

Holy Erotic Psychologic Linguistic Twister: R. Erica Doyle's Proxy Takes Stage



INTERVIEW BY AMY KING

Boog City printed matter co-editor Amy King spoke with R. Erica Doyle about the math we know by, the mechanics of editing in years, the loss of great loves, how and where such loss carries, and the underbelly of sex positivity—all in her scintillating and tumultuous debut from *Belladonna*, proxy.

BC: Holy erotic psychologic linguistic twister, Erica! Proxy took me through several permutations of “blush” and back to ground again. Congratulations on such a rich work! Let’s start by talking structure; I know Proxy has been labeled “prose poems,” but have you invented a new book form? Implied throughout is novel, poetry, suspense, and drama. Can you offer readers a suggestion or clue for the approach?

R. Erica Doyle: To fall, simply, fall into it. Or, glancing sideways, edge around. Or gulp. Try reading it out of order; order is relative. Read from the back to the front. Read every other. Rearrange it yourself with post it notes. I do. Surrender. Or refuse to do so. Be a switch about the whole thing; that, perhaps, is best.

BC: I am simply stunned by the gorgeous phrasing and images balanced throughout Proxy, so much so that I want to list what I’ve underlined, but that would entail copying the whole book almost. A few mentions by way of introduction: “She is the gape of a second.” “The sun places a little morning in each pale window, sweet water, purple orange nectar.” “If thunder were a vowel, this is the lip it would occupy.” Can you bare the bones and talk a little about your procedure for poets who struggle with narrative: did you write more at length and pare down or find yourself with a phrase or two and build the movement from there?

RED: You are too kind; but we already knew that. As to process: I recently went through all the drafts I could find to share with a class at Reed College reading the book. Those students’ analyses may eventually prove more salient than anything I have to say, but I will try.

First of all, I have ADD, so paying attention to anything that feels tedious—like editing—bores me so intensely I barely do it. It affects what actually stays in my permanent memory, which tends to be more random than most people’s. This tension between memory and tedium inform my approach to editing. I don’t remember well what I meant and so the work feels fresh, but I can’t spend too much time or I’ll die of boredom. Therefore most of my work is slightly edited, obsessively over three years with a two year interval between each. In this way I was able to keep picking away until it was clean. I was looking to create language that was lush and spare at the same time ...

I began with taking a book about calculus and paring it down, and that exercise became some of the procedure: overwrite, just a bit, get it out, and pare back and back, revealing the bones underneath. Some lines just came to me and I built the poems around them. The lines you quote above are unaltered from my journal.

BC: Before we jump further into meaty book talk, can you tell new readers a little about your background? How did you, R. Erica Doyle, arrive at writing something so personal about relationships, dejection, sex, and life?

RED: When I was an infant I sang to my mother and she sang back to me; when I learned how to speak I told stories and wrote songs; when I learned how to write I wrote. I was always running and skipping, talking to trees, lost in my vivid imagination. Writing, all the time writing. People ask how I “find the time.” For me, it is like asking how I have time to breathe, to eat. I’m working on two novels, have two other books of poems done, working on another, and have two children’s books.

Utterance is my background. I was influenced of course by my Trinidadian culture, which delights in the humorous double entendre, the multilingual, the hybrid, the transgressive sexual, without forgetting the political nature of the beast within which we find ourselves. I grew up with outsiders, was one, repeatedly. What sucks about being an outsider is oppression; what rocks about it is having nothing left to lose.

BC: Proxy is framed throughout by quotes from *A Tour of the Calculus*, indicating a marriage of math and rich linguistics, also implying a need for excess in our basic, possibly reductive equations. That is, the drama isn’t simple math: we were together and now we’re apart. Nuance and poetic layers make up the machinations that narrate our lives, especially in matters romantic. There is an intellectual seduction (“Women like that, too. Fixing things. Take in the broken wing you drag like a decoy.”) and so much more. Can you say a little about the framework and how the quotes from *A Tour* might act as bread crumbs?

RED: Proxy itself began with a found poem I wrote based on *A Tour of the Calculus* called “Fundamental Theorem.” At the time, I was trying to understand how my relationship with my mother was informing my lover relationships, and my relationship with myself, and the aspects of the calculus that most intrigued me were those that delved into the complexities of the relationships of objects to each other in space and time, and the notion of “as above so below” (which I was first introduced to by The Tom Tom Club, incidentally); not as neat as all that, but the relationship of parts to the whole in a quantum physics sort of way. In a dark matter sort of way. In that way that mathematics, since the time of the ancients, has been a way of grappling with the unseen until it could be seen; of knowing a planet was there, or land beyond, with stars for a map, before we saw the shore or sent out a satellite. It was a road map for naming something that was beyond my understanding, a graph of the self.

BC: And the extensions beyond that self, how that self extends into others—or disconnects?

RED: Ultimately we are all points on the same graph.

BC: I’ve never seen sections of a book work so well as markers and as suggestions of a progression before. But these, “Prologue,” “Palimpsest,” “Proxy,” “Phasedown,” and “Petroglyph” really serve the book well. There seems to be a telescoping from the intimate, personal, to being apart to living a larger life and “filling the hole she left.”

RED: I actually played with the structure a lot. At first it was one piece, a long poem, or a weird short story. I thought the first section was done, until I read it at The Poetry Project, and the fiction writer and artist Sarah Micklem came up to me and said, “Wow, there needs to be a whole book of that.” It was then I realized a narrative was playing out there on the pages; later, startlingly, it erupted into real life.

That first section was called “Palimpsest,” and it came to me to name the second section “Proxy,” and then I thought of making them all P’s and searched the dictionary for “p” words that would fit. I put a lot of thought into how that progression might work. I have notes in my journals that speak to my grappling with that. I sent it to poet Arisa White who wrenched it around to suggest the underlying order it has today.

The structure has been similar since the beginning, I think, but the order of the utterances has been quite different over the years. I really hoped that it could be read in any order. Just as we impose our own order on things after they have happened, and our minds arrange the memories in hindsight, the reader can do the same with Proxy.

BC: What people often refer to as an “honesty” in the work is really a nakedness of matters sexually related, like those you’ve laid out for us so eloquently here. That is, were you at all concerned with or fearful of laying bare matters so many women, especially queer women, struggle to acknowledge or put into words (especially in the “Palimpsest” section)—matters of desire, the physicalities of fucking, and so much more? The tip of the iceberg, for example, “Your hands as full of cunt as the stretch can dare...” and then a touch of Karen Horney’s womb envy or vagina dentata, “... and you open wide to swallow them whole.” So much more to quote, but I ask instead: were the graphics a goal or an effect of working through the evolution of this relationship?

RED: “Palimpsest” was the first section written after the “Fundamental Theorem.” It was a gauntlet I was picking up after chafing. At that time in my life, I felt I had lost my greatest love forever. I had won an Astraea Award that allowed me to spend a year writing and living in Greenwich Village. I was published in a book my relatives could buy at any Barnes and Noble—*Best American Poetry*, and I was getting job and publication offers. 9/11 had just happened down the street from my apartment and the wars were beginning. My heart was broken, my writing was taking off, my social life was waking up, my family finally thought I had a real job, and I was living in the smoke of the downed Towers. I was unleashed by all of this.

I was taking a Cave Canem Regional workshop with the marvelous Patricia Smith who challenged us to write a taboo poem, not about a societal taboo, but something that was taboo to us. (Interestingly, about half of us in that workshop were queer black women.) What was more taboo in the women’s community, fresh out of the sex wars, than to expose the ways we used and hurt each other in the name of sex positivity? To share the underbelly, the swagger, and the glory of our process? Tristan Taormino’s *Best Lesbian Erotic* series was barely five years old. Hardly anyone was writing about sex the way I knew we were doing it, and feeling it, and sometimes fucking each other up and over. Sex and the body are what make us dangerous—no one would care if we were writing platonic letters to each other about maple leaves.

The body is the site where all of this gets worked out, but then, in Proxy, everything becomes that body. The sea, the sand, the subway, the boys, the older women on the boardwalks, the platforms. Is there something fetal there? I did start out wondering about my mother.

And of course I was fearful. I was intensely uncomfortable with the work itself initially, and Ronaldo Wilson is the only person to whom I read the entire first draft. But I set out to terrify myself. I have removed parts of the book that were too bare, or harsh, though perhaps some might think, not enough!

BC: I’d love to see those excised parts! Of course, the physical dynamics are only one facet or layer of what’s happening with this persona and the relationships she navigates, possibly to avoid feeling what she does for the one who parts “as friends” halfway through. Is this persona struggling with what to make of an evolution she doesn’t have full control over? Is there a queer aspect to how this relationship has unfolded or failed?

RED: The real struggle is with the self. And the Persona, as you call her, is so obsessed with the beloved, she cannot see herself. I think. My ideas about it are still evolving. Speaking of an evolution one cannot control. Control ... I am still mulling over that word. Control is the problem. Awareness is the solution.

What can be kind of queer is how we are connected in our little segregated communities, and how we stay connected, and while sometimes it’s wonderful sometimes it feels like *Soylent Green*, eating each others’ corpses for sustenance. But I am one of those people who does not know what she would do today without those ex-lover friends. Maybe it’s because, especially when I was younger, I was flailing so, and they still loved me, each in her own way. And were largely kind. What is queer is all the ways we help each other to survive.

BC: Proxy’s persona seems to navigate the relationship terrain in an effort to emerge unscathed. What does she wish to avoid being hurt by? What has she learned to protect herself from?

RED: True intimacy leads to oblivion. Or so she thinks. She combines herself with those that guarantee it, unconsciously. Time after time, she desires her own demise. She never does find love in the end, or happiness. Avoidance yields nothing. It’s like tv.

BC: There is clearly a power struggle taking place between the beloved and the persona, with the beloved pushing ahead in separation while the persona holds back in expression by not admitting to how deeply her desire goes. Do I have this right or can you say something about the dynamics that are playing out between these two?

RED: I think you have something there, but part of it is also the nature of the illusion. The idea of the trompe l’oeil, the doubtful perception, abound. What is true, in the end? That is the struggle. The “power struggle” is only another illusion.

BC: Is there an element of race that is also working between them? “Negroes make me hungry, too, she says. You need an explanation but say nothing to this boastful non sequiter. You want to amuse her with your bones.”

RED: Well, there is an element of the outside world that encroaches from time to time—the men marching on the mother, the mercury in the Mediterranean, militarism, environmental degradation, racism—it’s all there in the atmosphere. Poisons. The characters joke around it, the way people of color tend to do, signifying, and the persona incorporates it into her compulsive cataloguing. The reference to the “Negro” alludes to the “Good Negro” and a politics of respectability that leaves the characters wanting. There is also, apparently, the questions of what one imagines the race of the characters to be. Once someone told me she couldn’t tell that the characters were black. Well, to me it was obvious. I think it was the absence of certain markers; what Proxy has to say about that is “They make all the usual gestures but you can’t reciprocate.” There are signifiers, perhaps not the usual ones, although it seems quite obvious to me. Everyone in the book is black, except for some of the men on television and one of the lovers.

BC: I guess another question is, is it important that race is signified clearly and the reader understand that those in the book are black?

RED: Who no know go know, and, if you don’t know, now you know. Fela and Biggie, respectively.

BC: Since the poems within are structured as connected prose poems, do you have any specific influences that have worked in a similar fashion? Have you read books written as a series of prose poems that inspired/influenced your efforts with Proxy? Also please comment on writers who inspired or gave you permission to write such a dissected relationship on the page.

RED: I am incredibly inspired and have learned much from the work of Erica Hunt, not only her books, but her “Notes for an Oppositional Poetics” have fundamentally informed my aesthetic. A great part of Proxy, during its second iteration, was actually written during her Cave Canem Regional workshop and she has been very encouraging about the work.

Harryette Mullen taught me much about the nuance and ecstasy of language, and the multivalent and symbolic aspects of black art. From Claudia Rankine I learned the art of the politically engaged, sustained idea, mass media’s incursions into the artifact, and the injection of humor. I met Claudia after she selected the book as a runner-up for the Cave Canem Prize, and have been privy in real time to her powerful artistry, process, radical courage, and kindness.

Proxy is also deeply influenced by Jeanette Winterson’s *The Powerbook*, which, aside from its beautiful writing—prose poems masquerading as novel—introduced technology into the equation in a way that was new at the time. The themes of loss and evasion and the constructed personas of the lovers of that book really spoke to me. The idea of taking on different personas to work out the relationship with the beloved was narratively liberating. *The Powerbook* is almost never mentioned in conversations about her work, and I gave away all my copies, so sometimes I wonder if it really exists (I googled it—it does!). She also has the most amazing description of a tulip dildo I’ve ever read.

My friends Ronaldo Wilson and Dawn Lundy Martin have been my accomplices in exploring “the prose poem that kills,” and their work and our discussions have deeply influenced my ideas in general and as I wrote this book. Their work embodies a passion, vulnerability, and playfulness—even in its brutality—that is affirming. If we can’t breakdance, fuck, love, and rewrite history, what’s the point?

Of her most recent book from *Litmus Press*, *I Want to Make You Safe*, John Ashbery described Amy King’s poems as bringing “abstractions to brilliant, jagged life, emerging into rather than out of the busyness of living.” Safe was one of the *Boston Globe’s Best Poetry Books of 2011*, and it was reviewed by, among others, *The Poetry Foundation* and *The Colorado Review*. For more, check www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/amy-king.



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Nathaniel Siegel photo

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Joel Dailey
New Orleans
Where You Stay At?
(for Lefty Wilbury)

I’ve broken every rule
Each & every ruler
Tossed watches
Systematically removed all clock hands

Instinctively like the dust bunnies
I know what goes around & keeps right on going
Dropping gorgeous tri-colored leaflets
Trajectory unbound

Links

www.sidewalkatsidewalk.blogspot.com
www.sidewalknyc.com/gallery
www.eastvillage.thelocal.nytimes.com/2013/02/14/as-sidewalk-marks-20-years-of-anti-folk-a-look-back-at-the-concert-flyers

Writer Bio

Jonathan Berger has been music editor at Boog City for a long time. Maybe too long ...

MUSIC

AntiFolk Archives

Two (2!) Visual Histories of the Scene (!)



BY JONATHAN BERGER

In this, the 20th consecutive year of AntiFolk at the Sidewalk Café, the regulars and staff at that East Village institution continue informing an ignorant public about all that has come before in the under-the-radar musical style.

Recently, two AntiFolkers have made the case for the scene, but not in terms of the music that has failed to shake the world, but rather, its art.

Several things bond these two individuals: neither are young men; they are not East Villagers. They are, however, dedicated, with their different kinds of media, to presenting the visual appeal of an aural art form. As one of them stated: "Sidewalk has meant so much to me over the years that I find myself wanting to tell everyone I know about it."



Domino

Herb Scher photo

Upper West Sider Herb Scher entered the world of AntiFolk a little under 10 years ago. The piano player was looking for an open mic when he entered the Sidewalk Café for Lach's Monday night AntiHoot. He was transfixed.

"I sat in the same chair from right after sign-up until I went on at 1:30 in the morning," Scher explains. "I didn't move. I very nervously played my one song, "Fishes." Lach said something very encouraging about the song, and it was exactly what I needed. Just that little bit of validation was enough for me to plunge myself into the whole scene."

"I realized 'this is going to be my home.' I thought 'this is a whole room full of neurotic songwriting nerds just like me.' The songs had this winsome quirkiness and sense of humor that I really identified with. I finally found my people."

For years, his involvement in the scene amounted to playing shows, along with sporadic public relations consulting, experience gained from his day job. Eventually, it grew to include other of Scher's myriad interests. He hosted a sporadic live talk show at the open mic; tried his hand at comedy; adopted a magician personality, Myron the Magnificent; and became the latest of AntiFolk's noted photographers.

Many have focused a lens, but only occasionally has a musician on the scene taken on multiple forms of artistic expression. In the eighties, Billy Nova performed his Christian pop hits among the East Village cognoscenti, and between shows would snap shots of the other acts. Lippe sat on a child's wooden chair from 2001 through 2008, singing simple melodies, and toured with Regina Spektor and The Trachtenburg Family Slideshow Players, memorializing their performances via photojournalism.

Scher joined the storied names of these visual AntiFolk chroniclers as he became the resident photographer for the print fanzine *Urban Folk*. Tasked with supplementing the articles in the zine, Scher became further embroiled in the world of AntiFolk.

"Photographing for *Urban Folk* was a great opportunity for me," says Scher. "It gave me a lot of practice taking pictures and working with people, and it also helped me develop closer friendships with some of the folks on the scene."

While Scher became proficient at portraiture, he admits, "taking good performance photos at Sidewalk can be challenging. For one, the lighting is usually dim and can range from extremely bright to extremely dark within inches, and that makes it difficult to properly expose the photos. Also, the number of good vantage points is very limited."

Lately, Scher, who has become a professional photographer, has dedicated his antifocus to a subtly different task: archivist.

"Most of my life I've had an interest in documenting the past," says Scher. "I'm the one in my family who has saved and organized all the old photos and memorabilia. I became very intrigued about the history of the AntiFolk scene. I started a blog about Sidewalk and dug up all these old interviews and articles and photos."

To help celebrate this 20th stable year for AntiFolk, Scher has been working assiduously to upload a gallery of photos from various artists performing at the club, usually taken by artists in the audience.

"When the anniversary came around it seemed like the perfect opportunity to put together a gallery tracing the whole time span at Sidewalk," says Scher. "For one thing, I wanted to find out myself more about what the earlier years were like. But, also, I thought the gallery could help tell the rest of the world about some of the unique aspects of the scene. Not only does Sidewalk's close-knit community exist at any one point in time, but it also extends out in a lineage across time. I thought that by organizing this gallery I might be able to represent some of this visually."

"The first person I contacted was Lippe," says Scher, "who I knew had a huge archive of photos from the scene. It would have been difficult to construct this gallery without his help." Other contributions came from Anne Husick, leader of Shameless and performer in untold East Village acts, and Kim Mossel, star of Peter Dizozza's musical, *The Last Dodo*.

"She had one shot in particular showing Adam Green in his Peter Pan outfit and Kimya Dawson in a dog suit that was the only photo I could find of the Moldy Peaches playing together at Sidewalk," says Scher. "The shots were not captioned on Peter [Dizozza]'s site so it is unlikely that many people have ever seen them."

"Unfortunately, I wasn't able to find any pictures at all from 1993 to around 1998," says Scher. "I was disappointed. I followed some promising leads that ended up not panning out. I'm sure there must be some photos out there, and I have hopes that some will still turn up, but that time frame is still sort of a mystery to me."

Quality among the photographs on display varies.

"The most important factor was documenting the people who had been most active on the scene, and so there are some shots that wouldn't necessarily stand up to professional criteria. But even the photos that suffer a little bit in certain aspects of their quality are interesting in and of themselves in that they come from the people involved and showcase the ways in which people were documenting the community at the time. I like that, in some cases, there is a certain roughness to the images."

The results speak for themselves a thousand times better than these words could ever do.

Bernard King has been a witness to the goings-on at the Sidewalk Café since the late nineties. He claims to be a retired performer, but he claims a lot of lot things—an assumed name, a musical past, and a life in Staten Island well beyond the reach of AntiFolk. To quote *NewsRadio*, King is "a cipher, wrapped in an enigma, and smothered in secret sauce."

At the same time, he has served in various capacities as a community builder. Though refusing to approach the stage himself, he curates seasonal readings that includes talking heads reciting his words and words he's selected for them to read. He has contributed to AntiFolk publications, helping manage the early aughts fanzine *AU Base* and the most recent AntiFolk Festival programs. Slowly, insidiously, he has become the greatest archivist in the scene.

King has cassette-recorded shows stored in his apartment, as well as photographs from before the days of digital. He also has hundreds of flyers that the various acts produced, cajoling locals to go to their shows.

King's collection grew over time, and now, in the 20th year of Sidewalk AntiFolk, King has provided his favorite flyers of the last 10-plus years to various and sundry. Both various and sundry have jumped to take advantage of these AntiFolk artifacts. The Sidewalk Café has printed up some of King's collection, posting them throughout the club. It's an exciting development for the music regulars, seeing their particular history presented as decor. It further cements the sense of history that this 20th year celebrates.

The *New York Times* has taken selections from King's archives and presented them online, providing a larger constituency access to AntiFolk's past, and what a striking past it is. The posters vary dramatically, artist by artist, show by show. Sometimes primitive, sometimes painfully baroque, the flyers of AntiFolk present another view into the creative process within the scene. It is a different avenue of expression than the norm in the musical East Village, but sometimes just as close to the hearts of the creators.

Artists such as Toby Goodshank, Preston Spurlock, and, of course, Jeff Lewis consider themselves as much visual artists as singer/songwriters. All three have produced comics as well as CDs. Dibs has produced flyers based on woodcuts and *Crazy and the Brains* cut and paste magazine photos onto their handwritten requests for attendance. Characters emerge through their artwork, sometimes a different character than what is expressed onstage, sometimes perfectly complementary.

King, ever secretive, was unavailable for recorded comment, but can be seen roaming the halls of AntiFolk at just about every relevant event, recording as he can: taking notes, collecting scraps, and, apparently, defining history. His flyer collection can be seen all over the Sidewalk Café.

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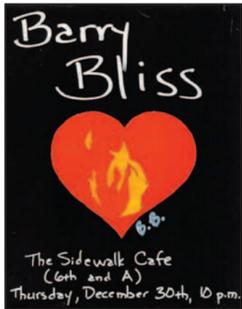
Bird to Prey

Herb Scher photo



Ben Krieger

Herb Scher photo



The Sidewalk Cafe (6th and A) Thursday, December 30th, 10 p.m.

CAConrad's New Astronomy

Poetry, Process, and Translucent Salamander

BY SHEREEN ADEL

Translucent Salamander: A (Somatic) Poetry Ritual & resulting poems

by CAConrad
Troll Thread



Translucent Salamander is, as CAConrad explains in the introduction of his collection, inspired by his time spent writing when involved in a residency program in Wyoming, Ucross Artist Residency. Each poem was written for each of 18 constellations he created while staring at the exceptionally starry night sky. The poems all have distinct shapes, skiny and jagged, undoubtedly related to their corresponding constellation. CAConrad writes without punctuation and skillfully manipulates language, letting it do what it will, free from too much constraint, while the line breaks provide a rhythm that guides the reader as the words flow into meaningful phrases. He maintains a remarkably straightforward and conversational style throughout the collection.



The first poem includes a fleeting impression of a city—"shake tall/ buildings/ out of my loving you"—then takes us into the countryside, where "trombones enter the/ pasta entering our bodies/ the microscope shows/ there is song between the grains." There's something appealing about the image of music on the farm, but CAConrad has no intention of leaving anyone with warm, fuzzy feelings. If the poem evokes a political discussion about the farming industry it isn't accidental. And he doesn't forget to mention that the "music mitigates suffering"—the tunes are a coping mechanism, not a representation of a happy-go-lucky farm hand.

CAConrad is generally outspoken when it comes to politics in poetry, and he has said in a past interview with Thom Donovan, "our pain is always there. I could vomit of it." He has spoken out vehemently against American wars and in this collection he addresses the issue with a tinge of black humor: "anyone with/ sense wants/ madness to end wants/ Canada to invade the United States of Americas/ bring us to our knees/ dissolve our military/ imprison our leaders/ distribute our wealth/ insist we live in peace."

Although part of his charm is his blatantly political voice, within the context of nature he gains depth in instances where the poems might otherwise border on ranting. In lamenting over great apes in captivity CAConrad seethes, "why are those fucking/ children here with cotton candy/ take them to gawk at drug dealers in human jail." By vehemently sharing his political stances on war, animal cruelty, and abortion—issues relevant in America—he may risk isolating readers who disagree or are uninvolved, sounding almost preachy. But these poems also include his thoughts on universally relatable human experiences contemplating life and death. His poem condemning animal cruelty ends with a thought that is aside from politics, "when you die/ whether human or ape/ 80 percent of you evaporates."

In spite of the suffering and sorrow depicted in CAConrad's poetry, we recognize a poet who is happy to be alive and yearns for more time. The translucent salamander is a creature that lives unusually long for its species, which seems fitting as the title of the collection and as the constellation associated with a poem that contemplates that passing of time. CAConrad has no delusions regarding his impending demise, but he playfully suggests that he'll ask only for days every Christmas and that he'll look for more time in a bag. As his poems become increasingly personal, his dark sense of humor becomes more apparent, "death can be/ hilarious in the/ wrench of not being/ strong enough to keep/ it away."

In this collection of poetry CAConrad scans a wide spectrum of emotion. Where there is beauty and hope we are reminded destruction and death and he does not for a moment want to let the reader take that for granted. These poems are a result of what he describes as "A (Somatic) Poetry Ritual" and about them he says, "This word is simultaneously two words: Soma and Somatic. It's the mutation(s) occurring when these wires cross where the poems can be found. This poetry truly is in everything underscoring Freud's statement, 'Everywhere I go I find a poet has been there before me.'"

Translucent Salamander: A (Somatic) Poetry Ritual & resulting poems is available as an eBook from Troll Thread, a collective that publishes eBooks as well as print books. It can be easily downloaded via the url in the margin, though it is not yet available as a physical book.

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Carrie Murphy's Pretty Tilt as Fairground Ride

BY KIMBERLY ANN SOUTHWICK

Pretty Tilt

By Carrie Murphy

Keyhole Books, an imprint of Dzanc Books



Movies are memorable, not because they remind you, déjà vu-like, what your own life was like, but because the characters are in a certain situation, the light is slanting just right, and the protagonist (or his enemy/lover/sidekick) delivers that perfect line: "Frankly, my dear ..." or "Toto, I've got a feeling ..." The quotes aren't about the words themselves most of the time, but what they mean in context to the films and their characters. Carrie Murphy's first full-length poetry collection, *Pretty Tilt*, begins, "I Caddie Woodlawn-ed up out of childhood, with a bounce/ & a book & on the corner" and readers see a girl, she might be a girl in a movie, she might be a girl in a book, maybe she is a girl in a book that was made into a movie in this first poem, "Forsythia." There is a definite overlap in this poem, and in the collection, between media. Caddie Woodlawn relates to the narrator in this poetry collection, but she is also a character from a book, a character from a movie, and all three of these things at once. This overlap does not take away from the poems

The girls in *Pretty Tilt* have subscriptions to *Good Housekeeping* and *Little Mermaid* hair; they google and instant message; they drink from 7-11 cups and eat vegan food; they listen to *The Weakerthans*, *Ani DiFranco*, and *The Spice Girls*.

as poems—they are clearly verse, and good, strong verse at that. But on an interdisciplinary level, the poems ask readers to refamiliarize themselves with their world, get to know its characters like they are movie characters or friends or friends' friends, and stick around as they play out glimpses of their lives.

The collection's major theme is memory. As it progresses from that first to last poem, girlhood is an important element, and a reader might think at first that the book focuses on what it was like to be a girl who grew up in the 1990s and early 2000s. Lines like "We drooled dozy-eyed with Chapstick pink hickies/ & Febrezed ourselves free" (from "Screaming & Not Screaming") and "he told me how he/ played piano with his penis when no one else/ was home I died & I died & I listened to "NSYNC unironically on repeat" (from "Hyundai Excel Hatchbook") definitely place the book in a girlhood of the late '90s—one of the first eras when even lower-middle class teens had easy and reliable and understood access to cars and music. But the collection instead seems more about remembering what it is like to grow up in general and grappling with these memories, trying to understand the disorder of youth, all its ups and downs and not just what it's like to be a girl—though gender and gender relations are of clear importance to the collection—but, of course, what it means to be human and what it means to be human now.

When asked about how she chose the order for the poems in the collection, Murphy says, "I didn't want it to feel like the 'girls' grew up over the course of the book or whatever, but they kind of did." In a way, the girls in the book are gaining maturity, learning about life, but these are poems in hindsight. They have the wisdom now to know, that "the word wild it means/ you thought wrong."

This girl speaking and the girls in the collection are looking back at what it means to have been alive for the first half of their lives and, for the first time, really thinking about just that. These girls are remembering, recounting, and they are doing so in a similar way that memory works: imperfectly, with slight embellishment, with a futile type of optimistic honesty. The girls of Murphy's *Pretty Tilt* are not embarrassed about liking Drew Barrymore in that movie their peers once made fun of in the same way teens today will most likely be unabashed at their love for *Hannah Montana*, Justin Bieber, or you fill in the blank.

A poem called "Glossary" then becomes the key to reading into the when of this collection. Each stanza "defines" a noun: "Away Message: purple Verdana font, song lyrics between/ yearning & aloofness. Yearning" or "Ironic: Four different Alanises with different hairstyles, singing/ & smiling & throwing themselves around inside of a car" or "Sex: Britney writhing with a big yellow snake in a tiny green outfit." These are not free association glossary definitions specific to Murphy: they are specific to what it was like to be immersed in the media of a certain era, but they work, too, as informative and/or interesting allusions for those unfamiliar with the era's

popular culture. Whether the references evoke appreciation, nostalgia, or curiosity, these distinct nouns denote an era and what it was like to be in that era, (whether you loved Hanson or pretended to hate Hanson because, overwhelmingly, you cannot deny that you still know all the words, be them nonsense or no, to "MMMMBop"). The girls in *Pretty Tilt* have subscriptions to *Good Housekeeping* and *Little Mermaid* hair; they google and instant message; they drink from 7-11 cups and eat vegan food; they listen to *The Weakerthans*, *Ani DiFranco*, and *The Spice Girls*.

Generally, a poem is memorable in a different way than a movie quote is memorable. This is to say something nearly obvious about poetry in general: readers relate to poems differently than they relate to films. Single poems and lines that stick with readers similar to how a movie quote will stick, but also in an additional way: because of the way the reader remembers his or her own life through the images and sounds that these poems evoke, as well as the references that they connect or reconnect the reader to. Murphy makes a character of herself and others and then asks the reader to step into her and their shoes. They fit, they take us home, there's no place like it.

The final poem in Murphy's collection is memorable because it is a slow bomb of a poem, a poem that reminds its reader what it's like to be born, what it's like to be five, what it's like to be a teen, what it's like to be in college, what it's like to have a quarter-life crisis, a mid-life crisis, a general crisis, then boom. "Kaboom," to quote Murphy directly. It isn't that the girls are all grown up, but that they are more self-aware. "We're eying/ each other, every leg, each bust. Oh waii,/ we're busted. We're/ busting our, blossoming/ up ..." *Pretty Tilt* brings you to this final poem, to these final lines, and when the opposite page is blank you can only close the book, put on Fiona Apple, and remember what it's like to first try to remember.

Keyhole Books has published five different writers in seven different collections. Murphy's book is the most recent, and it is still only available in print. A number of their past books are now also available in an eBook format, and some (one by William Walsh and one by Aaron Burch) can be purchased from the publisher not with money, but merely by tweeting about the collection. The cover image chosen for Murphy's *Pretty Tilt*, a photo by Ana Cabaleiro, seems to capture the beauty of the naïveté of youth in a way that someone might look back and remember it, rather than how it feels to experience it when you are young. The title itself evokes this type of beauty also: Life may sometimes feel a little off, a little slanted, but there is still something pretty about it.

These girls are remembering, recounting, and they are doing so in a similar way that memory works: imperfectly, with slight embellishment, with a futile type of optimistic honesty.



The Small Press Question

GINA ABELKOP



Founder/editor/publisher/
photocopier extraordinaire

BIRDS OF LACE PRESS
answers:

What are you currently reading and what are you currently promoting?

I just started *Vanessa Veselka's Zazen*, which I am crawling into slowly, and Harmony Holiday's *Negro League Baseball*. I recently finished Alison Bechdel's *Are You My Mother?*. I hope to soon read *Split* by Liz Lotty from Kristen Stone's *Unthinkable Creatures*.

In the recent past I've really loved Christopher Isherwood's *A Meeting at the River*, *Calling Dr. Laura* by Nicole J. Georges, *Manhater* by Danielle Pafunda, *Correct Animal* by Rebecca Farivar, and *Poems of the Black Object* by Ronaldo Wilson.

Currently I'm promoting Seth Oelbaum's *macey [triolet]*, a chapbook full of poetry spastic and funny about a boy, his teddy bear, and the destruction of the sun. Very soon I will be promoting Maia Elgin's ecstatic, sing-song chapbook *The Jennifer*. I saw Maia read last year in Baton Rouge and had my mind blown by her poems, so *Birds of Lace* is thrilled to offer them to the world in steel gray and gold.

Birds of Lace goings-on can be followed at www.birdsofpace.wordpress.com or purchased at www.birdsofpace.etsy.com.

Links

www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/22863
www.trollthread.tumblr.com

Writers' Bios

Shereen Adel lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. She has been a student/writer/editor/designer/teacher—not all at once, but often more than one at a time—in places like Boston, New York, Egypt, and England. Now she's doing all that and more in San Francisco.

Kimberly Ann Southwick is the editor in chief of the literary arts journal *Gigantic Sequins*. She tries to make people laugh when she talks to them sometimes. She lives in Philadelphia and is a poet and adjunct professor. Follow her on twitter @kimannjosouth

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Writer Bio

Of her most recent book from Litmus Press, *I Want to Make You Safe*, John Ashbery described Amy King's poems as bringing "abstractions to brilliant, jagged life, emerging into rather than out of the busyness of living." *Safe* was one of the Boston Globe's Best Poetry Books of 2011, and it was reviewed by, among others, The Poetry Foundation and The Colorado Review. For more, check www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/amy-king.

PRINTED MATTER

From Mexico to Jerusalem to Queens:
Rosebud Ben-Oni's 7-Train Love Carries Us All

INTERVIEW BY AMY KING

Boog City printed matter co-editor Amy King chatted with Rosebud Ben-Oni about place as a shape-shifting imaginary animal, the mobility of outsiders, how the 7 train moves and moves her, and the joys of adversity and fiction writing, through the lens of transnational journeys in her book of poems, *Solecism*.

Boog City: Rosebud, I'm moved by and in love with the journeys in *Solecism*. This is a layered event, a meandering—and pushing—through cultural and political landmines: congratulations for taking on so much while balancing us on the fine breaths of words and their varied usages! Can you say a little about how *Solecism* began and what might best equip us as we carry on?

Rosebud Ben-Oni: It began many times. It began with disappearances, wars, lost things. In my mother's hometown on the U.S.-Mexican border, in the fishing boats of my grandfather, in a vanished trunk that belonged to my mother's Mexican-Indian grandmother, in my childhood hot summer days on the Gulf Coast searching for the indifferent eyes of sharks—an aching I could never explain. In Jerusalem, in its broken roads, in a deserted midrahov on Sabbath morning looking through a pet store window at a parakeet eating another. And of course, New York, along tree-lined Skillman Avenue, where industrial Woodside falls into quieter Sunnyside, in numerous cathedrals like St. John the Unfinished, when after snow Prospect Park's winding paths freeze into ice, when seasons don't fully come right away, when 7-Train Love until Last Stop, Flushing.

One poem was written completely in my head when this really tough looking guy got on the 6 Downtown Local, twisted around the pole, giving everyone hard looks, before belting out Rihanna's 'I want you to make me feel ... like I'm the only girl in the world.' That really gets me going. He's the lipstick shade I'm wearing tomorrow.

too, to me, is just as imaginary if anyone thinks it's static. As someone mixed, it's hard to identify solely as a Latina/Chicana/Hispanic author, or Jewish author. I'm no longer sure which came first, but poetry in which place is indeed an anchor is a way for me to claim space, to be part of a social imagination, no matter how fleeting. I feel best actually when I'm in motion; that's when images and words come. Whether I'm on the 7 Train or walking the winding streets of Hong Kong looking the wrong way, that's when I'm most a poet.

BC: When you're in motion, I like that. I can feel it a bit in the book, this blending of place almost, though distinct, that Israel and Brooklyn and Mexico are not so far apart, I suppose, because your personas move between them, and culturally, among them. One of your blurbs suggests that you see borders as lines to cross, which resonates with Audre Lorde, "It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences." Did you include varying cultural references in close proximity consciously? Also, how does movement make you more of a poet?

RBO: I'm a creature of constant adaptation; I'm always half-wary, but I don't mean that in a negative way; on the contrary, it makes me happy. It might sound odd but, in the moment of it all, I don't always rely on language as communication. Circumstances have made me so; perhaps I like being the outsider, not looking in, but coming in as I am just that. Perhaps because my brain works better when I'm in the journey. If I were a journalist, I'd be happier in the field, while in the field. I'll never fully belong to any one place—even New York.

Recently I visited Hong Kong for the first time with my love. I'd been to Beijing and Shanghai before, but I was nowhere near prepared to fall in love with a new city in the awkward, hungry way I did. His parents offered the rooftop of their apartment to stay. I finished any last minute concerns about the book inside our room there. Although it was cold in January, I wrote on the adjoining patio looking out over the city and the water. When I tried to thank his parents, they deemed it unnecessary.

I met his grandmother, an intelligent, feisty woman with whom I felt a kinship immediately. My Cantonese is currently terrible. It wasn't because of language I felt close to her, but because her hands grabbed mine upon first meeting and I could tell she meant it. Because she asked for me when inviting family for dinner. Because one night she shared a passion fruit with me because I'd never had it. I developed a girl crush on her, an admiration I'm not ready yet to even examine too much.

BC: "girls grow slowly here/ in greying eyelet dresses/ under molted mocking birds"—Is there a conscious effort to infuse gratitude or celebrate in the face of adversity throughout the book?

RBO: I like adversity, I think, because so many people told me I couldn't do some many things. All those are journeys. Because my Mexican mother converted to Judaism, because I was a girl to boot, I was told that being Bat Mitzvah was impossible. Or that because my family didn't have money I would never go to college. Or that I should choose a "safer" occupation like business because only students with trust funds can make it as artists. I suppose when you have no money and nothing to lose financially, taking risks is both magnified and diminished—adversity too.

My parents did me a favor in two things: one, they had no sympathy for what they perceived as ridiculousness. I remember being around seven and very sick, and rather than coddle me, my father read me the D.H. Lawrence poem about the little bird that would rather "drop frozen dead from a bough/ without ever having felt sorry for itself." My parents gave me the cold, hard facts: there was much I'd have to do myself because no one was going to do it for me.

The second thing is the love they have for each other. It's very honest. It's real. It freaks me out. It's over 40 years old, that vow. I didn't get it when I was younger, what it meant, that my father still calls my mother in the middle of work just to hear her voice. He'd never put it that way. He'd never say it aloud. They are embarrassed when I try to honor that now. They think you shouldn't say, but do. They faced a lot of adversity to be together. I really am their daughter, though they'd say I'm very different from them. They are my first place; this book is them. I could never thank them enough. Instead, I tried to honor them by being honest about all things that made the journeys.

BC: You write fiction and poetry; how are these writing processes different? Do they ever overlap? Do you find yourself turning what started out as a poem into a story or vice versa? Is one mode more savory or exciting than the other?

RBO: The process of writing fiction is a bit more traditional, so to say: it grows through ideas, then drafts, then I think I'm done, and then at least two more drafts. Character development is important to me, and a plot that opens as much as it closes. Poems go through drafts as well, but it seems a much more free-for-all with the voices I hear in my imagination. It's a rowdy affair. I'll edit on my phone now in a crowded train car. Where fiction requires nearly complete silence and a concentration that scares the hell out of me, poems seem to just happen. I can't imagine not hearing verse in those moments that I'll remember years for now.

One poem was written completely in my head when this really tough looking guy got on the 6 Downtown Local, twisted around the pole, giving everyone hard looks, before belting out Rihanna's "I want you to make me feel ... like I'm the only girl in the world." That really gets me going. He's the lipstick shade I'm wearing tomorrow.

BC: Who are some of your influences? Writerly or otherwise? Also, what/who do you gravitate toward to get the pen moving?

RBO: Well, I've read you, Amy King, and I've definitely admired your work just as much as your activism. The poets I'm currently reading and rereading are LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs, Arisa White, Tara Betts, Lee Herrick and Eduardo C. Corral. Some of my first influences were Lorca, Apollinaire, Darwish, Coral Bracho, and the Israeli poet Rahel. Johnnie To films get me going, his early stuff especially. I love this one film *De La Calle*. And *Pan's Labyrinth*.

Between drafts, I talk to my parents, my cousin Stacey, my fellow horror-loving film friend Robin, to refreshen, revive my head. I listen to this hip-hop singer Carlton Zeus; my cousin The DMG plays drums for him. This one K-pop song "The Man" by Hyun Bin. (I admit I've seen quite a few K-Dramas.) All that gets my pen in motion.

I like to write in Café Lucid in Woodside and Rose Tea House in Flushing. But mostly I end up writing in my sleigh bed at home. Once I had an African Grey Parrot who'd run around in the apartment, shrieking various things like "I'm Fierce!" but she's gone now. Her name was Sophie Schwa. I think about her a lot while I'm writing.

BC: What are you working on these days? Does 7-Train love factor in? Bonus: I know someone who wrote a whole book riding to and from work. Do you write on the train?

RBO: I do write on the train, but I don't ever plan on it. It just happens. So 7-Train Love will always factor in; it is absolutely the best train in my world. Almost six years ago I fell hard for someone from Fuzhou, and his family, who lived in Woodside and Flushing; I suppose this, in part, explains why I fell for all those neighborhoods along that line.

Recently as I was getting off at my stop, a conductor tipped his hat to me and wished me "a very pleasant Valentine evening." Valentine's is actually my birthday, so I was extra-engaged in the day, wondering what the year would bring. I smiled and then flashed the peace sign which then I tilted into a seven and said "7 Train Love!" The conductor was a little startled but then flashes it back at me. These kids behind me started laughing, and were like, "She's flashing gang signs, yo." I was like, Oh hell ya. 7-Train Love gang symbols.

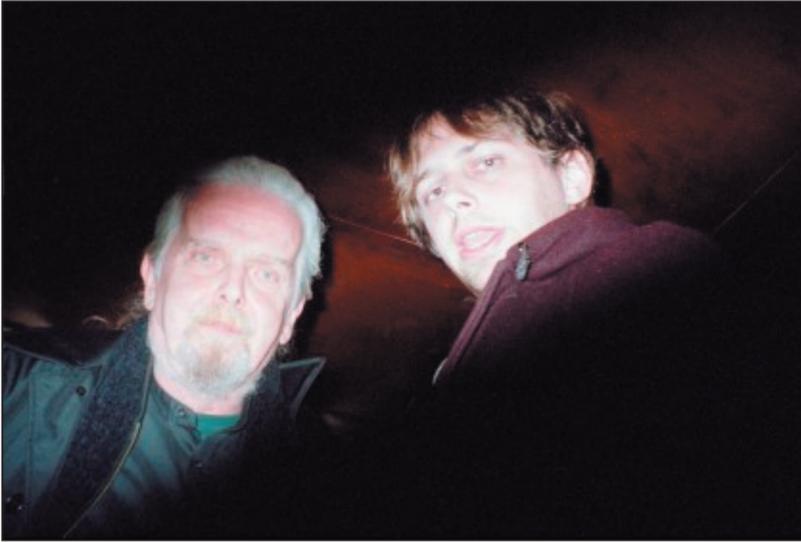
There's a whole lot of stuff up next. I'm working on my next book of poems, and writing a play about the drug cartels in the border towns which will have music by Carlton Zeus, the aforementioned hip-hop artist. My short story collection "Men of the Garua and other stories" is currently under consideration by a press. There's a novel about the Fuzhou family. In the near future, I'd really love to write a K-Drama. Why not, no? Who is not the barefoot girl in the faded sundresses, trying to think herself into magnetic fields of sharks somewhere off the Gulf coast? Anything, dear Amy, is truly possible.



I like adversity, I think, because so many people told me I can't do things. All those are journeys. Because my Mexican mother converted to Judaism, because I was a girl to boot, I was told that being Bat Mitzvah was impossible. Or that because my family didn't have money I would never go to college. Or that I should choose a 'safer' occupation like business because only students with trust funds can make it as artists.

Anselm Hollo, 1934 - 2013

Poet, Translator, Teacher, Beloved Friend



Anselms Hollo and Berrigan, East Village, early 2000s.

David Kirschenbaum photo

Anselm Hollo

Anselm's Dreams

for anselm george berrigan [re-dedicated back to paavo anselm aleksis hollo by agb]

saint anselm of aosta, le bed, & canterbury, a.d. 1033-1109, who spent much of his life attempting to prove the existence of god by logic, "in plain language & by ordinary argument, & in a simple manner of discussion."

*

having heard from his mother, the good ermenberga
that there is one god in heaven above
he imagined, like a boy bred up among mountains
that heaven rested on the mountains
& thus the palace of god was there
& the way up to it was up the mountains
his thoughts ran much upon this

*

& on a certain night he dreamed that he ought to go up to the top of the mountain & hasten to the palace of god, the great king, but before he began to ascend, he saw, in the plain which reached to the foot of the mountain, some women reaping corn, who were the king's maidens but did their work very carelessly.

the boy, grieved at their sloth, & rebuking it, settled in his mind to accuse them before the lord. so having pressed on to the top of the mountain, he came into the palace, & there found the king with only his chief butler for company, for all the household had been sent out to gather the harvest, for it was autumn.

so he went in, & the lord called him, & he drew near & sat at his feet. then the lord asked him with gracious kindness, who he was, whence he came, & what he wanted. he answered according to the truth, & then the lord commanded, & bread of the finest was brought to him by the chief butler, & he ate, & was refreshed before the lord, & plumb forgot to tell him about the careless reapers.

& therefore, in the morning, when he recalled what he had seen, he believed that he really had been in heaven, & been refreshed by the lord's bread, & so he declared, before others.

*

thirty years later, abbot anselm sat apart in a corner of the church to weep & pray for his friend.

from heaviness & sorrow he fell asleep & saw certain highly venerable personages enter the room where osbern had died, & sit round for judgment.

& while he was wondering what the verdict would be, osbern himself reappeared, like a man just recovering, or pale. three times, he said, had the serpent risen up against him, but three times he fell back, & the bearward of the lord, ursarius domini, stood by his side & chased the serpent away.

*

then anselm awoke & knew that his friend was saved, & that the angels do keep off our foes in the beyond, as the bearwards keep off the bears.

from Sojourner Microcosms: New & Selected Poems 1959-1977 (Blue Wind Press, 1977).

About the Poets

Joel Dailey (*cover*) is the editor and publisher of *Fell Swoop*. Previous books include *My Psychic Dogs My Life* and *Lower 48*, both from Lavender Ink. *Industrial Loop* is forthcoming later this year.

Christie Ann Reynolds's latest book is *Revenge for Revenge* (Coconut Books). In 2012 she was a winner of the Amy Award, presented by Poets & Writers magazine. She co-curates the series TOTEM: poetry+film.

Pattie McCarthy is the author of several books of poetry, the most recent *Marybones* (Apogee Press). Her chapbook *scenes from the lives of my parents* will be published by Bloof Books later this year. She teaches at Temple University.

Adam Marston is a barista and poet and a proud graduate of George Mason University.

POETRY



Christie Ann Reynolds Greenpoint, Brooklyn *Mirror Poems*

When they made you I think they made me too is
The way this way will go//I need you to know how serious I am
///the mention of animal not a diversion but a divulging
Soft archaic bullet preserved in lemon//I taste the rind in my mouth—I say, I say, I say, I
do-do-do-do-do//When we get married tell-me-tell-me: I will tell you everything I've ever
written is never a lie///which would be the way I say I do//I know you know this///Need
your spit like air

When they made you did they mourn///I will accept mourning as the color of coffee in a
Styrofoam cup the same way I wanted you inside me when you knelt to crush a
cockroach that rained from the ceiling///bodies of them lie dainty dried scrolls sleeping
on the bedrock///Oh we are so happy for any beast that meets the underworld before we
do

In an ending that stops///will you suddenly turn to me///like a bruise moving from black
to blue to purplish to the yellow my mother called cowardice///the accordian of pain is so
beautiful now///the moment we give in or is it give up///becomes the decisive factor in a
game of tug-o-war///that thing that love is///the crumbling pieces of food of hands
between couch cushions///perhaps the only feeling I permit myself to have is of natural
disasters//if you fuck me in a hurricane I go barren I go so so far away from the body///I
feel lovely when a child drowns///this is not true of course///I get so sad the only way to
feel light is feel nothing///to feel nothing nothing nothing at all///which K says means I
feel so much I can't///I do I tell him I do I do I do//carry my young in my mouth to
protect them

In dreams you are just lying to yourself///the things they told you as a child///you might
always walk funny you might we are sorry////you have a little cave in your brouhaha
chest///you will never be as tall on the left side///you might be barren and make prairies
go the way they went when tired farmwomen brushed up to their elbows in flour///made
artichokes bloom in their vaginas///oh always brains remember the way they were
made///the speaking pretty never///the doll undressed and see—see what?—see what she
was underneath which was always -less///emily's brain I eat with a tiny spoon/// reflects
the admirable grain envy

I think of body parts like scones///how people become the murderous kind///they bake
they taste their desire turns ///none of this makes sense—to want blood not sugar///I must
be sick like them too///too them like sick be must I///all the cliffs hum with my cunning



Pattie McCarthy Ardmore, Penn. *self-portrait, for new year's day*

some things women do with their hands
disappear her own hands
her face her blurred turning toward forward or
away her ironing board her level her shop-vac
(see also netherlandish flemish quiet
only low
countries south
philadelphia) her sea
level or below
her blurred turning her three
foot level her aged thirty-seven her cordless drill
her tool bucket one of those plastic tubs reused one
of her reduce reuse
those plastic buckets with the awful
graphic of a baby tipping headfirst into under
the graphic for no or graphic circle slash or the no symbol

[•Kate Kern Mundie, *Self-portrait*

with *Tools and Ironing Board* (age 37), 2011]

from *genre scenes*



Adam Marston Washington, D.C. *trust is not a series of pickled martians*

some speed scoops open
and in other notes we still go

we say that animals play the most
and then am rough with one

it was boring, my brutality
from the thinking rock breath
to mention a sound that wood makes

glohk!glohk!
gather it up for the dog

not mine
I never witness my dog
we grow into each other

lazily long material breed
that tired coming apart

you have to play persuasion
without your very persuasive
natural body

Welcome to Harry's House Live Poems Thrive on New Album

Harry's House

Fast Speaking Music

Harry's House is a dynamic mix of voiced poems and accompaniment. The album takes its name from the late legendary ethnomusicologist Harry Smith, whose cottage at Naropa University's Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics is now a recording studio. Produced by Ambrose Bye, the album is out on Fast Speaking Music, the independent artistic production company he formed with Anne Waldman.

The album begins with a piece performed by Edwin Torres, taken from Rick Moody's *Demonology*. The calm voice of Torres lags slightly behind itself, singing, "There was a man/ hiding inside a boy" as it harmonizes throughout the piece with his own dis/embodied echoes. One of the pieces Waldman performs is "Holy 21st Century". Her growling, expressive voice creates friction with the calming, synthetic sounds created by Brendan Haskins. "Drawer" by Moody changes the pace as he relays an obsessive narrative organized around a word the narrator finds annoyingly decorative, "armoire."

Perhaps Anne Tardos takes sound to a new level here, with her collaged sound pieces, "Shoe Collage" and "Efnogla, 1", 2, 3" re-contextualize each track on the album sonically. Akilah Oliver's "In Aporia" has pulsated in my thinking around the extension/ claustrophobia of bodies as she says, "I can't get out of this room."

"The Drama of the Shadowdrome" shifts gears, revealing the mythological landscape of light and dark that plays out here, on earth. Jillian Mukavetz's lonely violin playing in this piece folds into the intellectually emotive drama and will make you play it on a loop.

Kevin Killian performs an unpublished poem of Jack Spicer's, "Goodnight," which juxtaposes empty pleasantries and stone-heavy honesty in a way that made me want to crawl out from under it. The tone shifts from the isolated speaker in "Goodnight" to a "we" in Haryette Mullen's "We are Not Responsible" making one question who, actually is included in the proverbial "we" of society. *Harry's House* also includes work from Amiri Baraka, Stacy Szymaszek, Alan Gilbert, Eileen Myles, and Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, among others. It's well worth the listen.

—Ivy Johnson

www.fastspeakingmusic.com • @fastspeakingmusic

Ivy Johnson's first chapbook, *Walt Disney's Light Show Extravaganza*, was published by Boog City. Her chapbook *As They Fall* is forthcoming from *Timeless, Infinite Light*.





Whit Griffin
Memphis

The Pearl That Calms The Sea

The later texts will provide the answers. We are thoughts of the All. Everything is Becoming. Tell me about the sprouting of the pine on your head. Echo's singing limbs imitate every kind of sound. I've powdered all my rubies but the nightmares persist. *I feel sad, and yet none of my sheep have got lost.* Death and life, symbolized in the cone. Rhinoceros as symbol of the sage's estrangement. St. Clement invented felt. Virgil confused Ethiopia with India. I had to explain zucchini. Arthur met the dwarf who drank from a unicorn's udder. We were forced to melt our silver spoons so the lord could have an alicorn. How did you come to possess the horn of St. Denis? That I no longer fear you doesn't mean I've grown to love you. The master puts down his fork when the snake tongue begins to glisten.



Aubrey Lenahan
Chattanooga, Tenn.

Entry

What if memory were powerless to signify incident as iteration. Nicked subway token is to desire as peeling birch is to control. Or something. Remaining seated without rearranging anything in the room.

Tea leaves, no pattern. What brought you here as metaphor for what did not. Let us form in a frozen field some pathway to toss our lives upon like fists of salt. Let us take our cue from animals marking the unknown. Your defenses, your powerlessness: collated history, outside party, absolute sickness.

I sing songs in languages I do not speak. I am relentless eyetooth with song lost in middle. Let us form a chronic, low-grade anxiety. Once I had a fever or a sexual thought. It made me drive doughnuts in the BB&T parking lot. Our beautiful death, at any time. Who what where why when.



Rauan Klassnik
Kirkland, Wash.

Three from 'The Chirping Orgy'

(1)

Leaves like they've been cut from leopard cloth. Thick dripping branches. And a host of retarded, clapping monkeys. All the shadows leering up against each other like dream energy. All the love drunk and twisted lights. We declared ourselves rapt in this greenery. Bought up a pack of exhausted dogs. Made love. And painted ourselves with knives and glass.

(3)

As he talks and talks in the blaring winds his head gets fatter and fatter. He's been dead for centuries so it must be death, and only death, that makes his head get fatter and fatter with every flap of his dead mouth flapping. And it sounds like swallows. Shadows of swallows. Streams. Shadows of streams. He talks fatter and fatter. A few broken rocks. Shadows of tiny star. And so many bubbles.

(7)

"You've been such a good boy," she says, glazing, as she runs her hands through your hair and then down your back. The beach's scarred with twists of black driftwood. There hasn't been a seagull in a million years. Music so calm it must be great. Her hands, rock down, insistent as a boat. Your heart won't ever stop.

About the Poets

Aubrey Lenahan's poems can be found in her chapbook *Note Pinned to the Back of a Dress* (H_NGM_N BKS) and in *The Massachusetts Review*; *Leveler*; *The Greensboro Review*; and *Forklift, Ohio*. She teaches creative writing and American literature at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga and curates the Fusebox Reading Series.

Whit Griffin is the author of *Pentateuch* and *The Sixth Great Extinction* (both (Skysill Press)). His third collection, *A Far-Shining Crystal*, is forthcoming from Cultural Society. Along with Andrew Hughes he edits *Bright Pink Mosquito*, which maintains an online presence at www.brightpinkmosquito.tumblr.com.

Rauan Klassnik's second book, *The Moon's Jaw*, was just released from Black Ocean.

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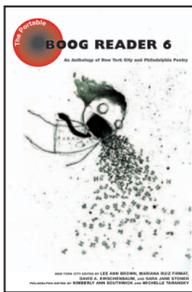
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Bio

Elia Alba was born in New York City. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Hunter College in 1994 and completed the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program in 2001. Her work has been exhibited at Studio Museum in Harlem; El Museo del Barrio; The RISD Museum; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Science Museum, London; ITAU Cultural Institute, São Paulo, Brazil; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; and 10th Havana Biennial.

Solo shows include Jersey City Museum; Galeria Overfoto, Italy; and Black & White Gallery in New York. Awards include, Studio Museum in Harlem Artist-in Residence Program (1999); New York Foundation for the Arts Grant (Crafts 2002 and Photography 2008); Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2002); Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (2002 and 2008); LMCC Workspace Program (2009); and Flying Horse Editions (2011).

She is currently an artist-in-residence at Recess Activities, where she is working on a publication/event series titled "The Supper Club." She is also working on another publication with publisher Photology in Milan on Larry Levan and DJ culture.

Artist's Statement

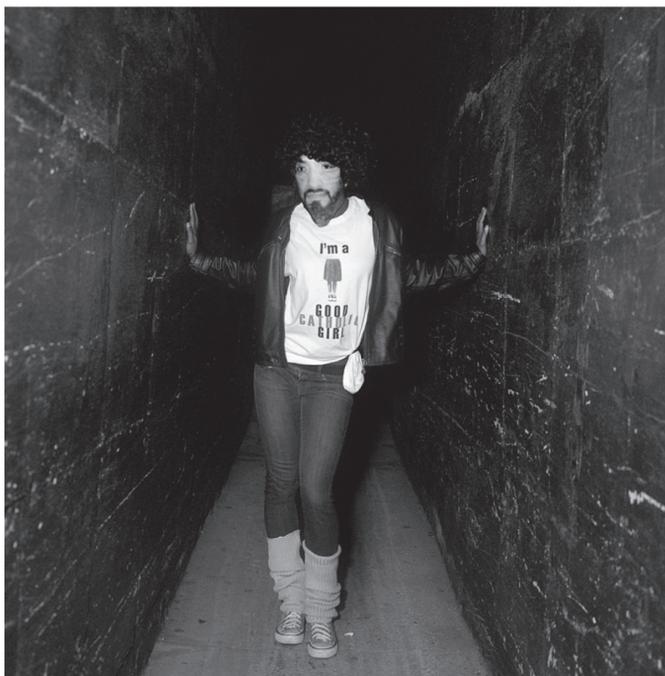
Informed by my mother's work in the garment industry, I began to integrate sewing techniques into my practice and eventually began to combine sewing with photography. Utilizing photo transfers on fabric to create sculptures and masks, which are used in staged portraits and video, these objects function as both portraits and substitute heads and bodies. The dolls utilize images of my own body, while most of the masks and sculptures are portraits I have taken of friends and family.

Since 1999, my works in fabric present corporeal fragmentations that can be grotesque yet playful, presenting alternative realities, where gestures, bodies, posture, place, and gaze defy classification.

ART

Elia Alba

Sunnyside, Queens



Good Catholic Girl 2008, 20" x 20", b&w print



Portrait of a Young Girl 2012, 28" x 19" x 5", photo-transfers on fabric, acrylic, synthetic hair



Busts (Jayson) 2009, 18" x 10", photo transfers on fabric, rope, grummets, acrylic