneuvers - personal, political, aesthetic, professional, promotional - on poets & poetry groups, always measuring new work & young poets within a framework or awareness of DEVELOPMENT. I.e. a dialectical sense: new young poets produce stunning revolutionary work: how does it relate to the past? what kind of individual development/apprenticeship are they going through? do they have staying power? By the same token, the critic would look at strong, established and productive poets, and ask: are they changing? getting any better? repeating themselves?
5. They would publish the results of their investigations, explorations, responses, and theories in a modest format available to everybody.
6. They would keep a respectable distance from conflicts of interest, tendentious promotion, and favoritism, by means of a proud dedication to their OWN endeavor: an independent criticism interested in measuring the values of what passes for literature and sharing them with the general public. Isn't this all we ask from any profession? Why are literature and poetry, poets and scholars, exempt from basic rules of order regarding tendentious polemic and mystifying "theoretical" promotion? The uses of "names" as a substitute for the thing itself? Those little blurbs look so innocuous... they're poison, poison!!!!

[↑ Contents](#)

1002. **charssmith**

**Re: Copies of AYA still available**

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Gordon,

Hi! I'd be interested in a copy of AYA. Don't think I ever met ya, but I remember yr name from old Houses of K. Where wd you like a check sent?

Charles Smith  
2135 Irvin Way  
Sacramento, CA 95822

In a message dated 98-01-30 09:49:22 EST, you write:

<< I still have twenty-one copies of AYA left, a one-time-only (maybe) magazine published by myself (Nada Gordon), Andrea Hollowell, and Ewan Colquhoun out of Tokyo.

all for only \$5.00

or 500 yen (a better deal with the current exchange rate)

to get your copy, e-mail: [REDACTED]

>>

[↑ Contents](#)

1003. **henry**

**Re: pumping poetry**

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

On Fri, 30 Jan 1998 11:19:15 -0600 Maria Damon said:

>hen rites:

>... And pardon me: I write poems. I know just, just

>how abject that sounds to every certified tenured intellectual.

>The funny thing is they're not going to get it; they don't

>MAKE poems. - Henry Gould

>

>\*\*

>

>now henry-kins, in general i admire your fighting spirit and purism, when

>you stick to the issues and refrain from ad hominem and ad feminam

>generalizations. it's fine to set high and intransigent standards for

>yourself; but who are you to judge the motives of others? this kind of

>macho poetico-darwinism (if you can't hack it alone against the crowd, yr

>don't deserve to draw breath etc) --loses its credibility. the fact that

>you write poems does not sound abject to me, or, probably, to joe conte,



>jonathan mayhew (hi jonathan), etc. but it \*does\* sound as if you need to  
>get some sleep or something.--md

Maria, I didn't mean you. Yes the ranting gets SLOPPY & BORING. I was thinking about the general phenomenon (is it a right-left brain thing?) of people theorizing about a subject when they have no feel for the process. (There will be many who think I'm such a one myself.) & the process I was trying to emphasize (this is one place where FORM & POLITICS connect) was the danger in poetry (imaginatively speaking). "It can kill a man." I mean the tightrope quality of moving line to line, when the poet puts his or her BODY ON THE LINE in the old sense expressed in the phrase "a man of his word". That's what I think of when I think of the process of MAKING POEMS. It can be lost sight of in the teeming jungle atmosphere of world poetry production in this day & age. It's a marvelous jungle indeed - you can take paths both outward & inward. But that being on the line through a whole lifetime development is part of what I meant by the danger of being thrown off the wire by irrelevancies or corruptions. I'm not talking about influences. I'm talking about selling out in various ways; being packaged; losing your bearings.

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

1004. **R. Gancie**  
***Modernist Antidote Urgently Needed***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Don Byrd and Joe Amato:I just caught up with your exchange and thought it would be an appropriate time, Joe, to explain why I felt that physics would remain at the center of the current controversies. It didn't surprise me that a physicist, Paul Forman was chosen to critique *The Flight from Science and Reason*. The history and necessary centrality of the current controversy has its roots, in large part, in quantum theory and its, as physicists themselves often call it, "counterintuitive" phenomena. Crudely put these 'anti-Ockhamist' quantum events are four:1) energy exists in discrete packets 2)wave/particle paradox 3) position/momentun paradox and 4) influence of the observer upon the observed. The 'counterintuitive' nature of these problems have led to a huge body of theoretical speculation which for reasons involving, among other things, the nature and capacities of language, can be fairly described as 'meta-physical'and every participant in the current debate is subject to these limitations and has demonstrated that fact repeatedly in their publications. What is maddening about the current controversy (and our hopes for an ecological solution)is that the evolution and therefore pervasiveness of this speculation is being ignored by all sides. A rough archaeology would look like this. 1)

Philosophical speculation introduced by the physicists responsible for the fundamental discoveries in Quantum itself who are troubled by its 'counterintuitive' nature--Bohr, Heisenberg, Einstein, Bridgman, de Broglie, von Neumann and many, many more 2) then came philosophical and philisophico-historical exegesis and the introduction of the problems involved in a reliance on formal or quantized systems--Husserl, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Hayek, Hansen, Reichenbach, Whitehead, Oakeshott, Feyerabend, Rorty and many, many more 3) then the Frankfurt School and the broadening to the social paradigm and a sharp critique of formal systems--Horkheimer, Adorno, Habermas and others 4) finally, deconstruction--Derrida, Foucault, Latour et al. This, in turn, is the inheritance of the debate born out of European Transcendental philosophy, enlightenment science, British empiricism etc. and in conflict with Realism and Logical Positivism (before its collapse the philosophical Xanadu for scientists that wanted a system of language that banished all metaphysical elements and paralleled the certainty said to inhabit mathematics---see Gross and Levitt, Higher Superstition on A. J. Ayer for a sense of how ill-informed these cats are) and the positivist adjustments found in Popper, Quine, Lakatos and many others. The importance of the fundamental questions surrounding these early 20th century physical discoveries is beyond question as well as unresolved. The influence of physics upon our daily lives is irrefutable. That a critical assessment of the contradictions and tenets as well as the technological fruits of the discoveries of physics has taken on a new urgency is borne out by Don's World Watch citation. For decades I have endeavored to put this debate into poetic form if only because it is utterly fundamental to all that we experience and how we interpret that experience. Generally, my response from literary and academic editors runs like this 1)we are not sure what it is you are doing 2) but we are certain that you are not doing it well. People in the sciences tell me that they do not need an historical or hermeneutical perspective to do their jobs effectively which jobs here in Washington are overwhelming defense or regulatory related. My work draws (or, I should say drew) heavily from the modernist forms embodied in Pound, Olson, Duncan, Zukofsky, Jones, Johnson et al because with the modernist mode you can build with original source material, a philosophical dialectic subtle and supple enough to advance a series of positions and conclusions. With the modernist form you can layer a tectonics of quoted material, image etc. allowing them to heat up as they come in the contact with one another. You can thus create unique arguments and reveal new syntheses. You can retain sense in the modernist mode without sacrificing the profundity of either the original argumentation or your reconstruction. The modernist mode is outward looking engaging some of the best of what has been thought encouraging the poet to increase the size and scope of his own thought. Modernism kicks the self-centeredness, naivete and sentimentality right out of you. And I've only begun to extoll its virtues. Don, its the ideal form for the kind of poetry you are

looking for and from what I can judge have on occasion, written. The "urgency" that you talk about IS being addressed. The opportunities to experience it are another matter.---Carlo Parcelli

[↑ Contents](#)

1005. **Harold Rhenisch**  
***World Union of Independent Critics***  
*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Henry!

You missed something.

I propose the formation of a World Union of Circusses, to which all the lion tamers, tightrope walkers, trapeeze artists, jugglers, clowns, gag artists, clairvoyants, savants, and poodle groomers of the literary establishment can happily belong, with the only requirement that they meet continually, travel the world together, giving shows in towns small and large, in countries rich and poor, selling popcorn for more than its worth, and enticing the young to run away from home for a life of romance and adventure.

Who could resist?

This in addition to your own World Union.

You see, I see a problem with this World Union. I'm sorry! I couldn't help it! I see those pesky "Buddy Chats" becoming outrageously popular, because, well, Oprah is popular too, gossip is popular, and trashy glitzy kitschy gossip the most popular of all. I think the fifth column of people out for a scurrilous time will subvert yr. good intentions.

I see too you don't want the poets in your group. They're going to snipe, Henry. They're going to nip at your heels. They're going to infiltrate your organization, and then they're actually going to meet over coffee. Boom! The whole enterprise is wrecked. You're going to have to kick them out. It's going to get petty. It will be awful. You might have to meet as a group, in order to kick them out. You might need an executive body.

And executive bodies, we know these days, are much in the news. We'd never be able to keep it quiet.

Don't get me wrong, I think your list of requirements for criticism is admirable, but who's gonna give you the authority? Those excluded from membership are going to attack your group in the same irrelevant way they nit and pick their way through the incests and love nests of contemporary incestual love-nesting, and there you'll be, building a bamboo sleeping platform in some tree and picking nits with the best of them.

Crum, but it sounds like fun.

In the spirit of comradeship and the love of trees, I propose the following:

1. We initiate Henry's Union of Independent Critics immediately, following his 6 axioms to the T, because someone has to cut through the guff.
2. We start up the World Union of Circusses at the same time, because someone has to guff.
3. While all that is going on, we get together here for coffee, free at last from all those burdensome responsibilities.

Whatcha say, Henry?

Harold

██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

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1006. **Harold Rhenisch**  
*absurd reviews*

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Catherine Daly wrote:

>>The idea that reviews be positive is absurd (in that way, it's kind of fun to imagine).

I agree. A genre of truly tongue-in-cheek, ironic reviews would be a lot of fun.

Harold Rhenisch

██████████

[↑ Contents](#)

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1007. **k. lederer**  
*Re: a posting to poetics*

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Dear Rod,

I really liked this take--

I think it seems especially accurate in light of what other new poets elsewhere are up to (eg Iowa types)--

I know a number of newer writers who have mainly worked alone, or away from the group you summon up in your post, who seem to be riffing off of a lot of the same issues/aesthetics/dead poets that those of your group riff off of--

Not to imply that there might be such a thing as a poetic control group--but there kind of might be--

In this regard: Cf:

Of Piscator, Martin-Corless Smith (U of Georgia, 1st book) The Little Door Slides Back, Jeff Clark (forthcoming from S & M, 1st book) Anything by Emily Wilson, Ishmael Klein, Kelly Flynn, Nick Regiacorte, Josh May, Kevin Larimer, etc--none of whom have a first book out yet--

Yours,  
Katy

\*\*\*

On Fri, 30 Jan 1998 [REDACTED] wrote:

*Re Ron's post yesterday:*

*I'd differ with Jeff Derksen by asserting that there are LOTS of projects, plural, among younger writers. That the L=A=N=G thang jelled into a singular recognizable project is contestable. Nevertheless, if as Mr Watten writ "Identity is the cause of war" perhaps "we" don't want one. This may be a possibility because of the multiplicity of influences available. The rather incredible amount of engaging writing available just within the Pound-Stein-Williams etc. tradition allows for such a variety of trajectories among younger poets & within a single author's work that it will take quite a bit of retrospect before "a project" could be identified. That this is the case does not mean that Anselm Berrigan, Edmund Berrigan, Sherry Brennan, Lee Ann Brown, Mary Burger, Steve Carll, Susan Clark, Kevin Davies, Jordan Davis, Tim Davis, Buck Downs, Patrick Durgin, Heather Fuller, Peter Gizzi, Judith Goldman, Lisa Jarnot, Andrew Levy, Bill Luoma, Jennifer Moxley, Melanie Neilson, Sianne Ngai, Hoa Nuyen, Julie Patton, Lisa Robertson, Lisa Samuels, Chris Stroffolino, Juliana Spahr, Rodrigo Toscano, Mark Wallace, Liz Willis, &&& are not engaged in serious critical explorations which are shared & which inform each others work. The work of the writers on the above list cannot reasonably be reduced to the epithet "bland abstract lyric," it just can't. Rather one might say that the context is wider, the number of influences being drawn on & the insistence on the contingency of any given mode is greater, that's all. This feeling that the context of the writing is wider (which it is) may be a response to the obvious fact that the context for actual political action-- for response at that level, has been shattered. Macropolitically, the corporations have won. The evidence of these writers, I think, is that micropolitically, they definitely have not. What that counts for I cannot say, it is certainly a valid kind of resistance-- most recognizably to overly codified modes of thinking about what poetry (i.e. communication) is/can be within educational institutions & for that reason is strongly allied to the continuing project of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E. Tho it perhaps can/will have larger influence, so one hopes.*

*I've pointed this out before but will say again, another major difference is the economic circumstance of this group. Re this question witness just the book titles Edge has recently issued: *They Beat Me Over the Head With a Sack*, *Nothing Happened and Besides I Wasn't There*, perhaps this is a rescue fantasy, & forthcoming, *Marijuana Softdrink*. It is my contention that there is much \*NEW\* (superscript tm) in this gen & it is informed by a stunning listening in to an entire tradition which includes L=A=N=G coupled with economic circumstances which often do not allow for the kind of lengthy critical explication one might wish for. Or one might not. I'm not troubled really by giving primacy to the poetic, if a writer's truly concentrated on their work which genre they've chosen at the moment is not the point. It's a matter of the degree of creative engagement, & there's plenty of that. I would define "creative" to include "critical" by the way. & it may be that identifying "a project" with the amount of discursive critical writing being done is precisely the mistake. It's understandable that this might be thought in the wake of or midst of L=A=N=G but it may be, um, wrong.*

Rod Smith

[↑ Contents](#)

1008. **Charles Watts**

***Re: As-Am poetics***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

I've been meaning to do this for the last several days, but haven't had time, and now don't have the book at hand, but:

Now published: Roy K. Kiyooka, *PACIFIC WINDOWS: THE COLLECTED POEMS OF ROY KIYOOKA*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1997. This is a big, really beautiful book, which contains all of Roy's earlier separate books--*KYOTO AIRS*, *THE FONTAINEBLEAU DREAM MACHINE*, *NEVERTHELESS THESE EYES*, *STONED GLOVES*, *THE PEAR TREE POMES*--everything but *TRANSCANADA LETTERS*, which was too big and bulky to be included, but which, I think, is still available from the press--plus previously unpublished or virtually unavailable work, plus a critical essay by the editor of *PACIFIC WINDOWS*, Roy Miki. This is really a fabulous book. It contains all of Roy K's illustrations for the original editions, as well as David Bolduc's illustrations for *PEAR TREE POMES*, all of which are in very beautiful color--and the illustrations are clearer, richer and more resonant than in the original editions. This book should be available from SPD (tho I just checked with Talonbooks and SPD hasn't ordered it yet), but you can order it from General Distribution Services. Here's the e-mail address:

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You can also order by toll free phone (within the U.S.): ██████████, or toll free fax: ██████████. The price is \$29.95 Canadian, \$26.95 U.S. If you've been

introduced to Roy's work only lately through e.g. PREMONITIONS and you liked what you found there, there's much to explore. Roy was better known in Canada as a painter and maker of assemblages of many kinds, but for the past many years the writing community here in Vancouver (and in select other places--the writers around Coach House Press, for example) knew him as a fine, funny, enormously inventive and elegant writer. He preferred to work, in writing anyway, on a relatively small scale; most of his books were published in small editions by small presses and are hard to get now; and he self-published many pieces in small, hand-made editions of around 50 and gave them to friends. I think many things remain unpublished -- his novelistic-essayistic treatment of the life of Tom Thompson (one of the Canadian "Group of Seven") for example, which some of us were lucky enough to hear at the Kootenay School. His mother and father were first-generation immigrants to Canada from Japan; his mother's stories, which are amazing, harrowing expressions of life in turn-of-the-century Japan and early 20th century Canada, were rendered from Japanese by Roy (via a literal transcription/translation of the tapes which Roy made of his mother telling the stories) into his own Canadian English-language versions. They're now available, from NeWest Press, I think (Doug Barbour or George Bowering, help me with this if you have the book), edited by Daphne Marlatt. The book is called MOTHER TALK: LIFE STORIES OF MARY KIYOSHI KIYOOKA. I don't have ordering info--maybe Doug or George can supply, or I'll find and post later.

But this is all to say that Roy was--he died in 1994, age 67, I think--and is a treasure of verbal and visual imagination. His written work is available now in a way that it has never really been before, thanks to Roy Miki and Talonbooks, and if you're interested in the work of innovative writers/artists, his is not to be missed.

--

Charles Watts  
Theses and Special Collections  
Special Collections & Rare Books  
Room 7100, Bennett Library  
Simon Fraser University  
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6  
Tel: [REDACTED]; Fax: [REDACTED]  
E-mail: [REDACTED]

[↑ Contents](#)



1009. **William Marsh**

***Re: the revolution will be poeticized***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Mark, found your post inspirational, and a fair and keen-sighted response to Siliman's legit points / not sure i have much to add, but

It's more

>important that (now I'm gonna get real polemical, from many folks' point  
>of view) that we develop socialist and revolutionary (also seriously  
>feminist and anit-racist) values, than that some external \*thing\* come  
>along, like Vietnam, and swat us on the side of the head.

and

It's gonna come from both our practice in our work as  
>poets and from all of us working to build popular movements with what time  
>we can spare outside our work. For me, it has usually been the labor  
>movement plus a number of more specific attempts to at least inject the  
>beginning of social democratic ideas into the immediate sphere of shared  
>discourse, the place where working people like myself encounter Ted  
>Koppell and all those shambling corpses...

all seems true / let me know if we're venturing into naming our causes -- not  
sure enough gets said on this list about the intersections of "poetry practice"  
and "social practice" or the politics of daily living (choices, habits, etc.)

trying to live and develop political  
>values in the core of one's own life..

yes.

bill

-----  
William Marsh  
PaperBrainPress  
Voice & Range Community Arts  
National University  
██████████

http://www.dtai.com/~bmarsh  
snail: 1860 PB Dr. #4  
San Diego, CA 92109  
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[↑ Contents](#)



1010. **Jack Spandrift**

***A Parable about a Pair a Bulls***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

There was a cowboy once by the name of J (not Jack; just J). Out on the prairie one day he saw a herd of Bulls. There was one big Bull named Henry; he wore a purple hat between his horns & was lecturing the herd as they moved along day after day. He trumpeted his lectures on a third horn between his two horns under his purple hat; everybody listened carefully. He cried, "Bulls, you are not to travel in herds anymore! You are to carry these Henry Packs on your backs and follow me!"

J wondered: is Henry the Bull a small town boy? Suddenly with a tremendous bullish roar the whole herd including Henry pummelled pell-mell over a cliff. J rode over to the edge & picked up a Henry Pack. It was extremely heavy; J thought: oy, the burdens he laid on their backs! Better for them to go right over the cliff than carry one of these! J opened the Pack. Inside he found a faded manuscript written on 8 x 11" legal pad with black ink. In block letters across the top he read: THE POEMS OF HENRY THE BULL. J thought: maybe I'll get to this one of these days... & he rode off into the sunset, singing "Row Row Row Your Boat"\*

\*according to Eric Blarnes of the Univ. of Left Overbie, this familiar folk song is the most profound work of literature in the English language.

- Jack Spandrift

[↑ Contents](#)

1011. **Keston Sutherland**

***Re: a posting to poetics***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Isn't this coercion of "economic circumstances" into low-pressure relevance via "CONCENTRATION ON..[etc]", really quite drearily enthusiastic? An explanation - however partial or specific - need not be an "excuse". How is your concentration enabled, what are the qualities of its persistence, what are the material situations of its effectiveness? The old "cop-out" accusation can also be an uninterestingly reflex gesture of self-aggrandizement.

Keston

[↑ Contents](#)

1012. **p. durgin**

***Re: a posting to poetics***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

"hen" & Rod,        The question becomes, to what degree does one's writing attain to a social function (not a role, a function). The role of poet or of critic would seem to imply that their function is social. Socio-economic distinctions do not register a "cop-out" insofar as one creates for and within turbulent and inequitable social matrices. And this inequity cannot easily be said to be innocuous in our distinctions between "good" and bad creative and critical work.        If I understand Rod's argument, it's that it's difficult(er) to formulate or recognize a unified "project" in some of today's writing, as opposed to that there Langpod hoedown of a few years back. It's tough to cop out of a project which was never undertaken.        Patrick F. Durgin

`  
`  
`  
` ---->\*<----  
` K E N N I N G|  
` anewletterof|  
` poetry&poetic|  
` s418BrownSt.#|  
` 10IowaCityIA5|  
` 2245USA\\V\\|

[↑ Contents](#)

1013. **k. lederer**

***Re: Great poem, great poet***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

By Ishmael Klein:  
(From Gare du Nord, Notley and Oliver, eds.)

Where Everything Waits

Nobody was left who'd lastly scuffed first earth's crust.  
Boiling sea had thin-sheened each cubit of firmament.  
Mountains ceased to assert, gave in to ground  
arounding whatever hard rock  
to then there-over and taken down.

All shapes breaking hysterical particles and subs who settled;  
devoting former whirr of shape to Silence  
which was enough.

It stayed uniform Silent for some many months  
which strengthened to pull outerspace noise in to neutralize  
but lost its grip.

So this Sound hard pressed in to sink holes  
and look into original force that was still shut up  
under black lacquer cabinetry: our future perfect world.

It opened door of dust,  
the space Sound, picked up pings distantly.  
Seeing to sound is what and how Bounceback.

Since the dust so still and small,  
this wave skinnied high-pitched  
to switch on resistance of an average mote.

What would stand to receive?  
What was the point of pointing to resisting decay?  
What was there to say?

Could anything be activated?  
Much was strained in "done" state and so sought exit through soft  
Silence under rather than be stabbed by point-cornered Silence above.

So sound deranged to be  
needle pierce to dust piece  
and sunned a word heard first by the bygone ("ouch").

And the Silence, started by the sneaking sound,  
forgot its own high ground  
and grumbled some rebuke.

Underground the glad particulates  
laughed at the gaff and stretched as to seem  
(something among it a voice) to sweep up what had been:

II

One in Dust begun

One chased out Perceptivity from mum.

This made and In so such could close  
over after outreach which comes back with something to stay.

Stretching comes to the zone where is shifting  
from mixing its own x-space with outside sensed data.

Each already edgy piece in "earshot"  
each piece pulled in by dust's desire to harbor more.

Similar to dolphin noise the riffs that began off flats of static  
f.p. earth, those etched by rust-hinge-close sound, insecure.  
Not all dust took in.

Those who did not got ultra dense.

If there were a strike to this one specie,  
sparks would three feet, at least, and atoms.

To them strike relieves adhesion.

They like hits from nowhere; they won't admit their Hard  
it's in every space.

But sparks in dark if eye sees then  
a mouth to say how beautiful a light of light blue  
that lasts then deepens in hue still blue. Shaped  
like a pin, each spark alights to hold itself elsewhere down.

What it lands on is to remember spark beautiful.

Spark from hard Silence made mad.

More mad makes for more hard which will get hit  
and fly farther because it is harder.

III

Clicketing care taken soft expansive dust gets all over the dense.

Colors change as comes collision.

They don't know intimately each color shift  
nor say "mysterious" to themselves when frequencies change wildcat.

They just want to do all they can  
now that they can.

They definitely do not know about the deep  
frozen people way out in orbit.

Animals are not in this orbit because they had a heaven in mind before they  
died.

For people, the trick would have been to have made arrangements as for terri-  
tory; seeing as something of them might survive.

If back before upheaval they know someone dying,  
they should have had him save a spot in the thereafter.

He'd have been able to stand by the rope and shake it so they would notice and to have said how long they would have to hold on before the rooms for them are ready.

[↑ Contents](#)

1014. **louis stroffolino**

***Re: Missing generation***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

One thing I've been thinking about lately that might tie in with some of the points Kevin Killian raises is this: Isn't it a little too early to complain about poets of (I guess) "my generation" that have "dropped out"? Maybe I only speak for myself here (maybe not), but when one thinks of Oppen's alleged 30 year hiatus, or the fact that Stevens didn't publish his first book until he was 44 (and had his economic life together) and then didn't write a poem for 6 years or so (while Holly was born and toddled etc.)--- (kinda like John Lennon's househusband phase? "watching the wheels" ah the courage to say "everybody seems to think I'm lazy/ I don't mind I think they're crazy") or Dylan's basement tape/nashville skyline "drop out period" ("just who were you expectin'? jesus zimmerman?") and the examples could proliferate, considering this, considering the sometimes really silly pressures poets place on other poets or on themselves (or maybe the "agent" that places these pressures is just some idea of productivity, some puritan ethic, some spurious "conscience", some idea of the career of the poet, the way the idea of the POET gets in the way, becomes perhaps at times somewhat debilitating, a question of aesthetic reputation), one may wonder and maybe it would be worthwhile to investigate exactly what is meant by "poetic commitment". So now that I've perhaps come off like an "EXASPERATING" killjoy, codger of sorts, let me say that I am not interested in preventing anybody from NOT "dropping out", but I do want to "rise" to a defense of those who may have dropped out (and I'm not naming names right now, names are not exactly what i feel is at stake here), or may have seemed to drop out. Dropped out from WHAT? is I believe a valid question. I don't know if anybody else here has felt that there's sometimes when it's very important to "lay fallow" as it were and maybe even WILL or FORCE oneself NOT to write, recognizing that there are, at certain times at least in ones life, when the enthusiasm to write write write fight fight fight publish publish publish (and in "the right places" at that) may become counterproductive, get in the way, when (dare I say this today, when LESS IS MORE), etc. and this can go many different ways, in many different directions, but i'm curious where you, oh dear collective of listers, might take it. Thank you, Chris Stroffolino

On Fri, 30 Jan 1998 [REDACTED] wrote:

*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 . . .*

[↑ Contents](#)

1015. **robert drake**  
***Call for hypertexts (forward)***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

*\_BullHead Electric: An On-Line Journal of New Poetry, Graphics, Reviews, News\_ is looking for submissions of hypertext poetry. Contact Joe Napora (██████). The URL of the magazine is:*

*<http://ram.ramlink.net/~napora/bullhead.htm>*

[↑ Contents](#)

1016. **pritchpa**  
***Re: pumping poetry***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

Hi Henry. Hi Kent. I like this idea by god. But I think you should call it the Utopian World Union of Indie Critics. They'll have a secret HQ the whereabouts of which are unknown to any of them. We could also abolish all self-interest too

and hell, why not, world hunger while we're at it. Who wouldn't want that? Well - lots of people I suppose. David Brinkely might get upset on both counts!

Seriously, though. It's amusing to think of a kind of blurbless blurb i.e. one without any attribution. Grosse Gott how would we know what to THINK? But for this to happen, really and truly, posits a radical series of sweeping cultural changes that would also end racism, sexism, fascism, etc etc etc. In other words, in the mutually interdependent world of the ten kajillion things, you can't have the one without all the others too. What you're really talking about is the end of a capital-based society - the end of the opposition between purity of vocation and Mammon - and a return to a gift economy. Well not really a return, but... Ja love, y'all.

To Chris Stroffolino: I heard Mark DuCharme read a piece last night he collaborated with you on. Great stuff - didn't get a chance to talk to him, he ducked out immediately after.

Patrick Pritchett

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From: henry

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: pumping poetry

Date: Friday, January 30, 1998 1:00PM

Maria, I didn't mean you. Yes the ranting gets SLOPPY & BORING. I was thinking about the general phenomenon (is it a right-left brain thing?) of people theorizing about a subject when they have no feel for the process. (There will be many who think I'm such a one myself.) & the process I was trying to emphasize (this is one place where FORM & POLITICS connect) was the danger in poetry (imaginatively speaking). "It can kill a man." I mean the tightrope quality of moving line to line, when the poet puts his or her BODY ON THE LINE in the old sense expressed in the phrase "a man of his word". That's what I think of when I think of the process of MAKING POEMS. It can be lost sight of in the teeming jungle atmosphere of world poetry production in this day & age. It's a marvelous jungle indeed - you can take paths both outward & inward. But that being on the line through a whole lifetime development is part of what I meant by the danger of being thrown off the wire by irrelevancies or corruptions. I'm not talking about influences. I'm talking about selling out in various ways; being packaged; losing your bearings.

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)



1017. **charssmith**  
***Re: references, please***  
*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Pierre wrote:

<< > ... There were some  
> "experimental" poets and writers of a different tendency who later moved  
> (David Levi Strauss comes to mind), and whose publishing efforts (e.g.  
> ACTS) subsided and whose writing slowed down (I haven't seen anything by  
> Levi in a long time, but he may be writing other than poetry).

Tom -- Levi is well & alive in the Mid-Hudson Valley (or in Kent's terms he joined the Catskill school) & writing much excellent art criticism, some of it in easily accessible places like The Nation. >>

Last time I saw Levi, he was still working on *\_Odile & Odette\_*.

ps. to David Israel: It's Arthur Sze. & yes, *\_Archipelago\_* is a wonderful piece of writing.

pps. it strikes me that there are many many "experimental" writers in the bay between the ages of 35 & 45 -- quite a few of them on this list. maybe not making as much noise as some, but the work's available for the reading. these lists of names, though, kinda become little more than chicken feed scattered in the dust.

--CS

[↑ Contents](#)

1018. **pritchpa**  
***(no subject)***  
*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Yes. Okay. Roger that. But just for the record - and maybe I was being too oblique - I never scoffed at the idea of integrity in writing (or anything else) - I was skeptical, however, that anyone "gets anywhere" on their own. To write a poem, even in utmost secrecy is - if you're at all serious - to use a language already ancient in its poetic accruals: is to engage with the living presence of the dead - and also, your living contemporaries. As for publishing: that takes luck, connection, timing, persistence, canniness and even possibly a modicum of skill, maybe... (Whatever it takes, it's still eluding me! But, as you rightly say, that's not "the why" of writing a poem). In any event, it takes *\_other people\_*.

Patrick Pritchett

-----

From: Henry Gould

To: [REDACTED]

Date: Wednesday, January 28, 1998 7:58PM

On Wed, 28 Jan 1998 14:26:00 -0600 pritchpa said:

>Oh Henry. Or should I say, "Oh Dr. Lydgate." Or better still, "Oh  
>Dorothea." This has gotten boring. Let's both try to calm down. Thing  
is

>I don't disagree with any of what you're saying about why one writes a  
>poem - that's all rather Obvious - I just find the way you say it  
>pompous and self-promoting - the very things you seem to be inveighing  
>against so vehemently. If there's a poet or critic on this List who  
>doesn't write "for luv" let him or her stand up now..... You see  
anyone?

>I don't. But if you want to keep tilting at that windmill then by all  
>means, go ahead.

Patrick, I'm really glad you agree with me. You began by scoffing at the idea that a writer might have a personal stake in originality or self-respect that might possibly be threatened by nepotism, back-scratching, the buddy system, groups in general; you thought it was naive that these things might influence the scene. But you've come around - that's the main thing, and I don't give a flying buffalo chip what you think of my style. Pax. I'm a pompous hypocrite - a list hog - so be it. The main thing is, you've come around. I'm surprised others haven't said what you've said more often - I think it's because everybody on the list is really nice (except for me & maybe that Bowering guy down in Canada). Self-serving - that's the least of it! Nobody ever knows, much less tells, the whole truth. The truth is I MARRIED into poetry, REMARRIED WAY OUT of poetry, and have been having poetic affairs (or trying to) IN poetry ever since! It's worse than Plath-Hughes, only the writing's better & nobody's died yet (me & Berryman just counted the other day). Ask Gwyn or Susan - they've actually read my stuff. (Gwyn - don't say anything before consulting my lawyer - let me give you his # - 612-000-00hh - he's that bearded guy in the lumberjack shirt & fur hat - Wayne McCornhusk - you've seen him on TV). Probably it's familiar already to 8% of the younger generation and 53% of the older generation, but it makes a helluva narrative, Dale. - Henry Gould (more creepily personal than ever!)

[↑ Contents](#)

1019. **KENT JOHNSON**

***Ojo al toro con tres cuernos***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Spandrift:

Your parable reminds me of an old Uruguayan saying, which begins, "Beware of the bull with three horns." I wish I could remember the rest, but I can't. But I do remember once when I was 19, being at a barbecue in Punta del Este before it was totally trashed by the Brazilian and Argentinian jet set. It was a big party of young YMCA members, about 25 of us, and everyone got a big hunk of fairly rare meat with the hide and fur still attached. I remember watching the 17 year old girl I loved pick this up in her hands and chew and laugh. A kid, about the same age, picked up a guitar and started to sing a song by Daniel Viglieti, whose music was banned at the time, and everyone joined in, singing. By and by a black van and car both full of plainclothes cops arrived and started arresting everybody, and the kid with the guitar, who started to complain, got a long, black club across the face. The cop who was dragging away the girl I loved conveniently grabbed her breasts, and I stepped forward and yelled Hey! But then I didn't say anything more, afraid that I might get hit too. She tried to kick and punch back, but to no avail. She screamed at them that they were fascist pigs. The van drove away.

It was me and three or four 12 year olds who didn't get taken in. I was American, so the cops just took down some info and told me to watch it. OK, I said, I will. I took the bus back to Montevideo.

About two weeks later I saw the girl back at the Y. Our eyes met and then she quickly turned away. I started to say something but only half of it got out. Here and there I saw her a few times, but never spoke to her again. The kid playing the guitar was in for more than two years. No one died. I have no idea why in the world I'm saying this on this list. I know my posts are sometimes among the most idiosyncratic here and certainly not among the most esteemed. I don't fault anyone for that. In fact, I have come somehow to even like those who don't like me! Isn't that strange? But what is wrong with me? Forgive me for this creepily personal post! Something about not remembering the old saying about the bull with three horns draws me to say it, and also to remember the way that beautiful girl turned her eyes from me. It occurs to me now that if it weren't for what happened then that I wouldn't be typing this now on this list, whatever it might mean. It occurs to me that it turned me into everything that I became. I guess that sounds trite. And yes, ok, so I'm feeling a bit embarrassed, not very polished or admirable at all, aware that even this candor is another sad way of demeaning myself before all of you.

Oh, I really did feel like jumping over the cliff. Still do, actually. I wish poetry was a parachute that worked, but it doesn't, not when the cliff is real. I wanted, Henry, to say to you at the end, "Here, Henry, here is your purple hat." But now I don't want to say that--at least not in the clever way that I'd planned. Now I am feeling a little sad, sad for us both, but mostly selfishly sad for myself, and I feel like being quiet for a long while. I know that you might well be thinking

that I don't need to be sad for you, and of course you would be right. And I guess in the end, after all this time, after all those years of trying to forget, that's all that I have to say about that half-remembered saying.

Kent

[↑ Contents](#)

1020. **David Israel**

***Re: A Parable about a Pair a Bulls***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Spendrift spinned this drift:

<< . . . J opened the Pack. Inside he found a faded manuscript written on 8 x 11" legal pad with black ink. . . . >>

acc. to this long-time law-office-worker, a legal pad is traditionally & customarily 8x14". Interesting tale -- "Allegory for the allegory's sake"? Dude may've not been far amis abt. "Row row [et seq.]" anyhow. One wonders as to the latter's origins. 7-foot couplet.

d.i.

p.s.: film worth seeing: Aton Egoyan's \*The Sweet Hereafter\*. That be narrative heaven, however fraught. Polley's music . . .

[↑ Contents](#)

1021. **david bromige**

***carlo's post***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

which I find splendid, a splendid correction, for myself certainly not seeing the wood for the trees (and then again, the trees for the wood), admirably concise and plangent outline of the history & not only of modernism, I would add (since Carlo stops with that term) but of the postModern (and I would be interested to read someone of Carlo's abilities who wants to insert other authorities to give some account of the difference between these two terms. "Counter-intuitive" requirements are what makes common sense so, uh, common, and so short in, um, sense. The entire appeal to intuition & common sense, spirals downward into bad temper ("why all these long words?") and barbarism ("Duh. . .") with which, among other minorities, intellectuals are attacked. Adorno liked to cite the tale of Mahler's donkey, which never met another donkey it didnt like, but had a hard time with modern music (I'm paraphrasing wildly here : someone got the correct quote?)

Reading this post of his, for me the whole constellance of debates \_lifted\_, I remembered what I'm here for--and hope others feel likewise. More on this soon I hope, David.

[↑ Contents](#)

1022. **Robert Hale**

***One Million Poems or a Thousand Lines a Day***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Chris Stroffolino writes:

considering the sometimes really silly pressures    poets place on other poets or on themselves (or maybe the "agent"    that places these pressures is just some idea of productivity, some    puritan ethic, some spurious "conscience", some idea of the career    of the poet, the way the idea of the POET gets in the way, becomes    perhaps at times somewhat debilitating, a question of aesthetic    reputation), one may wonder and maybe it would be worthwhile to investigate exactly what is meant by "poetic commitment".

I recall an article in the Wall Street Journal concerning Jordan Davis' project to write a million poems (or something like that). How is that going Jordan?

I also recall leaving a party after a discussion with Bruce Andrews about computers versus typewriters (guess which one he uses) and other matters including this list. His parting line was something to the effect of "now it's time to write a thousands lines." I took him seriously in the sense that he's fairly prolific. It was like he was saying "okay, partytime is over. Enough talk. Now go and write."

[↑ Contents](#)

1023. **Marcella Durand**

***Re: As-Am poetics***

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Check out Tan Lin's book from Sun & Moon, Lotion Bullwhip Giraffe (???). I'm blanking on the exact title.

-----

From: Bob Grotjohn

Sent: Friday, January 30, 1998 9:50 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject:        Re: As-Am poetics

Juliana Chang's essay is in MELUS 21.1 (Spring 1996): 81-98

Trinh T. Minh-ha, various work, is worth a look for theory.

Lisa Lowe, "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity" *\*Diaspora\** 1 (Spring 1990): 24-44. Possible relation to experimental poetics.

*\*Amerasia Journal.\** Asian American Poetry Issue. 20.3 (1994). A good place to start; various writers positioning themselves.

--

Bob Grotjohn  
Mary Baldwin College  
Staunton, VA 24401

540/

AA00/TcAALxR

[↑ Contents](#)

1024. **LAURA MORIARTY**  
*old/young academic/non etc*

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

To reply to Maria's reply to my post -

I think there is a difference in the thinking that produces an academic essay or career and the thinking that produces poetry and/or essays that would not be legible to most in academia. Some feel quite strongly about this - Robert Duncan was one. The first time I met him was in Tom Parkinson's class at Cal and Duncan spent a half hour or maybe an hour attacking all academics - esp Tom - It's an old list argument I know. But I do think the critic or editor, academic or not, has the responsibility to find the work and the people. Men submit more to non so I ask the women two times, three times - I myself am often reticent and I know some male writers who are that way - But one must be relentless.

I think legibility is a key point - A group or generation provides a context - Sometimes you have to read alot of new writing to get what people are about - What they are doing that doesn't seem new but actually has changed everything -

And to Katy and others (btw Katy, great magazine!)

I've been in the Bay Area forever (well since 73) and there has never not been a lot going on - Jimmy & Lucy's House of K, Big Allis, and Ottotole are among the mags that were edited by and/or published many in the supposedly absent generation - jeez some of my best friends are in that gen - Not to mention myself who at 45 and, in the *\*younger-person\** anthologies, am the same age as some of the old ones, as well the same age as of some of the *\*younger\** ones -

It's also true what Chris Stroff said - Sometimes you have to take a few years off to have a kid, or help someone die or make some money etc -

Laura

[↑ Contents](#)

1025. **Don Byrd**  
***Re: pumping poetry***  
*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

henry Gould wrote:

*the incestuous  
and truly mystifying monopoly amalgamations of theory, criticism, scholarship,  
and poetry that go on in the academy; the disdain & disinterest displayed  
in humanities departments (of all places) for poetry;*

I am aware of the disinterest (such disinterest there is little disdain). I am not aware, however, of mystifying monopoly amalgamations. Am I missing some thing? There have been a few books on contemporary poetry by academics in recent years, three or four of them by poet-academics on this list, and there is an occasional article in a literary journal. But what do you mean? M.P. talking language poetry in her never-ending lecture tour? I do not see how the miseries of poetry can be blamed on criticism. I would insist there is no significant amount of criticism. There aren't even any reviews to speak of.

Do you really think, Henry, that we have some rules for an objective criticism? I will completely agree that too many of the few people who undertake to write about poetry are demonstrably ignorant. I would say that at least 2/3 of the books on contemporary poetry written in the past twenty years prove only that their authors should NOT be tenured (and that those books secured them tenure shows how sadly bankrupt the system is), but when you say that you ideal critics "would keep a respectable distance from conflicts of interest, tendentious promotion, and favoritism, by means of a proud dedication to their OWN endeavor: an independent criticism interested in measuring the values of what passes for literature and sharing them with the general public," I have my doubts.

I get out my poetryometer (it was in the lab I got the key to when I got tenure) and measure the work of all the young poets. H.G. gets 9.5 on originality; 9.3 on structure, 9.9 on emotional intensity, 9.7 for ear for "daemonic laughter from distant Rockies."

I think it would be better for people to write about their friends.

Don

--

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd ([REDACTED], [REDACTED])  
Department of English  
State University of New York  
Albany, NY 12222  
[REDACTED] (work); [REDACTED] (home); [REDACTED] (fax)  
The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

1026. **R. Gancie**

**poetry**

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

What did you expect, Brennan. This is a Poetry list. There's nothing at stake here. Why don't you call up one of radical, do-gooder sites, you simple shit.---  
Carlo

[↑ Contents](#)

1027. **henry gould**

**Re: pumping poetry**

*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

On Fri, 30 Jan 1998 17:15:03 -0800 Don Byrd said:

>henry gould wrote:

>

>> the incestuous

>> and truly mystifying monopoly amalgamations of theory, criticism,  
>scholarship,

>> and poetry that go on in the academy; the disdain & disinterest displayed  
>> in humanities departments (of all places) for poetry;

>

> I am aware of the disinterest (such disinterest there is little  
>disdain).

>I am not aware, however, of mystifying monopoly amalgamations. Am I missing

>some

>thing? There have been a few books on contemporary poetry by academics in  
>recent

>years, three or four of them by poet-academics on this list, and there is an

>occasional article in a literary journal. But what do you mean? M.P. talking



>language poetry in her never-ending lecture tour? I do not see how the  
>misereries  
>of  
>poetry can be blamed on criticism. I would insist there is no significant  
>amount  
>of criticism. There aren't even any reviews to speak of.  
>  
> Do you really think, Henry, that we have some rules for an objective  
>criticism? I will completely agree that too many of the few people who  
>undertake  
>to write about poetry are demonstrably ignorant. I would say that at least 2/3  
>of  
>the books on contemporary poetry written in the past twenty years prove only  
>that  
>their authors should NOT be tenured (and that those books secured them tenure  
>shows how sadly bankrupt the system is), but when you say that you ideal  
>critics  
>"would keep a respectable distance from conflicts of interest, tendentious  
>promotion, and favoritism, by means of a proud dedication  
>to their OWN endeavor: an independent criticism interested in measuring the  
>values  
>of what passes for literature and sharing them with the general public," I have  
>my  
>doubts.

Don, and others (I've been asked to amalgamate my messages): A while back there was an electronic journal outa Buffalo: there was somebody writing reviews under the pseudonym of Edgar Allan Poe. That pseudonymous personage was onto something. She or he was AMALGAMATING several of the list responses to my World Indie Critics proposal. Kent: it was a pseudonym. Harold: it was a circus (it was a clown on a tightrope). Patrick: it was Indie in the Utopian critical sense. And Don: it was taking contemporary poetry seriously while "keeping a distance".

I live in a small New England city with one big Ivy League U. At this U we have a prestigious MFA program. In this MFA program we have a "mainstream" element (CD Wright et al) and an "avant-garde" element (the Waldrops et al.) Both, oddly enough, emerging out of Arkansas (WHAT DOES THIS MEAN???) or thereabouts (See Keith's intriguing memoir LIGHT WHILE THERE IS LIGHT).

I'm not a good scholar. You could say I'm a typical narcissistic artist type. But my gut feeling is there is a homemade poetry group industry & a homemade collegiate MFA industry & a homemade P.R. industry for poetry nationwide

(U.S.), in Don's term "homemade". In consequence for various idealistic & self-serving motives a lot of ALLOWANCES are made for this little fishbowl.

The strategy I am proposing is the "Edgar Allan Poe" strategy. Let there be critics who, even though they write about their friends, PRETEND (pseu- dony- mously) to maintain Indie critical standards. Let there be a little decency in the fishbowl; let it not be nice people scratching each other's fleas all the time. Let there be some people who develop global critical vocabularies about poetry (just go read the Princeton Encyc. for a couple months: that will do the trick), and set them loose on the chapbooks out there. Let there be advocates of a Hart Crane Tradition (read his letters on reading poetry: it will clean out your system). Let there be an Indie Critical Union that is Cool. Steve Evans is dressed for the part; Rod Smith & his collection have just the right mix of youth & miseducation; they just need to get together with a dose of fuck you cold shower do-it-yourself street-level ammonia vinegar ice in the veins honesty. The stage is set! They don't criticize themselves - let the Critics appear!

All of a sudden the academy will not be a rest home for aging Langpo heroes or 70s prof youth hostels; they will have to play catch-up with a poetry world that measures itself honestly by standards not established by the poets themselves.

Finally, in response to those troubled by economic conditions & the "cop-out" tag I put on Rod Smith. You say Rod was just characterizing a situation. But he was also promoting a list of his fave raves. I said: I agree. There's no need for critical boilerplate P.R. ala the Language Poets. I agree. Just don't wimp out by saying "hey, we're really poor in our dead-end jobs we can't think critically we just write the stuff." That is a cop out. Rod didn't say exactly that. He sort of left it open; it's: there's these economic conditions so we either CAN'T or DON'T FEEL LIKE developing a critical armature. (Economic conditions are probably no worse now than they were in the 70s for those concerned.) I say: Rod, whether you do it yourselves or somebody else does it, it would be good for poetry right now to have a non-tenured non-promotional non-blurb non-publisher non-establishment non-group non-ideological non-clubby non-bullshit pro-poetry INDY CRITICAL ARMATURE. Yay Edgar. - Henry Gould

p.s. Don's poetryometer, for example, seems to be working PERFECTLY and I'm going to send it some non-incestuous chapbooks very soon. Eric, on behalf of Jack, on behalf of Henry, owes you a hamburger.

[↑ Contents](#)

1028. **Don Byrd**  
**Re: absurd reviews**  
Fri 30 Jan 1998

---

Many years ago, Leslie Fiedler was proposing a new school of criticism, the tenets of which were that all critical judgements must be obscene, negative, and brief. His illustration was a take on \_Paradise Lost\_: too fucking long.

db

Harold Rhenisch wrote:

*Catherine Daly wrote:*

*The idea that reviews be positive is absurd (in that way, it's kind of fun to imagine).*

*I agree. A genre of truly tongue-in-cheek, ironic reviews would be a lot of fun.*

*Harold Rhenisch*  
[REDACTED]

--

\*\*\*\*\*

Don Byrd ([REDACTED], [REDACTED])  
Department of English  
State University of New York  
Albany, NY 12222  
[REDACTED] (work); [REDACTED] (home); [REDACTED] (fax)  
The Little Magazine (<http://www.albany.edu/~litmag/>)

\*\*\*\*\*

[↑ Contents](#)

1029. **Nada Gordon**  
**AYA address**  
Fri 30 Jan 1998

---

To all those of you who so rightly asked how to e-mail a check, I provide my earth address:

Nada Gordon  
4-26-6 Kitazawa  
Setagaya-ku

Tokyo [REDACTED]  
JAPAN

Six copies of AYA have been requested, which leaves fifteen \*still available\*.  
There may also still be copies available from SPD.

Will gladly consider trades.

[↑ Contents](#)

1030. **Nada Gordon**  
***Re: Copies of AYA still available***  
*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

Gordon,

*Hi! I'd be interested in a copy of AYA. Don't think I ever met ya, but I  
remember yr name from old Houses of K. Where wd you like a check sent?*

My address:

Nada Gordon  
4-26-6 Kitazawa  
Setagaya-ku  
Tokyo [REDACTED]  
JAPAN

Thanks!

[↑ Contents](#)

1031. **Henry Gould**  
***posting to poetics***  
*Fri 30 Jan 1998*

---

HIEROGLYPH

Papa was always working on the house,  
his long shadow bent across the sill  
like a letter in an unknown alphabet,  
his hoe or hammer making their steady  
marks across the vagabond afternoons,  
the deep summer water we lived through  
holding our breath, our lungs tight  
with promises, danger, laughing gas.

And when we grew older, more serious  
and dangerous, Papa was always working  
late at the office. For all we knew

he was a drone of the dread Pharaoh,  
one of the caretakers of the Sphinx,  
late into the night composing riddles,  
subtle passwords and husky undertones  
which opened the secret granary doors.

And it was only later, as we watched  
his dry wooden boat slip underground,  
that we understood the clean framing  
of intention, the straight crossbeams  
of its execution, that house of his  
a kind of sounding board for praise.  
Working across the tightrope of the  
roofline was his way of walking on air.

ol' Hen Gould [ca. 1982]

[↑ Contents](#)

1032. **Jordan Davis**  
***make it good***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

---

Can somebody who claims to be "Ron Silliman" please explain what is meant by the following publications:

Harvard Business Review  
Situation

Two Serious Ladies

My Trip to New York City

What

When the Sun Tries to Go on

Solution Passage

"I Know Men For Whom Everything Matters"

Public Economics

South China Morning Post

Forward

Cat Fancy

Kitchen Poems

Mysteries of Small Houses

Thanks! signed,

J

Alternatively, Ron, you could ease the collective disappointment by getting out of the live bait business -- and do something for american letters, again -- or as Anselm urged me to write -- Ron Silliman we love you get up

[↑ Contents](#)

1033. **Louis Cabri**

**phphph**

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

---

Hi everyone.

Here's the info again on the PhillyTalks newsletter if interested. Unlike the lovely Kevin K, I unfortunately must ask you for \$2 per issue, but I will be happy to send them to as many as desire them.

Thanks to Nate Chinen, the newsletter will also be available on website -- #2 is just up as of yesterday, just one click away from #1. #3 is on the way, apparently.

The next two issues will surely be as exciting as the last three have been. Here's the line-up:

#4 Feb. 18: Jena Osman & Tina Darragh

#5 Mar. 5: Tom Mandel & Ammiel Alcalay

Back issues:

#1 Oct. 30 & 31: Laura Moriarty & David Bromige

#2 Nov. 5 & 6: Andy Levy & Jackson Mac Low

And, for #6 I want to announce a CALL FOR RESPONSES to any of #s 1-5. Respondents so far include Ben Friedlander. Please send me your materials (and checks or bills) to: 4331 Pine St., #1R, Philadelphia, PA, 19104. Or query me, if you like, at my email address.

PhillyTalks #s 1 & 2 can be found at: <http://dept.english.upenn.edu/~wh>

I may as well also plug the upcoming issue of the magazine *\_Open Letter\_*; guest edited by Jeff Derksen, it is titled "Disgust and Overdetermination." I'm pretty sure a single issue costs \$9 and can be ordered from Frank Davey, 499 Dufferin Ave., London, Ontario, Canada, N6B 2A1.

Best,  
Louis

[↑ Contents](#)

1034. **Susan Clark**  
**addresses**

Sat 31 Jan 1998

---

If anyone knows snail / email addresses for

Mark Andrew Nowak

Karen Davies

please backchannel [I'm set to NOMAIL at the moment, overwhelmed]

thanks

Susan



[↑ Contents](#)

1035. **Thomas Bell**  
**Re: Old Poets Home**

Sat 31 Jan 1998

---

Henry,

In the days you are talking about, I was an 'occasional' reader of poetry without much interest specifically. But poetry was in the air then, it was alive and mattered to more than the poetry world. No matter what you say about the old poets and old readers, I don't think that's true today. tom bell

At 09:19 PM 1/29/98 EST, Henry Gould wrote:

>I like Ron's Big Thinking (even though he ignores whatever I have to say  
>about the limits of his "aesthetic"). It reminds me of Edwin Honig.  
>I don't think Ron's as old as Ed yet. But they both think a lot about  
>Vietnam (maybe because Edwin fought in France in WW II even though the  
>FBI kept trying to have him recalled because since he was a Jew from Brooklyn  
>& had been to a couple "anarchist" meetings in the 30s he was considered  
>a Commie). Now that we're about to test our new missiles (much more accurate!)  
>in Iraq we remember "the more things change..."  
>  
>I guess I would say your blind spot Ron is the idea that the "movement"  
>(a lot of big Langpo readings in SF - men & women! in the late 70s)  
>was So Much Better & Real & Great & Happening & Important than what's  
>happening now. As far as I'm concerned your movement was a failure  
>as political poetry. Wake up & smell the coffee, old guy. Poetry  
>will be political when it does a little better as poetry. A place to  
>start would be to shuck these generational reminiscences & scattered

>pigeon-like name-droppings that go by the name of "scholarship" or  
>"criticism" or "the academy". It's a circus - there's the clown act,  
>& then there's the tightrope.  
>- Henry Gould  
>  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

1036. **Thomas Bell**

***Part V elements of a visual poetics***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

---

The visual is operative. It allows the reader/writer to keep opposites and connections in mind. Padin uses the example of the significance of "T" in a poem that uses patria (homeland)/paria (exile - pariah) with T ->cemetery cross=death. This action of stillness - being held in the mind - does seem to be a uniquely visual action?

reference is to Clemente Padin, "The visual operator in experimental poetry" unpublished paper

[↑ Contents](#)

1037. **Tom Mandel**

***levi***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

---

Pierre writes:

> Tom -- Levi is well & alive in the Mid-Hudson Valley (or in Kent's terms he  
> joined the Catskill school) & writing much excellent art criticism, some  
of it  
> in easily accessible places like The Nation.

Send him my best, please. I blush to reveal my ignorance of what's in The Nation (and so many many other time-honored venues), but my mind seems to travel between the worldly and the unworldly with no resting steps between.

Tom

Tom Mandel

\*\*\*\*\*

Screen Porch \* <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 \* vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22031 \* fax: [REDACTED]



\*\*\*\*\*

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

1038. **Tom Mandel**

***Dan Davidson***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

---

Reading Gordon's post and Kevin's post about who was in SF  
in those days and where in life or death they are now  
makes me want to mention Dan Davidson, another poet  
who surfaced in the mid-eighties and was  
warmly welcomed by his older soon-to-be-friends.  
I miss Dan, and I wish he were here so I could throttle him for what he did.

Tom Mandel [REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

Screen Porch \* <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 \* vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22031 \* fax: [REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

1039. **Tom Mandel**

***Gordon as acolyte!***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

---

Ok, now we are having fun!

"I don't remember any of them (i.e. the SF language poets of Katy Lederer's reference) being critical of me, just encouraging. Maybe they thought I was an acolyte? "

...writes Gordon which made me guffaw at my monitor. The idea of Gordon as \*anyone's\* acolyte is very very funny.

You couldn't be around someone in those days whose sense of you was as immediately accurate and deflating (and friendly and brilliantly intelligent) as Gordon's. I thought she was so great I hired her to work for me the moment I could afford to. She related to me in that context as any other with an uncanny combination of fellow-feeling and sardonic pin-wriggling-to-wall.

Tom

Tom Mandel

\*\*\*\*\*

Screen Porch \* <http://screenporch.com>

4020 Williamsburg Ct, Ste 200 \* vox: [REDACTED]

Fairfax, VA 22031 \* fax: [REDACTED]

\*\*\*\*\*

Join the Caucus Conversation

[↑ Contents](#)

1040. **R M Daley**

***Re: Missing generation***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

---

katy

weez down here in the midwest shur are grateful for 't all the talkin  
bout things in-teelekchul-

but just to ask which generation is it that one belongs to ifn this is the case - ie, what if this seemingly necessary definition-by-generation is not so necessary seeming? in this belly of the beast even, arent there first years, second years, undergrads, not-in-the-workshoppers, undergrads in workshops, ... - just to say that maybe a 'critical' take understood via singular constructions such as generational, or gender, arent so useful finally- and like you say, how bout looking at the 'work' (as opposed to the 'play'??)- in this respect, i'm interested in the link you imply in work such as nick regiacorte's and that of say, josh may - both of whom have writing around, maybe not in the 'successes' form of a book contract or even a single publication, but beyond this, what gives? - in the end, what is the motivation to say 'this work belongs in this camp, this one belongs over here'? reviews aside, which do seem to function purely as PR (have never personally read a scathing review of any book, poetry), 'critical' work, as you have said before, can certainly be that kind of thing taht tells you as much about how a reader reads as a writer writes - well that these are more closely related in process (read: simultaneous) than the terminological distinction between 'reader' and 'writer' ('critic' and 'writer') makes them out to be

rd

[↑ Contents](#)

1041. **Rachel Loden**

***missing generation***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

---

Thanks, Kevin K., Chris S., Laura M. and others for terrific posts. In the early seventies I dropped out of a very active Berkeley reading and publishing scene

in which I had been increasingly "successful." It seemed to me that in my milieu (with the important exceptions of Judy Grahn and Kathleen Fraser) people were repeating themselves, and I was irritated by the easy applause I was getting. I left the scene cold, continued to write, and didn't send work out for fifteen years (was probably also terrified by recognition, but that's another story). Soon after this departure, I ran into one of the avatars of Berkeley poetry of the time, a woman who has since gone on to become very famous for work I don't respect. As we picked up our daughters at daycare she asked me "So, have you RETIRED?" The edge of sarcasm was evident.

But no--I hadn't retired. I didn't have words for what I HAD done, but it's clear now that turning my back was essential. At the time, all I could do was strap my daughter into her car seat and drive away.

It's said that we're a nation of salesmen, and sometimes, even in the odd precincts of poetry, it's just not okay to stop selling.

Rachel Loden

[↑ Contents](#)

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1042. **Alan Myouka Sondheim**

***Re: Great poem, great poet***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

---

This is totally wonderful, reminds me of the Rig Veda, that X 129 that has driven a \_lot\_ of work from womb to room. Meanwhile someone could make a lot of money putting out a popular translation of Japan's Kojiki - at least I haven't seen one...

Alan

[↑ Contents](#)

---

1043. **nikuko**

***I, Nikuko, am Listening to Buffalo Daughter***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

---

==

My Mythology

The earth was formed from a swelling that began out of a primordial germ and split, separating dust from effluvia, debris from stony veins. From this, the kami emerged. Soon veins formed head-bands, emptied of swollen lungs and brains. Some kami committed seppuku, removing their tongues by means of pinchers forged from stony veins. Thus were formed brains with their many channels of mizu. Ah, lovely mizu! Transparent mizu! Tasteless mizu! Channels of mizu run

down tiny brain-cunts in skulls formed from stony veins. Thus were formed "chan- nels." Inkan stamp the elbows of kami-heads; the stamps cry "Oh Holy Mother Let Us Have Necks And Shoulders." Thus did necks and shoulders form. Some kami have arms on shoulders on necks on heads. They are meat-girls, Nikukos swelling into split germs and stony veins. They are angry girls! They are Buffalo Daughter, whose New Rock release is on Toshiba-EMI Limited, a blend of techno and industrial voice-over somewhat reminiscent of Big Stick, first heard at Rhino Records in Los Angeles (as usual, their lead singer died). Buffalo Daughter appears courtesy of Chameleon Records in Fukuoka, punk-animals everywhere or rather can you dance as the voice goes way behind the back-beat. Meanwhile, in the Nihongi, Izanagi no Mikoto and Izanami no Mikoto say "Why should we not produce someone who shall be lord of the universe?" - an off-handed remark leading to much future woe. One can only imagine. "Universe" is given as "tenka" in a footnote, now meaning "the whole country; the public; the reins of government." Either a bring-down (EFL students would take note of the idiom) or hubris, from The New Crown Japanese-English Dictionary. What happens in the tenka? I don't know, but return to Nikuko's story, for her promising anger which spread like a virus from Nikukos-coalescing with trunks and legs, breasts and wombs, fierce warriors who have heard of Greece and Monique Wittig. They come across a hermit in a cave, another kami in disguise, since there are Nikukos-One and kami, and that's all. They show him their cunts, ask for sake; they drink much, push the stick through his cloth, and that is all there is to it. Shite, lead character in a Noh play, he begins to sing, Wa! (Harmony!) Waa! (Hurray!) He's it, goaded by the waki, Nikuko-who-does-not-wear-a-mask. Wa! Waa! Yugen, mystery-depth-profound-subtle-aesthetic, emerges among the kami, a beat magazine in New York 1950s, edited by Leroi Jones, if memory serves me. "It runs fine when I'm here," sing Buffalo Daughter, thinking of Nikuko. Shite-hermit sings and sings, stick poking through. Thus was born "song," "Noh," and "penis." In revenge, Shite-hermit says, "Nikuko, you cannot be in Noh." No-Noh-Nikuko. She sews him back up in the cave. (Was he sewn at first? Whose cave? Was that Nikuko's? Nikuko's cave - thus was born possession. Buffalo Daughter change to swing-beat. The synthesizers wind down. Anyway, they make the Sun-Goddess, called Oho-hiru-me no muchi, although Ama-terasu no Oho kami and Ama-terasu-oho-hiru-me no Mikoto are cited as well. Nikuko takes pity; the earth is kami, too. So are Buffalo Daughter, who are auspicious; the hermit, who receives the penis; the waki, helping everyone. Now everyone has all limbs and bodies but the penises and wombs are equally divided. When a war comes, Nikuko-who-does-not-wear-a-mask, and is a dark-haired girl living near Nakasu, gets angry, and says, there is no kami for any of us, and there are many less penises perhaps at first, and then less wombs. When the earth swells, there is an earthquake and caves are swallowed in the earth. Sesshu's Long Landscape Scroll portrays this incident

of Nikuko and hermit, and, as if in despair and irony, there is earthquake also, destroying the earth shrine at Hakata, until its memory faded from the affairs of men and women. (Some men and women are born without arms or legs; some without brains; some without breasts or wombs; some without penises; some without heads; some without skulls or necks; and some without shoulders.)

-----

Mizu, water; Nikuko, meat-girl; seppuku, suicide; shite, hero or hero-ine in Noh play, primary actor (wears a mask); waki, secondary actor, (maskless) in the same; Buffalo Daughter, playing now; kami, deity/ spirit of sorts; inkan, signature-stamp; Sesshu painted primarily in the 15th century; head-bands are often worn by workmen in Japan; Rhi- no Records was (and maybe is) the best alternative music store I've seen in America. The last copy of Yugen was going for \$10 a few months ago on the Lower East Side. Big Stick has disbanded. The Sun-Goddess names are from Aston's translation of the Nihongi. Monique Wittig wrote *The Lesbian Body* among other works. Nakasu is the snack-bar district of Fukuoka. Noh is a form of Japanese medieval theater; there are translations by Waley, but the intensity of tele-vised Noh was completely unexpected. I live in Hakata-Ku, Hakata Ward, which is the merchant's town of Fukuoka. I have no brain or skull. Aston translates the Sun-Goddess' names as "Great-noon-female-of-pos- sessor"; "Heaven-illumine-of-great-deity"; and "Heaven-illumine-great-noon-female-of-augustness"; but then Aston was writing in the nine-teenth century.

---

[↑ Contents](#)

1044. **Miekal And**  
***Re: As-Am poetics***  
*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

---

Gwyn McVay wrote:

A title with the power to induce widespread cognitive  
> dissonance is one you gotta love.

a     men

wo     ity

[↑ Contents](#)

1045. **Keston Sutherland**

**snip**

Sat 31 Jan 1998

---

The new fathom item A-Z mercy spree unsmothers afresh  
re donkey spirit sprezzatura fit or agog for a relapse, a slipped pin  
up assent to purpose marked down see hence vertical  
shark loans in purveyance-arrest, a bit strapped for life  
on the quay, shattered and bawling joke acid. Practically  
speaking, joy in repair may appear as in fit blood-streaked piss  
exhaustion or fades up, fawning / pouting his backside over her  
stumbled-across plastic stile. Ah, undo. Real ping-pong  
with Abraham vdu hyper relish. Top fate n1 stridulating in program n1.

Misery-to-be tautens and flats out as crap sin. Unquizzical stab B blends up  
multiple-choice #! in glue/weep promo delight din with stab C, D and ex-skin  
rick delivery #+1!, to what fails up in time a blessed pact, re: pedestal ash  
specks blent in gilded muck re: sum regress-inverse bonanza. Cracking the  
pig's jaw clean off, razing the hog's contempt. Improved regard-access loss  
puts extra-pittance loyalty via temporarily lax grin suppression a centimetre out  
of reach, spraying money inwards. Hence, actuality-compatible co listings  
slashed up, over the dale installed lice squawk and sigh down.

[↑ Contents](#)

1046. **k. lederer**

**Re: snip**

Sat 31 Jan 1998

---

It's funny--

My father always told me that "the best work" in English is often surprisingly  
full of one-syllable words--Shakespeare, Dickinson, Whitman, &&&. I wonder  
with writing like this (which I like)--what to make of that opinion--I suppose that  
"innovative" methodologies in poetry have basically razed all notions of key po-  
etic strategies--razed, theoretically, the notion of "great works"--

It's interesting though--it seems to me like this is something that really marks a  
departure--a schism--epistemological break--whatever--it that's what we're look-  
ing for (gosh, O! Yes, Will Alexander--that's another example)--any opinions?

Yours,  
Katy

\*\*\*

On Sat, 31 Jan 1998, Keston Sutherland wrote:

*The new fathom item A-Z mercy spree unsmothers afresh  
re donkey spirit sprezzatura fit or agog for a relapse, a slipped pin  
up assent to purpose marked down see hence vertical  
shark loans in purveyance-arrest, a bit strapped for life  
on the quay, shattered and bawling joke acid. Practically  
speaking, joy in repair may appear as in fit blood-streaked piss  
exhaustion or fades up, fawning / pouting his backside over her  
stumbled-across plastic stile. Ah, undo. Real ping-pong  
with Abraham vdu hyper relish. Top fate n1 stridulating in program n1.*

*Misery-to-be tautens and flats out as crap sin. Unquizzical  
stab B blends up multiple-choice #! in glue/weep promo delight  
din with stab C, D and ex-skin rick delivery #+1!, to what fails  
up in time a blessed pact, re: pedestal ash specks blent in gilded muck  
re: sum regress-inverse bonanza. Cracking the pig's  
jaw clean off, razing the hog's contempt. Improved regard-access  
loss puts extra-pittance loyalty via temporarily lax grin suppression  
a centimetre out of reach, spraying money inwards. Hence, actuality-compatible  
co listings slashed up, over the dale installed lice squawk and sigh down.*

[↑ Contents](#)

1047. **Keston Sutherland**

***pet***

Sat 31 Jan 1998

Every soul's of assuaged boredom causa lamb-litter un-  
verity post-gore vim spousage mock up, or happily may  
be so politely, one life on the trot (n). That single  
wren in the stars attests. Blow-dry apocalypse veer rate  
sunk down, a level zero. Sometimes hatred appalls me,  
grated into sickness like cheddar. Prophecy n-1 via thistlewarp  
screw cluster alpha party-lark (n), this is your longer  
lasting esprit-indent permit, should it be, heads or tails. Chop  
sauce alarm! pasty and inappetent! Shied in-  
cestial glades bewray, despite release #! she's frigid eye-blood.

[↑ Contents](#)

1048. **Kasey Silem Mohammad Hicks**

***"Antipath"***

Sat 31 Jan 1998

Antipath

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Punes pre-  
tautologic hamf  
pressed  
clibbard \_ofoy\_  
od product-  
nel.drammic  
tha cousin, hib  
played soum  
Chrot -00  
chaelle chairing  
Thr. liam radio  
how kew.st [shich  
proms barn ".  
\_ho lod sistre cancelled  
for un lampee bres  
for lingerie en bad\_  
I I re-rent y-yource  
,lod prim til barn  
prisses s. anala  
cobr[.  
ume lip alu-d  
pru.deminic nuss  
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[↑ Contents](#)



1049. **Henry Gould**

***Re: Ojo al toro con tres cuernos***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

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Kent Johnson, thou above all others hath interpreted rightly the parable. Thou shalt be with me in Tricorn Heaven whilst the rest gnasheth their teetheth in bull darkness. - Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

1050. **Henry Gould**

***Indie Critics***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

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I have just one brief summing-up to make, having hogged the list enough. Will be quiet for a while, & I hope Kent will not be sad & will come back soon, he's a fresh breeze from Rio amongst us paper pushers.

This whole hoot n'holler about an independent criticism comes down to one thing. 99% of what passes for criticism of contemporary poetry is either tendentious ("I'm writing about her because she's good & I like her stuff") or so necessarily wrapped in academic-scholarly apparatus ("Joe Poet fits into this dissertation-scheme of development from Obscure Russ-Formo-Femmo- Per-formo Bravado in such-such a way...") as to be completely BOUGHT OUT. Steve Evans, bless his brilliant soul, is a good example: look at his ILS essay on the process of literary change. How erudite, how stylized - & how the poets are bumped in at the beginning & end almost as a footnote. It's an example of how TALKING ABOUT IT is a major form today, and exhibits all the incestuous poeto-academo atmosphere I've been railing against.

Now all you street-talkin' anti-intellectuals, don't get the idea I'm on your side. I LIKE Steve's writing. It's just not the criticism (that essay anyway) that Rod Smith et al's "generation" might need.

Poets themselves are tendentious of necessity. That's a given. Look at Eliot, the greatest circus tightrope-walker of them all (he did it in his sleep, like a possum). He had to create a total mask of objectivity in order to be the "critic" he wanted - it even invaded his theory of poetry (objective correlative). Scholars - grad students, profs - are not necessarily tendentious - but they are pedantic. By this I mean the marvelous researches they undertake tend to enfold the poetry in a total system of research. THIS IS GREAT & NECESSARY. But it's not indi-crit!

Indi-crit is written by philologists in Mandelstam's sense (sorry) - familial lovers of the word. But I didn't get this from Mandelstam, I'm just using him as an illustration. I am speaking as a poet who has played by what I consider the rules

for over 30 years. My rules are: do the poem. Send it to magazines & contests. Think about what you are doing - maybe write an essay about it. That's it. In my experience "doing the poem" has absorbed the energy. Maybe I am a fanatic, or a hedgehog in Isaiah Berlin's sense, or a totally introverted recluse. Fine. I grant the limitations of my witness to you all out there in poetry-land. This great List, thank you Loss & Joel & Charles, allows voices like mine to be heard. Maybe some of you in the big-city clubs, west coast, east coast, coast on toast, should pay attention to what I is a sayin. If any of you are poets - & I have my doubts - I would think you'd be looking for an indi critic too - somebody with taste, judgement, freedom, and an artistic instinct. The rest is baloney. It's the kind of baloney Emily Dickinson was concerned about, & that led Uncle Walt to write reviews of himself under a pseudonym. Not to mention Edgar Poe. That's a complicated murder story in which the autopsy was suborned.

- Henry Gould

[↑ Contents](#)

1051. **Joe Brennan**  
***Re: missing generation***  
*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

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In a message dated 98-01-31 12:03:17 EST, you write:

<< Soon after this departure, I ran into one of the avatars of Berkeley poetry of the time, a woman who has since gone on to become very famous for work I don't respect. As we picked up our daughters at daycare she asked me "So, have you RETIRED?" The edge of sarcasm was evident. >>

It's been my general experience that folks who make remarks like the one in quotes above are usually pitifully vulnerable when

[↑ Contents](#)

1052. **Joe Brennan**  
***Re: missing generation***  
*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

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In a message dated 98-01-31 12:03:17 EST, you write:

<< Soon after this departure, I ran into one of the avatars of Berkeley poetry of the time, a woman who has since gone on to become very famous for work I don't respect. As we picked up our daughters at daycare she asked me "So, have you RETIRED?" The edge of sarcasm was evident.

[↑ Contents](#)

1053. **Joe Brennan**

***Re: missing generation/missing what?***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

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Sorry, i hit the wrong key. I meant to say that folks who say things like this are usually vulnerable to the same insults and insensitivities they throw around. I for one can't understand how anyone can get any serious work done when surrounded by such noises. On the other hand, ambitious folks have to block out the kinds of sentiments that you express, and are nearly deaf to them. To be famous --even at the level of the choir, is a full time job in itself. One has to hustle all of the time even to get nominal recognition; look at the silly argument that centers around the syllabus for Marjorie Perloff's seminar. Except at the level of recognition --& we all know what this means-- this argument is of no importance. It's difficult even to discuss the systemic nature of the problem; it's as if the institutional demands of the academy are suspended. Publish or perish, however quaint it sounds, is still an operative force. I realize that you most likely already know this, but I emphathize with your sentiments and wanted to respond.

Joe Brennan

[↑ Contents](#)

1054. **jarnot**

***Denise Levertov/Poetry Project Newsletter***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

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Dear List Members:

The next issue of the Poetry Project Newsletter will include a tribute to Denise Levertov. I am interested in collecting a number of short memoirs/statements. Space is limited and the deadline is coming up quickly (february 15th). If anyone would like to contribute, please backchannel me at [REDACTED].

Thanks, Lisa Jarnot

[↑ Contents](#)

1055. **jarnot**

***Robert Duncan materials***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

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Dear List Members:

I am currently gathering information for a biography of Robert Duncan and would like to correspond with individuals who have materials related to Robert

Duncan in their possession (letters, tapes of readings or lectures, manuscripts, interviews, photographs, etc.).

I am also interested in interviewing (and/or collecting written narratives from) individuals who knew Robert Duncan.

If you can be of any help, please contact me at [REDACTED] or at PO Box 185, New York, NY 10009.

Thanks,  
Lisa Jarnot

[↑ Contents](#)

1056. **Gwyn McVay**

***Re: As-Am poetics***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

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Footnote--I think this is funny, anyway: numerous people, replying to the thread about experimental poetics done by North Americans of Asian descent (am I remembering correctly that Roy Kiyooka was Canadian?), have cited Tan Lin's / Lotion Bullwhip Giraffe/. Everybody, so far, mentions not being sure of this title, but everybody who has mentioned it so far has given it correctly. A title with the power to induce widespread cognitive dissonance is one you gotta love.

g.mc

[↑ Contents](#)

1057. **Graham W Foust**

***distance carrier***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

---

will be a new web-zine featuring poetic, fictional, and/or critical texts written by more than one person (this means you).

A sparse, trendily minimalistic call for submissions is available at

<http://www.buffalo.edu/~foust/dc.html>

Good-bye.

[↑ Contents](#)

1058. **Tim Wood**

***Re: The ten gallon hat***

*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

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I've been busy getting the ListServ happy and moving smoothly, so I'm just getting back to reading the buffalo list. Good story. Since I'm not originally from

Texas, I've never adopted the ten gallon or the belt buckle. The boots beat the heck out of dress shoes though. Anyway, I'll pass the story along.

Tim

At 01:15 PM 1/26/98 -0500, you wrote:

>Emerging now from last night's post-game funk and can finally speak.  
>My class early this morning was an utter disaster: I started crying  
>in the middle of a lecture on topic sentences. How will I face them  
>now tomorrow? I feel like Clinton.  
>  
>Anyway, last night I drove up to Monroe, Wisconsin with my foam  
>Cheesehead hat to watch the game at Baumgartner's, a true "bar bar"  
>with all kinds of fish and animals grinning from the walls and not a  
>fern plant in sight. Drank about 15 Diet Cokes. But the reason  
>I'm writing, and it's a stunner, is this: During the second quarter  
>sometime, a portly man, fortyish, in ten gallon hat, bellied up  
>next to me and we got to doing the bonding thing by shouting at the  
>TV through the drunken din. DID YOU SEE THAT?! AW BULLSHIT,  
>COME ON REF! GO DORSEY GO! and so on. At halftime I introduced  
>myself, and he to me. Imagine my surprise when he grabbed my hand and  
>yelled in my ear, HI, I'M TIM WOOD, FROM TEXAS!  
>  
>I sized him up for a spell, probably cross-eyed with the shock,  
>and then yelled back as loud as I could, ARE YOU THE SAME TIM WOOD  
>FROM POETICS LISTSERV?  
>  
>WHAT'S THAT AGAIN PARDNER? he yelled.  
>  
>I SAID, I yelled, ARE YOU THE SAME TIM WOOD FROM POETICS  
>LISTSERV? (Only now does it occur to me that I yelled this twice with  
>a huge piece of foam cheese on my head, and the thought of myself  
>in that act strikes me, frankly, as somewhat disturbing.)  
>  
>NO, he yelled, I'M FROM TEXAS...WACO, TEXAS... ON BUSINESS.  
>  
>Anyway, the misunderstanding was a bit awkward (in those  
>non-verbal bar-like ways you can't quite put your finger on), and it  
>sort of short-circuited the visceral flow of our manly camaraderie.  
>By the third quarter, he had pulled back from the bar to yell at the  
>TV with other cheeseheads, and to leave me pondering over the utterly  
>wild coincidence of it all.  
>

>Tim, feel free to post this rather bizarre anecdote on the Texas  
>Poets Listserv as well!  
>  
>the Pack will be back,  
>  
>Kent  
>

[↑ Contents](#)

1059. **Karen Kelley**  
***Re: Missing generation***  
*Sat 31 Jan 1998*

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I read with amazement Kevin Killian's take on the "missing" in SF, and grew even more emotional with Chris Stroffolino's very accepting note about dropping out. You see, I hadn't realized, quite, why in the past 4 years I hadn't written much. After watching my brother's closest friends & lovers & then finally my brother die of AIDS in 1994, it became increasingly difficult to find productivity important. In fact, it became increasingly difficult to find ANYTHING important. Certainly not debates about aesthetics, certainly not literary ambitions; really, they started to seem obscene in their disregard for the hideous everyday human loss-of-life ripping through the city.

Lately, poetry seems more inviting--and I'm happy I stayed away long enough to find it new again, instead of slogging away making poems without the heart for it.

Anyone looking to see into the heart of the AIDs crisis: find *\_The Compassion Protocol\_* by Herve Guibert or *\_Last Watch of the Night\_* by Paul Monette or *\_This Wild Darkness\_* by Harold Brodkey or *\_Life Sentences: Writers, Artists & AIDS\_* by Thomas Avena.

Karen

[↑ Contents](#)