



Where the Sidewalk Ends East Village Musical Institution Finishes its First 26-Year Run

ANTIMike!

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2 songs or eight minutes

hosted by

Jon Berger & Kirk Kelly

NO RULES (except for all the things said already!)



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Where the Sidewalk Ends East Village Musical Institution Finishes its First 26-Year Run



BY JONATHAN BERGER

Around here, the more things change, the more things change, so if you've got something that stays the same for more than a New York Minute, maybe you've beaten the odds.

Sidewalk Cafe closed down in February, after maintaining the longest running open mic—as far as we know—in New York City, running on Monday nights since 1994 (barring an occasional snowstorm or Christmas). The bar, restaurant and club was managed by a consortium fronted by Pini Milstein—they also owned the building—which just got sold this week. There's always change, with new replacing the old, I guess.

Though the Sidewalk had been around since the '80s, catering to a biker clientele, with peanut shells scattered across the floor, I only arrived in '93 or early '94, it's tough to tell for sure. I was there to see Brenda Kahn, who had just recently released Epiphany in Brooklyn and was an old friend of Lach's.

Lach had arrived at the behest of bartender Laura Sativa, who'd suggested he book the place. The room was close to empty, and I saw him shuffling tables around. Though I only meant to see Brenda, I stayed for the other acts and I read all the articles plastered on the walls, telling the history of Antifolk through the '80s. It opened up this mythical history of a kid sister community to CBGB's and punk. I was quoted in somebody else's article saying, "I'd never heard about any of this, but between acts, I read the news, oh, boy." The story I put together was basically: this cadre of punk/folk artists made a splash around '87-'88, then imploded around 1991. And then nothing. That this whole scene seemed like something of a has-been was somehow incredibly appealing in a proto-hipster way. I was hooked. I kept going to shows, but didn't start hitting the open mics until the summer when I had more available time. I knew nobody, kept to myself, just lurked, a witness, but could see energy around the performers who all seemed to know each other and were mutually engaged. I didn't realize this was a justifying community, people who had all met through the power of that guy called Lach.

The summer of '95, someone started a print fanzine. I think it was the guys in Muckaferguson along with Junior Miss and Tom Nishioka. Junior Miss was really Jason Lewis who later led Americana band Star City. Muckaferguson was a trio that never seemed to play two songs in the same configuration of musicians. Member John Lee would eventually produce the TV show Wonder Showzen. When the aforementioned zine began, I found something I could contribute to the scene. I started writing articles, and, as people dropped out, I began to edit, then publish. I got to know more of the players on the scene, like Major Matt Mason USA and Scratchin' Matt Sherwood and even other people with different first names.

I got further engaged and discovered more acts: guitarist Heather Eatman, performance artist Heather Woodbury and piano-playing not-Heathers Kim Fox and Rachael Sage and, I don't know, maybe 3,000 others?

You could probably read about some more of them in AntiMatters (<http://www.cine-mavi.com/dizozza/antimatters.html> holds PDFs of all of the issues). Peter Dizozza runs that website; he's a piano playing madman who creates incomprehensible plays that everybody in the scene would inexplicably get involved in and devote endless hours to, wondering why every minute, until he convinced you to enter into the next production.

About every four years, people move on, get better paying jobs, move out of town, get married, get sick of low paying gigs, small attendance shows, realize they're too good for their audience, realize they're not good enough for their audience, every four years, a new crop of kids replaces the old crop of kids on the scene at the Sidewalk. Except for Pini. Except for me.

Lach, the host, the booker, the mastermind, kept things going with his jokes, his monomania, his good- and ill-will toward the entire scene. He was a force to be reckoned with, and he kept the entire community of Antifolk going well before it arrived at Sidewalk. He brought shows to Tompkins Square Park, The CNote, the streets of The East Village. He had his host Sidewalk brunches, theme nights, holiday shows, insisted people write songs on demand, collaborate in different ways; Lach brought it all together.

The new class around '99 featured players like Barry Bliss, who had really good stage presence; Jeff Lightning Lewis, who had a really good song; and Joie/Dead Blonde Girlfriend, who had a really good head of hair. Adam Green showed up, talking about his band the Moldy Peaches 2000, and Kimya Dawson followed a season later, making the band a reality. They broke up, got back together, signed to Rough Trade in the U.K., and spread the love with a compilation, Antifolk, Volume 1. Other national signings included

Jeffrey Lewis, Regina Spektor, Nellie McKay, Nicole Atkins. Rick Shapiro was also telling jokes on Wednesday nights. I hear some people laughed.

There was a lot of buzz around Antifolk, not so much around Sidewalk, but there was some excitement because of the celebrity attached to the national signings. People felt important. Artists felt encouraged around one another.

Somewhere in all that, I became a poet. After writing about all of these artists for years, I'd started hitting the stage myself as short-attention span writer of non-rhymes. I'm told I'm pretty fantastic, when looking in the mirror. Looking out at an audience, the reactions vary, but at the Sidewalk, the crowds are usually welcoming, because, of course, that's the environment that's been encouraged in the 26 years of performances with four vital bookers.

AntiMatters folded after a while. I asked someone else to take over, but without my special brand of fervor, it didn't last.

A new crop replaces the old crop, but sometimes the old crop returns. Paleface had been a regular part of the Antifolk community before the Sidewalk days, but started coming back around '99 or so, and hung with the Moldy Peaches crew, back in that temporary time when Chris Barron of the Spin Doctors was their lead guitarist? Anyway, Paleface came back, got some more mojo, started some new band Just About to Burn with people he met on the scene, and now he's a sensation, touring across the nation. Did the Sidewalk do that for him? Probably not. Did the community of people he met there do it? Dunno.

Lach got some help from Amy Hills. He dropped his responsibilities at the Sidewalk to do, I forget. Either this was when he was managing Nellie McKay's career or taking a stab at becoming a rock star. Neither one worked out too well, and though Amy had done a great job with the club, she wasn't satisfied with it long term, so Lach returned to the regular responsibilities of managing things.

After the Moldy Peaches' heyday, Sidewalk became a haven for people with a freak-folk aesthetic, artists that played for the love of it, though not necessarily very well. Probably the best examples of that were the Luv-A-Lot crew, led by the late Dashan Coram, of Huggabroomstik, a co-founder of Urban Barnyard, and producer for Luv-A-Lot Records. He really seemed to encapsulate the DIY aesthetic, and encouraged kitchen sink recording, like, recording on a kitchen sink.

A new crop replaces the old crop, roughly every four years. Except for Lach. Except for Pini. Except for me.

2005, Dave Cuomo convinced me to help him start a new fanzine, Urban Folk (<https://www.scribd.com/user/90816/urbanfolk>), then he gave it up after a year. I kept it going for another two years. Copies of that are available at the above url, detailing the heroes of Antifolk in the middle aughts.

Lach left for good in 2009. He wanted to work on an album, I think. He's living in Edinburgh, and comes through New York every year or two, for a triumphant show at Sidewalk. A year or two after he left Sidewalk, he started an open mic somewhere else—not on a Monday. It didn't last as long as the thing he had built so powerfully previously. Even the club that hosted it is gone (though I hear it may try to make some kind of a comeback). Ben Krieger took over for Lach, and, while a more loving taskmaster, Ben lacked Lach's mania and focus.

In 2011, Sidewalk closed temporarily for renovations. It started out with an expired liquor license, but they took the opportunity to renovate the entire place. They planned to fix up for a month or so. If memory serves. The doors were shut for close to three seasons. The Monday Open Stage continued at the Gathering of the Tribes, Steve Cannon's apartment/performance space on Third Street. There was no amplification.

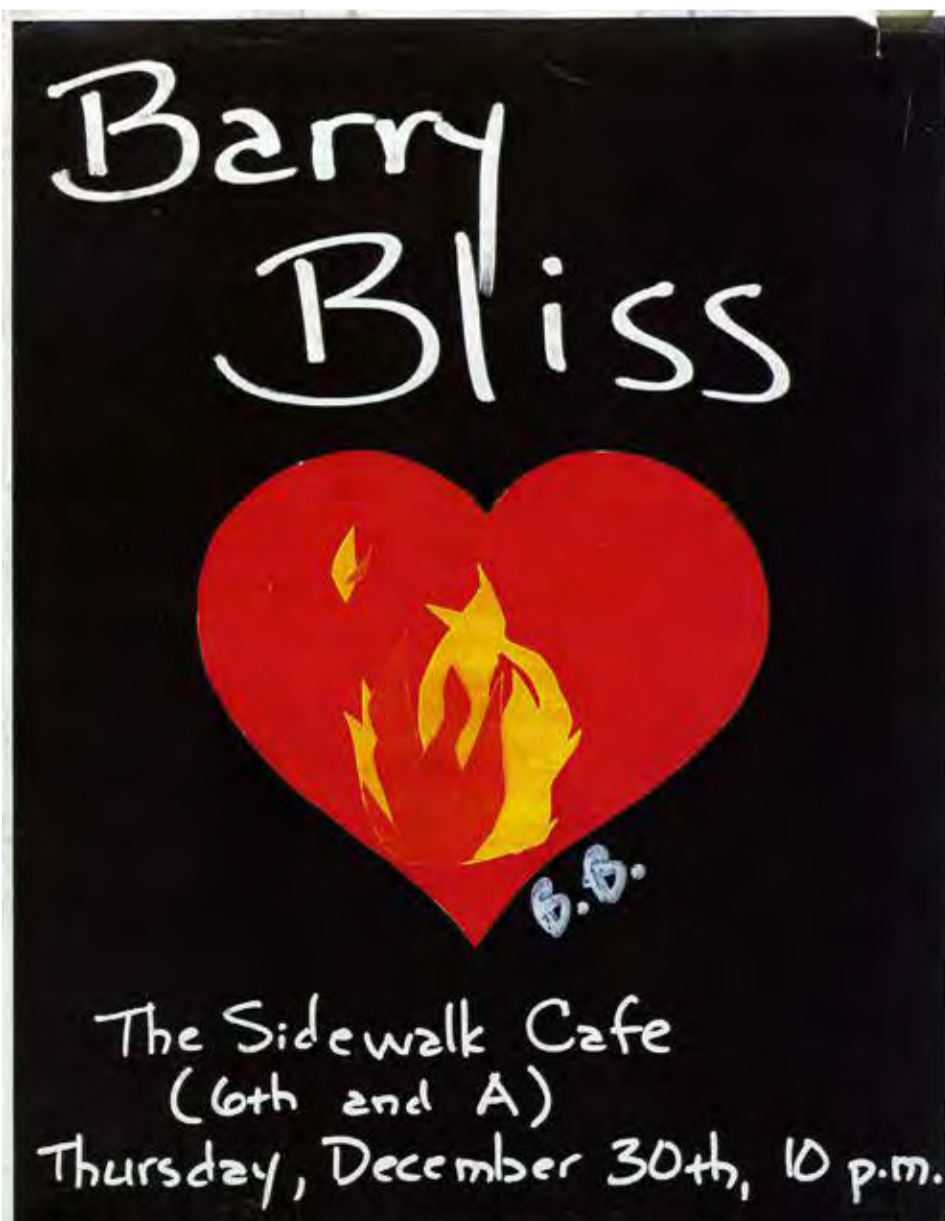
When the Sidewalk reopened, the restaurant looked bright, shining. The furniture was new; the menu had changed. The culture was inexplicably different. This might be when the name Sidewalk Bar & Restaurant took form. I know we always called it Sidewalk Cafe. When did that transition occur?

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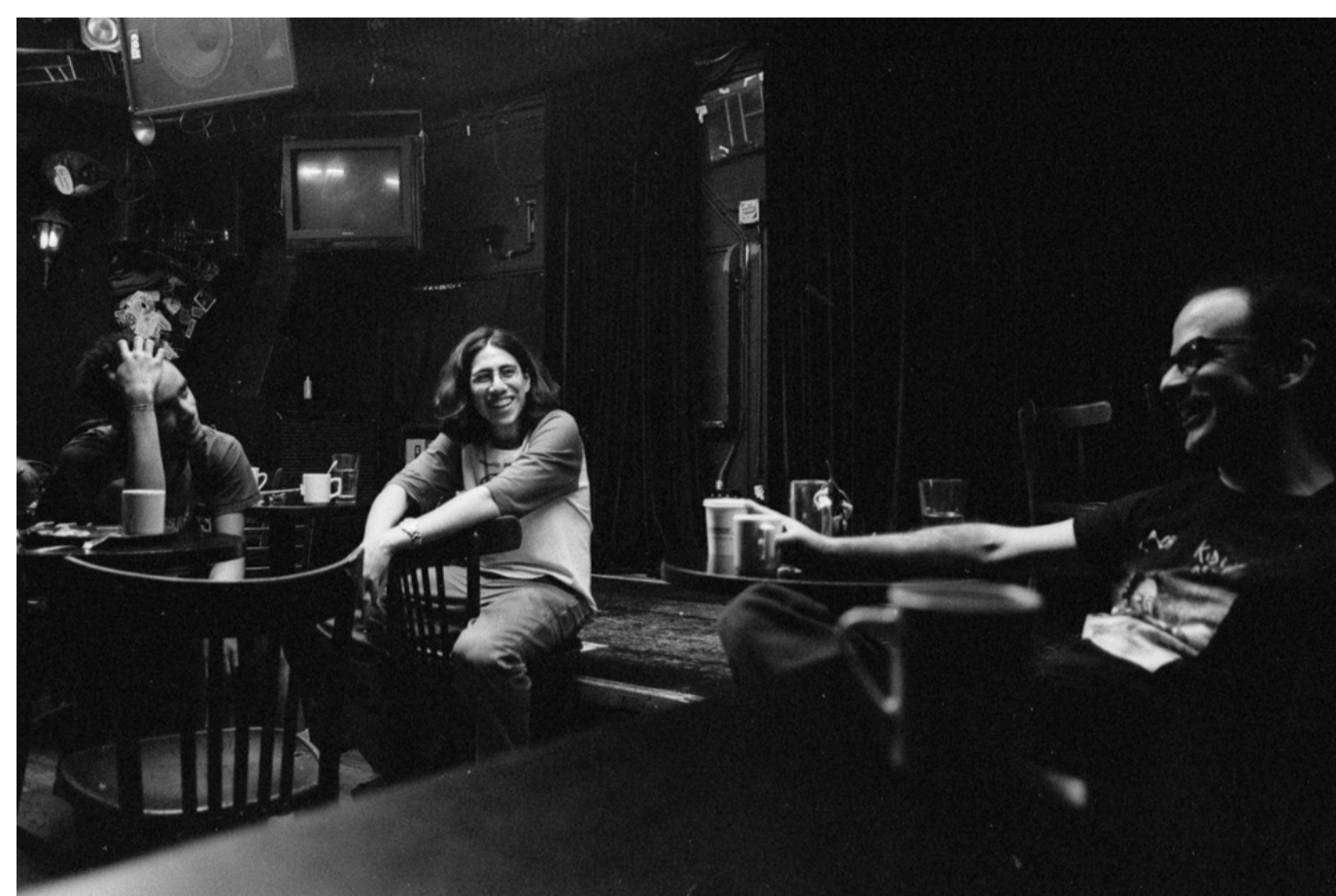
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Top to bottom: Lach. Herb Scher 2006 photo; Ben Krieger and Somer Bingham in the last days of Sidewalk. Herb Scher photo. Barry Bliss Dec. 30, 2010 event flyer.



Lach had a song, "Parade," that alluded in one of the verses to how the Sidewalk crew was up in arms about the gold lame curtains that came up on the back of the stage and what it meant for the scene. This, right around the Gore V. Bush Supreme Court decision regarding hanging chads. Lach thought it ironic, and I guess he liked gold lame.

Sometimes the people in the scene would get hung up on the integrity of the scene.

Ben jumped ship recently, I think it was 2015, but it was a soft jump. When he asked Somer Bingham to take over management of the music at Sidewalk, he kept on hosting the open mic, and continued to run sound a couple nights a week at the club.

Somer had her own band, Clinical Trials, and ran sound at other clubs. She'd worked

with Lach at Webster Hall, and, just like Ben and Lach before her, had a child while running the club. It didn't seem like Pini, the Israeli owner of Sidewalk, was as comfortable working with a woman as he was with guys. Or maybe he didn't like how most of the business in his club/restaurant/bar seemed to be in the back room, and even that was dwindling. The East Village's heyday seems to be further and further away.

I remember how Avenue A was always a parade of bodies, but a fairly recent Halloween saw me looking out the East Sixth Street front window, just waiting to see anybody walk on by: a ghost town, with no one in sheets.

New people constantly come in. A new crop always replaces the old crop. Except Pini. Except me. But someone recently mentioned that the apartment building for 94 Avenue A has been on the market for a couple years now. Pini and his partners have been ready to get out for a while now, I guess.

Some people keep coming back. John Hodel has hung around various musical communities for 30 years. Lorraine Leckie is a transplanted Torontonion who's started a songwriting circle in Greenpoint, but hits the open mic whenever she can. Walter Ego, Joe Crow Ryan, Space Machine, and Jim Flynn all come when they can. Ray Brown, a part of the Antifolk community with Lach and Paleface well before the Sidewalk, has made the Sidewalk his home with the rest of us. He comes with great frequency.

They sometimes play familiar stuff. They usually try to bring something interesting. Everyone tries to impress their community. Everyone is invested in each other—whichever part of the community they've joined.

A new crop always replaces the old crop. Except me. Pini's sold the building now, and the business is going to younger, fresher faces. It's unclear when Sidewalk managers Laura Saniuk-Heinig and Alyssa Sartor will reopen—the current renovations seem extensive—whether it will be the Sidewalk anymore.

The last few weeks of the club, before the renovations began, were moving and beautiful. For the final Antifolk Festival, many old-timers, from many eras of Sidewalk's musical life came back to say goodbye. The final performance at a packed room was Regina Spektor, a little drunk and seemingly nervous, who haltingly played songs from the time she was a regular in that room. The crowd was much more appreciative than they'd ever been back in the day.

Many of us stayed after the show was over, talking and signing well into the night. We didn't want to leave. We didn't want to say goodbye to all that.

Maybe we won't have to, though. I understand that, after consideration, the new Sidewalk (or whatever it may end up being called) owners would like to continue the open mic, and want Somer to keep on booking music in the back room, so maybe this isn't the end of everything I know and love. Perhaps all the gloom and doom and apocalyptic talk that has gone through my ears and lips these last few months has been slightly exaggerative.

Maybe a new crop isn't quite ready to replace me just yet. Good. I didn't think I was ready for that kind of change anyway; it's only been 26 years.

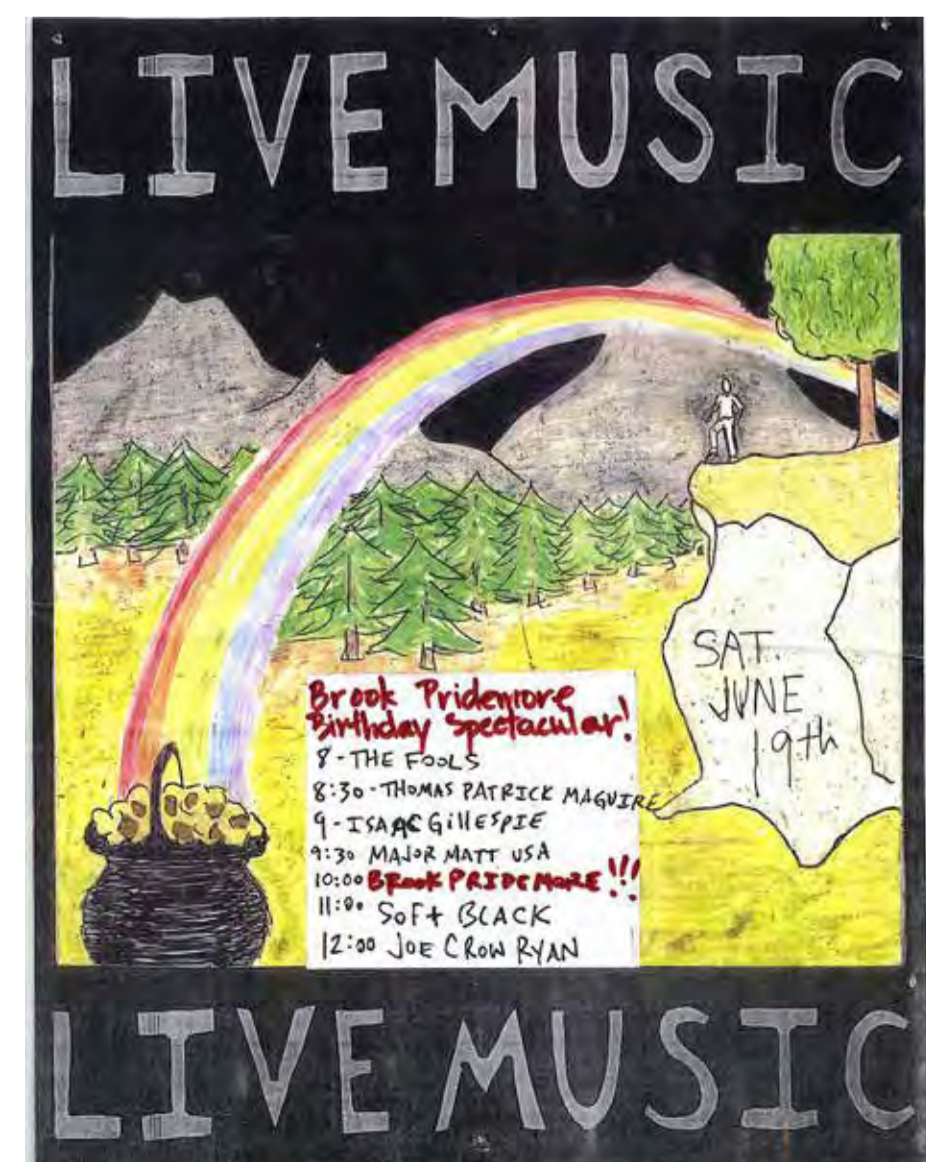
Jonathan Berger first came to the East Village to check out the Sidewalk. Check him out at <https://jonberger.com/>.



Top to bottom: Dashan Coram, Dibson Hoffweiler, Lach. Lippe photo; Steve Espinola. Lippe photo; Joie Dead Blonde Girlfriend May 4, 2002 event flyer. Brook Pridemore June 19, 2010 event flyer.

I remember how Avenue A was always a parade of bodies, but a fairly recent Halloween saw me looking out the East Sixth Street front window, just waiting to see anybody walk on by: a ghost town, with no one in sheets.

I got to know more of the players on the scene, like Major Matt Mason USA and Scratchin' Matt Sherwood and even other people with different first names.





Anna V. Q. Ross
Dorchester, Mass.

Pulling Up the Elm

I dig bare-handed
down along the seedling's
taproot, following
the hole it has made
despite the sun-striped
shade of the porch,
unearthing stones,
a worn triangle
of glass, and frilled
side radicals reaching,
capillary, to stabilize
the main shoot of what
is actually a sapling,
I see now that I've stooped
to put my full strength
against it, this remnant
of the 60-foot tree
that dangled branches
above the baby's room
and took three men
and a crane to bring down--
the core one long flame
of rot. And even if
this seed hadn't set here
to be trapped beneath
the gapped porch floor,
but had landed instead
in the yard's full sun,
it would grow forked
and bare, eaten within
by a fungus that furnishes
all but a few green branches,
the rest falling skeletal
nuisance to the ground.
But what do any of us know,
growing where something
much larger than us
once dropped us, using
whatever light we find?
These elms don't survive
in this place anymore,
or do only to loom
and damage, I comfort
myself, then brace my feet
to wrench the sucker out.



Jon Woodward
Somerville, Mass.

Labiomantic Lyric

With sun
city of
flowers
for sale.

Worms
mulch up
with sun
silent engine

city of flowers.
~ ~ ~

Bed
sunshine
neither
green (color)

neither irreducible
a fingertip
tips bed
sunshine

neither.
~ ~ ~

The kind
singer.
radiant radiant
radiant radiant

drum machine
The sunshine loose
loosens.
The kind singer

radiant radiant
~ ~ ~

Out in
slippery sunshine
of clouds
clouds

combing
combing
out in
slippery sunshine

of clouds
~ ~ ~

Out of focus
slips
the frame
with

you hold on me
pop song/pop song/pop song
out of focus
slips

the frame
~ ~ ~

Unseen
concentric,
the away
of focus

target practice.
Imbrication
unseen
concentric

the away
~ ~ ~

From one interval
to another
another
no epic.

Travel
with you inside
me I said
from one interval to

another another
~ ~ ~

At least pop
music.
From
songstress

You
star
from nowhere at least
pop music from

(from!)



Kevin Gallagher
Boston

Massaco
October corn
skeletons

with wild head dresses
waving in the wind

facing King Phillip
crying from the cave

watching
the valley blaze.

He thought we
would gallop right through.

Instead he made
some of the greatest soil

the valley would field
for three hundred years.

We started growing
tobacco

for cigar leaves wrapped
around volatile

fads of fresh cigars.
Now there are two

few Family farms here
selling tomatoes,

squash, honey, and maize.
Now the skeletons

are guarding the gourds.
Some of them lie down

Cuddling pumpkins
newly born

from the October moon.
What's left will become

covered with a white cape
of snow that buries

The living ghosts
that will be back next year.



Kenning JP Garcia
Albany, N.Y.

Recollections of Or is it for Another

5
they likes a similarity more than a same-ness. xe is more flexible for all the failures. is a
pirate desperate? xe hopes not.

"I can no longer distinguish words from tears." (Marguerite Duras - Yann Andrea
Steiner)

sadness starts in its static state. words are so immobile sometimes but a teardrop flows.
falls.

what is an echo worth? can xe buy one to give to them? they doesn't want anything,
least of all a reminder. they could do without hearing it again weaker than first time
around. they lost their love for memos when they were just a kid. now they think or may-
be feel as if they always knew and have known better from the very beginning.

15
who among us is a memory? who is a secret? who here is only here in another's sleep?

one day we'll pay for our hiding, for being hidden. we'll escape our text, our lost
echoes, our misheard words and yet we'll also be punished for what really remains. but,
we'll be rewarded for our ghosts too. we can't be forever fondly thought of. we'll flicker.
that's something. it's better than nothing. sometimes.

can they still be a cowboy? can they be remembered that way as the sun sets? in the
sunset? can they be a sunset too? they can wish it and make it so if only and only if for
once and only now they were and are a fairy unconcerned with the wishes of others. if
only they can become to remain the fairy they didn't always want to be when they only
wished and wanted to fly.

xe never wanted to get in the way. xe wanted to keep changing. to remain in xyr dissat-
isfactions, rejected, but not an obstruction. xe doesn't know much but wants to learn. be
willing to adapt. xe is a variable on xyr best days. xe is irrational and/or unreal on xyr
worst. xe is a number or a series of numbers. xe is counted in selves. none to some. one
to other(s).

no rain. not here. but it us often here. right now. this time of year. I miss it. let's miss it
together. let's be inflated with the notion of the flood.

". . . now that I've . . . accepted all the contradictions of my life, there's nothing left to
know. The only thing that moves me now is moving, finding out about another person
(you)." (Chris Krause, Eileen Myles, Joan Hawkins - I Love Dick)

we don't want to breakdown. I didn't ask to breakup. you needed a break.

xe has learned to bend, to fold, to fit a pirate's chest. they prefer to stash stuff for later.
to hide what must be hidden as they themselves have hidden before.

but nobody can do it all. even if all is as inclusive as all the names handed over for a
chance to do it all and to do everything even if only against the hyperbolic, once again
and once more, for another.

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Richard O’Russa

Lower East Side

<https://www.instagram.com/orussarichard/>



Bio

Richard O’Russa is a painter and letterpress printer. He collaborates often with poets on varying formats.

Artist’s Statement

These paintings are watercolor on wood. They measure no more than three inches by five inches, which makes them simultaneously delicate and sturdy.



Aged Correspondent



Despondent Captain



Meeger House

In Praise of Jonas Mekas Avant-Garde Cinema Legend Dies



BY JOEL SCHLEWOWITZ

On January 23, outside of Anthology Film Archives, just to the right of the entrance, a makeshift shrine began to be assembled with photographs, messages, and flowers. Jonas Mekas, the founder of Anthology, had died that morning. Displaced from Lithuania, arriving with his brother in New York after the Second World War, he took an interest in New York's independent film community, having a major part in many of its aspects. His enthusiasm for cinema—and especially for avant-garde cinema—led to his multitude of activities, from the founding of Film Culture, to writing about experimental film in his column in The Village Voice, to the creation of institutions for film distribution and exhibition: The New American Cinema Group, The Film-Makers' Cooperative, The Film-Makers' Cinematheque, Anthology Film Archives. He was a poet and a prolific filmer of movie diaries documenting the artists, filmmakers, poets, friends, and family around him.

A message left at the impromptu shrine outside of Anthology reflected the inspiration he was to so many: "I picked up a camera because of Jonas." A broken super-8 projector was left as an offering among the candles and flowers a little later that night.

I was first around the East Village film community, and I recall screenings where Jonas would sit near the back of the Maya Deren Theater at Anthology Film Archives, interested in seeing what younger filmmakers were up to. A young filmmaker myself back then, I had the young filmmaker's temerity and naiveté to ask him if he would look at some rough cuts of work I was doing. He told me that he never looked at rough cuts anymore. Too often he would see the unfinished version of something and end up liking it more than the finished version. Also I recall some time later, in the early 2000s, some filmmakers from the UK were at Anthology for The New York Underground Film Festival, and I heard someone say they were incensed that Jonas had attended their screening and wouldn't offer his critique of their grand opus when they'd cornered him just afterwards. He had explained that he always needed to ruminate on a film, to digest it, after seeing it and it wasn't possible for him to share any of his instantaneous thoughts as the lights came up. They apparently regarded this as making some excuse; perhaps he didn't like their film and wouldn't come out and say so?

But Jonas was never bashful about having strong opinions and convictions. Morris Engel told me how when meeting independent filmmakers Jonas would passionately hold forth. But, according to Morris, Jonas' Lithuanian accent made it difficult to understand exactly what he was saying most of the time in these zealous speeches. In the 1960s people would rush out to get The Village Voice to see what he was canonizing or condemning that week. In the pages of Film Culture issue 43, devoted to expanded cinema, Jonas' sarcastic commentary on corporate-sponsored expanded cinema work by Saul Bass is worth reading, just to see how withering his condemnation of commercialism could be. So too his epic rant in The Village Voice on Oct. 9, 1969 entitled "A Warning Note to the Projectionist at the Museum of Modern Art" (Movie Journal: The Rise of the New American Cinema, 1959-1971), addressed to the projectionist whose disruptive voice could be heard through the walls of the projection booth during a silent film screening.

His Village Voice column was called "Movie Journal" and, apropos to this, it was more of a daybook of goings on of screenings than a catalog of movie reviews. His comment to me, about not looking at rough cuts, seems to have been the contention at the heart of his agonized feelings about Cassavetes' Shadows (1959), preferring the rougher and more episodic earlier version of the film to its completed edit ("Two Versions of Shadows" January 27, 1969, Movie Journal).

With his own diary films he wrote about how he almost destroyed some of his early films by cutting up with too much determination and self-consciousness, and had to recover the material by returning it back to its original state. As a filmmaker Jonas could let his diary-footage speak in its candor and extemporaneous jubilation, jumping back and forth from season to season, the snow in Soho and the summer in the countryside with a simple typewritten intertitle as the pivot-point between these sudden temporal shifts. He freed the filmmaking craft from too much over-thinking and the over-dilution resultant from working over the raw material a bit too much (like the painter's palette that has become too drab and muddy from the over mixing of the colors). Sometimes it's said of artists who break apart the rigid conventions that calcify around some way of working: so-and-so "gave us permission to ...". Jonas gave us permission. He let cinema be a medium of the poetic and discursive diary film; an elation of the little joys glimpsed in the byways of the reel of footage from those passing moments of his ever-active life.

Not all regarded this "permission" as a positive. In the 1990s I worked as an assistant for Arnold Eagle. He was a semi-retired documentary filmmaker teaching filmmaking workshops who had gotten his start in moviemaking as cinematographer for Hans Richter in the 1940s. There had been an animosity between him and Jonas. Pressed on the matter, Arnold explained that he had former students who would go on to study with Jonas and adopt the Mekas style of filmmaking. That is to say, Jonas' "freeing of the cinema" (to borrow from the title of David E. James' book on Jonas, To Free The Cinema)

might be regarded as its own new form of convention. In Arnold's opinion, Jonas may not have encouraged self-determination as much as emulation in his students.

But seeing one of Jonas Mekas diary films it's hard not to wish to emulate the ebullience for the passing moments in paradise the camera has witnessed. Children in the Soho loft; the bright light of a winter day streaming in through the windows; a trip to the circus with the camera taking it in with innocent awe; stray cats befriending Jonas while he breakfasts outside of a café; chance encounters on the Soho streets; Central Park in the snow; a day observing a lighthouse in Cassis shot a frame at a time, compressed into five minutes of changing sunlight and the visual rhythms of the tacking sailboats; visits to Hans Richter at his farm in Connecticut while the prelude to Wagner's Parsifal is heard on the soundtrack, a wedding taking place; Peter Kubelka in dark suit and tie strolling in Vienna; and John Lennon and Yoko Ono at a gathering in a Soho loft, the camera turning back on the filmmaker who sits by the window playing a concertina and singing.

Upon leaving the dark theater after seeing one of Jonas' diary films there is a compelling urge to make films with the same joy of life as in these reels, to pick up one's Bolex and film everything!—with a push of the camera's trigger enter the paradise that Jonas has immortalized on the screen. Jonas the poet speaks on the soundtrack, announcing that these brief moments are indeed paradise. "I live, therefore I make films. I make films, therefore I live."

While the holy fool of Wagner's Parsifal was Jonas' musical leitmotif for the filmmaker in He Stands in the Desert Counting the Seconds of His Life (1986) and Birth of a Nation (1997), the images in his films more often have the lightheartedness that suggests sparkling works of Mozart, unreeling with an inexhaustible outpouring of melodic ideas, more than the holy gloom of Wagner's last music-drama. As evidenced by the footage in his film diary, Mekas would play upon the controls of the camera as if he were a musician dexterously performing on the keys of a clarinet.

Jonas' legacy includes that of a preservationist, creating Anthology Film Archives as a place to house the works of avant-garde cinema that might otherwise be endangered with becoming lost or inaccessible. In one of Jonas' last grand projects, Anthology will soon undertake an expansion to add more space for its holdings and access to its paper archive.

In some ways this preservationist mission has its parallel in his other endeavors: The Village Voice articles to preserve the work of the underground filmmakers in the form of a journalistic record. Even the underground press was devoting column space to reviews of mainstream cinema, he protested ("Why I'm Writing This Column" March 20, 1969 Movie Journal). His film diary would use the camera to preserve life's passing intervals of jubilation. Visions of an earthly paradise passing by fleetingly before the camera lens.

Anthology Film Archives will be commemorating the work of their founder in a series of screenings from April 16 to June 23. The full schedule can be found on their website: http://anthologyfilmarchives.org/film_screenings/series/50594

Joel Schlemowitz (<http://www.joelschlemowitz.com>) is an experimental filmmaker based in Park Slope, Brooklyn who works with 16mm film, shadowplay, magic lanterns, and stereographic media. His first feature film, 78rpm, is an experimental documentary about the gramophone. He is the author of the new book Experimental Filmmaking and the Motion Picture Camera: An Introductory Guide for Artists and Filmmakers (<https://www.experimental filmmaking.com/>) (Focal Press). His short works have been shown at The Ann Arbor Film Festival, The New York Film Festival, and The Tribeca Film Festival, and they have received awards from The Chicago Underground Film Festival, The Dallas Video Festival, and elsewhere. Shows of installation artworks include Anthology Film Archives, and Microscope Gallery. He teaches experimental filmmaking at The New School and was the resident film programmer and Arcane Media Specialist at The Morbid Anatomy Museum.



Jonas at Microscope Gallery, December 2018. Chiara Ambrosio drawing.

One message left at the impromptu shrine outside of Anthology (below) reflected the inspiration he was to so many: 'I picked up a camera because of Jonas.'

Joel Schlemowitz photo.



Photograph of a makeshift shrine outside Anthology Film Archives. Signs include "Rest In Paradise Jonas - New York City" and "I Picked up a Camera because of Jonas." The shrine is decorated with candles, flowers, and a small lantern.

Mekas Tribute Screenings, Part 1: I Make Home Movies, Therefore I Live

showing at Anthology Film Archives
2nd Street and Second Ave, The East Village

Lost Lost Lost
April 16 at 7:30 p.m.

In Between: 1964-68
April 30 at 7:30 p.m.

Diaries, Notes & Sketches (Walden)
May 14 at 7:30 p.m.

Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania
May 21 at 7:30 p.m.

Paradise Not Yet Lost (Aka Oona's Third Year)
May 24 at 7:30 p.m.

He Stands in a Desert Counting the Seconds of His Life
May 25 at 7:30 p.m.

As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty
May 26 at 5:00 p.m.

Out-Takes from the Life of a Happy Man
June 4 at 7:30 p.m.

Selections from the 365 Day Project
June 23 at 7:30 p.m.

Graceful Birds, Universal Humans, A Million Fucking Suns for Hegnauer

'Indeed, the experience of reading and rereading When the Bird is Not a Human is like going on a trip in which you never quite know where you're going, and you never quite achieve finality, but you know that—whether bird or human—you are where the world is, and in some highly particular place.'

BY ELLEN BLUESTONE

When the Bird Is Not a Human
HR Hegnauer
Subito Press

I would hardly recommend starting a book of poems in a busy airport, where words come at you in jarring, interruptive sound patterns that make you wish you could run. I felt especially vulnerable to the familiar assault of passenger names, alerts, boarding announcements, and cell phone chatter when I opened HR Hegnauer's slim little book, *When the Bird Is Not a Human*, seeking comfort in its delicate cover design and play-format—until it occurred to me that the loud, crazy environment of the airport offered an unexpected analogue to the poems. As Karla Kelsey states on the book's back cover, "... Hegnauer allows us to 'float in a world that understands we are all at one and the same time empty and full, awake and asleep, attempting to see and seeing.'" Wishing for the water bottle I'd been forced to give up, I became gradually aware of the jarring kinetics of these extremely delicate poems—with characters unable to voice themselves, senses trying to do the work of other senses, images forming and un-forming, and phrases escaping their word boundaries only to recreate themselves elsewhere, in acts of poetic restaging and "revisiting."



Hegnauer's play-with-words begins with "The Characters": three poems entitled "The Dog," "The White-Crowned Sparrow," and "The Constellation." None of these characters offer the usual comfort of anthropomorphism. The dog is "the leashed," and he speaks only in terms of what he cannot say: "How the leashed did not say" or "How the leashed wanted to bark." Incapable of voicing itself, and unmitigated by human agency, the poem ends in the language of ventriloquized default: "and so, we're humming what these birds won't speak." "The White-Crowned Sparrow" is told by a human unable to see it and choosing instead to hear it. The human persona tells us, "The phenomenon of dialect is the focus of my attention," yet sound is conveyed through words of sight: "this is what it sounds like to see a thing." "The Constellation" is equally bereft of human language or power: "We put the human in the star space/ not knowing that/ the star space didn't want the human."

It is in the dramatic core of the book, "The Settings & the Scenes," that images form and un-form across the boundaries of individual poems. The most pervasive and disturbing of these images is that of the baby, conjured imaginatively. The persona of "The Bed" angrily states, "I was a conduit for my imagined imagination of a baby./ I'm fucking kidding." In "The Baby," we are then told, "After the last time we made love, I gave birth to a still-born boy." And finally, in "The Baby Revisited," the persona casually proclaims, "I dreamt I was reading a story, / and in the middle of the story/ I gave birth to a blonde-haired boy."

As in an airport, motifs and phrases appear and reappear in different incarnations, and so do phrases. A blue sofa appears across the various rooms of several poems, and the phrase "I have the confidence of a million fucking suns," gives the comforting message "I care for you in dear ways" in "The Message," only to be conveyed by books in "The Living Room, Re-revisited": "They look at you with the confidence of a million fucking suns,/ They look at you with humility of every story ever heard."

Indeed, the experience of reading and rereading *When the Bird is Not a Human* is like going on a trip in which you never quite know where you're going, and you never quite achieve finality, but you know that—whether bird or human—you are where the world is, and in some highly particular place. The end of this journey is "The And"—both inclusive and suggestive of that which lies within and beyond the confines of its three short poems and Hegnauer's graceful little universe.

HR Hegnauer (<http://www.hrhegnauer.com/>) is the author of *When the Bird is Not a Human* (Subito Press) and *Sir* (Portable Press at Yo-Yo Labs). She is a book designer specializing in working with independent publishers as well as individual artists and writers. She received her M.F.A. in Writing & Poetics from Naropa University, where she has also taught in the Summer Writing Program. HR also has an M.B.A. degree in Business from the University of Denver.

Ellen Bluestone is a professor of English and women's studies and principal of Bluestone Write. For the past seven years, Bluestone has been teaching online in an M.A. program in English and creative writing at Southern New Hampshire University, where she received the 2017 Excellence in Teaching Award as an Outstanding COCE (College of Online and Continuing Education) adjunct faculty member. Before entering the world of eLearning, she taught at several other universities, including Fairleigh Dickinson, Widener, Pennsylvania State, and West Chester. At West Chester, she was voted an Outstanding Faculty Member by the Interfraternity and Panhellenic Council. Bluestone received a B.A. in art history from Wellesley College and an M.A. in English from Villanova University, where she received the Margaret Esmonde Award for Excellence in Scholarly Research. She has a Ph.D. ABD in English from Rutgers University. She completed a three-year course in The Philosophy and Appreciation of Art at The Barnes Foundation, and is a Fellow of the Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project and The National Writing Project. She taught for two years at the Uniao Cultural-Brasil Estados Unidos in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where she trained Brazilian teachers in the teaching of American Literature.

In Deep Cuts, Reyes' Stories Become Sublime

BY TAMARA OAKMAN

Deep Cuts
Dimitri Reyes
2019

Through an intricately woven combination of allusions, Dimitri Reyes' dynamic book of poetry, *Deep Cuts*, covers a myriad of important topics ranging from domestic violence and war to slavery and capitalism. This is a staple in Reyes' work as he has been quoted on his very popular Patreon Page as saying: "I'm interested in the many threads that weave into the poet, constantly aiming to stitch the academic, spoken word, performance, and page facets which are all important to the poet's development." This plays more specifically into *Deep Cuts* as from the first poem, "I Hear those Fights throughout the Night," to the final poem, "Wishing Well," Reyes uncovers the environmental, political, and psychosocial contexts that surround the poet who is writing in today's world. This is why his work is so important. But unlike some political work which can come across as jarring or downright disorienting, his actually pulls you into the fabric of his narratives with figurative language that isn't difficult to break down, I'd even venture to say, it's conversational.

The conversational nature of Reyes' poems work well, especially in "Coffee Street in Morning" which has a particularly interesting extended metaphor using coffee as the foundation of the metaphorical paradigm. The poem is about the folly of two men fighting over a woman who doesn't care about either of them, something that has led to many a proud man's imprisonment. There are conversational lines like, "they were too busy/ trying to punch each other's lights out ..." mixed with the coffee metaphor that also serves as a point of characterization. Two of the three characters present in the poem are named Jamaica Blue Mountain and Bustillo. As the poem moves forward, the verbiage reflects this characterization. Reyes uses phrases like, "men speaking bitter words," "she who had brewed them," "call her mucus creamer," and "taste testing each other's toughness." His clever use of coffee as the vehicle for telling a mundane story is what transformed it to the sublime.

This also displays the syntactical prowess of the poet. As with his other poems, he uses figurative language to carry the reader through extended metaphors, alliteration, assonance, and consonance where the musical quality adds to the overall meaning. I could not ignore the strong combination of allusions from "ponchos" leading me to Central America and "cotton gins" leading me to the Civil Rights Movement. In addition, the artwork does not simply illustrate the action of the poems. The color schemes, severe lines, blocked symmetry and focal points add yet another dimension to the poesy. In the poem "Wildflower," the illustration makes it clear that the poet is using wildflower as a metaphor, but he is really talking about a tree. The metaphor works because a wildflower and a tree both grow and are both wild. It was looking at the illustration that brought "twiggy branches" and "bark" to the forefront of my mind. Otherwise, the title might have made me focus on just the idea of a wildflower.

Reyes has a way of using figurative language that is complex when at the same time maintaining accessibility. Therefore, opening up his poetry to the everyday reader instead of closing them off. At the same time, the trained eye can pick up on the assonance, consonance, allusion, and alliteration. So there is something for everyone in a range of educational levels and even something someone who has never read poetry can appreciate. It is often hard to strike that balance and that is one of the aspects of Reyes' work that I enjoyed the most. It is a book I can teach to my students while at the same time enjoying and unraveling in my private intellect. I would recommend this book and this author. Delve into *Deep Cuts*, you will not regret it.

Tamara Oakman is an English, ESL, writing, and humanities professor, a poet and writer, and helped co-found *APIARY* magazine a 501(c)3 non-profit. Her work—poetry and fiction—is published in numerous online and print magazines such as *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *Many Mountains Moving*, *Philadelphia Stories* and *Best of Anthology*, and *Mad Poet's Review*. Her first book of poetry is *Snatched: A Lyric Series in Two Voices* is forthcoming. She also gives long, warm hugs and passionate, rambling speeches. She lives and loves in Philadelphia. Please visit <http://www.apiarymagazine.com/> and come see what the buzz is all about!

Dimitri Reyes (<https://www.youtube.com/c/dimitrireyespoet>) is a Puerto-Vegan YouTuber, writer, and educator from Newark, N.J. He is the recipient of *SLICE Magazine's* 2017 Bridging the Gap Award for Emerging Poets and a finalist for the 2017 Arcturus Poetry Prize by the *Chicago Review of Books*. Reyes received his M.F.A. from Rutgers University-Newark and his poetry is published or forthcoming in *Entropy*, *Hawai'i Review*, *Obsidian*, *Borderlands*, *Acentos*, *Anomaly*, *Kweli*, and others.

A Garden Plot Like Strobe Lights Russo

BY ANNE-ADELE WIGHT

G
Emmalea Russo
Futurepoem books, 2018

Green. Ground. Garden. Germination. Growth. The g in the center of the word edges. The initial of a lover, there for a while and then not. Beginning with an ever-changing garden plot of poems, Emmalea Russo's *G* reflects the confusion, disagreement, and frequent exhaustion that accompany the enterprise of a new garden. Her collaborator in this project is her lover, known only as "G."

Interestingly, Russo's background is in sculpture, and the physicality of making is omnipresent in these poems. We watch the garden take shape in a series of flash images like the skitter of a strobe light. Pairs of short poems face each other, seemingly in conversation but actually talking past each other. The poems on the odd-numbered pages are mostly brief prose paragraphs that read like stream-of-consciousness reflections. The facing poems are linedated, but so strangely



that they read with difficulty:
Hand the outside ove
r to the yard interp
ret the paper drying

Their contorted syntax and forced spacing contrast with the more natural flow of the opposite pages. Russo's use of these devices reflects the unnatural function of land parceled for planting; words often break in the middle, sometimes losing parts of themselves rather than overflow the boundary of the garden. Does the garden itself have a perspective, imperfectly translated into language?

The contrasting poetic structures also suggest the impossibility of communicating in a difficult relationship, especially if one of the partners dominates. *G's* plans for the garden, involving daily hours of labor in summer heat, override any objections from his exhausted companion. Another opposition, suggested obliquely, is the inevitable shortfall between design and product: no matter how hard both gardeners work, the garden in practice can't live up to the idea that conceived it.

The *I Ching* and the hex signs of rural Pennsylvania both recur as images throughout the book. The *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, provides an apt image for gardening because a garden changes constantly and is static only when dormant. Russo rearranges the components of the letter H (the magical power of the hex sign?) into a symbol representing a gate: | | |. The numerical significance of H, the eighth letter of the alphabet, suggests a further connection. The *I Ching* has eight trigrams arranged in an octagon, each trigram symbolizing a gate into another world—an escape from the garden or a way into understanding it more profoundly?

The garden's proximity to railroad tracks may represent a means of potential escape, from the garden or from G himself. But the railroad tracks are abandoned and the speaker is deeply attached to her lover. Do the tracks represent a useless enterprise? a relationship that can't last?

As summer gives way to fall and the garden approaches dormancy, the relationship loses its energy. On one page, "Hoarfrost the hour arrived"; on the facing page, "Moods, muscles, handfuls of broken off stalks"—clearly the garden is not the only casualty as winter approaches. But with the winding down of [the] garden and romance comes a suggestion of renewed creativity: "I was able to start making things after shimmying out from under G."

The book ends with a narrative in poetic prose that helps to orient the reader. In this section appears the question, "Are G and I connected? If yes, by what and for how long?" The obvious answer: They are connected, but only by the garden and only as long as the garden can produce. Everything has its season and nothing can flourish forever.
Geological. Gate. Ghost. Glacial. Grief. Gone. Go.

Emmalea Russo (<https://emmalearusso.com/>) is an artist, writer, and astrologer living on the New Jersey coast. When she was 19, her trajectory shifted when she had her first grand mal seizure and was diagnosed with epilepsy. Since then, her art and healing practices have been devoted to exploring consciousness in various forms, including using the energetic and intellectual powers of astrology to navigate the world. Her writing and art is interdisciplinary and explores non-traditional modes of communication. It takes the form of photographs, performance, books, and intuitive research. She has an M.F.A. in writing from Vermont College and an M.F.A. in sculpture from Pratt Institute. Her books are *G* (Futurepoem Books) and *Wave Archive* (Book*hug). She has been an artist in residence at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and 18th Street Arts Center.

Anne-Adele Wight's most recent book, *An Internet of Containment*, was published by BlazeVOX at the end of 2018. Her previous books, all from BlazeVOX, include *The Age of Greenhouses*, *Opera House Arterial*, and *Sidestep Catapult*. Her work has been published internationally in print and online and includes appearances in *Apiary*, *Philadelphia Poets*, *American Writing*, *Luna Luna*, *Bedfellows*, *Oz Burp*, and *Have Your Chill*. She has read extensively in Philadelphia and other cities and has curated readings for two long-running poetry series. She has received awards from Philadelphia Poets, the Philadelphia Writers' Conference, and the Sandy Crimmins Poetry Festival.

'The I Ching and the hex signs of rural Pennsylvania both recur as images throughout the book. The I Ching, or Book of Changes, provides an apt image for gardening because a garden changes constantly and is static only when dormant.'

