PRRB

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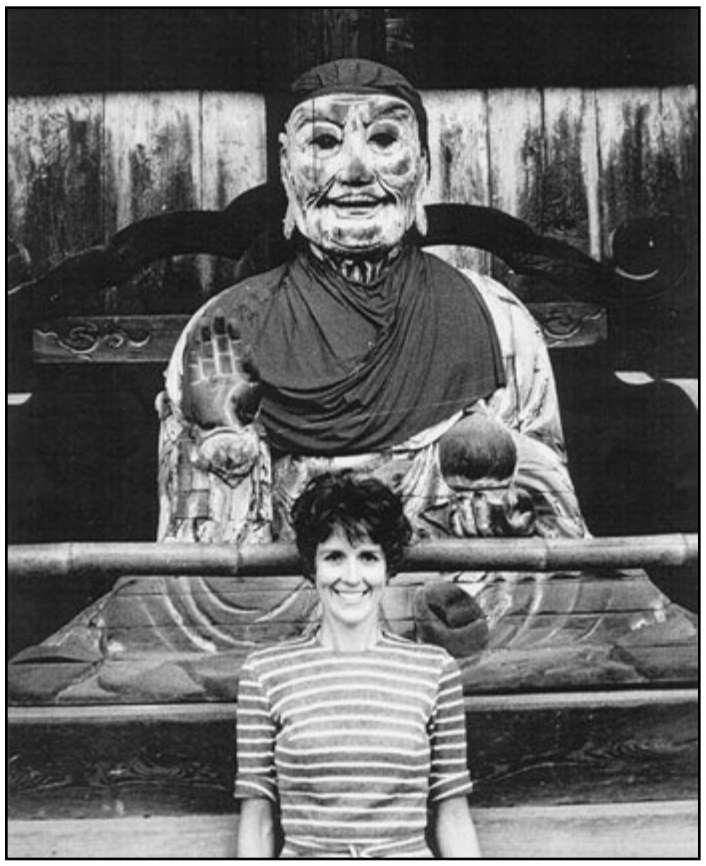

Joanne Kyger photographed by Allen Ginsberg

COLLECTING KYGER

A BLOOMSDAY INTERVIEW WITH

JOANNE KYGER

BY TREVOR CAROLAN

RUSSELL BANKS

DREAMING UP AMERICA

REVIEWED BY

JOHN CARROLL

ROSITA DELLIOS ON CHINA'S NEW SECURITY DIPLOMACY

BEAT LIT'S GOLDEN ANGEL:
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THE PERSONAL BECOMES POLITICAL:
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ALAN TWIGG GOES FULL TIME
BY JOHN MOORE

PLUS:

BILL YAKE ON ROBERT SUND'S *TAOS MOUNTAIN*; DONALD RICHIE ON JAPANESE AESTHETICS; FAILED URBAN PLANNING; DAVID WATMOUGH'S *GERALDINE*; TIM BOWLING; VIVA PUNK & GRUNGE; AND RICHARD WIRICK REMEMBERS PHILIP WHALEN

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This issue of the
Pacific Rim Review of Books
is dedicated to the memory of
Michael Bullock (1918-2008).
Author, editor, translator and
friend, he pushed the limits of
creative writing in everything he did.
He will be missed.

The Walled Garden:
A Fantasia
Ekstasis Editions
120 pages
$14.95 paper
$26.95 hard

Avatars of the Moon
Ekstasis Editions
30 pages
$10.00

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Joanne Kyger: A Bloomsday Interview in NYC

Trevor Carolan

A mid-June morning in Manhattan's Chelsea neighbourhood is a comfortable time to approach an interview with a respected poet like Joanne Kyger. If it's Bloomsday and the sun is shining, a stop for coffee at Café Eros at Seventh Ave. and 21st is a good place to review the architecture of the conversation ahead before the day heats up. It's a friendly part of town, built to human scale; there are flower-sellers on the corners and black-bibbed sparrows on the curb. Kyger herself is in town for an Asia Society *Soul of Asia* symposium— convened through the generous patronage of Harold and Ruth Newman. Addressing 'what drew the Beats to India and how they inspired successive generations of Americans to turn to the East for spiritual and creative wisdom', the participants include distinguished poets, translators, Beat Lit biographers, and a group of authors invited from India. There's a sense of historical importance about this gathering, a testimony to the company Kyger has enjoyed throughout her long, productive career.

Joanne Kyger

Never confined to any one camp, Kyger's poetry and celebrated Japan and India Journals have been informed at times by Black Mountain and Beat poetics, and since taking up residence in Bolinas, California in 1969, by an acute awareness of and commitment to place. Nature literate and known pre-eminently as a poet-of-the-moment, her poetry reflects the basic Buddhist premise of dwelling in the present, an approach to documenting experience and occasion that she shares with such fellow travellers as Phillip Whalen, John Weiners, and Ted Berrigan, the latter a New Yorker. In this, Kyger represents an independent poetic voice—but more importantly a poetic eye—curiously bridging both the nature-attuned West Coast/ San Francisco tradition and the New York School of O'Hara, Schuyler, and Ashbery with its non-linear narrative ethos. In itself this poetic shape-shifting traces back to the European tradition of Beaudelaire's 'urban pastoral' with its simultaneity of time, mental impression and emotion—what Charles Olson would remake via T.S. Eliot as Proprioception theory, recording what the eye sees in the moment. As the 800 pages of Kyger's *About Now: Collected Poems* (National Poetry Foundation) confirm, this has been her practice throughout much of the past four decades. Unsurprisingly, she has been variously claimed by Language-Centered poets, and by scholars subscribing to one or another of the early tribes with whom she consorted. But defying any easy typecasting, Kyger remains simply a California poetic original. She met with PRRB international editor Trevor Carolan on Bloomsday at the loft home and office of Vincent Katz, publisher of Kyger's new collection, *Not Veracruz* (Libellum Books).

TC: *Joanne, you've recently come out with your 'big' book*—About Now: Collected Poems*, at 800 pages. When Allen Ginsberg come out with his* Collected Poems *back in '84, it seemed monumental. Here you've been at it all the while too, quietly, steadily plugging away. Any thoughts on the role of the 'little books' that individually reflect a life in the craft, that cumulatively shape your masterwork?*

JK: Yes, the smaller book are the ones you can pick up and carry around. They have an intimate feel. I call my *Collected Poems* a 'doorstop,' —and there's Ted Berrigan's Collected work and Philip Whalen's as well These books are useful; they're a kind of library work—you can refer to them, but they're not intimate in the way that you can easily handle them. I find that when I want to refer to a poem, I generally go back to the small press edition because I know where that poem is.

PRRB: *Your early San Francisco Bay Area involvement with the craft brought you into association with the Duncan-Spicer group. Several of those personalities would move on to Canada and become citizens—George Stanley, Robin Blaser, Stan Persky. Can you tell us something about the mood and flavour of those times?*

JK: Around '57 I moved to North Beach from Santa Barbara where I'd been a university student studying philosophy and literature. Paul Wienpahl, my Philosophy professor was teaching Wittgenstein, and Heidigger's thoughts about 'being' and 'nothingness'. Then D.T. Suzuki's translations of Zen Buddhists texts became available, it seemed the inevitable next step.

It was through John Weiners and Joe Dunn that I met the rest of the people in an informal Sunday group, taught by Jack Spicer and Robert Duncan. Everyone hung out in a little bar called The Place. George Stanley was there, Dora Fitzgerald who was married to Harold Dull, Ebbe Borregaard, George Stanley and the others. After Black Mountain broke up in '56, a lot of poets followed Duncan out to San Francisco. Also painters like Tom Field and Paul Alexander. Spicer and Duncan started teaching these various poets informally and I guess that's when Spicer started the Magic workshop, of which I wasn't a part. There's a very readable book about this period by Lewis Ellingham and Kevin Killian called *Poet Be Like God*. It's a somewhat picaresque view of what was going on in the Duncan-Spicer group scene at that time.

PRRB: *What it was like to be young and hungry for poetry within such an artistic milieu?*

JK: It was totally exciting. It was like going to 'actual' school. I had a small apartment obtained from a friend, on Columbus Avenue, a few blocks away from City Lights bookstore in North Beach. I was working at Brentano's bookstore and the whole *Howl* trial had come down at that time. Before this in Santa Barbara I'd associated with a young group of writers and with a sculptor named Mark DiSuvero, who became fairly well known. With a few others we started their first literary magazine. My writing hadn't really developed yet; actually, I wrote a column, humorous journalism, for the college newspaper. I still wasn't sure what poetry was.

PRRB: *You'd studied with Hugh Kenner at UC Santa Barbara though…*

JK: Yes, he was teaching Freshman English, introducing Pound and W.C. Williams. At this time Pound wasn't even allowed to be taught at any of the U.S. schools. Kenner was Canadian, the campus was fairly new, and there were a few people from Germany who had come and who were specifically interested in studying Pound; so Kenner was something of an anomaly. I didn't know how to write. I wrote with a great deal of emotion, and I wrote for the school newspaper, but I didn't know how to spell, and I didn't write in real sentences. Nothing I wrote was polished and Kenner thought I wrote a column that parodied him—I was reading James Thurber and Robert Benchley, a lot of satirists—and he gave me a D in freshman English! When I came to San Francisco and read *Howl*, that was such a different order of emotion and language—I was immediately thrilled by it. Then I began participating in this small group after being introduced by John Wieners and Joe Dunn, who had been students at Black Mountain College. Jack Spicer was encouraging Joe Dunn to print a small series of White Rabbit books, these little 25¢ books—they did Charles Olson, Jack

Spicer's *After Lorca*, Borregaard, Stanley... So these little books were coming around and they were easy to read. I was still thinking about what poetry was, and by reading some of my own pieces, which I had started to write, I found myself being accepted; I was on my way then.

PRRB: *Any reflections about the larger influence of that period on your own work, your own life and times?*

JK: Well, I went to Japan January 1960, after I'd met Gary Snyder in '58. He'd come back over from Japan and read at one of the Sunday meetings and I was really taken by him and his poetry, his direction. When I came to North Beach in '57, everyone said "Oh, you should have been here last year; Kerouac was here, everyone was here then…"

PRRB: *Speaking of Kerouac and Snyder, there's a reference in one of your early poems, from "Journal, Oct. 9, 1958" to the 'Dharma Committee'. What was that?*

JK: I think that was when *The Dharma Bums* had come out. Spicer has this Dada surrealist sense, you know, having encounters in bars, totally non-academic environments. He loved to set us up. The dharma committee was kind of a joke, like Spicer saying, "So you're interested in Snyder are you—Well, let's start a Dharma Committee…" I didn't even know what dharma meant, Spicer really encouraged this surrealist humour to go on.

PRRB: *It's surely one of the earlier references to dharma in American culture, but that's Kerouac for you…*

JK: Jack had a very keen ear and was writing things down all the time in his pocket notebook. It's pretty clear if you read his letters that he was writing exact renditions of what was going on. He was one of the best typists I've ever seen. He was able to transcribe very quickly what was going on, to go with whatever he saw, and with such style. He and Ginsberg and Burroughs read a lot of James Joyce out loud and they went into improvisations: they'd make up characters and act out little scenes for each other. They had a flair for the dramatic, besides the open-ended sentence: I think Joyce gave Jack especially an open mind, an open consciousness in his writing.

PRRB: It's Bloomsday today, of course. Was Kerouac's French-Canadian/Atlantic sensibility welcomed by the San Francisco Lit community?

JK: The San Francisco Poetry Renaissance didn't have anything to do with the Beats at all. It had to do with the Berkeley Renaissance group that was basically Spicer and Duncan and the teachers they had there, along with Helen Adams, James Broughton, Landis Everson, Robin Blaser, and a few others, as well as William Everson. There were others who were interested, in communal living. Rexroth of course, was seminal in terms of a kind of socialist political stance, and his familiarity with the California landscape. Radio station KPFA had also started up in 1947. This energy moved across the bay to San Francisco—San Francisco always had its own culture, style, artists, politics. When I was there the Beats were considered a New York City phenomenon, coming and causing a lot of Grey Line tourist bus trips that would go through North Beach and cause a hullabaloo. There was a certain amount of resentment against this much-publicized phenomenon of the Beats, the Beatniks.

PRRB: *At some point you encountered the Pacific Northwest poetry contingent—Lew Welch, Gary Snyder and Phillip Whalen. Is it possible to quantify what their influence brought to Bay Area arts and letters?*

JK: Perhaps in terms of work specific to location. The Six Gallery reading was a meeting, a collision of all the groups—the Pacific Northwest, San Francisco, Ginsberg/the Beats from New York. You had Michael McClure, Philip Lamantia, Rexroth as the M.C., Kerouac was there, Gary Snyder and Phillip Whalen. Spicer was going to be part of it, but he was stuck back east, and Duncan was in Majorca or teaching at Black Mountain. It wasn't only the San Francisco people who were blessed by the alchemy of that historic event.

PRRB: *Somewhere in all of this there's the East-West House that you were involved with…*

JK: Essentially, East-West House, was modeled after the Institute for Asian Studies when Alan Watts, among others, taught other like-minded people in Asian Studies. It closed and a group of students decided that they would start a communal house in

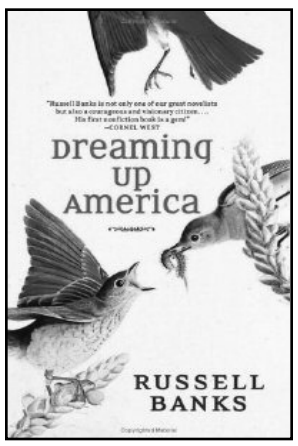
Joanne Kyger with Trevor Carolan (photo by Lachlin Loud)

which people who were interested could study Buddhist texts, Japanese, and go to Japan. Snyder had already gone there on his own. Gia-fu Feng, a translator from Chinese whose edition of the *Tao Te Ching* is still circulating, was living there too; also Claude Dahlenberg,and Philip Whalen. Gai-fu went down to Big Sur and become part of the beginnings of the centre at Esalen. I was there at the East West House in 1959 for a year and the house had been running for some years by then. They had sort of loosened their constraints and allowed women, and other non Japan-directed people to live there, But by then I was planning to go to Japan. There was an overflow of people from East-West House and so they started something called Hyphen House, which was the hyphen between East and West. That was a few blocks away in what is now Japantown. Close by there was the Soto Buddhist temple where Shunryu Suzuki was invited to come and be the priest for the Japanese community in the Spring of 1959. He started zazen practice in the morning, open to everyone. He became the catalyst for beginning the Zen Center of San Francisco. I learned to sit there, during the year I spent at the East West House before going to Japan.

(*continued on page 45)*

The Dangers of Dreaming

John Carroll



Dreaming Up America
Russell Banks
Seven Stories Press
144 pp., $24.95

Dreaming Up America by Russell Banks began as spoken commentary recorded for a documentary by French film-maker Jean-Michel Meurice. The film traced the history of America as presented by American cinema, from A *Birth of a Nation* to *Blackhawk Down*. Banks and Jim Harrison, American novelists who often write about seminal moments in US history, were asked to provide a "counter-narrative" to the film imagery as a kind of "corrective to the version of American history that French people were most familiar with." Banks and Harrison's original commentary took the form of filmed impromptu responses to questions asked by Meurice. These were then edited and played against a montage of scenes from American movies. What we have in *Dreaming Up America* is an edited and expanded typescript of Banks' filmed commentary that also retains its spoken and spontaneous feeling.

The theme of this slight book, as the title suggests, is the perpetuation of America's grand narrative, which at its core promotes the familiar mythology of the American Dream. That dream has been pursued time and again by the immigrants who, through their labour and trust in its reward, built a nation. It's their story of coming to America and starting over, working hard to create a secure future for their children.

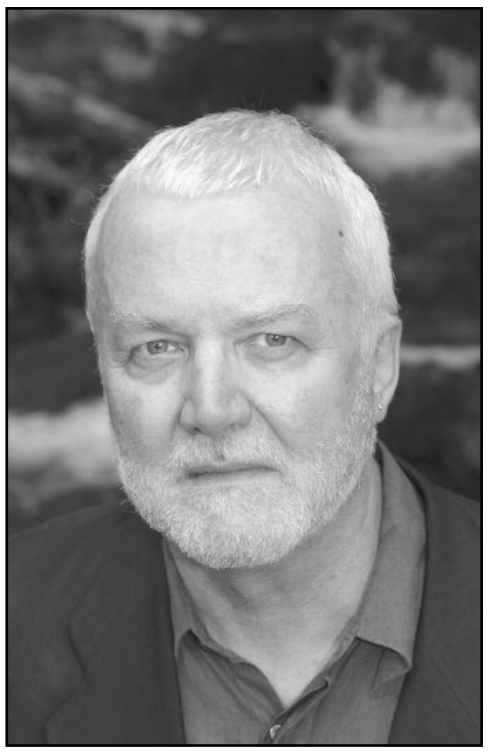
However, as Banks sees it, there are actually two narratives at work in the history of America. The first is the aforementioned American Dream; the second is the dream of empire. The first is the dream of the common working man and woman (Banks calls them his heroes); the second is the dream of the few at the top, "the Rockefellers and the Carnegies and the Fords." Banks believes the present moment in American history is a defining one, a moment when the dream of the many is in danger of being superseded by the dream of the few.

Banks first outlines how the history of the earliest Europeans in North America illustrates the pursuit of three distinct quests: for El Dorado, for the Fountain of Youth, and for "God's Protestant utopian City on a Hill." These quests, in various forms, dominated America socially, politically, and ideologically since its earliest days. Although these three tended to merge over time, there is still to this day, Banks argues, a demonstrable conflict in the American psyche between the spiritual and the commercial. So, for example, when President Bush proclaims that the invasion of Iraq will bring that country the gift of democracy, in reality he is promoting a tripartite world view with roots in the earliest history of American conquest. Banks categorizes this view as "the three C's: Christianity, Capitalism, and Civilization."

Central to Banks' discussion is his critique of the way American cinema often provides a distorted view of history by advocating the myth at the expense of the reality. The result can often be the justification of unconscionable acts performed in defense of the all-important dream. For example, *A Birth of a Nation*, he points out, "equates the birth of our nation with the achievement of racial purity in the era of Reconstruction." As well, the American Western ironically treats First Nations people and Hispanics as the interlopers who most be stopped at all costs from deflecting "the mighty engine of Manifest Destiny."

The narrative of race is central as Banks deconstructs the grand narrative. Racial conflicts have both threatened and heightened the American self-view, and Banks believes that the American conflict about race has yet to be resolved: "When you lift the rock of American society and you look under it, you almost always see race." This deep discomfort with race, he argues, accounts in part for the American propensity to go to war: "As horrific as foreign wars are, they are much easier for us at home than it would be to face the internal battles of being at war within ourselves." These "internal battles" result from the conflict between the way Americans wish to see themselves and reality. According to Banks, this tendency can be traced back "to the early colonists . . . who were basically committing a kind of genocide against the native people, but who claimed they were saving them for civilization, Christianity, and capitalism. In fact, they were killing them and stealing their land, but they never looked at it that way."

Dreaming Up America ranges far and wide with its social commentary. The section on television's inimical influence on the young is particularly strong. This analysis is relevant to the book's larger theme since it comments on the ability of TV programming to distort reality. Today, young people get a vision of their culture through the distorted lens of television. Banks worries that "their minds are being organized around a need for… products" and that we are "turning our children over to the purveyors of consumerism." Since the beginning, the role of parents has been to keep the sabre-tooth tiger away, especially from our vulnerable children. But in a reversal, we have now (Canadians included) invited the sabre-tooth tiger, in the form of the salesperson on television, into our children's bedrooms—yet another success in establishing "a fascist plutocracy presiding over a world population of disenfranchised and distracted consumers and would-be consumers."


Russell Banks

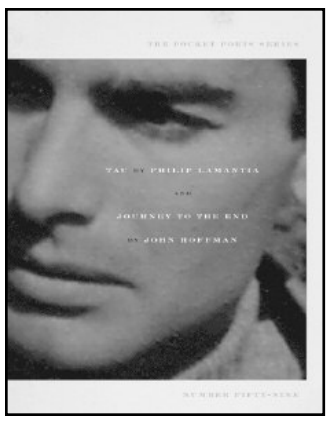
It can be argued that the first step in deconstructing a narrative is to understand it. Banks' comments are intended to help us do so. However, it's worth cautioning that Banks' text is in itself a narrative, albeit a counter-version; it does not do away with national assumptions altogether. As a Canadian I still detect in his tale remnants of the original myths. For example, Banks several times refers to the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution as "sacred documents," and he writes that the American Civil War "turned our flickering national identity into a sacred flame." It's hard to detect any irony in these statements.

Nevertheless, Banks provides a colloquial yet elegant interpretation of a distorted American narrative. Its relevance to the post-911 America is obvious. I was reminded of Karl Popper's concept of historicism and how easy it is for a society in times of great change and stress to fall back on safe ideas of magic and tribalism. This tribal impulse is what Banks calls "nationalism," referring to W.H. Auden's comment that nationalism is a disease. Perhaps analyses like *Dreaming Up America* can provide a healthy antidote.

John Carroll writes from Abbotsford, B.C. His previous contributions to PRRB include reviews of Pacific Northwest poets and "The Word, the Way, The Look: Another Side of Charles Bukowski."

Tau & Journey to the End
And the Critical Pursuit of Philip Lamantia Begins

Allan Graubard



Tau by Philip Lamantia and Journey to the End by John Hoffman
The Pocket Poet's Series
No. 59,
City Lights Publishers,
2008, $12.95

Phillip Lamantia is a singular presence. From his first works published in *View* magazine at the age of 16 (in 1944) to his final collection *Bed of Sphinxes* (published by City Lights in 1997), he remains, for this reviewer, the premier poet of his generation. Appearing on the scene, as his older friend, Kenneth Rexroth, noted, "fully formed," his influence roots deep and spreads far. Not only do we meet him in the surrealist milieu of the latter war years in New York but there he is at the famous Six Gallery reading in San Francisco, where "Beat" emerges as a resonant sensibility precise to its time. Intervening episodes of exile in Mexico, North Africa and Europe hone Lamantia's passion for unearthing the hidden sources of poetic revelation; from the collective rituals of indigenous cultures to select groups of Europeans bent on hermetic ascesis, to vital remnants of revolutionary anarchism. Upon his final return to the U.S. in 1968, he picks up from where he began, inspiring another generation of creators, both surrealist and not.

Of all the figures he associates with, however, and whom we now celebrate as pivotal to our understanding of poetry, art, dance, music and film — should I mention Andre Breton, Maya Deren, Paul Bowles, Parker Tyler, Bob Kaufman, Jay DeFeo, and so many more – there is one we knew, until now at least, mainly by hearsay.

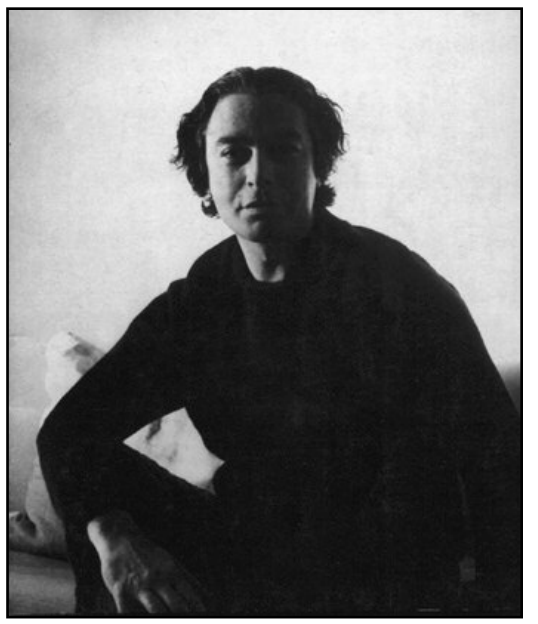
John Hoffman is a young poet who meets Philip Lamantia in 1947 after attending a reading of his in San Francisco. The two quickly form an intimate bond recognizing in each a shared necessity: to oppose by poetic subversion, the derangement of the senses and marginal living the oppressive menacing shadow of triumphant America then in the first flower of its new imperium; an imperium which has crested only now, six decades later. Indeed, as Lamantia relates, it is this friendship that touches him more deeply than any other in his life. And while this is purely speculative, I cannot but assume that Lamantia will see aspects of Hoffmann in other close friends in years to come.

Hoffman also becomes something of a figure on the scene then, seeking inspiration in successive journeys, as Lamantia notes, "through New York, New Orleans, San Francisco, Rio, Montevideo." His vagabondage ruled not only by wanderlust but also to avoid any sense of settling down to endure another war, however "Cold" it might seem. By 1952, this lyrical, graceful, adventurous being dies in Mexico perhaps by overdose and sunstroke. He is just 24 years old.

Not surprisingly, Hoffman had left with Lamantia a manuscript of poems, all we have of the man, *Journey to the End.* It is this manuscript that Lamantia reads at Six Gallery as much in homage to his friend as to distinguish the accomplishment so readily at hand. A dead poet speaks through another poet in a reading where Ginsberg debuts *Howl,* and Michael McClure, Phil Whalen and Gary Snyder take center stage, with Jack Kerouac egging them on in the background. It is a poignant performance that has now come full circle with the publication, in one volume, of *Tau* (by Philip Lamantia) and *Journey to the End* (by John Hoffman), via City Lights.

Not only can we read John Hoffman's poems, which Lamantia organized, along with his two introductions, but we have a manuscript of Lamantia's that he previously suppressed, save for four decisive works, which later appear in the fiery *Ekstasis* of 1959: "The Owl," "Intersection," "Terror Conduction, and "Man is in Pain" (one of the great drug withdrawal poems extant).

Philip Lamantia was not in the habit of suppressing manuscripts, formed by the poet in response to the internal and external pressures that consumed him until his death in 2005. His books consistently depict his desire, his need, to transmute the quotidian and the literary into an acculturated realm of magic potencies, where language and image return to us exceptional powers that reveal our capabilities anew. With Lamantia, negative analogy, erotism, the oneiric, *umor,* chance, elective affinity, and love, love above all, entice us to near visionary confabulations of our own; we who seek, like him, "*the genius of present life.*"



Phillip Lamantia

And yet questions remain in regard to the manuscript despite the charm it exerts. Did *Tau* satisfy its author? Perhaps not. Did Lamantia's mystic conversion to his own heterodox form of Catholicism cause him to devalue the majority of the poems in *Tau*, enough to forgo their publication? Perhaps that is true. Were there other reasons at play here that Lamantia has kept from us, including a rapport with avant garde trends in literature he would later critique as a matter of principle? This also may be true. Whatever the answers may be, in fact, *Tau* is finally ours to explore. Its 17 poems capture the poet when we have least knowledge of him, and seem to bear witness to a crucial juncture, shot through with tense, self-interrogative formalities that close in on themselves as much as they open to jazz — given Lamantia's public readings with musician David Amram and, I imagine, other boppers in San Francisco, when the jazz-poetry confluence was just finding its voice. That Lamantia will later recognize that the more significant relation of poetry to jazz lies in the rituals exclusive to each, and not in ensemble performance, is also something that his peers rarely acknowledged; and something for us to consider.

Phillip Lamantia and his friend, John Hoffman, speak to us in this book as if they were among us. The vivacity of their refusals, their revelations, their derangements, and the poems they left as witness then, will give us pause. And perhaps, for those open to it, this book will prompt us to consider, or re-consider, who and what has moved us most to risk what we can and cannot in our search for the marvelous, whenever and wherever we have found it; whenever and wherever it has found us.

Included in the volume are texts by Garret Caples, the book's editor, who provides the kind of historical context and sensitive poetic commentary that readers will benefit from.

And so,

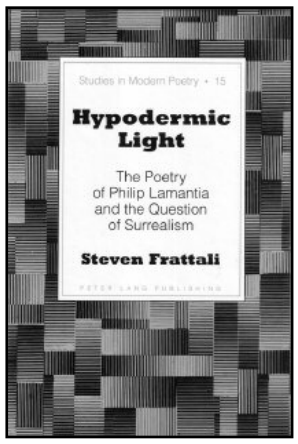
> To your always perilous obliqued and
> Always
> vanished
> shore.
> ("To see this evil from its core," Lamantia)

here is *Tau* and *Journey to the End…*

In March of 2005 Philip Lamantia died. The exceptional poet, sometime surrealist, and magnet for several generations of creators has now become public property. Near enough to his death to seem eerily coincidental is the publication of the first book-length study of his poetry by a young English professor. It is a curious examination of a poetic oeuvre lifted, it seems, en masse from Lamantia's history — as if the work existed distinct from the man who wrote it — and which, while recognizing Lamantia's critical distance from literary culture, seems not to understand the point.

The title, *Hypodermic Light: Philip Lamantia and the Question of Surrealism,* places the work in a particular context defined by addiction. More unfortunate is the author's take on Surrealism, discussed exclusively in terms of Lamantia's initial encounter with it during the 1940s in New York. That Lamantia departs from the movement several years thereafter then returns to it in the 1970s and 1980s, when he publishes three books of poems (the reissue of *Touch of the Marvelous, Blood of the Air,* and *Becoming*

Visible) along with several essential critiques, the most important of which (*Poetic Matters)* he publishes in *Arsenal,* the journal of the Chicago surrealist group, as an editorial board member (1976-1989), passes unnoticed save by several oblique references (if references they are). Of equal concern is the skewed bibliography of "works" that lists Lamantia's books only. I mention this for two reasons.



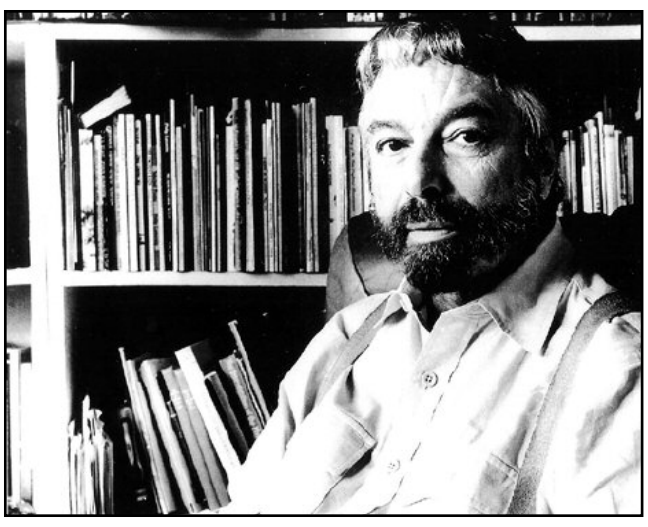
Hypodermic Light: The Poetry of Philip Lamantia and the Question of Surrealism
Steven Frattali
Peter Lang Pub Inc.
144 pages, $55.95

In this study with its inflated subtitle, one would expect a complete representation of the most important works by the poet, including his critiques written, I should add, when Lamantia adhered to Surrealism as an organized movement. Second, with social amnesia rampant, and figures such as Lamantia too easily overlooked in life, as too quickly revisioned in death, it is the responsibility of commentators to satisfy the discursive horizon they set for themselves while providing their readers with enough bibliographic information at least to enable them to take their own view of the man in an open light.

A poet who reached heights of revelatory powers during different periods, Lamantia also possessed an acute cognizance of poetry in modern culture, how it worked, what was and was not of value, and why such clarity was decisive. Didn't he pen an attack on the American poetic canon titled *The Crime of Poetry (1)*? And what, again, of *Poetic Matters (2) , Between the Gulfs (3),* or the poignant *Radio Voices — A Child's Bed of Sirens (4).*

Given such content, it is astonishing to this reviewer that the author of the present study informed his work not with Lamantia's sources – which include Gaston Bachelard, Charles Fourier, Fabre D'Olivet, Schwaller de Lubicz, Fulcanelli and Hegel, to name a few — but Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze, and Levinas, et al. Nor are Lamantia's sources noted in the "Secondary Sources" that concludes the bibliography.

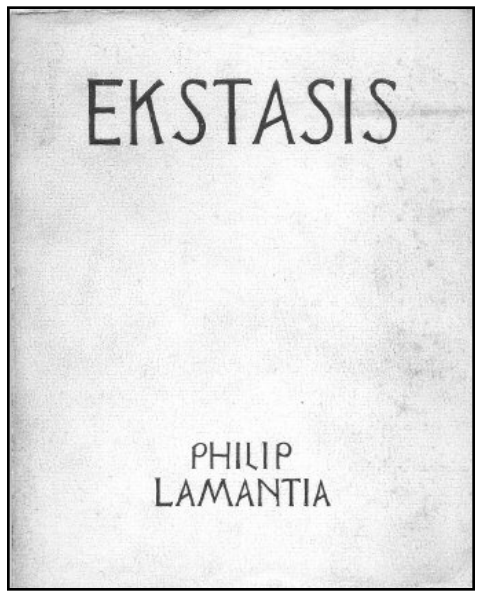
The issue here, of course, is something more than priority, and brings with it an ethical dimension that too many professors of literature avoid. Can a poet define a critical universe that best clarifies his own poetry without the consent of the academy and what academics recognize as significant in terms of their analysis? What is more precise to the subject of the study: the analytical affiliations of the analyst or those that clarified and inspired the subject of the analysis by virtue of direct testimony?



Phillip Lamantia

Confusion is a ready concomitant of such oversight. Here are several examples: Lamantia, born in the United States with American and Italian surely spoken in his house yet is (p. 137) "an Italian writer." "Among American authors he reminds one at times of… Pound" (p. 2) (whom Lamantia launched his most scathing attack on), and Lamantia "has affinities with Spanish speaking authors as… Neruda," also page 2 (who disgusted Lamantia, as much for his poems as for his Stalinism). Again, "there is a close connection with Ginsberg in the latter's more surreal moments," when that connection, if it does exist, is the result of Lamantia's influence on Ginsberg (which Ginsberg admitted in print, and which Ferlinghetti has attested to). Should I mention this useless phrase: "Surrealism is a style of writing" when the entire corpus of authentic Surrealism is opposed to the predicates of "style" or "tone," or any other "criteria." which finally reduces when all is said and done to a matter of taste, a very fickle measuring scale in the marketed sensibility of our times. And then there is the author's odd belief that it's possible, even worthwhile, to compare Ashbery's *Tennis Court Oath* with Lamantia's "Flaming Teeth," a poem in *Blood of the Air.* Possible it is when you're concerned with effects but worthwhile? I think not when recalling how Ashbery constructed his work, which he later called an "experiment," and how Lamantia *wrote* his poem, as much as his life and times wrote him, which was no experiment.

The author continues in this vein by noting facile relationships with other well-known poets, such as Gary Snyder and Adrienne Rich (p. 85), simply for their attraction to nature, and the resonance it gave to their work — as if Lamantia needed the company or held to the same or similar poetic values. Or his presumption in telling us that Lamantia's experimentation with hallucinogens was "not the exploration of consciousness itself…but the revelation of the truth of nature as well as insight into how to live harmoniously within it" (p. 85). Are the two so distinct or have any reason to be understood as distinct? To this author it seems so. I wonder why.



Lamantia's Ekstasis
The Auerhahn Press, 1959

Of course, the author does evince a certain rapport between Lamantia and Hart Crane, which bears scrutiny for linking Lamantia with an extreme poetic sensibility embraced by the canon; a sensibility more difficult to discuss in part, and that does not easily allow for analysis of the poem divorced from the poet however much scholarly discourse might push one to do so.

Of greater misfortune for the reader who picks up this book, and is not well aware of Lamantia's poetry, is the absence of excerpts generous enough to prompt the reader to read the poet.

Hot air, I suppose, will have its day.

If you wish an encounter with one of the more unique poets ever to have written in English, Philip Lamantia is there, and some of his books are still in print. One word of caution: his last collection *Bed of Sphinxes,* while the easiest book to obtain, is also the least appropriate in capturing the work in the spirit in which it was written. Better if you can obtain original editions, especially of *Narcotica, Destroyed Works,* and the two editions of *Touch of the Marvelous,* the last with a cover image by Toyen while *Becoming Visible* features a photomorph by J. Karl Bogarte – which has more to say about the contents in the book and the meaning of the title than anything the author of the study in review here is able to.

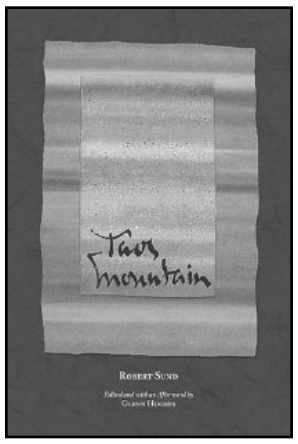
Washington, DC 2005

END NOTES
(1) in *The City Lights Anthology* (pp. 249-250). San Francisco 1974: City Lights Books.
(2) in *Arsenal: Surrealist Subversion 3* (pp.6-10). Chicago, Illinois. 1976.
(3) in *Arsenal: Surrealist Subversion 2* (p. 32). Chicago, Illinois: 1973.
(4) in *Surrealism and Its Popular Accomplices, Cultural Correspondence,* 1979; City Lights Books, 1980.

Allan Graubard is a poet, playwright and critic. His most recent play,* Woman Bomb/Sade, *played in New York in 2008. In 2009 his book* Fragments from Nomad Days & Other Poems & Tales *will be published by Exstasis Editions.

Taos Mountain

Bill Yake



Taos Mountain
Robert Sund
1991, 104 pp., hardback
Edited and with an Afterword by Glenn Hughes
Poet's House Press

Early in the spring of 1991 Robert Sund spent a rare three months distant from his damp, sea-level homeland in western Washington State. He boarded in a farmhouse with friends at the edge of Taos, 7000 feet up in the highlands of northern New Mexico, where he soaked up the landscape and native traditions that surround that ancient pueblo. Most nights he wrote poems and created haunting paintings that echo the designs of traditional Puebloan blankets. In early June when he headed home for his garden on a hilltop overlooking Puget Sound (Sund called it the *Salish Sea*), he brought gourd and blue corn seeds along with his *Taos* manuscript: "371 loose sheets of plain paper containing – in Robert's casual calligraphic handwriting – long and short verse sequences, letters to friends (sent or unsent), journal entries, stories and jottings" (*Afterword*, Glenn Hughes).

His blanket paintings were sown among friends and patrons.

Now, 16 years later, Robert's friends and executors at Poet's House Press in Anacortes (WA) have published *Taos Mountain*, a distillation of that season's work – the manuscript, the paintings, the musings. In accordance with Sund's wishes, the book was edited by Glenn (Chip) Hughes. It is – in keeping with Sund's lifelong esthetic – integral, unpretentious, elegant and, thus, beautiful.

Taos Mountain contains potent and moving poems, certainly. Yet, for me, the book entrances especially as a whole; as an intricate and integrated response to place. Robert arrives as a stranger and engages a new landscape: 'making sense' of a place very different from his damp Salish homeland. He brings himself and his interests fully to the task: friendships, calligraphy, art, meditation, poetry, Buddhism, and, especially, his love of landscape and its essential occupants.

Being displaced, even willingly, is unsettling. Sund's initial reaction seems to reflect this up-rooting:

> Too many are landless, in the midst vast stretches of land.
> Too many have left the land they had. Not only the homeless are homeless.
> from *Speaking From a Place*

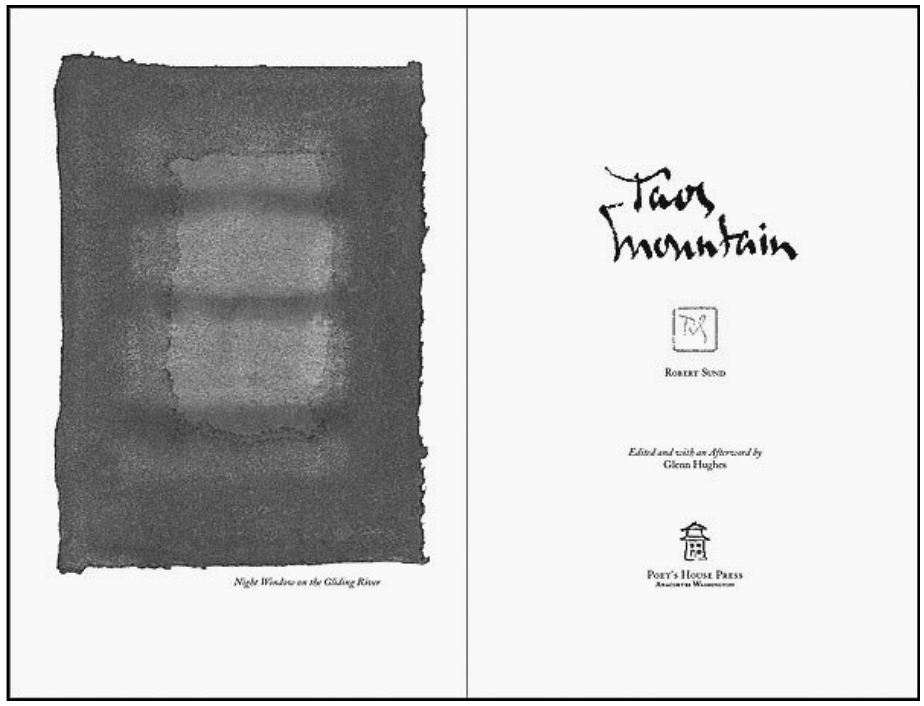
But there is also the joy of discovery, and *Taos Mountain* is filled with that.

> The mountain
> seems in its profile from here in town
> like figures lying around a fire.
>
> When you turn away
> you can tell one of them
> stood up and stretched and
> sat down again.
> Her skirts, her blanket
> made quick little winds
> sweeping through the ponderosa.
> from *Taos Mountain*

Robert stays up nights writing at a table in his host's home, goes with his friends to ceremonies at the Pueblo, to hot springs in a snow storm, to Santa Fe where the setting sun lights up a cathedral window.

He experiences the new particulars of this place, moving from assumed generalities to specifics:

> I have been watching
> these two horses for a week.
> Every day they become more real.
> from *Two Horses*



The title page spread of Robert Sund's Taos Mountain

He watches, dreams, meditates, writes, paints, and cogitates. His painting informs his poems, his poems his paintings.

> For me poetry and painting are not separate. My best landscapes are in the poems. My best ideas are in the paintings… To bring poetry and painting close together, that is my work.
> from the *Foreword*

The idea of *weaving* becomes an important metaphor for the way Sund integrates the discoveries he is making through his various means of inquiry.

In seeking a bit of context for Sund's use of the idea of *weaving* to examine this new place, I found this germane historical note on the internet: "Weaving in the American Southwest began more than 1000 years ago with the Anasazi… Until the introduction of cotton, these ancestors of the Pueblo Indians used human and animal hair, fur, and native plants in their non-loom weavings…" [1]

Sund's poetry-weaving uses poetic materials in a way similar to the Anasazi use of found fibers. He imagines a vertical warp:

> Of all the colored strands
> hanging
> down from the sky,
>
> the one that was mine to pull on
> was poetry.
>
> Later, painting –
> another thread.
> a path back into the world.
> from *Poetry and Painting*

Through this warp of art he weaves a weft of sky, mountain, memory, night, star, and song. Sometimes the bands are recurrent days and the rhythm of successive horizons: sunrise and sunset, layers of day and night breathed successively: waking, followed by dreaming, followed by waking.

Sometimes they the colors created by elevation on successive life zones:

> …getting the colors down…and up the plateau the scattered and persistent grey- green sagebrush, where nothing else would thrive…"
> from *Hot Springs*

His blankets are painted in earth-tones, crop-tones, horizon-tones, and falling-evening tones; and their names reinforce their genesis in this place: *Shadow*, *Mesa Twilight*, *Blanket in Moonlight*, *Night Blanket*, *Weaver's Dream Made Real*, *Blanket Dream*, *Red Earth Blanket*, and *Prayer for Blue Corn*.

Similar materials are used and reused as they would be in weaving a blanket or rug. [I wonder if Robert considered that when he played his autoharp, it was as if the tune were woven on the strings?]

Taos Mountain integrates experience and place; poetry, lyric, prose and painting; black ink calligraphy and color plates, the waking experience and the dreamt versions that reinterprets experience; what is seen and heard, what is imagined, and the speculations and realizations that come through mulling over it all.

Yet, despite the experiences, speculations and realizations, much of *Taos Mountain* remains mystery. What is the motivation to art? What is the result? What is the relationship between artists of a place and the other inhabitants of the land?

Robert Sund in 1992 with autoharp and paintings

When the wool blankets were woven

When the jars were painted, using
blades of yucca plant

It could have been a plain blanket,
it could have been a jar with
no figures on it.
or a grass basket unadorned.

Then where
would the lightening go to rest
where would the streams
remember to flow,
where would the willow hang its leaves.
what home would
the mountain grouse have

How would the young woman
remember her grandmother's hands

Where would wool go to be beautiful.
and a story go to stretch itself out.

from *When the Wool Blankets Were Woven*

The questions of this poem seem to evoke the native tales that turn questions into lessons, tales that assume that the beings and powers of the world – wind, mountains, snow, sunlight and coyotes – are invested with spirits and personalities that make these powers players in stories of creation and causation. In many of the Taos poems native beliefs seem to have dovetailed with the spirits-and-essences that inhabited Sund's dreams, the creatures in his poem-worlds, his tools (pen and ink bottle), and the artistic creations that sprung from these sources. In Taos, Robert seems to have added a native sensibility to his understandings of his Buddhist practice to meld a sort of native Folk Buddhism that served as the creative center for his poetics.

When Robert returns home to the early summer showers of western Washington, we can easily imagine him bringing not only gourd and blue corn seeds, but also the colors of the Taos landscape, new mysteries, seeds of Pueblan culture, and a widened vision. These are the gifts we and Robert traveled for, and *Taos Mountain* gathers them bountifully and elegantly for Sund's growing community of readers.

[1]*Southwest Textiles: Pueblo and Navajo Traditions:* St Louis Art Museum http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/4aa/4aa325.htm

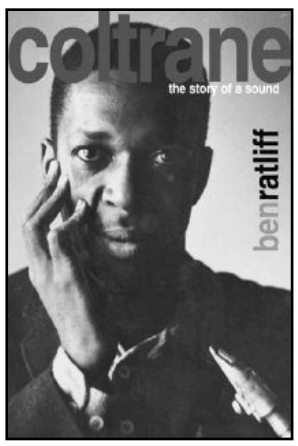
Bill Yake worked as a scientist for the Washington State Department of Ecology for 24 years. His book* This Old Riddle: Cormorants & Rain *(Radiolarian Press) was reviewed in issue five of the PRRB.

From Way In to Way Out

Joseph Blake

Two recently published books describe passionate voyages of sonic discovery. More than one wag has been credited saying 'Writing about music is like dancing about architecture'. These two jazz books transcend that quip.

New York Times critic Ben Ratliff's *Coltrane* is a thoughtful biography of a modern jazz saint with his own African Orthodox Church of John Coltrane in San Francisco. Ratliff, from his post in the Big Apple, portrays the legendary saxophonist's musical evolution from blues-born Navy band bebopper to his breakthroughs with Miles Davis, heroic struggle with heroin, and rebirth with Thelonious Monk. The author runs the biographical voodoo down with Milesian understatement and a focus on Coltrane's evolving sound and musical approach.



Coltrane: The Story of a Sound
Ben Ratliff
Douglas & McIntyre / FSG Adult, 250 p. , cloth. $27.50;

Most telling is the image of Trane's blood-soaked mouthpiece from hours of practice underlined by his biographer's description of "stamina that comes out of hard, solitary practicing" and references to the saxophonist's trademark sheets of sound as "immensely worked out music."

Ratliff is hip to the power of a working jazz band and steady (albeit low-paying) gigs, noting Coltrane's six-month stint with Monk at the Five Spot in 1957 as transformational.

In the book's second section describing and trying to explain the saxophonist's legacy and influences, Ratliff writes that "like all great artists, he embodied multiple, often contradictory aspects. He was Liston and Ali."

The author is good at writing about Trane's sound too. My favourite is his description of the saxophonist's solo on the *Milestones* version of *Straight No Chaser:* "At first he announces himself, getting comfortable with some long tones in his first chorus. But most of the second and third are expressed in sixteenth notes, skidding through extensions of chords and implying several chords simultaneously; it's like dirty motocross."

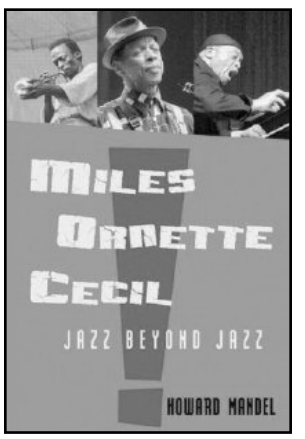
John Coltrane

The biography's concise narrative builds to Coltrane's early '60's classic quartet and its disbanding after seven years of wide-ranging triumphs from lyrical collaborations with Johnny Hartman to *A Love Supreme's* spiritual resonance. Ratliff frames the musical breakthroughs in a wider cultural, artistic, and political context and while pealing the personal and historic layers from Coltrane's sheets of sound, reveals the components of the musician's transcendent musical discoveries, "the mystic's keen sensitivity for the sublime, which runs like a secret river under American culture."

It's a good read and a layman's guide to Coltrane's odyssey.

Howard Mandel's *Miles Ornette Cecil* takes off from there. Even more than the perceptive analysis that Ratliff serves-up, Mandel offers a soul-revealing story of personal discovery in his biographical explorations of these three major figures in modern jazz. Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor have produced jazz beyond jazz for half a century. Mandel sketches a sonic pilgrim's progress through the minefield of fusion, free jazz and avant garde that he first discovers in his native Chicago's cut-out record bins and during a New York-career catching and interviewing his musical heroes.

In conversation with Miles, the trumpet star offers opinions about Prince, Wynton Marsalis, and just about everybody else in the wide-ranging interview at the heart of the book's first chapter. Mandel's a quirky critic with a sensibility forged in the fire of his passion for the new. He loves Miles, loves pretty much every stage of his chameleon-line career, but the author does his best work dealing with the electric stuff from *Bitches Brew* to the unfinished, but still daunting and daring *doo wop*. Mandel really cooks while championing the critically-trashed ghetto gem, *On the Corner*. He makes a case for *Decoy*, even Miles' versions of Cindy Lauper and Michael Jackson, arguing that the trumpet star could always pick a good tune to cover.



Miles Ornette Cecil: Jazz Beyond Jazz
Howard Mandel
Routledge, 292 p.
cloth. $30

Mandel presents Ornette Coleman's guiding harmolodic theory, what the musician now calls sound grammar, in a series of cubist, Socratic interviews that capture Ornette's serious play with language as well as music theory:

"If you're playing a melody and you don't have everything in your mind that you can do with that note," Coleman explains. "What some people call improvising, which I now call harmolodic theory and method, which has to do with using the melody, the harmony and the rhythms all equal- I find that it's much easier when a person can take a melody, do what they want to do with the melody, then bring his expression to yours, then combine that for greater expression…the people who I have worked with, they know how to do that."

Band mates Don Cherry, Charlie Haden, Dewey Redman, Denardo Coleman, Asha Puhtli and Ed Blackwell add their visions of Ornette and his music, but it's Mandel's description of his education as a serious, passionate listener and fan that sets the page on fire, and it flames brightly through his immersion into Cecil Taylor's equally boundless musical world.

Intimations of the theatre in Miles and Ornette's performances are jacked-up a notch in Taylor's costumed, choreographed projections of his artistic conviction. Unlike Ornette, who seemed to describe his musical essence as compositional, and Miles, whose contrary leadership was legendary, Cecil describes his music as ritual, adding, "I mean: Is it entertaining? I hope it is entertaining, but it is also, I think, the most holy thing I can do."

Miles Davis

Mandel describes the moment he grasped that "Cecil's music was not whatsoever random, thrown carelessly together, or chaotic, whatever I'd thought up until then." Carving Taylor's architectural musical conception to it's core, Mandel writes, "Players, it seemed, could stand alone even while remaining vital parts of larger ensembles; equally, entire ensembles could turn or climax on the motion of a single link."

The author's passionate, personal, and scholarly descriptions of his encounters with Miles, Ornette, and Cecil's music and his interviews with the musicians offer inspired, insightful reading. This music is not easy listening, but the book provides a knowing, open-hearted guide.

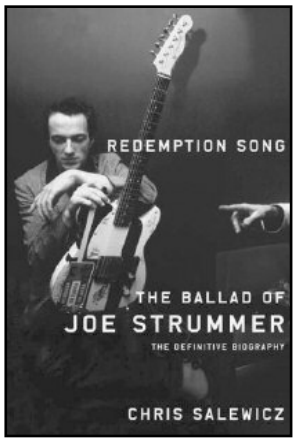
Taking Another Look at Punk and Grunge

I was too old for the punk mosh pit in the late 1970's, but dug The Clash's potent political energy on record. A new father by the time Nirvana reshaped pop music in the early 1990's, I missed Grunge completely. Two new books by a couple of music journalists close to The Clash and Nirvana helped me fill in the blanks.

Redemption Song: The Ballad of Joe Strummer is Chris Salewicz's definitive biography of The Clash's frontman. Salewicz wrote for the British music magazine, *New Music Express* from 1974-1984 and countless other publications worldwide over a long career that includes musical biographies of Bob Marley, Billy Bragg, Paul McCartney, Jimi Hendrix, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. Most importantly, Salewicz was Joe

Strummer's friend through thick and thin for three decades. In *Redemption Song* he presents a nuanced picture of one of rock's most complex, walking contradictions.

Salewicz begins his insightful biography with Joe Strummer's death in 2002 and the obituary for *The Independent* where the author calls the musician "a pub philosopher and articulate rabble rouser for the disposed." Noting Stummer's trademark "energy, passion and heart-on-sleeve belief", Salewicz also describes a man who is "hopeless at soul baring," a contradictory personality who is always empathetic and involved while maintaining an air of mystery and self protection.



Redemption Song: The Ballad of Joe Strummer. Chris Salewicz. Faber& Faber, 629 pages. Cloth. $37.95

True to his life's contradictions, the musician who journalists called the spokesman for the punk generation, the author of incendiary songs like *White Riot, London's Burning, Revolution Rock, English Civil War* and *Tommy Gun,* died quietly from an undiagnosed congenital heart defect in his home in rural Somerset after taking his dogs for a walk. Stummer was 50 years old. After years of depression and post-punk self-doubt, he had made peace with his roots and mistakes and was happily married and finally rocking again with his last band, The Mescaleros, a world music-inspired group formed in the mid-90's.

Born John Mellor in Ankara, Turkey, the self-named Strummer was the second son of a career diplomat and a crofter's daughter from the Scottish highlands. Salewicz does a good job explaining how these divergent dual influences helped forge Strummer's personality, politics, and music.

After living with his family in postings in Cairo, Mexico City and Bonn, Joe and his older brother were sent to an upper class, private boarding school in Surrey. After dabbling in right-wing politics and mysticism, Strummer's brother committed suicide in 1970, a traumatic turning point in Joe's life, but one he keeps to himself despite his long friendship with the author.

Strummer moved to London to attend art school, lived in Wales for awhile, and returned to London to live in squats and busk on the street with Tymon Dogg. By 1975, he'd joined a band called the 101'ers and changed his name in reference to his flailing guitar style. A year later he joined fellow art school dropouts Mick Jones and Paul Simonon in The Clash.

Salewicz sails through the details of the band's short life, detailing how Topper Headon replaced original drummer Terry Chimes in 1977 and the release of the band's self-titled debut, a record the author calls "positive light to the darkness of the Sex Pistols." Salewicz calls The Clash's music an amalgam of an almost Puritanical sense of rock and roll heritage, reggae and other world beat rhythmic influences growing out of the rise of British multiculturalism, and Strummer's Woody Guthrie-like, modern day protest songs.

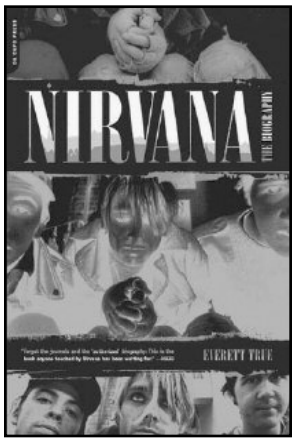
Film maker David Mingay, who helped make The Clash concert film, *Rude Boy*, remembers that Strummer "already seemed to be suffering terribly from the notion of being Joe Strummer. He wasn't exactly lying back and having a great time. Joe was always full of contradictions, one of which was that he managed to be both ultra-British and anti-British at the same time."

Salewicz calls The Clash's manager Bernie Rhodes "a wily Situationist" while describing how this business colleague of Sex Pistol Svengali, Malcolm McLaren turned The Clash's sprawling, three LP *Sandinista!'s* critical drubbing into a triumphant 16-nights at a Times Square club and the follow-up *Combat Rock's* five million-selling commercial breakthrough in 1982.

As *Redemption Song* illustrates, it's all downhill from there. Strummer sacked Topper Headon for his heroin abuse and then, with Simonon and Rhodes, conspired to kick out group co-founder Mick Jones. That proved fatal for The Clash. Strummer realized the error in dumping Jones from the fold after the band's 1985 release, *Cut the Crap* flopped, but by then it was too late to reform the group. Jones had moved on to a new band, Big Audio Dynamite.

Salewicz describes Strummer's lost decade after The Clash's demise, playing bit parts in films like Alex Cox's *Straight to Hell* and *Walker* and Jim Jarmush's *Mystery Train.* It's depressing to read of the pot-loving musician's years of stumbling around London's Notting Hill pubs. It's much more inspiring to read of his visits to his beloved Spain, years as "the perpetual gatherer of waifs and strays", and his enduring love and central role in campfire culture at annual outdoor music festivals. Near the end of his life, Strummer and Mick Jones reunite onstage at a benefit for the Fire Brigades Union. I'm glad they finally got back together, but after 600 pages, all I wanted to do was to put on *White Man in Hammersmith Palais* and turn it up loud.

Everett True is Jerry Thackery's nom de plume. Taken from the early twentieth century comic strip *The Outbursts of Everett True,* Thackery has also called himself The Legend! Maybe most importantly, he has been called "the man who invented Grunge" for an early reference to "grungy" sounds in a review of a recording by Happy Mondays and for his first person journalism depicting the emergence of the "Seattle sound' while writing for *Melody Maker* in the 1980's. True also purportedly introduced Nirvana lead singer, guitarist and songwriter, Kurt Cobain to the woman who would become his wife, Courtney Love. In his role as a participant journalist, True wheeled Cobain onstage in a wheelchair wearing a hospital gown at the Reading Festival. After reading his new biography, it's hard not to come away with the feeling that the journalist was instrumental in making Nirvana the biggest band in the world in the early 1990's.



Nirvana: The Biography. Everett True. DaCapo Press. 636 pages, $24.00

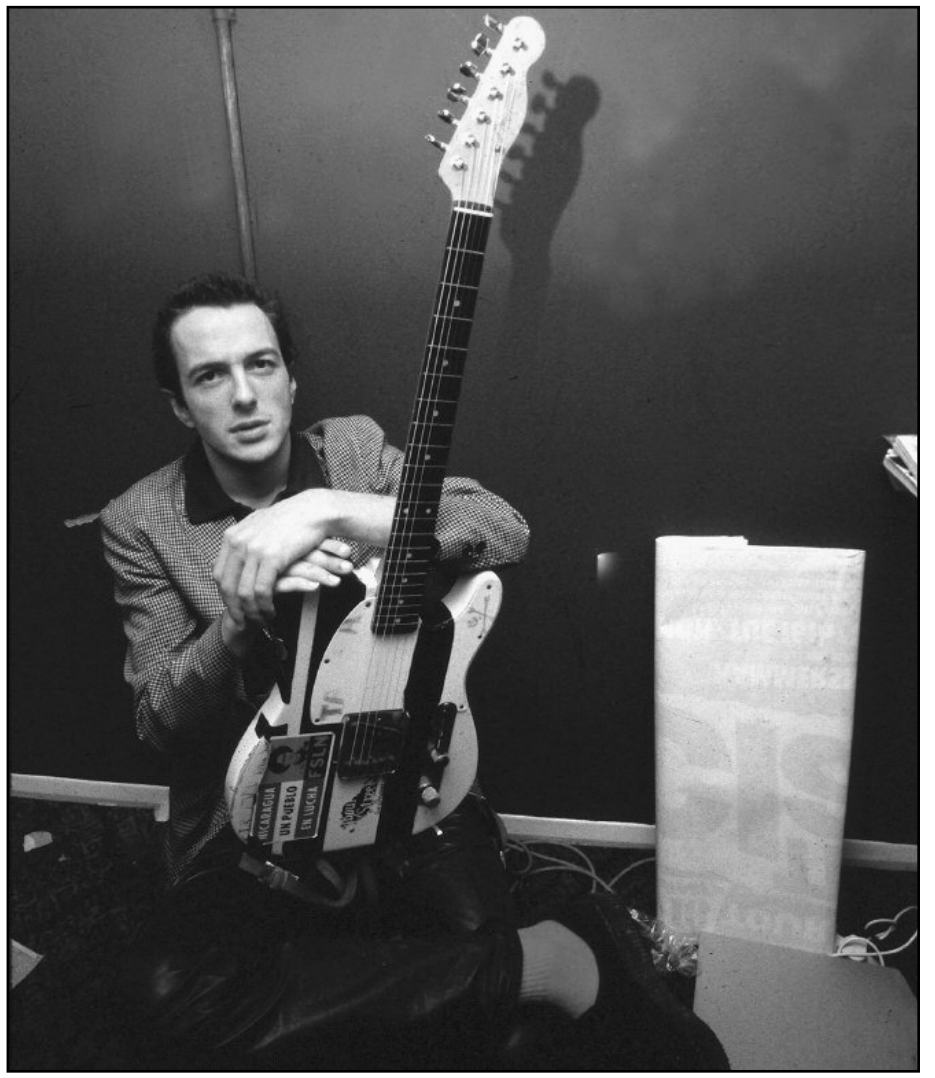
True's 600+ page door-stopper of a book focuses almost entirely on Cobain, and much of it is inspired by Hunter S. Thompson-like gonzo journalism. For the most part it is an engaging, messy, funny, sad, and passionate narrative by the band's number one fan.

The author admits in his acknowledgements that "great chunks of narrative have been taken from my previous 'grunge' book, *Live Through This: American Rock Music in the Nineties.* Readers of *Melody Maker, NME*, and other music magazines will recognize quotes from True's earlier work too. None of this affected my enjoyment of this book's wild, scatter-gun approach to storytelling. It's great fun.

True introduces his tome with the question "Have you ever noticed how the rock establishment all wear Ramones t-shirts now?" before going on to claim that "None of them wears a Nirvana t-shirt. Not one."

Getting to the heart of his book, True continues, "Leave that to the kids—the eight year olds who weren't even alive while Kurt Cobain was around: the 12 year olds desperate for peer approval and fed up with the blandishments of the mainstream media: the 15 year old Goths lounging round city centres, studiously bored, frightened

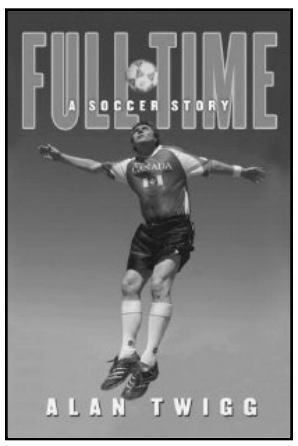
(*continued on page 12)*



Joe Strummer

Full-time: A Soccer Story

John Moore



Full-time: A Soccer Story.
Alan Twigg.
McCelland & Stewart
293pp. $32.99

"Sports don't build character, they reveal it," American writer and film producer Nunnally Johnson observed. It would have made a good quotation for the flyleaf of Alan Twigg's memoir of his lifelong involvement with soccer from his boyhood on rep teams in West Vancouver to his current spot in the roster of a Vancouver over-50 squad called the Legends.

Football, a.k.a. soccer, is often called the World Game because it seems that in every culture, at every time in history, some variant has been played using a ball, a bundle of tied rags, or even a human head to dispute a territorial pitch. While visiting the magnificent ball-court of an ancient Mayan city in Belize, a sense of the deep universal roots of his chosen game overcame Twigg and, as a writer he began to explore it. Much of the resulting book is a witty and informative history of football, studded with quotes from famous players, coaches and sports writers. Had Twigg left it at that, he might have easily produced a steady seller that would stay on the shelves longer than the usual three months. Instead, he took a chance, went for the breakaway, and produced a unique mix of history, culture criticism, personal memoir and creative non-fiction that will become a classic in the genre of writing about sport.

These days, soccer is frequently called the Beautiful Game, a slightly imprecise translation of *Joga Bonito*, as it was dubbed by former Manchester United striker Eric Cantona. As Twigg points out, *joga bonito* actually means "play beautifully" and the greatest thing about the game is that it makes no difference whether you're watching a World Cup match or bunch of street kids playing a pick-up game in a Third World vacant lot (or even a polyglot crew of over-fifty amateurs); you can still witness moments in which quickened intelligence and athletic grace combine to turn the simple act of kicking a ball into something that brings a lump to your throat.

It is those moments the ageing amateur players of the Legends seek, drawn to football perhaps because it does not reward brute power or strategic pre-game planning. Of all games, it is the simplest, yet the most complex, demanding patience, improvised tactical thinking on the run, a sense of *timing* rather than mere quick reflexes and valuing endurance above mere strength.

Twigg's account of the preparations of the Legends for a trip to Spain to play several similarly aged and skilled teams provides the narrative frame of the book, which he stuffs liberally with asides, historical detours and diversions without losing the basic story of a bunch of middle-aged guys who probably take soccer too seriously, but whose wives know that there are worse things they could be obsessed with in middle age.

No longer boys, the Legends all have adult lives and career responsibilities, yet they support each other through all the ills flesh is heir to with a camaraderie that, because of their age and experience, runs much deeper than notions of 'team spirit' fostered by coaches of juvenile squads.

Parallel to the struggle of the Legends to put their best foot forward for their own private international debut, runs Twigg's record of his obsession with the 2006 World Cup, getting up at all hours of the night to watch matches televised live from Europe, reading all the sports pages, becoming the Total Fan until the shocking moment when French superstar Zinedine Zidane lost his temper and head-butted an Italian defender in the final while the whole world watched and gasped. The revelation that the Italian had been deliberately baiting him by saying foul things about his sister mitigated Zidane's behavior, but only made the black eye on the face of international soccer that much bigger, confirming the view of those who hold that "Rugby is a thug's game played by gentlemen, while soccer is a gentleman's game played by thugs."

In Spain, the Legends get a taste of the 'international style' of soccer when they find themselves facing not a team of equals in age and skill, as supposedly arranged, but a squad stacked with ringers of lesser years and greater ability. Despite a second fairer and more collegial match in another town, it is a sobering moment for the amateur Vancouver Legends as they discover just how seriously the rest of the world takes their beloved game.

Alan Twigg has enjoyed a long career as a respected journalist, literary critic and publisher of *B.C. Bookworld* magazine, as well as authoring historical travel guides to Cuba and Belize, yet *Full Time* represents a quantum leap in his development as a writer. With the exception of *Intensive Care*, (Anvil Press), a collection of his first writings after being operated on for a brain tumor a few years ago, *Full Time* is his most intimate book to date, the most daring and the most complete; a self-portrait of 'the man in full' that reveals the boy inside the man—alone, kicking a soccer ball repeatedly against a playground wall or dribbling it along an empty field, polishing his skills against imaginary opponents, endlessly preparing for the perfect moment of the Beautiful Game.

Alan Twigg

John Moore is author of* The Flea Market *and* The Blue Parrot. *He writes from Garibaldi Highlands, B.C.

PUNK (*continued from page 11*)

of the encroaching adult world. They understand how it feels to be unloved, confused, misunderstood, betrayed by those in positions of authority who only ever claim to be helping you. The kids understand."

True remembers how that feels, and he understands too. He describes how two schoolyard friends (Kurt and Krist Novoselik) formed a band in Aberdeen, Washington (a post-logging, deadend wasteland) and hook-up with the punk-inspired, highly-politicized, feminist scene in nearby Olympia. Except for a Sub Pop record debut, Nirvana never really was a "Seattle band" despite all the media hype about the city's grunge scene.

True describes a great live band driven to extinction by the contradictions of their political and punk ethos and their personal demons and appetites for destruction, including the biggest drug, fame, and a deal with the corporate music business that sold eight million Nirvana records while sucking the life out of the band.

True spews out pages of drunken rant that is pure rock and roll, some of the finest rock writing since the untimely demise of Lester Bangs. Tales of drugs, guns and junk food diets are married to countless descriptions of the band's fevered, instrument-destroying sets. (Kurt lived almost exclusively on pizza, pop, corn dogs, candy, and sugar cereal. No wonder he had chronic stomach problems that supposedly lead to his heroin abuse.)

As the destruction mounts and the crowds grow too quickly from a dozen spitting punks to international stadium dates before 50 to 100 thousand MTV-addled fans, the band self-destructs and disintegrates. Kurt ends it for good with a shotgun blast after a massive dose of heroin, but Nirvana, in all its ragged glory, died long before his suicide. True's book compels readers to go back and listen to the *Bleach, Nevermind* and *In Utero* recordings, and maybe most importantly, to go down to the nearest club and check out some young, local noisemakers before it's too late.

Joseph Blake is PRRB's music correspondent extraordinaire.

The Personal Becomes Political: The Powerful Intensity of Linh Dinh

An Interview with Linh Dinh by Marianne Villanueva

"Linh and I first met at the 2005 Berlin Festival on Southeast Asian Art and Literature, "Sending Signals." The conference sought to bring together Southeast Asian artists and writers whose work evoked powerful political realities. These artists included such emerging talents as Thai director Pen-Ek Ratanaruang and poet Nguyen Quoc Chanh, whose poetry is banned within Vietnam.

Linh was at the time finishing up a two-year stint in Certaldo, Italy, as a guest of the International Parliament of Writers, and was about to begin a stint as the 2005 David K. Wong Fellow at the University of East Anglia.

These are the essential facts: He was born in Saigon in 1963 and now lives in the United States. He publishes poems in both Vietnamese and English. Among his books in English are two collections of stories: *Fake House* (2000) and *Blood and Soap* (2004), both published by Seven Stories Press, and the poetry collections *All Around What Empties Out* (Tinfish Press, 2003), *American Tatts* (Chax, 2005), and *Borderless Bodies* (Factory School, 2006). His latest poetry collection, *Jam Alerts*, was published last year by Chax. His first novel, *Love Like Hate*, was published this month by Seven Stories Press, is described by the publisher as "a dysfunctional family saga that doubles as a portrait of Vietnam in the last half century."

MV: *You left Vietnam in March 1975, just a month before the fall of Saigon. And your official biography lists you as having a "fake name": Ly Ky Kiet. What was its purpose?*

Linh Dinh photographed by Brian Doan

LD: In March of 1975, as the shit was about to hit the fan, my father arranged for his secretary, me and my brother to evacuate with a Chinese family. This family had a daughter working for the Americans. In order to safeguard their properties, some of this family chose to stay behind. And they ended up selling my father three spots.

We all took fake names. My brother's was Ly Ky Vinh. My father hired the secretary to take care of my brother and I. She was 22, Chinese, with a very short temper, and a face that was round and puffy like a dumpling, liberally sprinkled with meaty pimples. I wrote about this episode in "April 30th of Ly Ky Kiet."

MV: *The word "fake" seems to be an important one for you, since I saw it in* Blood and Soap*, your second story collection, and again in your bio. Does it have special meaning for you? Or am I just reading too much into it?*

LD: The two cultures I'm most familiar with, the U.S. and Vietnam, are tremendously fake, but in different ways. During the Vietnam War, the Hanoi government also called the South Vietnamese "nguy," or "fake" (This term "nguy" is frequently translated into English as "puppet," but it actually means "fake.") One of my favorite lines of all time is Elias Canetti's "She saw behind everything. Behind that, she saw nothing." So my motto is, "You've got to see behind what's behind," you've got to see beyond the so-called authenticity behind the fakeness.

MV: *You write experimentally in both fiction and poetry, and your work seems to consistently break accepted norms in an overt attempt to play with form. What attracts you to this?*

LD: I started out as a painter. Working with oil, I strived to improvise, to think, as I was painting. Play was a central concept in my work. I was also a critic. In 1994, I curated a show at Moore College of Art called "Toys and Incense," a reference to Rimbaud's "*pourquoi pas déja les joujoux et l'encens?*" Why not toys and incense already? To play is to experiment, to make things up as you go along. Oil is an endlessly malleable substance, though hardly cooperative, much less so than words, which have the quickness of thoughts. To paint well, one needs tremendous dexterity, to play a musical instrument requires training and skill, but to write well, one merely has to think beautifully and viciously, something countless people are capable of, at least on occasion, I would think.

MV: *Where does your attitude – or maybe an "aversion" — to narrative come from?*

LD: I actually don't have an aversion to narrative. There are many relatively straightforward stories in *Fake House*, and even a few in *Blood and Soap*. But you're right, I often employ a collage aesthetics. There are so many ways to create fiction.

MV: *Do you have a fear of alienating readers with your experimentation?*

LD: Not at all. Like other writers, I want to have as many readers as possible, but I must be true to myself, to my vision, if you will. My interest in writing, my respect and passion for it, takes precedence over my whorish concern for seducing sexy, intelligent readers. Where are they, anyway?

MV: *What about your family? Do they read what you write, and what do they think of your art (your painting, poetry, and fiction)? Do they react more strongly to one field than another? And has your family ever tried to influence what you do and/ or write or paint?*

LD: My parents hated the fact that I became an artist, then a writer. My father insisted that I become a lawyer, a profession I despise above all others. My parents have been divorced since I was nine years old, by the way. My mother abandoned her two children to be with her new husband, but took me in years later when I had to escape from my deranged, constantly screaming stepmother. My mother's third husband, a literate guy, encourages her to read me, I think, although her responses range from indifference, to befuddlement, to disgust. She told me that my *Fake House* disgusted her. Pointing out a minor mistake in one of my translations, she told me to stop translating. My mother has a knack for belittling men. She castrates all the men in her life. My father, on the other hand, is a raving megalomaniac. His solipsism is bathetic. He thought my involvement with art and literature were completely frivolous. When I started to publish in Vietnamese journals, however — when his friends and acquaintances started mentioning my name — his attitude toward me changed. He reads some of my stories in Vietnamese, and when I have a new book out, he buys them by the box-load (at my 50% author's discount), to give to friends. For the last 10 years, he has actually been supportive of what I do.

MV: *I find your stories very chilling, because of the narrator or protagonist's dispassionate tone when describing the most horrific events. That said, I like your stories precisely because of this tone. Is this a tone you strived consciously to achieve, or did it just come naturally as you contemplated writing about the events that you did?*

LD: My tone varies, I think, although the dispassionate voice is probably predominant. In any case, I don't think about tone as I write, because my preferences for what works (where and how) have been internalized, which is another way of saying that I adjust my tone intuitively.

MV: *Which writer positively inspired you and made you think a writing life was possible?*

LD: The young Rimbaud for his passion, and Kafka for how he used literature as a tool for survival. He needed to write to understand his predicament.

MV: *Which authors influenced you the most when you were just starting to write, and*

(*continued on page 26*)

Baptize Me in Wine

Jim Christy

It was one of those days when I knew something unusual was going to happen. Everything on the outside seemed strange or magnetized. Like someone had taken a harrow to the force field. All matter appeared animated. On the trees leaves quivered and at one street corner were bunches of those orange and black rubber stands that street workers put up to warn you to be careful. They have a round yellow plastic light on top. Of course, workers working outside all day have to have somewhere handy to tend their toilettes so there was a Johnny-on-the-spot on the corner and the orange and black warning stands looked like they were all waiting their turn. They seemed to tremble with urgency.

It was that kind of day. Even the mundane was fraught with potential and the everyday marvelous is better than, say, being abducted by aliens. Of course, with my luck, I'd get abducted and they'd have this ritual they'd picked up from spying on doctors examining guys for prostate cancer. The space ship would be filled with latex gloves. Or, worse, the aliens would listen to lousy music. I don't want to offend anyone by mentioning names. They'd know what you don't like and they'd play it. This is not a divergence (from *what?* you might ask) because it does bear upon the topic, which is music, a musical discovery on this particular day or, more precisely, a re-discovery.

It has to do with the late great Screaming Jay Hawkins who's been there in my mind since I was thirteen years old, and it involves to a lesser degree a fellow named Doc Starkes, and his Nite Riders, who've been in the personal movie, too but in bit parts sort of like Ukulele Ike, otherwise known as Cliff Edwards who invented scat singing, appeared in 200 or 300 movies, was addicted to practically everything, was the voice of Pinocchio and is in the ukulele hall of fame. But he is certainly another story.

I was in Value Village, a good source of art supplies, and stopped to pick through a shelf of cassette tapes and old tape recorders. Now I've been in this same Value Village twenty times and never looked at this shelf. But I did because I *knew.*

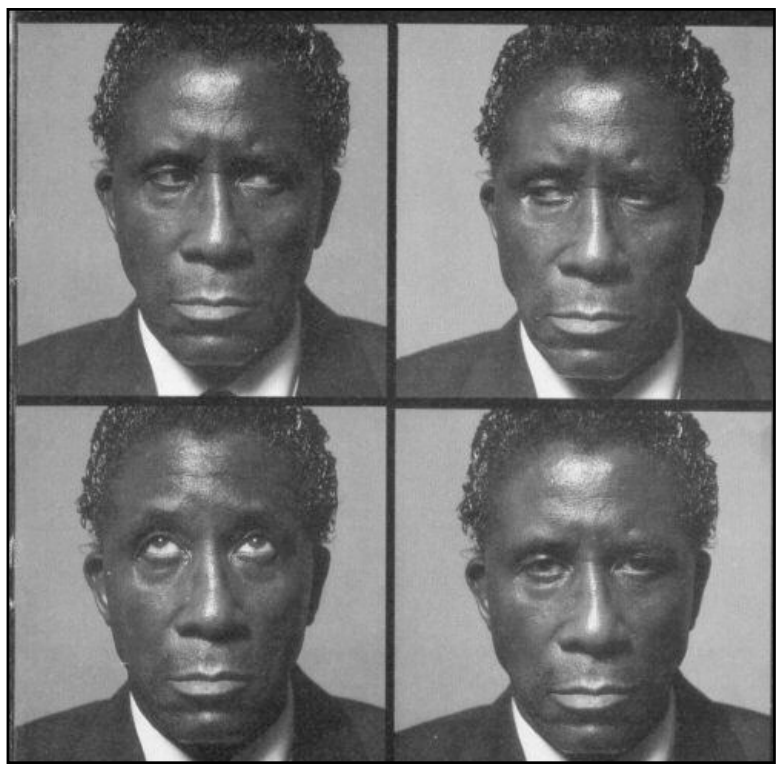
And there it was. Screaming Jay Hawkins doing his 1953 tune *Baptize Me in Wine* that I heard him do in person in Annapolis, Maryland when I was thirteen years old, in 1958. I was there for the express purpose of seeing him, having run away on a class trip to the Naval Academy. I've written about this before so I'll only mention that I saw a poster on a telephone pole advertising the show, which also included Bobby 'Blue' Bland and a girl group whose name I've never been able to remember.

I've been longing to hear *Baptize Me in Wine* ever since. Fifty years!

I never heard it on any Screaming Jay album. I suppose I could have consulted serious record collector networks or later I might have found it on the internet but I suppose I always hoped I'd come across it the way I did. But, what makes this day all the more special and strange is on the same tape was a tune by Doc Starkes and the Nite Riders. Those fellows—unusual name for a black group—were the artists on the very first record I ever bought with my own money—come to think of it, no one else had ever bought me a record with *their* money. And I found that too in a junk shop, in Philadelphia. It was a few years before I heard Screaming Jay in person and I was accompanying my father on his rounds, which involved him stopping into different shops or social clubs and going off to confer with 'those people,' as the saying went. So he goes into a flower shop to speak with some Italian guy who looked like all he knew from flowers was that they are what you sent when somebody died, and if you killed him you'd send more of them.

Apollo recording of "Baptize Me in Wine"

Anyway, I drifted off on my own and near the corner was a junkshop, not the Value Village kind but an old-fashioned one with bird cages, dusty silk foulards, hundred year old scrap books and a man nearly as old. There was a small stack of 45-rpm records on top of a brass smoking stand and when I picked up the stack there was what would become a not unfamiliar feeling, I *knew.* Something was going to happen. My life was about to change, that's what. The world was going to look different. Maybe if I hadn't chosen the record that I did my life would have changed in some other way. I can't imagine what that change would have been because I don't remember the other records. But it would have been 1955, too early for rock and roll disks—at least what


Screaming Jay Hawkins

has come to be known as rock and roll—to be in junk shops. So maybe the others were Theresa Brewer or Red Foley, which wouldn't have been so bad or even other R and B artists, maybe Bullmoose Jackson or H-Bomb Ferguson, which would have been even better, not that I knew anything about them yet, which is a damn good thing because I was already disoriented enough.

So on one side of the 45 was *Don't Hang Up the Phone*, on the other *Six Button Benny*. I had no choice; that was the one. I took it home and played it for the first of a thousand times. It's a wonder my parents didn't call the authorities. "He's in there playing that record again. You better come and get him. See he gets the help he needs."

"Let me get my time in let me/put another dime in/ honey don't uh/ don't hang up the phone."

And on the other side the man sang about the short overcoat that his "baby" bought him. It had "a belt in the back." The background musicians ask him about the colour, sort of like the way the fellows do on Ella Fitzgerald "A Tisket, A Tasket." "Was it brown?… No, man no… Was it beige?… No man, no…Was it blue? … No man, no. It was a charcoal benny with a belt in the back."

John Doc Starkes and his Nite riders. I got my thousand listens in before the record vanished, perhaps thrown away by my parents when we moved. Well I never heard either song again and never heard anything at all by Doc Starkes and his fellow travelers until I came across the tape at the Value Village. The tune is *Women and Cadillacs*, of which I'd heard four bars or so several years earlier, there being just that briefest snippet of this great car and driving song on the soundtrack of John Waters film *Cry Baby*.

Thing is I met Screaming Jay Hawkins and never thought to ask him about *Baptize Me in Wine*. This was in Paris in 1983, the meeting having been set up by Michael Zwerin, who had been a trombone player in the Fifties and Sixties, even recording with Miles Davis, before he began devoting more and more time to writing. He eventually wound up in Paris and is still there as I write. I first was in touch with Zwerin because he used to play in small jazz groups with my great old friend, bassist, Charlie Leeds who recorded with Buddy Rich, Woody Herman, Tad Dameron and others. Charlie and Zwerin were ringers with the University of Miami jazz band long about 1951 or '02. So I telephoned Zwerin at the International Herald Tribune when I was in Paris. He asked if I'd ever heard of Jalucy Hawkins, also known as Screaming Jay. He was going to interview him at 3pm that very day, at a café on the left bank. He said I might stop by but to give him an hour alone with the Hawkins. I waited until four but figured a legend like Jay Hawkins wasn't going to go over the allotted time with any journalist, even one as hip as Zwerin. But he was still there, a big dark man with huge hands, large ivory nails, with an afro and wearing a dashiki. He didn't say

Hawkins on stage with his sidekick skull "Henry"

anything when we were introduced just stared like I was the guy who'd helmed the first slave ship. I sat and he stared hostilely. Just fixed his eyes on me and didn't move them. Zwerin would ask him a question and Jay would answer while the malevolent eye stayed on me. After Zwerin got up to leave, Jay stayed there staring. I sat looking back as resolutely as I could. If he reached over and began to strangle me, I was sure none of the patrons would come to my aid, him being black and they being white Parisian intellectuals.

Finally, he spoke to me, "What you thinking, honkie?"

"I'm thinking you look better with your hair caulked than you do with that Afro."

The mask crumbled then and rearranged itself into a great big smile.

"Can you play?" he asked.

"Play?"

"Yeah, like guitar, sax, any motherfucking thing?"

"Naw."

"Shit."

"Why?"

"I need somebody with me up there tomorrow night. These French cats, man, they, well, you know."

Soon enough I was telling Jay about seeing him on stage when I was a kid. How he was in a coffin, skulls clattering around the floor with pink smoke coming out of them. But, I said, to tell the truth, it was his straight singing I liked the preferred.

An original Doc Starkes recording

"Yeah, man. That's what I am. I'm an opera singer or light opera, better than that Mario Lanza, anyway. You know Roy Hamilton?"

"Yes, I do."

"No, you don't"

"Hell, I don't. *I Believe. You'll Never Walk Alone.*"

"Yeah, I love that corny shit. Hamilton, he's a trained singer. I'm not trained and I can sing better than him."

I told him that I'd heard so many songs where he begins in a straightforward manner then starts screaming on them and growling. Like *Deep Purple*. He waved me off. "Five years before I did the infamous version of *I Put a Spell on You*, I did it straight, released it on some dinky ass little label. Then I redid it when I was drunk, we were all drunk. In the middle I started screaming and I've been stuck with it ever since."

Some many years later, he did a non-screaming rendition of Tom Waits' *Heartattack and Vine* that is downright evil in its foreshadowing. It's a lot more dangerous to picture Screaming Jay Hawkins at that intersection waiting on that little jersey girl in the see-through top sucking on a soda pop who's still a virgin but of course it's only twenty-five to nine. There's a motel around the corner; she'll be turned out tomorrow.

We talked about some of his heroes, old R and B singers, mostly, like Roy Milton, and Frank Sinatra. Then, Jay said, "You want to go to a movie?"

(*continued on page 46)*

Rising Star: China's New Security Diplomacy

Rosita Delios

China's 'new security diplomacy' is actually quite old when judged by the September 11, 2001 watershed in Western security thinking. Bates Gill, an established scholar on China's strategic and international relations, makes this point from the outset of his book that incorporates the phrase in its title. It is not a September 11 phenomenon, he says, but dates back to 1982 when China's reformist leader, Deng Xiaoping, pronounced the international situation to be sufficiently stable for China to focus on economic development. This was in contrast to the theme of 'war and revolution' that characterized the strategic thought of his predecessor, Mao Zedong. Despite contrasts in leadership preoccupations, the new security concept, we are further told, draws its lineage from the 1950s 'principles of peaceful coexistence' which sought to locate China as a non-aggressive power.

Rising Star: China's New Security Diplomacy
Bates Gill
Brookings Institution Press, 2007
267 pages, $28.95

Has Bates Gill performed what the Chinese appeared to have done and poured old wine into new bottles? Is his 'new security diplomacy' simply another book on the rise of China – hence the 'rising star' part of the title – just as China's defence and foreign policy posture has remained avowedly defensive since the People's Republic was proclaimed in 1949? Is he telling his readers of the latest twists along the diplomatic road to rising stardom rather than presenting evidence for a 'security diplomacy' that is genuinely 'new'? The answer must lie in China's own narrative of old and new. That which is enduring, China reassures the world, is the defensive doctrine and force configuration of China's security posture. Beijing does, however, point out in its government documents that effective defence against security threats needs to be consistent with the technological and international political climate.

Thus the old Maoist people's war doctrine has faded from official rhetoric and in its place, in the latest defence white paper, stands the phrase 'Revolution in Military Affairs with Chinese characteristics'. It also notes the need to 'informationize' and not only mechanize the military in accordance with the trend in network-centric warfare. However, to be fair to Bates Gill, it was not hard power that he had in mind with China's 'new security diplomacy' but the ubiquitous 'soft power' – a turn of phrase introduced by Joseph Nye and frequently applied to China's modus operandi in international relations. China's 'peaceful rise', 'peaceful development path' and 'harmonious society' projects are the slogans for this soft power diplomacy from Beijing; foreign journalists had labelled it Beijing's 'charm offensive'. Not all commentators agree that this is necessarily anything more than a defensive tool by China's policy-makers against Western assertiveness, that in effect China's so-called soft power is reactive rather than proactive. Further, with China's continuing military modernization, security diplomacy has a healthy injection of hard power to ensure that the three nominated 'evils' of 'terrorism, extremism and separatism' are kept in check. China's military exercises with Russia in Central Asia are a case in point.


Bates Gill

Bates Gill identifies the implicit goals sought by the new security diplomacy. One is to foster international stability in order to focus on domestic development. Another is to seek prosperity through a win-win strategy and counter any threat perceptions of a rising China. A third concerns American influence in the region – how to contain it or co-opt it without appearing confrontational, but with the result that China plays a greater role in its own neighbourhood. None of these is especially remarkable in diplomacy. They are pragmatic, in line with China's post-Mao philosophy, and they are eminently sensible – develop on the home front, do not court enmity, and keep an eye on the Americans.

The value of this book, however, resides not so much in identifying the evolution of conceptual slogans but in empirical evidence of China's performance. Gill provides this in three of his seven chapters, under the headings of regional security mechanism; nonproliferation and arms control; and sovereignty and intervention. Chapters five and six examine the challenges and opportunities for US policy, while the final chapter looks ahead into an even more 'complex and interdependent' Sino-US relationship, with a prescriptive message that the two should seek 'common ground' in their 'identifiable interests'.

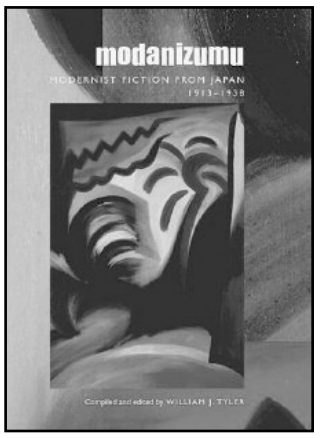
Gill is to be commended for not falling into the trap of becoming a China threat alarmist. However, beyond the comfort of a soft power underbelly, the dragon has sharpened its claws and demonstrated its fire-breathing capabilities if required to deploy beyond its borders – or within. The reasons may sound reassuring: a war against the 'three evils', of which terrorism is but one, and hence a certain synchronicity may indeed be found with the West's own 'new security' concerns with the 'war-on-terror'. But the reality remains that China's 'security diplomacy' is as old as its doctrine of 'active defence'. It admittedly does contain new capabilities and modalities to address the current strategic era. A notable feature of this era is, of course, the rising star of China.

Rosita Dellios is Dept. Head of International Relations at Bond Universit,y Gold Coast, Australia

When Modern Was Really *Modernizumu*

Trevor Carolan

As William J. Tyler attests in his dense introduction, what lover of Yasunari Kawabata's haikuesque novellas or Junichiro Tanizaki's elegant novels doesn't view them as being somehow emblematic of "traditional" Japanese culture and aesthetics? But both these literary lions, Tyler argues, as well as Nagai Kafu and other prominent authors were harbingers of internationalist-style modernism in Japanese fiction — a movement about which little information has existed in English until now. A work that parallels Jonathan Reynolds' *Maekawa Kunio and the Emergence of Japanese Modernist Architecture* (2001), this substantial new collection traces the *modanizumu*, or modernist movement in Japanese prose fiction from 1913-38. Its 25 newly translated stories and novellas of the period showcase how deeply internationalist *modan* ideas had permeated Japanese fiction prior to WW II. Organized in four parts — Anti-Naturalism, Cosmopolitanism, the Multiple Self, and Actionism — each with rich scholarly notes, the translations show the clear influence of Joyce, Malraux and Gide upon a contingent of talented, but unfamiliar authors including Abe Tomoji, Tani Joji, and Takeda Rintaro. Kawabata and veteran detectivist Edogawa Ranpo do appear though, and Tanizaki's wartime-banned tale "The Censor" is essential reading. Not light reading but specialists will appreciate its comprehensive treatment.



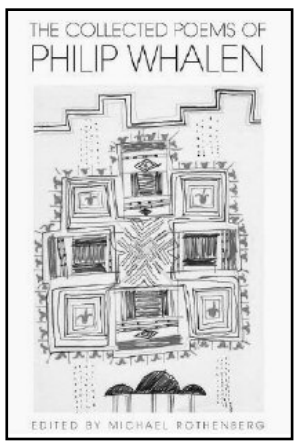
Modanizumu: Modernist Fiction from Japan, 1913-1938.
compiled & edited by William J. Tyler
University of Hawaii Press. 606 pages, $47.

Trevor Carolan is the international editor of PRRB.

Chilly Buddha Hall: Remembering Philip Whalen

Richard Wirick

I needed a break from the symbolic logic I was studying as a freshman. It reduced all discourse to truth tables, little grids whose premises yielded conclusions whose validity depended on the initial premises' truth functions. Berkeley was godawful enough of a place to be in those days, shocked into apathy after the Kent and Jackson State shootings. It was like getting to town after the circus had left. The logic course, a mine-sweeper for the philosophy major, made the curriculum feel monochromatic, trade-schoolish, vocational. I felt like I was studying diesel mechanics or dental hygiene.



Collected Poems
Philip Whalen
edited by Michael Rothenberg
Wesleyan University Press, 932 pages, $49.95

And the prof didn't like me. He was the great logician Ernest A_____. My papers veered off into metaphysical implications of logical properties, an area—though I didn't know it yet—called philosophical logic, which happened to be *his* specialty, and which of course he wouldn't tell me about until I stopped getting D's on his quizzes and learned the fundamentals. When I sat across from him and watched him touch the cover of my blue books, I thought of the Holden Caulfield line where the headmaster "[T]urned my paper around and around in his hands like it was some kind of turd or something."

So I need a break from the quantitative. I needed a Blakean interlude, a genuine surface explosion from the imaginative sun. Of course, Bill himself had had the same revulsion at geometry, homeomorphs and symmetries and undergirdings, rational superstructures and their champions: "The atoms of Democritus/And Newton's Particles of Light/Are sands upon the Red Sea shore/Where Israel's Tents do Shine so Bright." True dat. I needed to grab Dionysus by the horns and get down in the suck.

My roommate had gotten us tickets to a reading at the College of Marin: Ginsberg, Gary Snyder and Philip Whalen, clearly a supergroup of Beat show musicians. The campus had a small chapel in a pine grove off Highway 101, deep in the foothills of Mount Tamalpais. The air in the sanctuary was damp and salty for a place so far inland; it reminded me of the "chilly Buddha halls" and Yukon River roadhouses Snyder had celebrated in his newly released *Regarding Wave.* Though I'd carried the brick-like, unwieldy *On Bear's Head* around in my backpack, Whalen's was the work I knew least. And there he was in front of me, staring at some point in the chapel's rear where the whale-ribbed nave rose up and left dangling above us all kinds of strange detritus: white paper lanterns and bones of mountain rams, dried rattling kelp, glass balls from Asian fishing nets that cornered the knotted hemp and kept it afloat.

The poets, chummy-seeming and circled around a little altar of incense, nevertheless seemed destined by the hosts—the old Panjandrum Press—to go in the order of their fame. Ginsberg started with his majestic, wintry "Open Window On Chicago," his voice an incessant, hypnotic Shaman's drum, and finished with "Please Master," his sado-masochistic plea to his guru to strip off his blue sweat pants and blow him and finger his ass. We were rolling. Our sinuses cleared. Little hash pipes blinked on and off like fireflies.

Snyder went next. He read his merchant marine poems, all seemingly set on the deck of the freighter he took to his Kyoto sabbatical, "digging the earth as playful, cool, and infinitely blank." His voice was the opposite of Ginsberg's—circumscribed and delicate, as modest and composed as his tidy, calligraphic handwriting.

Whalen went last, bald and great-bellied, blazing in his crinkled robes and maize and scarlet sashes. We waited. He swung the mike boom toward his head, spectacled and freckled, wreathed with smoke. We waited, waited. His stare still held on the chapel's rear. Absolutely nothing came out of him. Pure silence.

Then he uttered a few clear, pure syllables, and suddenly, all around us, people joined the chant he had begun. It was a sutra, a Buddhist prayer, its cadences and rhythmic hum as loud and deep and even as a cloud of bees around our heads. And there were only a few of us who *weren't* chanting: the sutra was the calling card here, the ticket to the party. But it struck me as what we called in Christian churches a welcome hymn, or "welcome table"—secret and exclusive in its diction but purely selfless, a gesture of entreaty and inclusion.

He had been so sonorous in his chanting, but the verse he recited was even more stunning: strange and funny and fresh and playful. For someone so rejecting of *maya*, the world of illusion, he wrote almost entirely about the familiar, the stable, the domestic. It was a poetry of whatever came into his field of vision, of Things Presenting Themselves, quotidian-lists as flat and glibly descriptive as anything one found in the overly worldly O'Hara or Koch or Jimmy Schuyler.


Philip Whalen

Listening to him recite—all clearly from memory—was to hear a holy voice as uncompromising in its spirituality as that of Dante or Pierre Emmanuel. But unlike these fellow "religious" poets, Whalen steered away from descriptions of systems, explanations of beatific states or journeys. He was not just a Buddhist but a Zen Buddhist. Which meant wisdom was reached by surprise, that literal truth and recitation of facts alone transcended the spiritual clottedness of facticity. Repetition of minutiae was the cutting tool, the knife that sliced through those same facts lying fallow and undescribed. Such is one of the paradoxes of Zen. Such is the ethical touchstone of Whalen's prosody.

I knew Whalen was a slow-working, exacting craftsman: none of the Ginsbergian "first thought is best thought," spontaneous composition for him. Listening to him reminded me of an earlier formalist (Yeats); more properly, it brought back all formalists' recipe for veiling verse's hard labor behind a cultivated effortlessness, something Auden captured later in a poem title: "The truest poetry is the most feigning." And the way Whalen trilled his hard consonants made me think of Yeats on the old, scratched Caedmon recording; like the Irishman's, the Zen poet's voice cultivated a weariness, as if to stress how only hard work and hard forms can push the ephemeral toward eternity:

> I praise those extra Chinamen
> Who left me a few words,
> Usually a pointless joke or a silly question
> A line of poetry drunkenly scrawled on the margin of a quick
> splashed picture—bug, leaf
> caricature of Teacher
> on paper held together now by little more than ink
> & their own strength brushed momentarily over it
>
> Their world & several others since
> Gone to hell in a handbasket, they knew it—
> Cheered as it whizzed by—
> & conked out among the busted spring rain cherryblossom winejars
> Happy to have saved us all.
> ["Hymnus Ad Patrem Sinesis"]

The poet delivered his lines like a pugnacious football captain. He was never mythological or symbolic. The voice coming through the incense and flower scent was the straight stuff. But its effects were echoing, mysterious, hallucinatory; as back-lit and off kilter as the "plainest" image in a Magritte painting. Whalen is nothing if not a nature poet, but again, his pastoral is one of falleness, the eye turning back on itself as the describing spirit, the age-old force of human continuity and permanence.

His intonations said a lot about the world that night, all of it simultaneously. He saw whatever drifted by as goofy and puzzling and worthy of our affection, of our scrupulous, passionate observation. But what his poems "said" is that within all that burns something deeply separate—our own yearning, the mind's longing for release from what it can only see. The animate and inanimate illuminate each other, but for all its radiance the inanimate glides away; "floating and gliding," his old roommate Snyder once said, "sliding by." The animate stays. The longing goes on.

Richard Wirick is the author of the novel* One Hundred Siberian Postcards *(Telegram Books). He practices law in Los Angeles.

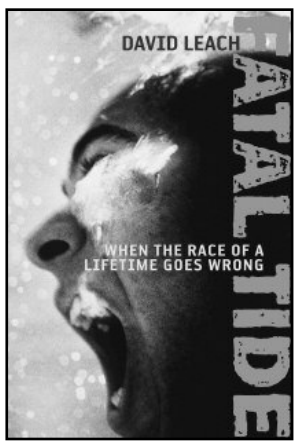
Fatal Tide: when the race of a lifetime goes wrong

Linda Rogers

Do you feel good?" the gospel singer asks. "Yes!" his audience responds and, for a moment, the slaves of time are distracted from their daily misery. The ultimate desideratum of any work of art should be reaction. That is the purity of a calling to record human existence.

When I put down David Leach's *Fatal Tide*, a ruthless account of the tragic outcome of a kayak race in the Bay of Fundy, I was suffering from sympathetic hypothermia. The phone rang and I could not speak coherently. Life doesn't get any more reactive than that.

This book is every mother's nightmare. The story of a young man drawn to the consequences of manly pursuit is hardly a new theme. We already have our Greek tragedies, our warriors, explorers and moonwalkers pushing the boundaries of human endurance, sometimes achieving the immortality of heroic status, and sometimes sinking into the mud of anonymity.



FATAL TIDE, when the race of a lifetime goes wrong,
David Leach,
Viking Canada,
Hardcover, 267 pages,
$32

There is nothing fresh about risk, but Leach, carefully documenting the story of René Arsenault and his fellow competitors in an adventure race, gives us the social context for the new breed of extreme sportsmen.

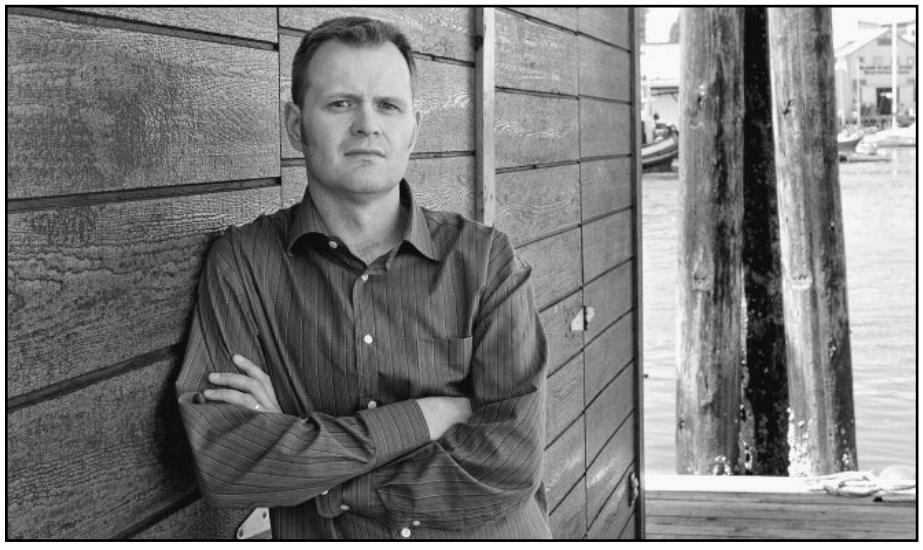
Leach's narrative is a reconstruction that begins with the risky salvage of Arsenault, his boat and his would be guardian angel, fellow adventure sportsman Boon Kek, by lobster fisherman Bob Mawhinney, who, like his fellow mariners, has respect for the sea.

Leach begins at the end, a kindness as it turns out. Knowing the outcome does nothing to dispel the suspense that builds through his telling of the story. The opening chapter gives the book a special integrity. The cops knock on the door, and then Leach reels back to the beginning of a day that will change the lives of everyone concerned and perhaps everyone who reads this book. The writer does not dangle hope in front of us as we paddle backward through the churning seas to full disclosure of the events.

Following the threads of individual competitors as they meet the challenges of a day of running, cycling and kayaking in the Fundy multi-sport race to the greater glory of a headband that will identify the winner, we begin to understand what motivates and often undermines the modern questor, who is as often as not tied to an urban lifestyle that allows his perceived manhood to languish. Like the gospel paricipant, he too wants to "feel good."

Along the way, Leach builds both sides of the argument about risk. Is this the heaven that exceeds our grasp or a hell of our own making? Arsenault, the boy who dies of hypothermia, was born to fight his own physiology and nature. He was a blue baby, whose first breath was a struggle. Like many "at risk" babies, he was left with deficits. The hyperactive boy asserted the value of his life on earth in sports. He tried harder. Nevertheless, he was unprepared for the challenges of this day.

People who undertake these challenges believe that they are celebrating nature, a world that doesn't need help exalting itself. We are the enemy, the polluters and violators of the various codes that would keep balance in nature. In Victoria where I live by the Selkirk Narrows, known as The Gorge, rowers shout and plough their way through a fragile nature estuary, destroying eel grass, frightening the birds, marine animals and otters that live along its banks. This is the entitlement of yuppies seeking immortality.



David Leach, photo by Ben Moore

Leach gives thrill seekers a cold eye, even though he admits that he too is lured by the sense of well being that comes from physical challenge. In the course of his research, he goes out on the Fundy waters with survivor Boon Kek, who proves that getting back in the boat is one way to conquer fear. This book graphically illustrates the futility of fighting extinction with high risk, which only hastens the process.

Do young men like René plunge into dangerous waters or are they led? Leach does not spare the organizers, arrogant jocks whose pride disallows respect for the elements and for those who do not measure up to the challenge. In this case, their flaws were fatal for the young man who took their word. It is a matter of trust. A vulnerable young man's trust left his family in ruins.

Leach's book is as much about ethics as it is about the foolish courage of boys and men who are boys. There is profit in extreme sport, for the organizers and the producers of reality shows that put mere humans in superhuman situations and endanger them.

Ethics aside, the book is a good read. I have to add here that David Leach has proven my faith in him. When he was my creative writing student, fellow faculty disbelieved that the poetry of this young student who had travelled the world with his parents could be "that informed." I fought for him then and I was right. That was a much safer challenge than an adventure race and one that, I think, is doing the world good.

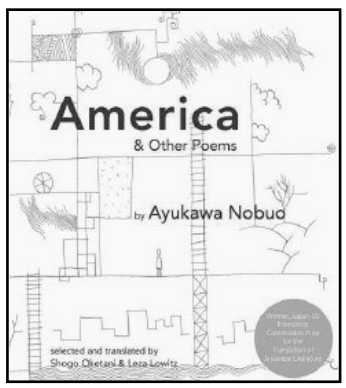
Linda Rogers is finishing a collection of poems and* The Third Day Book*, second in her Empress trilogy, the story of a cellist who takes an extreme risk to reconcile the two continents fighting in her nature.

Modern Japanese Poetry: Two Translations

Kate McCandless

If readers of books are a declining segment of our society, and readers of poetry are a small subset of those, we could speculate that readers of Japanese poetry are a similarly small subset of poetry readers. So those whose labours of love bring us devotees new translations are deserving of more acclaim than they usually get—not only the translators, but the small presses that publish their work.

The old Italian maxim *traduttore, traditore* is nowhere more true than in the translation of Japanese poetry. It is impossible not to betray the original when translating from a language as utterly different from our own as Japanese. The challenges of Japanese poetics and cultural nuances only raise the bar higher. And yet, those who love the language, the poetry, and the mental yoga of translation continue to try their utmost to make renderings that work as poetry in English. Two recent successful efforts are each the work of a Japanese native-speaker/English native-speaker translation team.



America & Other Poems, Ayukawa Nobuo. Selected and trans. by Shogo Oketani & Leza Lowitz. Kaya Press, 152 pp., $14.95

Husband-and-wife co-translators Shogo Oketani and Leza Lowitz have chosen to present a selection of the work of Ayukawa Nobuo (1920-1986), a poet virtually unknown in the West. In his engaging essay on translating Ayukawa, Oketani comments that even Westerners such as his wife and others who know Japanese poetry well had not heard of Ayukawa. To understand his surprise, he suggests we imagine encountering Japanese aficionados of American poetry who have not heard of Allen Ginsberg. Ayukawa was no Japanese Ginsberg, but he was an iconoclast and existentialist who stubbornly insisted that Japan take responsibility for its part in the great suffering and tragedy of World War II. He was severely critical of the post-war poets who wrote passionate anti-nuclear poetry, when during the war they had jumped on the militaristic national bandwagon. And he refused to take refuge in traditional Japanese aesthetics. Ayukawa's post-war poems are as bleak as those years were in a devastated Japan:

I, who don't believe in victory,
have been longing for this desolate land
for a very long time.
A place where neither hope nor desire can find a place to settle
Beyond where past or future can roam,
where the wolf's shadow does not exist—
far away from any capital,
a place never drawn on any map.
Oh, how can a soul heading toward this vast, desolate land
believe in defeat?

(from "The Soldier's Song" 1953)

Ayukawa suffered from *shinisokonau*, or "failure to die", what we would call survivor guilt, and wrote often of his young comrades who died in the war. He himself contracted malaria and was sent home. Throughout his life he admired the U.S. though he never travelled there. In the title poem and others, America is an almost mythic entity symbolizing individual freedom, the antithesis of the conformity he believed had led the Japanese people so astray.

Ayukawa's later poems are reflective; the angry intensity of youth has waned. There is something in him of the old veteran, who felt most vividly alive during the war years.

I won't go anywhere.

The thing that destroys me
has vanished.

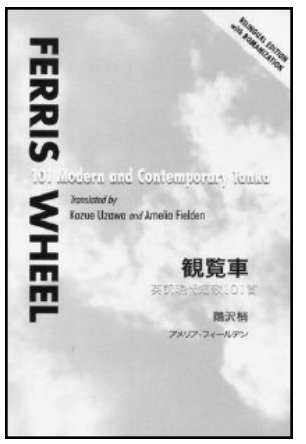
There is no place to go or return to,
neither war nor home.
Life has been sold to machines—
the world of men is over.

(from "Vanished Horizon" 1976)

There is also a yearning for inner peace.

From time to time, I leave my house
in the early morning, carrying my rod
up to the clear river, looking for fish
in the deep ravines. Held inside
immovable mountains,
I will enjoy a life of meditation
as it draws to an end.
There is nowhere else to return.

(from "Dreaming of the Mountain" 1982)



Ferris Wheel: 101 Modern and Contemporary Tanka, Translated by Kozue Uzawa & Amelia Fielden. Cheng & Tsui Company, 130 pp.

These are meticulously crafted translations. One suspects that the co-translators know how to express their respective points of view and really listen to each other. It's a partnership that serves this work well. Kudos should also go to book design by Erin Shigaki and line drawings by Richard Hahn, both of which complement Ayukawa's poetry. This volume is an important contribution to the poetic literature of response to war, at a time when Ayukawa's ethic of existential responsibility has seemed most lacking in the very country that so inspired him.

Ferris Wheel is Kozue Uzawa's personal collection of favourite modern and contemporary tanka. She and her co-translator, Amelia Fielden are tanka poets themselves, based in Canada and Australia, respectively. The tanka is a Japanese poetic form rooted in over one thousand years of tradition. It is written in five phrases, with a 5-7-5-7-7 syllable pattern. The more popular haiku form developed in the seventeenth century, from the first three phrases of the tanka. In her preface, Uzawa comments that tanka allow for more expression of emotion, lyricism, even political opinion than haiku. She hopes that this volume will contribute to a growing appreciation of tanka in the West. Her selection certainly has that potential.

A wide range of tanka poets are in included, from names established in the canon of early 20th century Japanese poetry, such Akiko Yosano and Hakushu Kitahara, to senior members of the contemporary Japanese tanka world, to emerging poets in their thirties. Some are classical in their diction and sentiments, some colloquial. I was pleased to find several tanka by Akiko Baba, a poet I admire for her intensity and daring. Here is one:

naming it
a black assassin
I attack—
furious skirmishes of stones follow
on our go game board

Some of the other women poets took particularly brave risks with content, in the spirit of their predecessor Akiko Yosano.

exhausted
from the police interrogation
I get home at midnight
my period starts
like rage

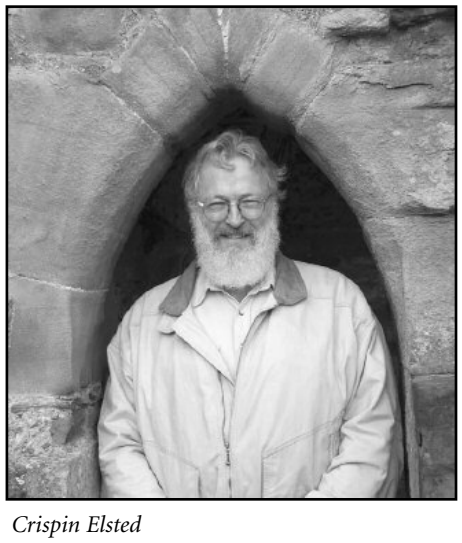
- Motoko Michiura

(*continued on page 26*)

My Father's Desk

Appolonia Felicity Elsted

An abundance of loose paper and cards. A small, weathered looking comb that was once pearly white, but has now faded to a wan grey. A collection of assorted gold elastic that was taken from boxes of Purdy's chocolates. A bundle of papers encased in what was once a pocketbook, but is now a faded lump of black and red held together by an elastic band. A variety of pens, most of them fountain pens, because he doesn't like the "plastic hard-to-hold rubbish", commonly known as ballpoint pens. Plastic rolls of change from distant, foreign countries. This plethora of memories is kept in a battered, round clay jar that is placed amongst books and music in a small bedroom. The assortment of apparently worthless objects belongs to my father.



Crispin Elsted

How well can a person really know about another person simply by riffling through the objects on a bedside table? A person's individuality hopefully extends beyond the simple keepsakes he has collected over the years. When surveying the objects, obviously untouched judging by the thin film of dust covering the top of the clay jar, I realized that my father's complexities are not explained by these trifles, yet they are symbolic of his life and personality.

An abundance of loose paper. He keeps these small, seemingly insignificant papers because they hold some thought, some word, or a line of a poem that is dear to him. He writes things down on the backs of receipts, business cards and note paper. On one side, where it reads the name of some obscure book dealer in Stratford, Ontario, the other side with its two lines of Shakespeare holds the small, private world that my father resides in.

A small, weathered looking comb. His constant mantra since I was very little was that he doesn't care what he eats, what he looks like, or how he dresses, yet that comb is identical to the one that he keeps in his pocket at all times. Is this proof that he really does care about his image, or that he simply has it on him in case of a sudden need to impress someone? The teeth are starting to fall out of the comb, but like the man he was brought up to be, a man that doesn't waste things, my father never throws out what can still, though barely, be used.

Assorted gold elastic. He is the ever-constant packrat. "They're useful bits of string" he tells an exasperated daughter as I try to point out that the decorative elastic that encases a Purdy's box of chocolates serves no purpose in the real world. It isn't even proper elastic, stretching only an inch or so beyond its original size. He adamantly refuses to accept the gold string as useless and puts it away, never to be used again. "Just in case." *Just in case.*

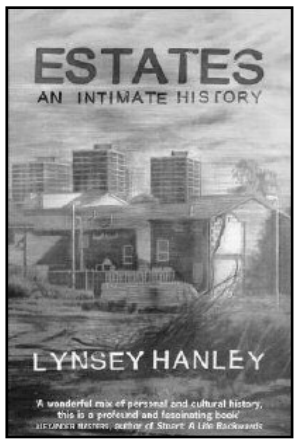
A beaten-up notebook and a fountain pen. A writer's most treasured tool is his pocket book; anywhere and everywhere he travels, there is always inspiration. A notebook, therefore, provides a space in which to write that inspiration and hopefully it turns into a worthy poem, story, or essay. Many of the pages of this notebook are mere scribbles, crossings out of lines, but some of the pages are worth their weight in sentimental gold. I do not look carefully at the pages, for I am sure that if my father found out, there would be hell to pay. The fountain pens are beautiful and though their nibs are dry, they will be used at some time or another to create a work of art.

Apollonia Felicity Elsted writes from Mission, B.C. She studies English and graphic design. Her father Crispin Elsted has been nominated for the Governor-General's Award in poetry and runs Barbarian Press with his wife, Jan.

Estates: An Intimate History

Mark Cranmer

As a practitioner of community generation, the title, *Estates: an intimate history* begged me to read it. This book concerns the history of municipal or social housing in Britain, a peculiarly twentieth century phenomenon. Lynsey Hanley asks some very important questions in this book, which is part biopic, part history of British social housing. As the cover of the book suggests, Hanley "challenges the stereotypes that estates have in Britain, and asks why homes that were built to improve people's lives ended up, in many cases, doing the opposite".



Estates:
an intimate history
Lynsey Hanley
Granta Books
256 p. 2007

By estates, we are not talking about the heritage of the landed gentry where tea and muffins are served on the lawn and everyone is genteel, a very English stereotype. What in fact we are discussing is the other side of the coin: the now notorious council estate.

Hanley's subject concerns the history of working class housing and the social engineering of a succession of governments in cahoots with planners and architects who believed they knew what was best for the British working family. Indeed, the intention was to alleviate the overcrowded condition of inner city slums and to provide "homes fit for heroes", for those who had returned from the First World War. This social housing experiment of mass housebuilding irrevocably changed the country's landscape as England's green and pleasant land gradually became dotted with concrete and red brick ghettoes. Geographically isolated from dwindling industrial jobs that were concentrated in town and city centres, the estates ultimately compounded toward a new social, political and economic exclusion—an exhausting downward spiral which is Britain's contemporary inheritance.

British society's gulf between the haves and have-nots was exacerbated by an overall slowdown in house building that led ultimately to a shortage of social housing. With the eventual introduction of the Thatcher government's "Right to buy" policy, which gave working class people with the means an opportunity to buy their council (government-owned) dwelling at a substantial discount from market value, Hanley argues that this contributed to the situation we now witness, where 1.1 million Britons live in sub-standard private accommodation, or reside in bed and breakfast hostels, or are on the waiting list for social housing with no hope of ever owning property in a vastly over-priced real estate market.

Raised just outside Birmingham, England's second largest city, on one of the largest council estates in Europe, known as "The Wood", Hanley offers an insider's account of life on a council estate. A genuine working class woman who managed to get an education, she was thus fortunate enough to overcome the "walls in the head" mentality experienced by so many who experienced no life outside of the estate. These were people who went to school with people from the estate, and only ever experienced the company of…you guessed it, people from the estate. The wall in the head is an appropriate parallel term to that of the East German psyche when the Berlin wall fell, "Die Mauer im kopf".

Hanley's background allows her to provide an insider's account of housing estate life with an articulacy rarely achieved by external sociologists. Indeed, she suggests that the only contact people on the estate had with middle class people was in the guise of professional social workers and medics. She describes the architecture as being designed by someone who never planned to live there, and mourns communities that, whilst impoverished, were lost forever in massive inner city slum clearance programmes—and to what end?


Lynsey Hanley

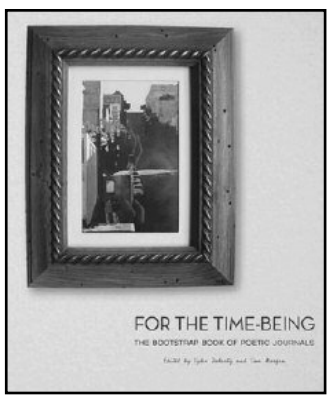
A penetrating elucidation of how Britain's dream of social housing shifted from "the crowning glory of the welfare state" to become "mass produced barracks", Hanley succeeds in creating empathy for those who have been left behind in the ever widening gulf between the socially excluded and everyone else. Readers will note that Hanley managed to become an owner-occupier on a housing estate in London's East End. Her highly readable book does not shirk from making the salient points that need to be made: perhaps we should think twice before we condemn the behaviour and so-called fecklessness of those left to rot at the bottom of society. Why should they care about society if society doesn't care about them?

Mark Cranmer lives in Bradford, West Yorkshire and has worked in social and economic urban regeneration since 1992.

For the Time Being:
The Bootstrap Book of Poetic Journals

John Carroll

Imagine going into your laundry room and pulling down an old suitcase that you haven't used for several years. You spread it open on the bed, ready to pack it for your trip to Thailand, and you notice it's full of odds and ends, scraps from your last trip - where was that? Machu Picchu? There's a ticket stub from the bus you road to Cuzco. A few Peruvian coins. A wrinkled map. A rock. A menu. A pen from that quaint hotel.



For the Time-Being: The Bootstrap Book of Poetic Journals.
Tyler Doherty & Tom Morgan, Eds.
Bootstrap Press, 252 p.

Tyler Doherty and Tom Morgan have edited a collection of Poetic Journals (and interviews about Poetic Journal writing). It offers a wide selection of journal writings by twenty-nine writers, including Joanne Kyger, Michael Rothenberg, and Andrew Schelling.

The introduction provides a definition of the poetic journal, which unlike the notebook, is intended as a "public document." It "celebrates the open-endedness and indeterminacy of the world." It is not "preparatory to something else." Its purpose is to "track change" and "memorialize experience." The poetic journal expresses "thusness, or thatness, or thisness." And it does so by "paying close attention to the word/world in the process of unfolding." Its three muses are description, musicality, and mindfulness. And its practitioners are particularly fond of lists.

Its lists might include fragments of "overheard conversations, found language," incongruously juxtaposed images—in essence, a collage put together in the present tense, without any (obvious) effort at organizing. In fact, linear arrangement and narrative are noticeably absent.

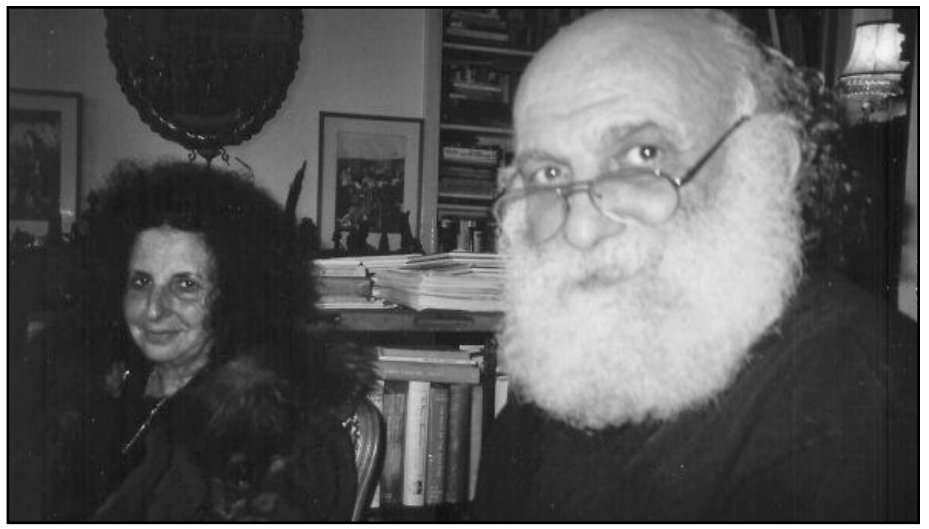

Andrew Schelling

Andrew Schelling claims "[i]t is too easy for the mind to become linear, to know where the poem wants to go, and to brilliantly and efficiently get there." He prefers to "step off the path—be a woman, be a child, be a fox, be a dictionary."

The problem is, unless you know me or unless you find me intriguing, the items in my suitcase might not interest you. They will have no connection for you with memory or with the linear narrative of my trip. Poetic journals then can seem like long lists without meaning.

There's also the problem of poetry longing to be non-representational art. Whereas a color in itself has no concrete or definitive meaning, every word carries with it denotation and connotation. It's possible to slap paint non-representationally onto a canvass, but it's impossible to do the same with words. They have to be chosen and spelled, and they always represent *something*. Words mean, or they want to mean. And if the artist is reluctant to shape the list into something more coherent, there is minimal connection between artist and audience. Michael Rothenberg writes:

> *Pack bags*
> *Send mail*
> *Eat Bagel*
> *Buy sponge*
> *Bakery brownie*
> *Call California*
> *Count lucky stars*
> *Edit a poem…*


Louise Landes Levi with Ira Cohen in 2004. Photo: Edith Ringnalda

I want to connect with the artist, but the artist seems too self-absorbed. In an age when many of us complain that the human has been removed from just about every area of living, why do we also strive to take the human out of art? Chekhov might have called it the "moral idea" behind the work of art; it's the choice an artist needs to make about his material. I can Google just about anything and get a list.

There's nothing new about writing the private for public consumption.

I must confess: if it were Dylan, I'd hang on every word.

Louis Landes Levi writes:

> *A beautiful forest grew on the same property but the towering pines & chestnuts trees are gone now. When the owner (behind whose villa the tower rises like a lingam) mercilessly cut the forest down I knew she wld. get cancer. But I cldn't tell her. She did get cancer.*

Shin Yu Pai writes: "Picked up Pound's *ABC of Reading* and a book on "raw" cooking by Juliano, Demi Moore's personal chef who prepped her for her role in Charlie's Angels."

Ironically, the closer the writing gets to the linear and the narrative, the sharper its effect. For example, William Corbett, from "Another Cel-Ray for Del Ray":

> *In the last grains of daylight*
> *a woman walks from her*
> *corn field laden with*
> *corn ready to be shucked*
> *for dinner. Oh, Corn Maiden!*
> *I waved and drove on.*

Or Mark Pawlak's entry for August 1 in "Quoddy Haibun, 2005":

> *Steep trails*
> *lead down shear cliffs*
> *past sea-eroded caves,*
> *to sandless beaches*
> *with high berms of heaped,*
> *sea-smoothed, egg-shaped rocks*
> *where when the tide goes out,*
> *the tide goes out*
> *& out & out,*
> *and you pick your barefoot way*
> *along the "ocean bottom."*

Joseph Massey has a fine series of Haiku-esque poems. And Dale Smith shows how all the theory of thusness, thatness and thisness might work in poems like "A Walk" and North Wind Song."

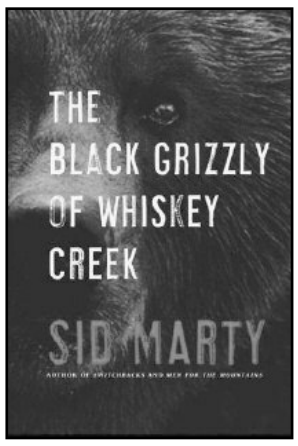
The interviews with William Corbett, Joanne Kyger, Michael Rothenberg, Andrew Schelling, and Shin Yu Pai are worthwhile. I found inspiring much of what they had to say. In theory, poetic journals sound quite grand. In practice, for me it was much like rifling through someone else's suitcase.

John Carroll writes from Abbotsford, B.C. His previous contributions to PRRB include reviews of Pacific Northwest poets and "The Word, the Way, The Look: Another Side of Charles Bukowski."

The Black Grizzly of Whisky Creek

Martin Van Woudenberg

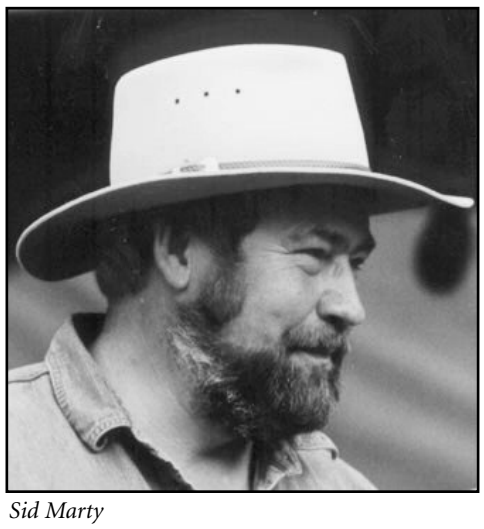
Sid Marty's latest, *The Black Grizzly of Whisky Creek,* is all about flashbacks. While moving through this page-turner, I had flashbacks to my boyhood readings of Jack London and Farley Mowat, and to my young adult reading of Robert T. Bakker's *Raptor Red.* Marty employs the 'look backwards' technique liberally when piecing together his understanding of events. Dealing with a series of brutal maulings by a massive black grizzly in Banff, Marty utilizes a wide range of forms, weaving them into a coherent and engaging whole. A man of the mountains, the author served as park warden in Banff, British Columbia prior to the incidents in 1980 on which the book focuses, and moved in to assist as a civilian volunteer during it all. Since his tenure as warden, he has been writer, poet, speaker, journalist, and conservationist – all of which shine through in the text.



The Black Grizzly of Whisky Creek
Sid Marty
McClelland & Stewart
282 pp., $34.99

Categorizing this new title proves difficult. It is largely non-fiction, dealing with real people and events. Much of it reads like a reporter's work, citing interviews, police evidence, and official statements surrounding the attacks. Marty interjects his own previous experience in Banff National Park, as well as his viewpoints and experiences on the ground in 1980. We benefit from new information released on the incident in the intervening years, as well as court documents and case settlements that were not yet in the works during the crisis itself. In the case of fatalities, Sid Marty interviews widows and children who lived through the events and have a perspective that can only grow through time and healing. Combining all these elements with the deftness of a surgeon, Marty creates a narrative as compelling as any detective story. On these merits alone, it's an exceptional book.

There is another element at play among the pages however, and it nearly shifts this publication into the realm of fiction. The hunt for the massive bear was an exercise in futility and frustration for much of its duration, largely due to the bear's obvious intelligence and cunning. To fill in these gaps in the story, Marty employs his "best guess," and tells the story from the bear's perspective and within the bear's thoughts, feelings, and motivations, much the same way Bakker does with *Raptor Red.* Under a lesser pen, this would likely fail on two separate fronts. In the first place, it would feel disconnected from the journalist's format and create a disjointed reading experience. In the second, and arguably more important, place, these sections would be either pure fiction or weak conjecture and out of place among the rest of the book's content. To do this well, an author needs to know bears and their wilderness intimately. Thankfully, Sid Marty possesses both the insight and the skill to make this work, and the sections from the bear's perspective are undoubtedly among the book's most compelling portions. One part *Jaws* (a connection the author himself makes), and one part *White Fang*, there is no denying the grip this book has upon the reader already by the first few chapters.


Sid Marty

As for the incident itself, it is both comic and tragic. Clearly, as the ensuing legal battles and investigations proved, there was a wide range of causes and failures that led to both the maulings and the destruction of several bears. The failure to properly dispose of human food and garbage acclimatised the bears to human dwellings, dumpsters, and garbage dumps. Despite efforts and warnings from wardens, restaurants saw little motivation to clean up their act, especially when Parks Canada's own garbage disposal methods were so poorly managed. Combined with the last tourist weekend before the fall, the influx of visitors, consultants, would-be hunters and the RCMP, wardens had much to deal with. For much of the book, one cannot help but feel sorry for these men who find themselves under the microscope and forced to kill an animal whose only crime was to defend its traditional territory from encroaching tourists, or seek the easy food offered so freely by restaurants and campers. Tasked with the protection of wildlife, their mission was now to kill it. Being a former warden with the park, and a respected conservationist, Sid Marty is in a unique and key position to properly tell this story in a way that both honours and critiques the wardens. He knows from experience what protocols are to be followed, what bureaucracy ties their hands, and what errors in judgment were made. We receive, in short, the best of all possible perspectives on this strange and tragic event.

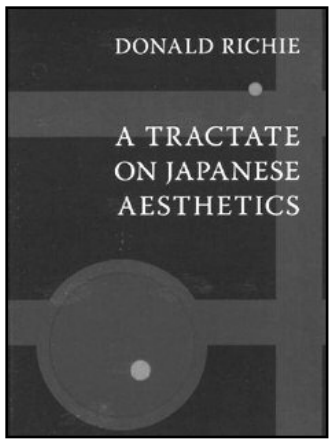
I know of no self-respecting nature lover and outdoorsman who has not read Mowat and similar writers. My father, a deep lover of the wild, often handed me books to read during my childhood, with a simple, "You need to read this one." That is how many great nature writers found their way onto my bookshelf and into my heart. Perhaps the greatest compliment I can pay both my father and Sid Marty would be to take *The Black Grizzly of Whiskey Creek* and hand it to my father with my own simple, "You need to read this one" – something I intend to do at the earliest opportunity. For others, I leave behind that recommendation as well. If you love the earth and her wildlife, you will love this book; you need to read this one.

A frequent contributor to PRRB, Martin Van Woudenberg is the author of* How To Fake Romance—When Your Love Is Real *(Createspace).

Tractate on Japanese Aesthetics

Rhonda Schuller

"*Japan,*" says my daughter, the twenty-something year old, "*is the new Europe. Everyone I know goes.*" Donald Richie's small, elegant *Tractate on Japanese Aesthetics* is an accessible, informative way to understand the beauty of this country of so much interest, whether you have been, have yet to go or choose to admire from afar.

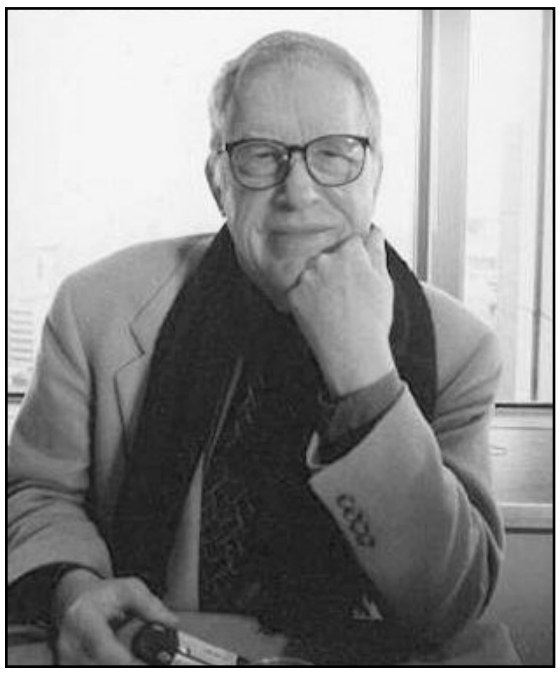


Tractate on Japanese Aesthetics.
Donald Richie. Stone Bridge Press. 80 p. $12.00

The short (80 pages) small book by Stone Bridge Press in Berkeley, California, is a treatise defining ideas of beauty and how they have evolved through centuries of Japanese art. The book includes the 'tractate,' bibliography, and glossary.

Within these few pages, Richie builds for the reader a sense of Japanese aesthetics, no mean task for a country with a long history and no concept of or term for art as an object until European ideas forced the need. "[T]here was no word corresponding to 'aesthetics.' Japan coined its presumed equivalent (*bigaku*) only in 1883, and this was because a term became necessary in order to refer to what foreigners meant when they spoke of *asthetik*, the German philosopher Hegel's term for the 'science of the fine arts'."

Richie weaves this aesthetic from the linguistics cues of the language: *wabi*, *sabi*, *aware* and *yugen*, exploring the origins and evolutions of these words, contextualizing them in poetry of the masters. In this accretive process, Richie builds our understanding of a Japanese aesthetics centred in tradition. This 'essay' is created in a Japanese manner, zuihitsu, as Richie works to capture the spirit or image of ideas by 'following the brush [of words], allowing [them] to lead. The structure is the multiplicity of strokes…, one which they imply and we infer.' With that direction we have entered the process.


Donald Richie

Japanese aesthetics, Richie explains, values the symbolic over the representational, looking for qualities 'under this outward surface.' Beauty, then, was not in imitation but in 'indication, suggestion, simplicity,' linked to refinement and connotations of elegance. Elegance, for Japanese, is not held in a theory of art but a theory of taste. "[A]lthough the elements found common to beauty are perhaps universal, it is their reception (the universal standard) that creates the excellence of the art."

Richie explains how the elegance of simplicity is found in the everyday, the placement of a single flower, a visible architectural structure, a grain of wood. Beauty is both the "expression and the result of an awareness that comes from a highly self-conscious regard of nature."

Richie's wide and deep experience in Japanese aesthetics enables him to offer us an evolution of taste. He takes us from an early sense of refinement, through the Heian period (794-1185) when the idea of taste is nuanced with "social rectitude," through the rule of the shogun Yoshimasa (1449-1473) when beauty takes on a sense of rustic, meshing with a Buddhist notion of "this man-made world" as delusion, and later acquires a sense of loneliness at the apprehension of something necessarily ephemeral. Richie offers illustrations of his claims throughout this work, Here is a poem attributed to Saigyo (1118-1190) translated by Donald Keene, in support of the idea of loneliness as part of an aesthetic of beauty:

A mountain village
Where there is not even hope
Of a visitor.
If not for the loneliness,
How painful life here would be.

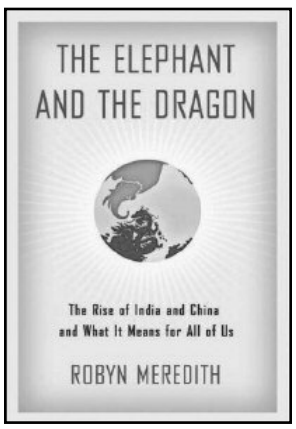
Throughout this work, we easily, simply, follow Richie as he gives us the words which represent the ideas in a synthesis of beauty. This elegant little book enables us to understand Japanese aesthetics, possibly in spite of ourselves and our need for Western need for analytic dichotomies. Twenty-something or far beyond, Richie's work allows us understand a bit of what we experienced when we went, what we will experience when we do go, or what we understand of Japanese aesthetics as we contemplate the culture from afar.

Rhonda Schuller teaches composition and rhetoric at the University of the Fraser Valley in BC.

The Elephant and the Dragon

Fred Young

As a Hong Kong-based foreign correspondent for *Forbes* magazine, Robyn Meredith has a front row seat in the global arena witnessing the economic transformations of giants. Her assignments take her to various regions of China and India where the economic landscapes of these nations have been altered in only a couple of decades: old Shanghai, where its own citizens were once forbidden to enter, has now been transformed with a modern cityscape decorated by thousands of skyscrapers. The once "Garden City of India", Bangalore, is now the "Silicon Valley of India," the source of India's IT exports, and the hub of back-office operations for many transnational companies creating hundreds of thousand of white collar, service-industry jobs.



The Elephant and the Dragon,
Robyn Meredith,
W.W. Norton, 252 pp.
2007, $25.95 U.S.

Meredith distills the wisdom of many interviews with regional influential leaders from both nations and intersperses this with new statistics and research findings from China and South Asian experts. The result is a comparative analysis of these two countries as each metamorphoses from its own culture, diverse political structures and regional competitive advantages, into becoming a global giant of its own. Meredith explains the unique cultural and psychological factors which allow these countries to excel at certain trades, and warns readers and policy decision-makers of the coming struggles they represent to North America markets. The threats, she asserts, are real as one witnesses the increasing loss of manufacturing jobs to China's low-cost labour factories, as well as service-industry jobs to India. This tectonic economic shift will inevitably threaten North American standards of living and ultimately cause the coming erosion of its citizens' wages.

Meredith begins by tracing a map from the historical Silk Road to the modern Internet's fibre-optic highway. She outlines and contrasts the rising economies of China and India, observing how their isolationism impoverished both nations and deprived their economic engines of needed investment and technology for renewal. She then reviews how each nation has begun following its unique historical heritage to assert its position on the international stage while confronting many significant and often contradictory challenges, be it economic, political, social or environmental. "Yet, the rise of India and China is about much more than jobs moving overseas", asserts Meredith. "It is about a major shift in post-Cold War geopolitics, about quenching a growing thirst for oil, and about massive environmental change. This is tectonic economics: the rise of India and China has caused the entire earth's economic and political landscape to shift before our eyes."

> *"This is tectonic economics: the rise of India and China has caused the entire earth's economic and political landscape to shift before our eyes."*

The author traces the plight of China's economic hardships back to the Chairman Mao's Great Leap Forward program and his Cultural Revolution, where the nation was taken to the brink of starvation and its own cultural genocide. However, since Deng Xiaoping's ascendance to power in 1978, China's economic fortunes have turned for the better through a series of gradual economic policy reforms. Accordingly, in just three decades China has seen its daily export totals equal a full year's value in 1978. China evolution in becoming the world's manufacturing giant, the author notes, has benefited mostly from its focus on expansion in infrastructures, from its vast low-cost human resources, and from its totalitarian polity where decision-making tends to be efficient and expedient.

By contrast, she explains how the impact of British colonization instilled a resistance to capitalism in India. Its vast bureaucracy, red tape, and huge numbers of poor citizen voters were seen as a hindrance to economic progress. "It is easy to see why India has not yet attracted many new factories," Meredith illuminates. "[Its] developing-world infrastructure prevents companies from exporting their goods cheaply and quickly." Significantly, the author also demonstrates how "creating vast numbers of jobs for India's poor is critical, literally a matter of life and death". India's fortune came right after the Y2K crisis when the U.S. and Europe discovered the pool of talented human resources available in India at a fraction of the usual cost. Indian computer programmers and back-office operators suddenly became hot commodities for the world's high tech companies. Since then, more than a million white-collar, service-related jobs have been created in India with multiple impacts that have stimulated other sectors of the economy.


Robyn Meredith

Yet struggles remain for both nations to continue their economic successes. China's negative environmental legacy is tremendous, and it faces grimmer challenges of air and water pollution, and of shrinking farm land due to urban sprawl. Even so, China's economic train cannot be stopped as it would risk major instability for those citizens located between the coastal cities and inland regions, the newly rich and the rural poor.

Similarly, if India is to transform itself over the next generation, Meredith argues, the economic benefits currently enjoyed by its educated elites must be broadly extended to millions of illiterate young people, women, and city slum dwellers. Projected to be the world's most populous nation in surpassing China by 2030, India must ensure its economic transformation does not sputter and die off.

Unfortunately, the path from poverty to economic prosperity has never been smooth. Current high energy prices and ever-threatening interest rate increases on the horizon—which are needed to combat inflation—could stunt the economic growth of both countries. The wise will continue to pray for smoother economic train rides for both China and India while the world continues to work through their impact on globalization, balancing the challenges they represent between ecology and economics, politics and due process, as well as nationalism and the global village.

In her concluding chapter, "A Catalyst for Competitiveness", the author addresses the head-on challenges for the US, and makes a number of recommendations. "What the United States must do is clear," she argues, "[is] strengthen its educational and economic foundations and foster the innovation that will keep [it] ahead in the technology that underpins so many parts of the nation's culture and the global economy." Recognizing the clarion call for China to strengthen its currency to combat manufacturing job losses in North America, Meredith demonstrates in no non-sense fashion how ineffective it would be for China to re-evaluate its currency higher, say by 25 percent, or to face an across-the-board import duty of that magnitude on Chinese imports. If this pressure were to be successful, it would have little impact on the US job market as the jobs would simply be shifted to even lower wages regions like Vietnam, South Asia and even Africa. Reiterating how Americans are directly benefiting from the cheaper Chinese currency despite the terrifying dark side of globalization, North America must embrace a new focus, she contends, one that reflects back upon itself in emphasizing the need to reduce personal and federal debt, and to excel through innovation.

Fred Young is a professional accountant with decades of experience in paper recycling and the packaging industry. He currently serves as a senior business analyst with the West Coast's largest directory paper/ newsprint company. Previously he was an executive officer and corporate controller for Crown Packaging in B.C., Canada.

JAPANESE POETRY (*continued from page 19*)

hitting you
hitting the kids
my palm feels on fire
frantically loosening my hair
I go to bed

- Yuko Kawano

Tanka by splendid male poets are represented here, too, from the eerily surreal to the mundane. Here are two:

Looking at
The Noh mask of a young woman
I feel white arrows
Silently flowing
Under the faraway ocean

- Kimihiko Takano

drunk, I was talking
of that summer
and another summer
slurring together everything
from my twenty-nine summers

- Yukitsuna Sasaki

Not all of the tanka in *Ferris Wheel* work well in English, but the great majority do. Each poem is presented in translation, in the Japanese original, and in romanized transliteration. This is a great favour to students and lovers of Japanese poetry, as well as to those like me, who just can't resist trying their own version here and there—that's part of the pleasure! Uzawa includes a helpful author index and bibliography for further exploration.

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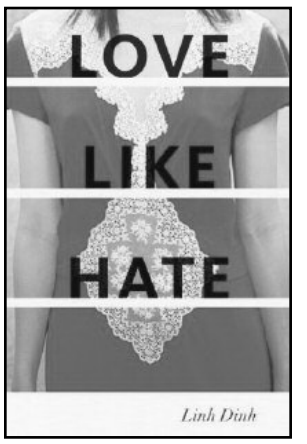
One only wishes that small press editions like these two could be more widely distributed and read, because it is so important for North Americans to expand their cultural and linguistic horizons, if only through translation. Oketani, points to the Beat poets, who were drawn to Japanese poetry, "not because they wanted to satisfy their curiosity with 'new and unusual' things, but because, when faced with the rise of the Civil Rights Movement and the advent of the Cold War, they were forced to acknowledge the deception in their social and cultural background that had supported a highly developed consumer society monopolized by white people." Similarly, Ayukawa was drawn to Eliot, Pound, Dostoevsky, and Kafka out of alienation from the Japanese traditions that had failed to prevent the horrors of World War II. Oketani describes this interest as reflecting "the historical and universal necessity of reaching for foreign books that reflect [readers'] own worlds, mirroring or otherwise illuminating their own cultural crises, and emphasizing the themes that unite us." The art of translation is what makes such cultural cross-pollination possible.

Kate McCandless is a clinical counsellor, Zen priest and erstwhile translator for Kodansha International. Her poetry has appeared is several journals. She hopes not to wait for genteel retirement to take up translating Japanese poetry again.

LINH DINH (*continued from page 13*)

which authors influence you NOW?

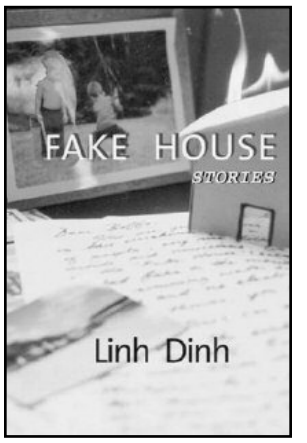
LD: When I first started writing, I was very influenced by Kafka, Borges, Céline, Carver, Thomas Bernhard and Nguyen Huy Thiep. Now: Borges, Houellebecq and many of the essayists on the web, writers who comment on the political, social and economic predicaments of America, people like James Howard Kunstler, Joe Bageant and John Zerzan. I also translate constantly, mostly from the Vietnamese, but also from Italian and Spanish, so I'm probably influenced by the writers I translate. Actually, I'm not influenced by anybody. I'm completely original! For poetry, I've been influenced by Rimbaud, Vallejo, Michaux, Stevens, Ashberry and maybe Michael Palmer. I'm also a devourer of trash writing, a scuba diver in the ocean of bad English.



Love Like Hate, Linh Dinh's most recent title (due in 2009) from Seven Stories Press

MV: *So what is your writing process? Do you proceed "line by line"? With the narrative carried by voice rather than by plot?*

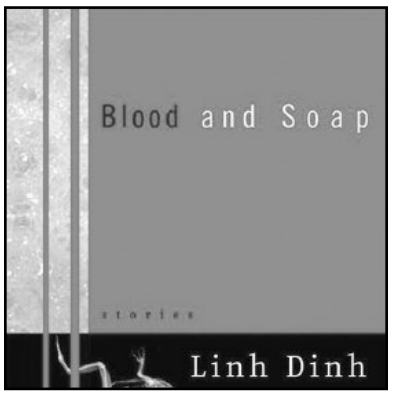
LD: My writing is "line by line" in the sense that I will improvise from one line to the next, with one sequence of images or ideas suggesting subsequent ones, but I usually start out with a concept, an image seen or imagined, a phrase read or heard, or an ecounter from real life. The genesis of the story "Prisoner with a Dictionary" (in *Blood and Soap*) was my experience studying an Italian-Italian dictionary. Kafka's and Borges' stories are always conceptual. Celine's prose relies on raw emotions and a vast repertoire of stylistic tricks, anchored with hard-earned, often nearly-lethal experiences. I've learnt from all three.



Fake House,
Seven Stories Press, 1994

MV: *How do you come up with such great titles for your books?*

LD: "Fake House" was the nickname of a communal house for artists in Philadelphia, so I just stole that one. "Blood and Soap," "All Around What Empties Out," "Borderless Bodies" and "Jam Alerts" are all titles of pieces in the books themselves. I don't sweat my titles too much.



Blood and Soap,
Seven Stories Press, 2000

MV: *You seem fearless to me. Were you always this way?*

LD: I don't have anything to lose as a writer or as a person, so what's to be afraid of? My only fear is wasting the reader's time. If you want to talk about real courage, then consider the case of poet Nguyen Quoc Chanh, who was with us in Berlin. Chanh lives under a totalitarian government in Vietnam, and yet he writes without the least regard for his personal well-being or safety. His integrity as a writer is unimpeachable. Several times, I'd read a new poem by Chanh and think, "Oh, shit, now they'll get him," but his reputation is growing internationally, so maybe the Vietnamese government won't risk a scandal by messing with Chanh. Knock on wood.

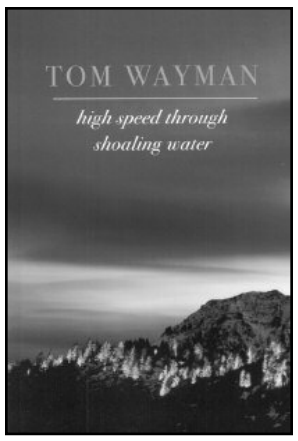
MV: *What is most important for you and your writing? Do playing with form and structure sometimes preclude writing with heart?*

LD: Never!

Marianne Villanueva is the author of* Ginseng and Other Tales from Manila *and the collection* Mayor of the Roses. *She still considers herself a Filipina writer.

High Speed Through Shoaling Water

Garth Martens



High Speed Through Shoaling Water
Tom Wayman
Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing Canada, 2007, 158pp. $17.95

Tom Wayman has published seventeen collections since 1971, when *Waiting for Wayman* established him as a notable voice in Canadian poetry. His work is distinctive in its casual tone, and especially the early poems, its music and colour. What sets him apart from the likes of Stephen Dunn or Billy Collins, both experts of the casual voice, is his preoccupation with realism and the subject of work. Wayman believes workplace poetry has a purpose: to separate readers from fantasies established by such bourgeois writers as Yeats or Leonard Cohen.

Wayman's latest book, *High Speed Through Shoaling Waters*, offers eighty pieces in seven sections. These are unfortunately uneven in quality, several as startling as those in the poet's first collection, and the rest largely mediocre: what hinders them is a laxness of diction and a failure of tone.

In the first two sections, the poet grapples with aging and the approach of death. Poems like *Wind Carol: Aspen* and *Shift* reveal Wayman's talent as remembered, marriage of erect image and ease of tone. Elsewhere the poems dwell redundantly on their themes: there are really only three poems here, re-written again and again.

In *Portrait of Myself as a Cloud or Natural Feature on the Valley Floor*, Wayman writes:

> The discarded liquid
> that soaks into my septic field
> or lifts into the Valley sky
> causes my existence here
> to resemble each permanently temporary
> pond or water meadow.

This image is powerful in its capacity to shift our perception, but the register of the poem is too elevated, the other images slack, and the formality distancing rather than luring us. I wanted so much to love this poem — could hear what might have been — but Wayman's ears must be stopped with cotton batting: the poem has neither bone nor blood.

Take these lines from *Recurrence*:

> The blade's sharp tip
> strikes again under the belly
> unrolling a shockwave of
> anguish as it pauses…

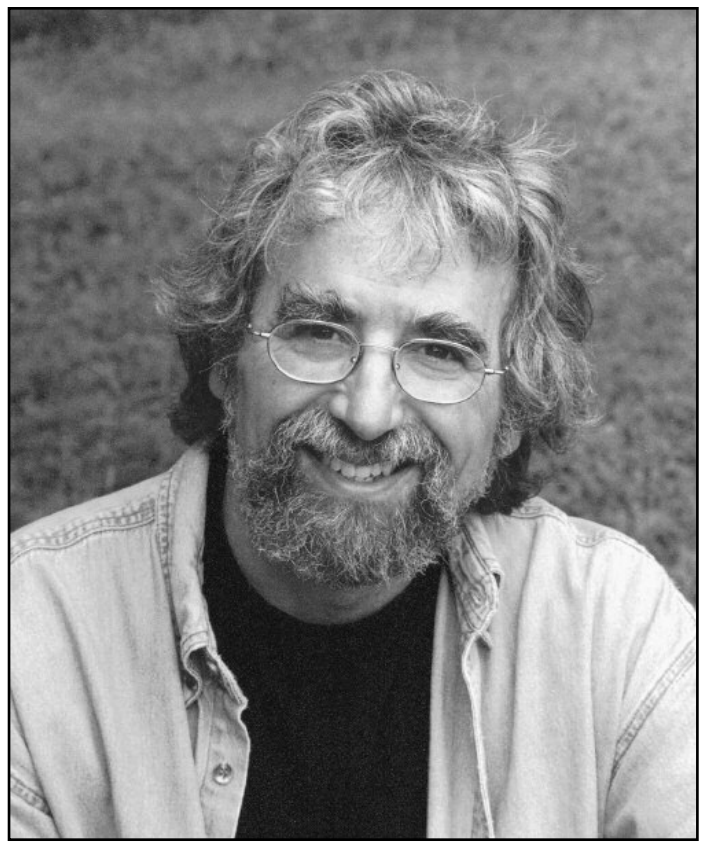
With the word 'blade' come assumptions, that it is 'sharp' and has a 'tip'. Why tell us the grass is green? The last two lines and the abstraction — anguish — offer nothing slick we can feel through our flesh.

In sections three and four, Wayman makes a welcome shift in subject. These poems enter the workplace — confront realities of living under someone else's thumb — and make love at the side of the road. In *Death of the Grandmothers* and *Postmodern 911*, the diction and voice work. Narrative sustains us.

Eye Ballad strikes like hallelujah among a banal stream of poems: the moment of meeting a stranger and submitting to the portal of her eyes, which are "pale / as the underside of birch leaves / or a glacier-fed river / floating below a high cirque." What makes *Eye Ballad* refreshing is Wayman's reliance on sensory detail — abstractions are a minority and the language more concise.

Wayman displays his blue-collar banner through many of the poems, but not more so than in *Anthem*, a piece that collapses under the weight of its message:

> …if the enterprise falters,
> it's perfectly reasonable that the president and vice-presidents
> whose decisions resulted in the financial collapse



Tom Wayman

> should depart with a few million to ease their transition
> to another position of responsibility
> while we get a month's severance
> if the union can swing it…

Whether or not one agrees with the motion of argument, the poem offers nothing unexpected: it bristles with tired sarcasm, more eloquent and better arranged than some internet forum rants.

There are moments in otherwise flat poems where Wayman strikes brighter notes. In *Backpack*, for example, he writes:

> Perhaps they nevertheless dream of
> floating free of the inventory within, including devices
> that hold a thousand songs
> the owners never sing…

Of the last three sections, only the final is noteworthy. Wayman returns and he allows us the loose magic he fears. *Reading a Book of Forty-Eight Poems, Not One of Which I Understand* is a multi-layered engagement with another writer's poems. He isn't sure, and neither are we, what to make of them:

> The poet's joy in these poems
> may lie in the delight of capturing
> the simultaneity of the brain's attention: the scent of marigold,
> the house low on sugar, a moment in a novel
> dipped into last night…

Only when Wayman's language loses its muscle do his poems suffer, which in this collection, is most of the time. The more formal the tone, the greater the music necessary to make it palpable. In his work of the last decade the muscle has atrophied a little. Yet there are poems here that flex and perhaps his next book will surprise us again.

Garth Martens attended the University of Victoria. He is spending the summer in Edmonton. This is his first review for the PRRB.

A Wild Haruki Chase:
Reading Murakami Around the World

Hillel Wright

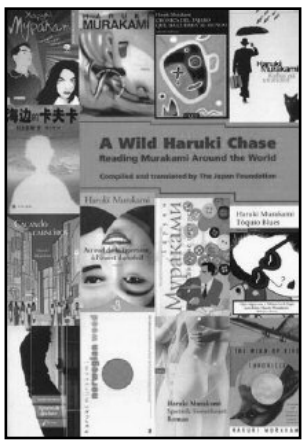
Okay, so having produced just two Nobel laureates in Literature in the 20th Century (Yasunari Kawabata in 1968 and Kenzaburo Oe in 1994), the Japanese government, cultural and literary establishments are now engaging in a rather shameless promotional campaign to see novelist Haruki Murakami win a Nobel Prize.

Murakami, arguably the most popular Japanese writer outside Japan is, ironically, not extremely popular in his own country. Except for his 1987 novel *Norwegian Wood*, which sold over a million copies and made him famous in Japan, Murakami's works have done better in translations than in his native Japanese. His books have been translated into over 30 languages and have been published in nearly 40 countries around the world, from Brazil to Bulgaria and from Israel to Taiwan.

Haruki Murakami. Image copyright Elena Seibert

Murakami's works are especially popular in Scandinavia and the Baltics, with Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania all offering translations. Another irony is that the original Japanese title of his novel *Norwegian Wood,* "*Noruwei no Mori*", the translation of the Beatles' hit "Norwegian Wood", is actually a misinterpretation of the original. *"Mori"* in Japanese means "forest" while the "wood" in the Beatles' song actually refers to the material used to make cheap furniture. Perhaps the title should have been *"Noruwei no Ki"*.

This book, *A Wild Haruki Chase*, grew out of The Japan Foundation's "International Symposium and Workshop: A Wild Haruki Chase" held in Tokyo, Kobe and Sapporo in 2006, and includes essays by nine of the participants, along with an Introduction by Harvard professor and Murakami translator Jay Rubin, and an essay on translation by Haruki Murakami himself. A rather slim book, weighing in at only 150 pages, its content is diluted (although some may say enhanced) by eight pages of color plates of Murakami book covers from various countries and 26 pages of additional text – an outline of the Symposium schedule, a list of titles of translations of Murakami's books by country, and biographical notes on the contributors. The nine critical essays add up to a mere 88 pages. If Murakami is indeed important enough to be granted the most prestigious literary award on the planet, it seems to this reviewer that the publisher, or The Japan Foundation, could have produced more written evidence to make the point.



A Wild Haruki Chase: Reading Murakami Around the World,
Compiled & trans. by the Japan Foundation, Stone Bridge Press.
150pp

The lead-off essay, "Interpreting the Haruki Boom", by Meiji Gakuin University professor of Comparative Literature Inuhiko Yomota presents the main theme, that Murakami is popular abroad because he is not typically Japanese. Traditional or even modern Japanese culture, stereotypical Japanese characters and even Japanese locations are not important features in most of Murakami's novels. According to Yomota, Murakami is successful because he is more cosmopolitan than Japanese.

Roland Kelts, a truly cosmopolitan writer, with an American father and a Japanese mother, who lives part of the year in Tokyo and part in New York, gives us "What We Talk About When We Talk About Murakami" (a grab from a Raymond Carver collection), and ends his insightful essay with a fantastic anecdote given to him by Mr. Murakami.

Korean translator Kim Choon Mie credits Murakami with opening the doors for Japanese literature in post-war Korea, especially with the "386" generation – born in the '60s, students in the '80's and in their 30s in the '90s when Murakami's books became popular, and Russian translator Ivan Sergeevitch Logatchov compares and contrasts Haruki with the other Murakami, Ryu, author of *Almost Transparent Blue, Coin Locker Babies* and *69,* in the eyes of Russian readers.

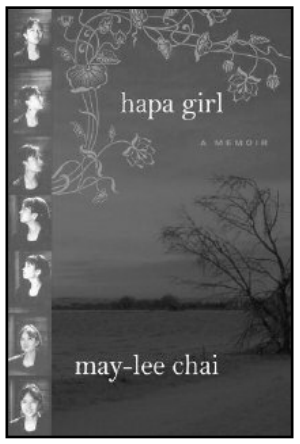
While most of the essays in this collection make some interesting points, there is no "Eureka!" piece and I was left with the overall impression of something lacking. If The Japan Foundation really wishes to promote Haruki Murakami's worthiness for the Nobel Prize in Literature, it seems to me that his works – eleven books in print – could have generated more than nine rather superficial essays, five of them (six, if you count Kelts) by fellow Japanese.

To be completely fair, Haruki Murakami is a literary heavyweight; as a Nobel contender though, this book keeps him in the featherweight ranks.

Hillel Wright is author of the novel* Border Town, *the story of a fictional manga artist and her works.

Hapa Girl

Frances Cabahug



Hapa Girl,
May-Lee Chai.
Temple U.P. 232 pp.,
$25

The term *hapa haole* is Hawaiian for "half-white foreigner," and May-lee Chai's memoir *Hapa Girl* begins by informing the reader that the term *hapa* is currently being reclaimed by mixed-race people for positive self-identification. But as May-lee Chai's adolescent recollections attest, the arrival at this positive self-identification is preceded by a journey battling the prejudice, contempt, and fear hurled against interracial families. Told in a voice that is sometimes sympathetic, wounded, and at times bitterly sarcastic, the memoir records May-lee's struggles with peer alienation, family conflicts, and journeys away from home before she could finally come to terms with the cruelty that her family faced in 1960's Midwestern America.

May-lee Chai describes her childhood as the time when she is the most "happiest" but also the most "clueless," and the memoir starts out in a similar state of ignorant bliss. There is barely any hint of the difficulties to come when we first read of the fortuitous meeting between Winberg Chai, the Chinese-America chair of the Asian Studies Department, and Carolyn Everett, an Irish-American artist. The couple's whirlwind courtship and eventual marriage in New York paint a picture of happiness. If more narrow-minded people would later reduce their partnership as "the Chinaman and the Blonde," Winberg and Carolyn were at first oblivious to the prejudice because they believed themselves to be so perfectly matched. At the time of Winberg and Carolyn's marriage, the Civil Rights Act lifted the anti-miscegenation laws, and the couple's two children, May-lee and Jeff, were among the first generation of children who were born legally biracial.

But as the Chai family soon discovers, while there were laws in place, popular racist thinking remained unchanged in more rural areas. "We soon discovered every law contained two parts, the part that was written down and the part that could be enforced." The Chai family is forced to realize the difference between written law and lived reality when they decide to move from New York to a South Dakota farm. The small town population makes its prejudice clearly known right from the start, from the intruding and pointed stares directed at the Chais whenever the family went out in public. The unwelcoming attitude quickly escalates from alienation to violence, with shootings directed at the Chai homestead and the continuous killings of the family dogs.

May-Lee Chai

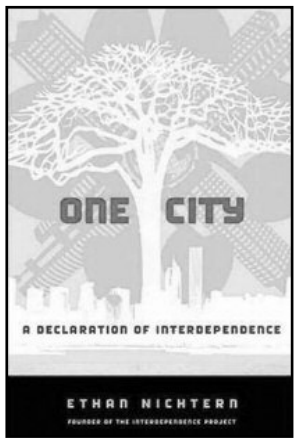
With the constant hostility and ostracism, Chai's memoir hits some really bleak moments as the monetary situation of the family deteriorates. Even worse, the family members start to argue incessantly with one another, particularly between frustrated Winberg and the adolescent May-lee. The memoir explicitly captures the confusion of becoming a teenager searching for a place in the world, complicated by the sense of entrapment within an unsympathetic community. Chai even includes the gritty detail of a Tylenol bottle kept as a reassurance of a way out just in case May-lee finds her young life completely intolerable. But the memoir strays from being completely disheartening, as the Chais find ways to cope. May-lee and Jeff learn to toughen up and start lifting weights so they won't get beaten up in school. Carolyn creates allies within an Irish group, and Winberg battles his homesickness by eating at every Chinese restaurant he can find. With patience, ingenuity, and a lot of humour, the family learns to live through the cruelties hurled their way.

Chai's memoir is not merely a gloomy recollection of a more racist American past, but also offers an analysis of the forces behind the racial animosity. When Chai finally escapes high school and goes to China during the 1988 student revolutions, Chai realizes that her small town's "fears of change, of economic uncertainty, of racial anxiety, of the unknowable future compared to the known past were the same as China's." By extending her criticism towards the State of South Dakota's treatment of Lakota natives, Chai situates her family's suffering within a time and place that resisted societal change. With this memoir, Chai calls for the acknowledgment of the universality of the problems of racism. By acknowledging the undeserved grievances she went through, May-lee Chai has indeed reclaimed her identity as a "hapa girl" and turned her experiences into a story of endurance and family bonds.

Frances Cabahug lives and writes from Vancouver, where she is attending classes in the University of British Columbia.

One City: A Declaration of Interdependence

Patrick Carolan

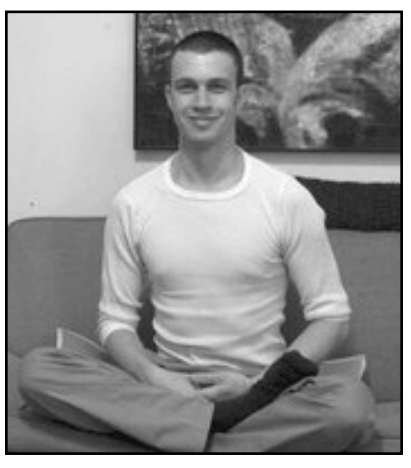


One City: A Declaration of Interdependence
Ethan Nichtern
Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2007, 175 pp., $19.95, Paperback

Cluing readers into the existence of what he calls "the Real Internet"—the myriad of relational, spiritual and economic links by which every being is interconnected— Ethan Nichtern, author of *One City,* prompts readers to think deeper. From the application of Buddhist philosophy to this theory of interdependence, Nichtern provides readers with a handbook for improving their own lives and the world they live in.

From Chinese-made toothbrushes and Indian sown-sweatshirts to American-designed (and subsequently Chinese-made) alarm clocks that are an inescapable aspect of our daily routines, Nichtern reveals the thousands of ways we depend on others across the globe. By virtue of this interdependence, he argues, the fate of the world is *everyone's* responsibility: we must all work toward solving the issues of global warming, genocide and poverty, for—as he reminds us—turning a blind eye to them is as bold of a statement as speaking out is.

His solution? Buddhism. Through the outwardly seeming 'self-centered' practice of meditation, Nichtern believes that Buddhism offers a way to "bring the practitioner to a place where she or he is more and more able to live with the world." He argues that the mind is our "wireless connection" to "the Real Internet"; therefore it is only natural to "train ourselves in the skilful operation of this basic interface." Increased mindfulness, awareness and insight developed by meditation, Nictern suggests, will help us to proactively interface with our external world.

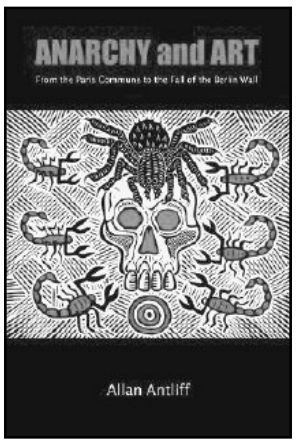

Ethan Nichtern

The message contained in *One City* is one of hope. Nichtern asks readers to open their eyes to the problems around them, and while he may not have all the solutions, he offers one or two. While it can occasionally feel as if he's trying a bit too hard to be hip with his references to pop culture, his breezy style and reader-friendly approach to sharing knowledge will especially resonate with young people looking for a new way to better the planet. This proactive socialization of an up-and-coming generation trying to remain hopeful in a chaotic universe is the key strength of his book and why it makes a great read for anyone looking for practical suggestions on how to leave the world in a better state than when we found it.

Patrick Carolan is 21 years old and writes from Vancouver, Canada where he studies psychology, history and Korean language at the University of British Columbia.

Let's Ramble Towards Utopia

Jordan Zinovich



Anarchy and Art: From the Paris Commune to the Fall of the Berlin Wall.
Allan Antliff.
Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2007; $26.95

I'll be clear from the beginning: Allan Antliff's *Anarchy and Art* is not a history of anarchist art through the period covered by the title. Nor is it a social history of the various anarchist movements' conceptions of art during that period. Nor a definition of "Art" as anarchists employed it. Nor a description of the activism that anarchist artists generated. Nor an extended exploration of what "art" meant to anarchists. What it is, instead, is an idiosyncratic survey, via a loosely-linked series of seven essays and one interview, of a few anarchists and aspects of their (primarily) visual art production.

Given Antliff's professional concentration on art-historical approaches to visual art, the book's focus isn't surprising. For Antliff, at least in this collection, "Art" tends to refer to what has traditionally been called "high" visual art: painting, sculpture, etc. No sustained and satisfying attention is paid to music, literature (notwithstanding Chapter 6), dance, theater (as opposed to set design and the theory of acting), performance art, or the notion of a purely aesthetic-driven life that may produce no formally recognizable art objects but inspires artistic potentiality in others.

Specific criticisms seem to me to be pointless, though I did think that overlooking the role of absinthe in the period covered by Chapter 2 was unfortunate. And ignoring the active presence of Baroness Elsa in New York City in 1913, two years before Picabia is said to have "introduced dada to New York" is a factual error. But Chapter 4, "True Creators," was fascinating.

I liked the references to Fernand Crommelynck's 1920 play "The Magnificent Cuckold" ("Magnanimous Cuckold" in Antliff's translation), but regretted the exclusive concentration on Meyerhold's famous biomechanical production of 1922. After seeing the East River Commedia's revival in the fall of 2007, and knowing how diligently anarchism has battled the notion of woman-as-property, I felt that the text's farcical strategy merited commentary. It was, after all, written only two years after WWI and the flu pandemic of 1918 — a post-apocalyptic time exploding with artistic responses (Dada, Surrealism, Absurdism, Futurism) and threatened by totalitarianism and economic crisis.


Allan Antliff

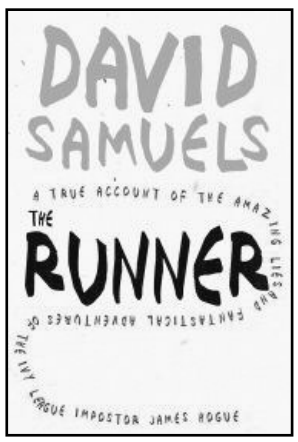
Anarchy and Art seems very rational, very removed from the passions that drive the anarchism I find appealing. Though this says more about me than it does about *Anarchy and Art*, I found many of my personal favorites underrepresented or overlooked: Alfred Jarry and the Baroness Elsa in particular. The exuberance and range of Antliff's earlier editorial project *Only a Beginning: An Anarchist Anthology* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004, 29.95) is missing. Only the extended interview with Susan Simensky Bietila provides a whiff of gunpowder engagement. While it may be a worthy project to compile a catalogue of historical moments and people worth investigating from an anarchist perspective, and to suggest avenues for exploring their "art production," that doesn't satisfy my particular emotional and aesthetic curiosity.

Antliff is a serious scholar, who I find much more entertaining (and insightful) in conversation than I did in *Anarchy and Art*. His tendency to valorize critical theory in these essays may be interfering with what he really intends to say. There is some validity, I think, in viewing anarchism as more a generalist than a specialist milieu. If, in his next project, he could somehow modulate the excessively pedagogical tone of his essays in the direction of the engaged interest his interview with Susan Simensky Bietila displayed, it would be a service to sympathetic generalists.

Jordan Zinovich is a senior editor with the Autonomedia Collective, one of North America's most notable underground publishing houses.

Flim Flam, Flum

Richard Wirick



The Runner:
A True Account of the Amazing Lies and Fantastical Adventures of the Ivy League Impostor James Hogue
David Samuels
The New Press
173 pages, $22.95

Something there is in us that bends over to the zipper-dropping con man. We like the prospect of a bargain. Unlike most Europeans, Americans tend to tolerate the stranger with a story, even if his narrative is stitched so obviously with entreaty. We trust because we expect others to trust us: as the ethicist Bernard Williams points out, it is fundamental to our image of ourselves that we see others as having the veracity we assume we possess. It is easier to trust, less stressful than suspicion and more conducive to psychic peace. It becomes a habit. Like the dying family pet, we instinctually raise our paw to everyone, even the vet whose glove hides the waiting needle full of pentathol.

The con memoir reached its post-war high tide with Geoffrey Wolff's *Duke of Deception* (1979), the story of Geoffrey and Tobias Wolff's legendary sire-snookerer, a man who faked prep school, military and college records to land himself on the boards of General Electric and ITT. John LeCarre's father was also a celebrated broker of non-existent real estate and thoroughbreds, continuing it on into his childrens' adulthoods by begging them, prostrate, for bail money with hands around their knees and cries of "Not prison again, not at my age." It worked.

Now comes David Samuels' *The Runner*, the story of a brilliant petty thief, James Hogue, who re-tooled himself as the self-educated ranch hand Alexi Indris-Santana. Hogue's cons would classify him as crazy under many sections of the DSM-IV, but to look on his actions that simply would be to miss the fact he latched on to the American Dream and the way it allows, encourages, even decorates the wide latitudes sometimes necessary for self-invention.

The book approaches Hogue through anecdotes of his property theft victims, rich doctor-lawyer ski denizens of Telluride, Colorado who let him manage their real estate deals and chalet refurbishments, only to find themselves short of hundreds of gallons of propane and board-feet of rare Honduran mahogany paneling. Samuels' initial explorations fail here: the swindled grousers, still stunned and remaining at still stratospheric levels of wealth, are full of defensive, shameful cliché and can't give any original insights into Hogue's motivational pathology. Samuels spends the first third of the book poking and poking for a good vein, but simply cannot tap one up.

The Runner gets its momentum when Hogue's schemes become grander and paradoxically victimless, i.e. when he applies as an affirmative action admittee to the Princeton class of 1992. Actually born in 1969 to a self-employed potter and a Mexican sculptress of some success, Hogue's "personal statement" transfigured him into a Plato-reading, physics-obsessed, marathon-running drifter that played into Ivy admissions committees' endless capacity for class guilt and grasping, ill-advised mold-breaking. Here is where the book gets brilliant:

> What 'Santana'offered Princeton was a storybook universe that embodied all the requisite multicultural virtues at the same time as it hearkened back to the mythic virtues of the unspoiled West. What the physicist Feynman (oft-quoted in Hogue's autobiographical essay and who was famous for squiggles and lines simplifying subatomic encounters) did in writing about science, Hogue would do by inventing the character of Alexis Indris-Santana, who could appeal to the prejudices of Ivy admissions officers [with] a fairy tale they might understand: even the most advanced science was a way of approximating and communicating a reality that was actually quite different from what was being described. The most advanced minds, with the most advanced degrees… believed that intellectual life was a sophisticated species of fraud. In conclusion, the applicant wrote, "The best that I can hope for from all of this is to emulate Feynman's attitude that science turns out to be essentially a long history of learning how not to fool ourselves." It was useful advice, which the Princeton admissions office had no intention of taking.

David Samuels

This is a little over-stated, especially its sweeping reduction of intellectualism-as-fraud. But it captures beautifully America's barriers to entry to education and wealth, the last thirty-five years of attempts to level that playing field with new "diversity" boundaries and rules of play, and how the ball takes its funniest bounces when a dishonest, brilliant aspirant comes off the bench to work it all.

Oddly, Hogue is outed when one of his professors, remembering the boy's touting of his Western ruggedness, notices that Hogue is petrified of a minor lightning storrn on a hike with fellow students and Boulder outreach staffers in Colorado's San Juan Mountains. After an interview (why exactly 150 questions?) with Princeton's academic ethics staff and further background checks, Hogue is revealed to be an ex-convict from Utah who had jumped his parole and engaged in similar deceptions. The University decides that, despite his straight-A standing and otherwise unblemished disciplinary record, since Hogue applied to the school with false information, his attendance, his very existence at Princeton, had to be completely expunged from its records. He had entered as a fiction, and would leave as a sort of meta-fiction. The next day, New Jersey state detectives asked his surprised geology professor to have him step out of class, handcuffed him, and booked him for extradition to Utah.

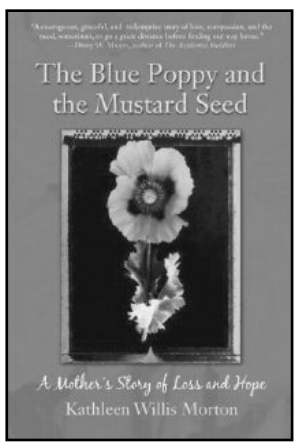
Then things got really interesting. Opinion among students and faculty at Princeton was evenly divided between those who thought Hogue guilty of little more than a desire to get a good education, and others who saw him merely as a criminal who should be off the premises. The first school of thought invoked his 1540 SATs, his constant presence on the dean's list, his election to the elite Ivy Club. The latter group saw a homeless drifter's ability to exceed at one of the country's top colleges as beside the point: he could have bettered himself with less fanfare, entirely legitimately, at a lesser caliber university. Hogue's attorney, Robert Obler, hoped to put Princeton on trial before a jury and show the boy as a young long distance runner who had tried simply to better himself in the best way he could imagine. Instead, Hogue appeared before a Mercer County judge and pled guilty to undisclosed counts of theft by deception.

More layers of the onion unpeeled. Justin Harmin, the sprightly Princeton PR spokesman charged with saving the face of academe, continued pointing out that 'Santana' was a model applicant in every respect except "for the fact he was a fictional character." (I am not making this up.) Upon his expulsion, and from recommendations by that geology professor, he became a sub-curator at Harvard's museum of precious minerals and gems. Soon more than $40,000 worth of precious stones would be found in Hogue's room, with Princeton getting a good laugh at Harvard's expense. And it turned out Hogue grew up not in Utah or Colorado, but in Kansas. Its official state motto, *Ad astra per aspera* (through adversity, toward the stars), was often invoked by the Latin-fluent felon. To struggle is fine, and to lie is very much a part of the social contract's elastic. "You can fib a little bit," as the Talking Heads song goes, "but not too much."

Richard Wirick is co-founder and editor of the journal* Transformation. *Telegram Books published his novel* One Hundred Siberian Postcards *in 2006. He practices law in Los Angeles.

The Blue Poppy and the Mustard Seed

Kate McCandless



The Blue Poppy and the Mustard Seed:
A mother's story of loss and hope
Kathleen Willis Morton
Wisdom Publications,
173 pages $15.95

There is nothing quite as heart-wrenching as the death of a child. It feels so profoundly unacceptable, so wrong—and yet it happens every day, all over the world. *The Blue Poppy and the Mustard Seed* is Kathleen Morton's story of the death of her infant son, Liam, born prematurely with severe brain damage. The seven weeks of Liam's living/dying are both extraordinarily painful and astonishingly beautiful, a paradox Morton portrays in stark and tender detail. In the wake of this life-shattering event, she and her husband, Chris, embark on what she calls "a mourning walk around the world," in search of understanding and peace.

Morton, only twenty-eight at the time of her son's death, had been practicing Tibetan Buddhism since she was seventeen. Her journey of grief is deeply informed and guided by her Buddhist faith, though it provides no easy answers, and it does not exempt her from the pain of her loss, nor should it. It does give her a means to return again and again to a wider view of her personal experience, to a place of compassion for herself, her young husband, and for the human condition.

The rare Tibetan blue poppy becomes Morton's symbol for the precious, fleeting beauty of her son's life, and the mustard seed the symbol of her quest for acceptance. A distraught young mother named Kisa Gotami once came to the Buddha, carrying her dead child in her arms, and begged the Buddha restore the child to life. The Buddha agreed on the condition that she bring him a mustard seed from a household that had never experienced death. Kisa Gotami journeyed far and wide, but in one house, she heard of the death of a beloved grandmother, in another of a fine young man, and in some homes, she met mothers like herself, who were still grieving the loss of a child. Her heart opened, she understood the transience of human life, and returned to the Buddha to become his disciple.


The Tibetan Blue Poppy

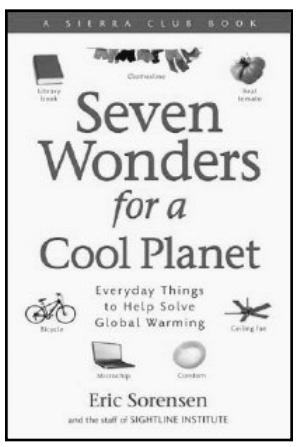
Though Morton is inspired by this story, her own journey is different. She and Chris travel through China, Tibet, and India, then to several European cities. Their experience in Asia is often uncomfortable and frustrating. Anyone who has experienced the exhaustion and hypersensitivity of grief might question the wisdom of such an ambitious trip. The typical travails of Asian travel become unbearable to the grieving young mother. She has repeated emotional meltdowns, which her husband is helpless to assuage. Morton is unsparing in documenting the strain loss of a child puts on a relationship. Yet for all the raw pain in her account there are moments of simple sensory aliveness, of insight, even moments of peace.

Interspersed with episodes from the trip are flashbacks to various points in Liam's short life. These are often more vivid and well-told than the travel sequences, which tend to bog down in details about restaurants, food and sight-seeing. Indeed, Morton's manuscript could have benefited from another firm round of editing. Too often awkward syntax or word choice weakens the impact of her powerful material. This is the work of a young writer still learning her craft. We can be grateful for her courage in sharing her story and her hard-earned wisdom.

Kate McCandless is a hospice bereavement counsellor, Zen priest and poet living in Mission, BC.

Seven Wonders for a Cool Planet

Rachel Kreuger



Seven Wonders for a Cool Planet: Everyday Things to Help Solve Global Warming,
Eric Sorensen
Sierra Club Books
120 pages, $9.95 US

I'm about as green as the next girl, always wondering if my hairspray emits too many CFC's and recycling my dolphin-friendly cans of tuna. So when *Seven Wonders for a Cool Planet: Everyday Things to Help Solve Global Warming* crossed my desk, I thought to myself, 'Great! More ways I can chip in to keep the world spinning.'

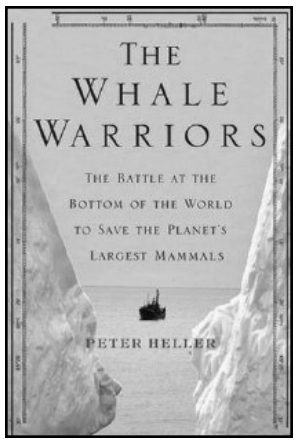
Sorensen's intent seems to have been to divide his slender book into seven 'solutions' – small changes the reader can make in their lifestyle which will slow our planet's desperate plunge into destruction. Some of them are quite simple and easily-implemented, such as running one's errands by bike or foot rather than by car. Of course, this only works if one lives within walking distance of a grocery store, and preferably in a dry, warm climate. Or eating more locally-grown foods to reduce the fuel costs necessary to ship mangoes in from the Philippines, or eating more grains and fewer fuel-inefficient cows.

Many of Sorensen's 'suggestions,' unfortunately, devolve into a discussion of factors beyond the reader's control. 'The government must start doing this,' he says, or 'Industries need to implement that' which, while informative, is hardly something 'everyday' that *I* can do. Other times, he wanders completely off-topic. In a chapter on condoms (of which the *only* global-warming-related benefit is the population reduction), Sorensen digresses for several pages to discuss the AIDS crisis, the rising rate of STDs, and women dying in childbirth. Again, while these are interesting (if not entirely novel) statistics, they are unrelated to the

(*continued on page 33)*

The Whale Warriors

Peter Francis



The Whale Warriors,
Peter Heller
Free Press
304 pages, $29.99

Paul Watson is a pirate. His ship, the Farley Mowat, painted black, flies a Jolly Roger. Although many countries label him an outlaw, none has convicted him of a felony. It's more likely that countries such as Norway and Japan which engage in whaling would find such a trial too embarrassing as they decimate the last remnants of a few great intelligent species that roam the oceans. Unlike Greenpeace, which Watson helped found in 1972, Watson is not interested in embarrassing whalers into stopping. He eschews Gandhian tactics in favour of direct action. *The Whale Warriors* documents the 2005/2006 voyage of the Farley Mowat through the waters of Antarctica in pursuit of the Japanese whaling fleet.

Written by magazine journalist Peter Heller, the account of the anti-whalers' voyage mixes scientific fact and emotion to bring the reader on board the Farley Mowat on a voyage which is both suspenseful and tedious. Crew members pass the time playing poker while the real stakes are their lives which are at risk at every moment on the high seas. Heller takes some time to discuss the personalities of the crew members, each of whom are unpaid. He notes the very human foibles of the people on board and the sense of urgency of their mission. Apart from Watson and his wife Allison, however, sometimes it can be difficult to keep the characters straight. Yet the ecological facts are compelling.

Heller points out how human activity has systematically decimated the oceans through long line fisheries and drift nets as well as whaling. Ninety percent of the large predatory fish, the tuna, sword fish, marlin and sharks have vanished since 1950. We've worked our way down from the big fish to the point where we're dragging up any kind of protein to use for animal feed and, ironically, for fish food for fish farms.

But the decimation of great whales is both tragic and demonstrative. One and a half million humpbacks are now only 18,000. Japan's estimate of Minke whales, of which their self-assigned quota is 975, is 760,000. But the International Whaling Commission says the number could be 300,000 and other scientists think the number could be even smaller. The truth is that no one knows. And the Japanese "research" ships are mere fronts for a whale meat industry, not sources of peer-reviewed scientific research.

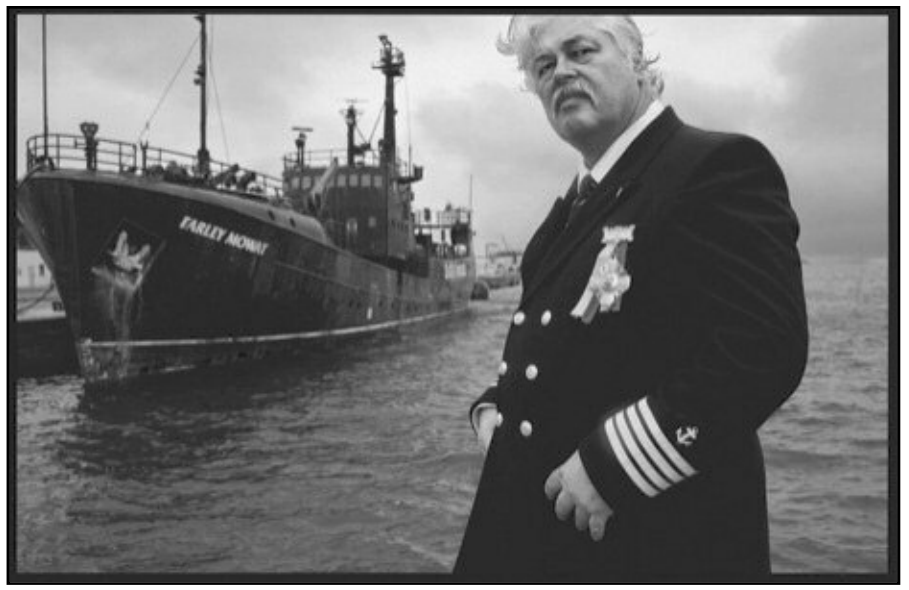
Peter Heller

The southern ocean is a big place. Almost a million and a half square miles can easily hide a whaling factory ship. Heller's magazine style writing serves him well as he documents Watson as anti-Ahab in search, not of the white whale, but of the whale's killer. And like Ahab he proceeds in his own monomania putting his own life as well as the lives of his crew at risk.

The ship carries a small helicopter for reconnaissance flights over the ice-strewn seas where 20 to 30 foot swells dwarf the Farley Mowat at times. High tech communication equipment allows Watson and crew members to keep in touch with the outside world although physical distance would prevent a timely rescue if things go wrong. Watson fires off communiqués to newspapers, governments and anyone else who might be interested. Despite his advocacy of direct action, it is clear that Watson knows that only policy change can make the whale hunt extinct before the whales.

The whale hunt takes place in waters claimed by Australia and they could send a naval ship to stop it. Watson knows the law of the sea as well as any captain and believes that under the UN regulations his disruption of an illegal fishery is protected. His means of disruption is to sink a whaling ship, if necessary. To do so, Watson's crew welds a giant "can opener" to the front of the Farley Mowat. Its purpose is to rip a hole in the whaling ship so it can no longer function. They fashion "propeller foulers" from wire rope and buoys designed to get caught in a whaling ship's propellers and disable the ship.

The high stakes game is played with Greenpeace on one side and Watson on the other squeezing the Japanese in the middle. Greenpeace has two ships in the southern Ocean on the same mission, the Esperanza and the Arctic Sunrise, but Greenpeace refuses to cooperate with Watson. However, a sympathetic Greenpeace member, risking their paid position, secretly passes information to Watson, helping him to locate the fleet for his first attack.



Paul Watson with the Farley Mowat
Photograph by James Nachtwey for The New Yorker.

On Christmas Day 2005 the Farley Mowat meets the Nisshin Maru, the Japanese factory ship. Over four stories high, this behemoth is designed to butcher whale carcasses caught by smaller hunting ships. If the Mowat can disable the Nisshin Maru, the Japanese whaling season will be over. Harassed by Greenpeace for several days before the arrival of the Farley Mowat, it first looks like the ships will physically collide. But the faster Japanese ship escapes into the ice and fog, leaving the Farley Mowat to continue its pursuit and planning its next encounter.

Not one to be easily discouraged, Watson pilots his ship almost halfway around the Antarctic continent in dogged pursuit of the whalers. Supplies of fuel running low, we're not sure if they will get out of the deadly sea safely. It is not until the book draws to a close do we finally see another confrontation, this time more physical. Yet both sides still live to fight another day.

Peter Francis is a Learning Support Teacher with students at risk in Burnaby, B.C. His previous review for PRRB was "Peaks and Lamas."

WONDERS (*continued from page 32*)

topic at hand.

Eric Sorensen

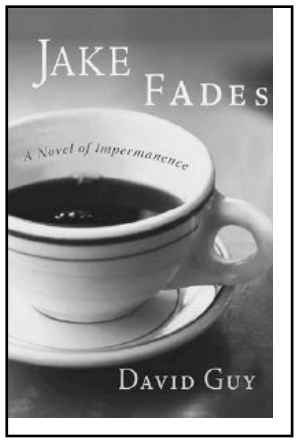
A few of the suggestions are of uncertain value. Let's face the facts here: we switched from clotheslines to tumble-dryers because they are much less hassle, and are unlikely to switch back, particularly those of us not living on the equator. Some chapters, such as the rapturous ode to the microchip, seem to have no helpful tips at all, unless it is that we should use more computers.

Overall, *Seven Wonders* reads like a hastily cobbled-together research paper. It is not, as advertised, full of 'everyday things to help solve global warming,' but more of a wandering selection of facts seemingly tossed in to reach the 120-page requirement. Little of any practical value is said that can't be found in the 10-page introduction. It's a quick read, and an engaging one, but in the end, not terribly useful.

Rachel Krueger reads books for a lot of people, including herself at http://www.booksidoneread.blogspot.com

Jack Fades:
A Novel of Impermanence

Patrick Carolan

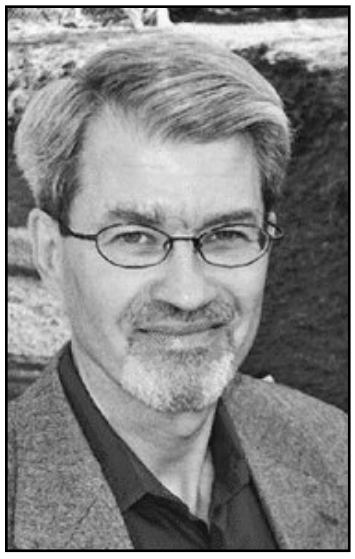


Jake Fades: A Novel of Impermanence,
David Guy, Trumpeter, 210 pp. $24.95

David Guy's *Jake Fades* is an exploration of Zen Buddhism, sex, death, relationships, and the human condition as seen through the tale of a 56-year-old-man truly coming of age for the first time. Hank, an ex-high school teacher, lives and studies as a Zen priest with his jovial 78-year-old mentor of 22 years, Jake. Jake, who fixes bicycles and teaches meditation out of a small shop on Mount Desert Island, Maine is a man of boundless clarity and charisma. He can instantly connect with anyone and is in charge of any situation he finds himself in. While he trained as a priest in one of Japan's strictest temples for 12 years, it through his compassion and "round belly that he most resembles the Buddha." These qualities have led him to build up a respectable following.

When the aging Jake begins showing signs of dementia he looks to the hesitant Hank to take up the successor's mantle as his Dharma heir. Over the course of a weeklong trip to Cambridge with Jake to lead a retreat and set up a new Zen Centre sponsored by one of their students, Hank is forced to confront the mortality of his master and journey toward becoming the man he is sure that he can never be: the man that Jake believes he already is.

Jake Fades embodies the Buddhist concept of impermanence—the notion that every aspect of life is in constant flux, all part of a continuous cycle of existence ending with death and beginning with birth in its characters and crises. The book focuses on the ultimate humanness and fragility of the waning Jake, and the growing realization of his closest students that he is indeed just a man, not the nigh "immortal," infallible father figure they all perceive him as. Even Hank, who has seen Jake eat enough donuts to know that he is not perfect, must confront the awkward revelation on both their parts that perhaps the older man dropped the ball by not grooming him to be his successor as early as he could have. But readers will also find that the story of Hank—a person who is reluctant to see anything in himself past his own shortcomings—begins to parallel that of Jake as he starts attracting younger pupils to himself thanks to his warm acceptance of them. They see wisdom in his initial clumsy attempts to teach and guide them, hinting to readers the possibility that at some point in the past Jake's own charisma and brilliant insights were as much a product of his students ideations as they were of him. Both this full circle nature of Hank and Jake's relationship, as well as the continued emphasis on Jake's weaknesses, help further the theme of impermanence as expectations and perceived constants are contradicted and one life picks up where another one leaves off.



David Guy

The structure of the narrative is breezy, lending itself nicely to a novel of impermanence. Readers will find that the book tends to flow passively from scene to scene, often with few major developments, and may find its climax and one or two great surprises somewhat expected. However the novel ends on an elegantly open-ended, almost incomplete note that is refreshing and uplifting: while not everything works out perfectly, it leaves readers optimistic for the futures of its protagonists. David Guy's work is far from life-changing, but it is an enjoyable read and ideal for anyone who has had the experience of discovering the weakness and beauty in all of us through the vulnerability of a hero.

Patrick Carolan writes from Vancouver, Canada where he studies Cognitive Psychology, History and Korean Language at the University of British Columbia.

Ontology and Angst

Jim Feast

The Company I Keep
Jordan Zinovich
Ekstasis Editions, 2004,
120 pages, $21.95

I have a nonstandard definition of anarchism, which connects it not so much to a line of political and social philosophy as to its base, the *hobo*. (As we will see, that pejorative term, used rightly, does not refer to some marginal group of wasters but to an important segment of the working class.) Given my belief, I was forcefully struck by the volume of poems and a play by Jordan Zinovich, published under the title *The Company I Keep*, which concludes with a lyrical anthem to one such "tramp." To me, this indicated that the author was in my particular sense, an anarchist intellectual, again, not one who espoused a certain world view, but one who saw into and illuminated the existence of the underdogs. And, true to this interpretation, the first half of the book, before the anthem, is given over to piercing reflections on the ontology and angst of being a "bum."

So what is a hobo? In another publication, I argued, drawing on Wallerstein's portrait of class fractions, that Marxism and anarchism are not as incompatible as they are portrayed. Their differences come from their being addressed to different audiences. While Marxism provides a philosophy and strategy that is right for the proletariat (and such unions which are centered on their concerns as, in the U.S., the AFL-CIO), anarchism is custom made for the semi-proletariat. This later group consists of workers who support themselves only partially through waged work, which they combine with such practices as subsistence farming, street selling, smuggling or (at a higher level) with grants and student loans. In the U.S., the union most known for recruiting such workers was the I.W.W. (the Wobblies), who (in the Western states) enrolled seasonal workers: grape pickers, construction site laborers and timber wolves (loggers), among others.

To get back to Zinovich, bearing in mind my comments on the I.W.W., note his early employment history as he recounted it to me in a letter:

> I came back from Asia and planted trees for five years in a camp conceived […] by me and an eco-activist friend to give activist artistic types a refuge. We worked and played as a community for 2-3 months each year, and from that made enough money to finance our years. Hard work, though — loggers watched us and swore they'd never plant trees. Bodies regularly broke down.

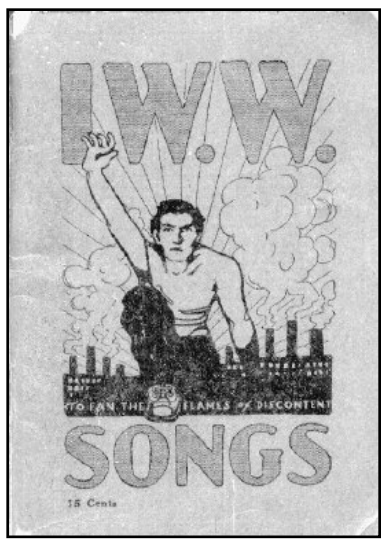
He was a timber wolf, of sorts. Even before that, he notes, he had been "working and hitchhiking my way to India in my early twenties." The typical Wobbly of the early twentieth century also worked and "hitched," in this case "riding the rods," that is, catching passage on boxcars across the U.S. and Canada, moving from job to job, hoboing.

As I suggested, the "bum," a disparaging name supplied by the bourgeois press, was simply a semi-proletarian, despised yet tolerated by the middle class and even allowed to ride freely on the rail lines (the train detectives casting a blind eye to this practice) since these workers needed to circulate between transitory jobs for the good of the economy. The red card-carrying bindlestiff (the card attested to I.W.W. membership) was the prototypical Wobbly.

We'll return to this. [S]mall as the North American anarchist movement is at present, it is not small enough to *not* be splintered, something Zinovich acknowledges. [But h]e might be less willing to go along with this interpretation of his work. I will argue that the central gambit of the early portion of *The Company I Keep* (the poems) is to look at the most basic, existential features of the semi-proletarian. Using his own life as a sounding board, Zinovich creates a persona that helps him *tick over the strengths and weaknesses of this class position.*

Farm Security Administration: Migrant worker on California highway. (Circa 1935)

Now, at first glance, this might seem more an exercise for a sociology book than for a work of electrifying poetry, but to understand [my point] better let's look more closely at the wager and the possible winnings. The poet's wager is that he will do this without ever violating the truth of this own experience. The winning, if the work is done perspicuously, is that any further development of anarchism can proceed from a more complete comprehension of the human type who will (ideally) be brought into and will lead the movement. We'll look at the poems for verification.



Songs to Fan the Flames of Discontent, an IWW ("Wobbly") songbook, 1932

Traits 1-2)
Right off, the central breakthrough. While the Marxist worker, being factory-bound is clock-bound, the semi-worker, having to selectively and creatively cobble together multiple activities to form a "career," beams away from a 9-to-5 focus and, indeed, very often hovers close to natural rhythms (as does migrant agricultural labor).

Two implications are evident here. It may be conjectured that the working class proper, given its standardized, routinized day would tend (at least in times of dampened class struggle) to become numbed to experience. The semi-proletarian, by contrast, drifting between workplaces and on the alert for new opportunities, is not inclined to habitualized perception. For them, a new slate is constantly being pulled up.

In agreement with this characterization, rawness of rendering is the driving wheel behind Zinovich's most sensual poetry. And this same "uncouthness" is reflected in a use of language which is unexpected, unbridled and flagrantly evocative.

As evidence take these lines:

> That huckleberry sky / twinkles crisp as an eye, / and the moon is glowing like straw wine / ("Towards Blood Season," 45)
> In this fragrant hour / when the mists smell of fir / and the sun's last flare / rivets clouds to the earth / ("For Adele (The Obverse)," 79)

Indeed, in another, equally agile stanza, he outlines one founding cause for his obsession with capturing unadorned moments. He writes:

> "Each sensation is absolutely original: / a snowflake on a bubble / trembling at the edge / of disappearance / ("Encounter," 48)

However, this seeming explanation for why Zinovich's verse often details the flow of an unsurpassable instant is not the whole story. As we have seen, backed up behind a desire to capture moments is the rendering of an ontological portrait of a class. Due to this dual-sided goal, his writing, which he characterizes as "hooking wires together in patterns too intricate to chart" (19), draws vocabulary from both descriptive and sociological lexicons, so that language rips back and forth between what is appropriate to natural objects underlit in pointillist scene-painting and to the demonstration of their existence in a syllogism.

This occurs, with dry wit emphasizing the contrast, in "Four Reckless Hokku…" The speaker mentions an atmosphere of dryness, a horizon, and that "I remember a young man // bearing a potted orchid" (99). Then, the speaker notes:

There were scientific names / for those horizons, the dust / that orchid, and the / process of remembering

The combination of vocabulary bases is less self conscious in "Lessons in Wisdom" where a tranquil word flow in keeping with a still life portrait suddenly charges into financial terminology, blunt and abrupt.

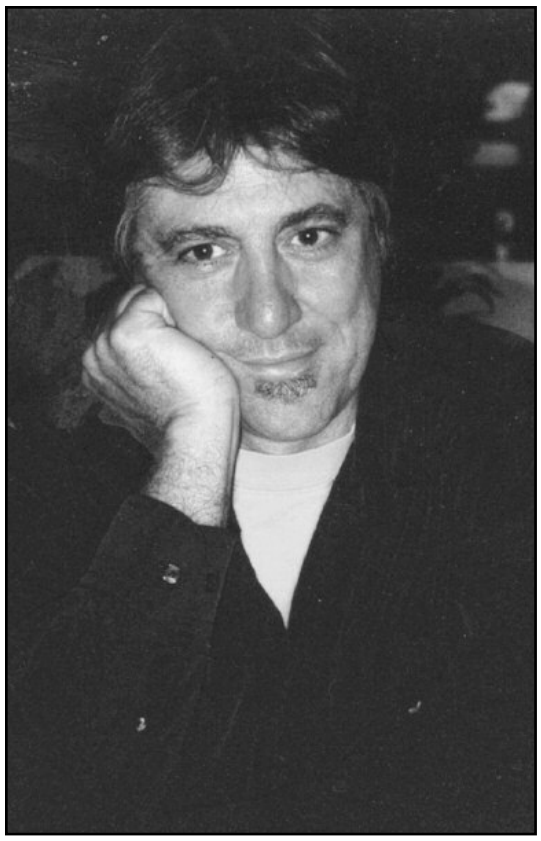
The sunlight from this should-be / summer sky crawls flat and hard / and thin across the wall. At least / it's warm – its following shadow / is as adamant as money, as cold as debt. (100)

If every writer who has created a personal style has a special, word-level glow, this is Zinovich's.

Remember this previous clause, "hovers closer to natural rhythms"? This is an all-important declension. For, beside what has been said so far, *this worker is ecological through and through*. The tree planters Zinovich worked with did not labor for only two months simply because this was the time sufficient to get an adequate grub stake, but also because these were the months in the natural cycle when trees could be planted. Pickers are hired to harvest at the proper season, and even construction workers only work, weather permitting. And, for the semi-proletarian, *such relative closeness to the earth irradiates all his or her other attitudes.*

In "Lacelong Afternoons," this often unappreciated, but stark difference between proletariat and semi-proletariat, is fully exposed. There are those who "own everything," but have lost the pulse of nature while others, like Zinovich, can contemplate "muggy lacelong afternoons at this window" (30).

At first, the poem appears contradictory until the reader realizes that both thought-positions are only depicted with natural symbols — since for Zinovich these are the only metaphors worth inhabiting. Those divorced from nature themselves are described with similes taken from nature. "Their clueless wind barely flutters//the leaves withering on the trees" (30). Wind which would, in reality, be the lived expression of various naturally occurring pressure gradients, tempered by the seasons, is here "clueless," a product of intellectualized synthesis, which ignores the real processes of its engenderment. Such a wind acts impotently, trifling with the branches when (the poet suggests) a true breeze would be putting up a stiff blow.



Jordan Zinovich

The inability of a technocratic, scientific view, guided by instrumental reason, to capture an ecological moment is opposed to the skillfulness of such a capture done by a more pagan, earth-based, semi-proletarian perspective, beautifully captured in this passage, which begins by describing the feelings of those who produce the clueless wind. They are:

longing for our mists and graven images
From our Masonic / emblem-glyphed folly / secular clouds trace / unbearable light across each new evening (30-31)

Here I take "unbearable" to refer to the intensity of unmediated access to singular natural phenomenon that, as noted, is only deployed in a consciousness that (to some degree) fits its relationships to the patterns of the ecological system.

(Traits 3-5)

Three other significant traits of the semi-working class are brought out in a sequence detailing how the speaker comes to terms with the death of his father. Rather than enumerating these attributes immediately, I'll let their qualities appear in the interrogation.

In "Night's Exemplar," the son has been staying in the father's hospital room, watching the older man weaken. "You grow daily // thinner" (50). They play a game, "15, 2, 4 — 6 // and 8 are 14" (ibid.). Even at this last gasp, the father (a lifelong fighter against the system) sticks it to capitalist ethics.

We play [the son says] / for my inheritance, / and you say / "If I win I get it all. / And I'm taking it with me." (50)

The father is satirizing the view (that of the ruling class) that humans exists in a Newtonian space where time, an arrow, moves ever onward without interruption. Death or other unsurpassable interruption is uncontemplatable. By contrast, in the father's (implied) view, individuals and collectives rise and fall, causing breakups and discontinuities in historical line. Indeed, to go a little further, following Bloch's argument in *Philosophy of the Future*, in different epochs, time proceeds at different speeds, depending on the pace of human affairs and their degree of engagement in natural processes. Human life moves more quickly the more it is split from tempos found in its natural pace. Or, to use a different illustration, music can understood by looking at the integration of its producers in the business or natural cycle. The tempo and meter of rock & roll are more inflexible (hence more allied with industrialization) than the more pliable, unconstricted, natural meters of folk music or jazz.

This interaction helps us establish three key traits of the semi-proletarian: irony, formed in dialogue, humor. A further poem in this evolving cycle will help pin down these characteristics.

In "I Saw" the son is with the father in a mountainous area and he notices, again, the man's weakness. In keeping with a principle laid out earlier, he uses similes from nature to rawly depict the deterioration, "the strange hissing sounds // of his breathing – a solar wind // ripping a magnetosphere." Then he comments:

And I thought / How old he looks. / Despite my love for him, / despite his strength, / how like death / yet still / like me

Irony, the use of words to convey an opposite meaning from their literal sense. What I have quoted so far does not display the irony. His father looks like a corpse. But when?

He hadn't slept for days / too driven by air and endless light / to imagine missing an instant / of this strange world:
Traveling and talking and looking / in wonder. Then he did / all of a sudden, / and I thought:
How old…

The father appears dead, then, not because he is old and decrepit, but because he is motionless, in bed dreaming in a position where anyone, even a youngster, might appear as deceased.

Formed in dialogue. In the first poem, father and son communicate: talk, game; and here, too, there is interplay. There is a sequence in which the son finally gets the last word. He can sputter, object, rave all he wants, and continually produce remarks that his father can't top as long this father… sleeps.

It is all humor, but of what strain? As we saw, the father's first reply, on inheritance, mocks our culture's fixation on money, which is of no value at crucial moments. Moreover, the father, who had been a school teacher, who lies on his deathbed giving sums, also makes fun of his former profession, and of having a career, another touchstone of our civilization. The later poem even nullifies the conventional understanding of what existence is. At a certain point, it suggests, when you are most in love with life, "driven by air and endless light," those around you see you as already dead.

So what type of humor is this? A dispelling comedy that takes no granteds and uses a heavy, dismissive hand in dealing with the hollow hallmarks of traditional, acceptable world views.

(Traits 1-5 Positive and Negative)

Let's review the five points mentioned so far through a mirror process. So far all the traits have been enumerated in a way that shows their positive valences, but each also has a corresponding negative quality. Strength caves into weakness.

The semi-proletarian, because of its helter-skelter, ever-shifting work patterns, *lives wholly in the present*; but this may lead it to reject, to its loss, institutionalization of a progressive character. (It may be recalled that some historians, such as that of Paul Brissenden, have accused the I.W.W. of being unable to build on its successes.)

The group, attracted to seasonal work, *lives closer to natural rhythms* than do most other class segments, but this orientation often leads to checks and frustration as it tries to exist in an environment revolving around clock time.

Given their disenfranchisement, which leaves them divested of the security of settled employment, they have a less complacent view of society's ideological lattice,

(*continued on page 38)*

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PAPER TROMBONES NOTES ON POETICS

Mike Doyle

The text centres on the craft of poetry, others' and my own. That being so, it's a memoir, in anecdotes, of a life in poetry, which in my mind I've called 'the other life', the one not confined to earning a crust. As a sketchy memoir, it does not avoid a certain amount of ego-tripping and name-dropping; after all I haven't lived in a vacuum, but in a world where one must fend for oneself.

Mike Doyle from *Paper Trombones*

Mike Doyle has lived in Victoria since 1968. His first poetry collection A Splinter of Glass *(1956) was published in New Zealand; his first Canadian collection is* Earth Meditations *(Coach House, 1971), his lastest* Living Ginger *(Ekstasis, 2004).*

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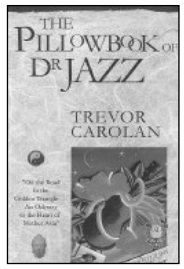
Trevor Carolan is the author of Giving Up Poetry: With Allen Ginsberg At Hollyhock, *as well as books of poetry, including* Celtic Highway. *He teaches writing at UCFV and lives in Deep Cove, BC.*



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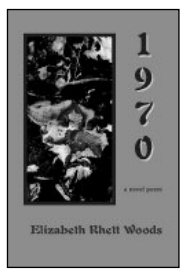

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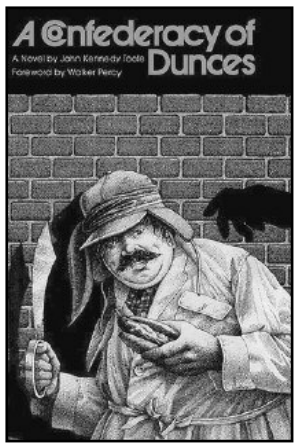
ONTOLOGY (*continued from page 36*)

giving them more knowledge of the unmeaning of words (*irony*) and customs (*humor*). (Using "unmeaning," I follow Bordieu, who insists social norms and language are arbitrary conventions, coercively imposed for the benefit of the elite.) But such coruscating attitudes can, at worst, lead to burned-out cynicism, dropping out, passing on in the canoe, rather than dropping in, taking action to make contact and form alliances.



A Confederacy of Dunces by John Kennedy Toole, in its 20th Aniversary Edition from the Louisiana State University Press

Finally, given the informal, ad-hoc nature of the work units and tasks assayed by the precariat, this class fraction has a greater *need for dialogue* — the transmitting and updating of instructions from bosses to employees and the negotiating of job allocation among the team — than do those involved in more routinized occupations. Still, the constant need in semi-proletarian organizations for consensus building and discussion can lead to inaction, divisiveness and splintering.

Last points. I believe works of literature that have enduring legitimacy must deal with the "big" questions. But, then, I have a nonstandard definition of big questions. I don't think they concern such themes as love, death or alienation, but refer, rather, to a world segment's most pressing socioeconomic issues. For instance, a Weimar German, concerned with "big" issues (a Doblin or Mann) might deal with the rise of Nazism. A great U.S. writer in the 1970s and '80s (Walker, Morrison) might discuss the vicissitudes of early second wave feminism.

Perhaps the central issue for the last few decades in the U.S., which was addressed, among other places, in *A Confederacy of Dunces* by John Kennedy Toole, is the advisability and viability of a union (in hopes of changing the world) between the proletarian and semi-proletarian classes. In Toole's book, the hero, Ignatius J. Reilly, goes from being a clerk in a clothing factory, a proletarianized position, to a quintessential semi-proletarian job, street vendor, pushing a large metal hot dog. Thus, in his career progress, he bridges the two class fractions.

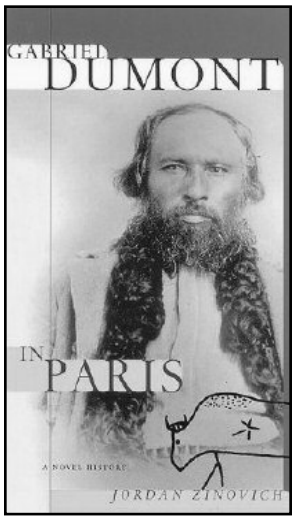
It just so happens the same topic is the focus of the last text in Zinovich's book, the theater piece *John Chapman's Harvest*. The hero here, like the aforementioned Ignatius J. Reilly, is on a mission to unite working-class fragments. He himself belongs to the precariat, again quintessentially so. He is introduced — the poem alternates between the voice of the narratrix and that of the protagonist, John Chapman — in this way, "a tramp walks a village street" (109). He has entered a proletarian town, "This is a hard-rock mining town with its dust just settled, wrenched from the forest by tough people" (111). He goes to the door of a resident and greets her with a warning, "Yes, Ma'am.… here's some advice: // Empires never…" (111). My guess is he meant to go on to suggest that the present social arrangements were deteriorating and so new manifestations of lower-class solidarity were on the agenda. In any case, the door bangs shut in his face.

semiotext(e) CANADAs, a 1994 project edited by Jordan Zinovich

Time for a retreat to ponder his failure. "Ev'rything I // undertook here // I must undo // to do again" (113). His cogitations reveal to him that restrictive, "Morality // is as uncanny // as a raven's sympathy" (115). The kind that has allowed the townswoman to dismiss Chapman before he barely said a word is arsenalled with both a repressive apparatus, the kind leveled, typically, at nonviolent protesters, "armor, dogs, and hard // water cannonades" as well as closed attitudes (ibid.).

Having, if not found a convincing argument, at least squarely faced up to the difficulties, Chapmen ventures out again. His next encounter is with an old man. Rather than ending successfully, it brings him another rebuff. "[John,] You will // end up reduced. // You will grow until // life betrays you: // as we all do," the elder tells him (122).

Chapman's subsequent reflection on mortality, "Babylon fell, and Troy, and Athens, // Carthage, Rome, Constantiniople; // no trace lingers of the scrambles" give the old man's chiding a political thrust (123). If all men die and end up "reduced," so do all repressive states. This indicates that, dialogically, he has considered his interlocutor's objections and used it to refine his argument. Fortified, he decides to bring his message to an urban setting. The narrator notes, "A city doesn't seem the kind of place that would suit him, does it?" and his encounter with office workers is none too propitious (125). He finds, "the wage slaves are reclaiming their streets — coffees in hand, papers in armpits, styles preprogrammed," and when he speaks to them, "various pedestrians look with anger at him" (132, 133). However, when he moves to a neighborhood "filled with indolent youth," where he meets a woman who is "fearless in her snakeskin, delicate and quiet in her listening," he finds some response, inconclusive and unlovely as it is (135).



Gabriel Dumont in Paris, a novel by Jordan Zinovich published by the University of Alberta Press in 1999

Remember, though, it is the essaying of the theme of this alliance, not its happy execution, which lifts and empowers the narrative. It gives the play's contour considerable political insight. For one, it indicates that when a political activist, like Chapman, is thwarted by cynical responses, the best tactic is not to turn from but plumb these missed encounters.

But I want to look at one more literary choice here. I think my quotations from the book have already adequately testified to the economy and lyricism as well as to the witty and often bitingly melancholy tone of these poems, which is carried over into *Harvest*, but I want to bring up the seemingly eccentric choice of fugueing the play by adding not only voices of a narrator and soliloquizing hero (as mentioned), but the seemingly inconsequential voices of Pomona (describing apples) and Mercury (giving routes).

A deeper gauging of this material reveals its integrality to the story. By the close of the work, the grand design of the uniting of the two class fractions is accurately portrayed, at this historical juncture, as a will of the wisp, or perhaps, to use a metaphor more in keeping with *Harvest*, an illusory aurora borealis. Should this conclusion make readers despair, as it does the old man?

Now we find the point of the two seemingly inconsequential voices who provide (as did the ontological portraits in the previous poetry) grounding in a materiality that reaches beyond the confines of our authoritarian society. An apple is fruit, but it also records, metaphorically, different peoples who have survived the onslaughts of weather (as did the American Southerners who got through "Hurricane Camille, who // reeled Virginia in '69 // smiting the orchards"), revolution (as did the Russians, who made it past "19 and 17"), and imperial decline (as did the Dutch, "Belle de Boskoop dropped its fruit in old // Amsterdam… an excellence that's sweetened with age" (112, 116, 125). Such descriptions do not represent displays of nationalism, but a pledge of faith in the legacies of different lower class populations' history of struggles and endurances that serve as a continuum on which can be constructed further advances.

Then there are the itineraries. These depictions of paths, unlike bare route markings are replete with the oddities and quirkiness of both rural and citified environments:

> …follow to sign $_4$E (rt. — 1/2 mi. / Pet Cemetery entrance, / two fire hydrants (120)

These Mercury sections lay out the irremediable originality of settings, which in the structure of the play, join the apples, the historically discrete backgrounds of resistance, which all subaltern groups possess, to hopefully indicate evergreen, incipient nurturing grounds for the move to a more democratic organization of society, a more cooperative bolo.

If we can point to scholarly works that set out a new basis for looking at a field, then, in a complementary way, *The Company I Keep* lays an aesthetic foundation stone for a new era in poetry by providing a canny and ontologically etched portrait of the semi-proletariat, that segment of the working class, which, if all goes well, will inherit the future. Even more, Zinovich, utilizing scintillating humor, humanist consideration and lush language, has drawn out as number of features of our diverse environment, which, if all goes ill, as it does now, preserves an abiding belief in a better world, the way a windbreak nurtures a flame. Something he offers humbly, in his own words,

> Befóre this whirling vortex / dragged me from the sky (99)

Jim Feast wrote the novel* Neo Phobe *(Autonomedia) with Ron Kolm, and is a member of the underground collective of noir humorists, beer mystics, anarchists, neophobes and passionate debunkers called the Unbearables. He lives in New York.

Rejoyce: The Poetry of the Wake

A conversation with Robert Amos on "shortlining" James Joyce's Finnegans Wake

.... the more carrots you chop, the more turnips you slit, the more murphies you peel, the more onions you cry over, the more bullbeef you butch, the more mutton you crackerhack, the more potherbs you pound, the fiercer the fire and the longer your spoon and the harder you gruel with more grease to your elbow the merrier fumes your new Irish stew

On June 16th, 2008, Bloomsday, 104 years after James Joyce fell for Nora Barnacle, I joined several fellow Joycephiles at the James Joyce Bistro in Victoria for a reading of the text of *Finnegans Wake*. Bloomsday is, to my mind, the finest of secular holidays, a day of good drink (especially drink!), good food and good company. The day on which Ulysses is set is also the day Joyce met Nora. As a National Holiday in Ireland, no woman could ask for a finer tribute. Of all the great modernists, James Joyce is the most psychically healthy. Pound was mad, Eliot was repressed, Lawrence was neurotic, but Joyce always seemed essentially happy. At the core of all his great works is a joyfulness (Joy[ice]fulness) and an expansive humour. He liked a good bawdy joke and was very entertaining in the pub, when he would sing, with his guitar in hand, in a rich baritone. On Bloomsday this year, that day on which we celebrate his great life-affirming vision, I participated in a public reading of *Finnegans Wake* with Robert Amos, David Peacock (owner of Peacock Billiards and the James Joyce Bistro) and others. It was an extraordinary and delightful evening, an opportunity to renew pleasure in the text of *Work in Progress.*

Finnegans Wake grew by fits and starts, from endless notes and ideas. *Finnegans Wake* has no beginning or end, and the centre is a wild vortex of language, held together by the theme of the enduring power of love and a history of civilization told in a polyglot of utterance. From 1922, when he finished *Ulysses*, to the publication of *Finnegans Wake* in 1939, Joyce wrote and rewrote continuously, expanding, refining, and enriching his *Work in Progress*. His building material was the same as poetry—images, phrases, notations and ideas, and references, dispensing entirely with linearity. *Work in Progress* was the closest a prose work has come to the stuff of pure poetry.

Robert Amos, the arts columnist for the *Times-Colonist* in Victoria BC, has long been fascinated by the language of *Finnegans Wake*. Like Joseph, who wore a multi coloured coat, he is often seen in a coat embroidered with phrases and images from *Finnegans Wake*. He designed the decor of the James Joyce Bistro in Victoria, where the Joycean ambiance is defined by his paintings of Joyce and Nora on the walls.Words and phrases from *Finnegans Wake* are everywhere, on the walls, on the floors, absorbed into the exquisite cuisine; but the tables are an extraordinary work of art, each uniquely crafted by Amos, passages of the *Wake* written out by hand, circular on the large round, marble tables. If one feels intimidated by the Wake, it is possible to read the best sections by sitting at a different table each night. Highly recommended for your your reading and dining pleasure. Charles Cave is a computer programmer in Sydney, Australia who maintains an ever-expanding webpage devoted to a study of *Finnegans Wake*. He used his love of *Finnegans Wake* and his skill as a programmer to develop a set of algorithms to deconstruct *Finnegans Wake* into its essential poetry; by breaking the lines into phrases the Wake opens out into new meanings. The following is an email self-conversation with Robert Amos, arts columnist for the Times-Colonist, Victoria, B.C., about their collaborative project.

Richard Olafson, Publisher

1922 drawing of Joyce by Djuna Barnes

What gave you the idea of writing out the text of Finnegans Wake in a poetic format?

After years of trying and getting nowhere with *Finnegans Wake* I discovered the page-a-week group instituted by Charles Cave, and began to make some progress.

The first inclination came with the part which is a theatre poster for the… of Mick, Nick and the Maggies. I could imagine it typeset in old woodcut type, and thought I'd give that a try myself, to see if I could space the lines, exactlly as they were written, in a way that was circus-poster-like. It worked out well.

The next inclination occured when, during the online readthrough with the page-a-week group, I realized that there were two women involved in the text of the "washers at the ford" chapter, one on either side of the river. I thought how helpful it would be for me if I separated their speeches out so I would know who was talking. I did it by downloading the text and keystroking it. That was a lovely challenge, and took me to the heart of the matter.

To do this I downloaded the text from the Trent University site and spaced the text by adding line returns. At that time someone on line made a little entry, presenting a tiny bit of *Finnegans Wake* "broken up" like poetry, in short lines. I tried it and was immediately hooked.

First I divided the sentences with two returns – an empty line – between each to help me get the grammatical sense of it all. Then I broke each line with a return, where the commas, semi- and colons, and so on occurred. It was a great realization that Joyce's punctuation was entirely sensible and the grammar was (almost) always correct and complete. That told me that James Joyce meant every jot and tittle of this huge and puzzling book.

I posted a bit of my reformatting on line and one of the group members commented that it looked like a reading script for a radio play. I had, of course, for a long time had the feeling that *Finnegans Wake* could be best understood when it was read aloud. David Peacock was enjoying the audio book of Ulysses and provided me with the 6-hour selection of readings by Jim Norton (Naxos) which helped me (though I have always felt that he reads too fast to allow any thinking about what he was saying). Subsequently I have sought the other recorded bits by a variety of readers – Joyce himself,, Siobhan McKenna, Cyril Cusack, Brendhan Behan, and Joseph Campbell come to mind. I learned that someone had made a once-through flat-out recording of *Finnegans Wake*, though I have never heard it.

Nevertheless, when discussing my projects with David Peacock, we reflected on how useful Norton's reading of *Ulysses* was to him. In a bid to capture David's interest for *Finnegans Wake*, I proposed to make a spoken word recording of the entire book for him. Though by no means in possession of a complete understanding of the book – I hadn't read as much as a third of it by that time – I began. At first I made a home recording using an old cassette tape recorder. This took some years, and eventually I filled about 36 90-minute tapes.

During that effort some things became clear. First, my pace was different than the page-a-week group, so I left the internet behind. Second, the key-stroking I had to do to make up my script seemed repetitious – I don't much like sitting at a keyboard. Third, I needed to get to a recording studio if this effort was to have a future.

I had been corresponding with Charles Cave of Australia, and described to him how I was "short-lining" the text. When I explained my process, he said that he was a computer programmer and could easily set up the algorithms to take care of much of my keystroking effort. To this end I defined and wrote out the "rules" for him, by which the newly-formatted text could be laid out by the computer.

How do you think the reformatting helps the reader appreciate the text?

There is no doubt that I have done this reformatting for my own purposes. I add not a single key stroke to the text but simply create the line lengths to suit my understanding and put appropriate spacing between lines – just as the nameless typesetters did for Joyce in 1939. Despite the utterly minute interventions in the text, I expect scholars consider even this heresy. (I removed the line numbers where they occur in my downloaded text – someone else's interventions.) But I see great advantages to anyone beginning the study of this book. If there was nothing standing in the way of publishing *Finnegans Wake* this way – in an edition more than 2,000 pages long – it would be a real help to readers.

Here's why. The words on the page, as they have been typeset, are one solid mass of uninflected verbiage, compacted for convenience and economy. What is lacking between that and the oral tradition is a dynamic, which is based on grammar and is encoded in punctuation. That feeling that one must read *Finnegans Wake* breathlessly to reach the end of a phrase or clause is dissipated by this visual correlative of mine – you can see where you are at a glance. Thus, with short lines we can tell where the subordinate clauses begin and end (separated by commas, for example). And visually the lists which are such a part of *Finnegans Wake* pop into view. Their parallel stuctures (they lived ant laughed und loved end left) are suddenly given a shape. When you know where a list begins and ends, you can enjoy and examine it for what it is, and not as an annoying distraction.

WHAT FOLLOWS IS A LOVELY EXAMPLE OF "SHORTLINING" – the text was downloaded and the reformatting was done entirely by the computer following the rules I set, most of them dictated by the punctuation.

> Like Jukoleon, the seagoer, when he bore down in his perry boat he had raised a slide and shipped his orders and seized his pullets and primed their plumages, the fionnling and dubhlet, the dun and the fire, and, sending them one by other to fare fore fom, he had behold the residuance of a delugion: the foggy doze still going strong, the old thalassocrats of invinsible empores, maskers of the waterworld, facing one way to another way and this way on that way, from severalled their fourdimmansions.

Like Jukoleon,
the seagoer,
when he bore down
in his perry boat he had raised a slide
and shipped his
orders
and seized his pullets
and primed their plumages,
the fionnling
and dubhlet,
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the foggy doze still going strong,
the old thalassocrats of
invinsible empores,
maskers of the waterworld,
facing
one way
to another way
and this way
on that way,
from severalled their fourdimmansions.

Tell me about your project recording your own reading of Finnegans Wake. Do you plan to release it to the public?

Realizing that my home recording was never going to be good enough, I made the acquaintance of a neighbour, Robert Martin, who has a professional recording studio in his basement. I decided to do the first hundred pages with him as a test, and it took us a number of sessions for us both to learn how – in particular I worked at how to make small edits myself as I read, to save Robert's time when he came to clean up my recording. By now we are well into our third year of sessions – both of us are quite busy and can only free up a few weeks each year, it seems. Typically we meet at 9.30 am, set up the microphones and levels, and I read for an hour – then a break – than half an hour more. By that point I notice my concentration is beginning to falter, errors crop up, and so we repair to the control room where we edit out the page turnings, coughs, misspeaks and anything else. As of yesterday, I was at page 402.

James Joyce in 1904

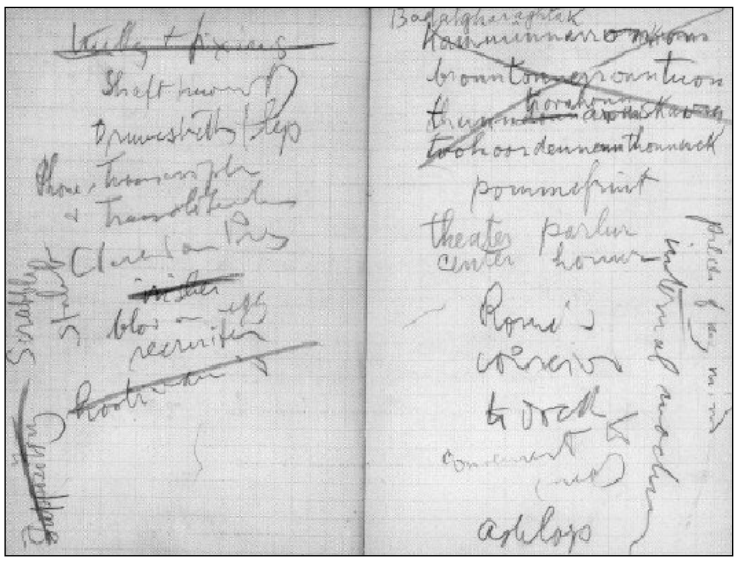
I have no plan to release this commercially, but I am making it with a quality that could be offered that way. My long-term vision is that when the copyright issues surrounding Joyce are extinguished I will have the text ready for its audience – should there be one.

When people hear that I am doing this they often ask if I am using an Irish accent. The answer is no. I've never even been to Ireland. My family came to Canada from the Scottish borders in the 1840's. But with a Canadian upringing, and a British wife, I think I have the sort of mid-Atlantic tone which makes most of the words clearly spoken. Of course, being a natural ham actor, I have taken it upon myself to create all the characters as they occur to me.

I have no idea who an audience for this will be – no one has so far shown any inclination to listen to me read, but I believe it would be a real benefit in a university library – if students ever have to confront what Joyce's words might sound like. In fact, as I read it I feel it makes perfect sense!

How does the reading of Finnegans Wake tie in with the reformatted text? Should the listener be following the reading with the reformatted text?

The audio version of the text and the written version are intimately conjoined. After I finished recording the first hundred pages I made a CD for my own use – it was copied in MP3 format so I could fit it all on one CD, and at the same time I copied the text, in its newly formatted form, on the CD. Anyone listening to it on a computer can also have my own script appearing on the screen. (When I found there was more space left on the CD I also added some of my own calligraphy of my favourited phrases.)



Two pages from Joyce's Finnegan's Wake notebooks

Comment on the "rules" you devised for Charles Cave and his program to automatically format the text.

The rules:
1. every paragraph gets three extra returns (lines) at its end.
2. every sentence (ending in .! of ?) gets two extra returns at its end.
3. every point of punctuation (, ;:) gets a return
4. the following words (conjunctions and prepositions, mostly) begin a new line: on, in, and, with, by from, to, for, before, as, but, though, yet, if, into, till, until, or, nor
5. hyphens are eliminated in hyphenated words.
6. phrases in parentheses start be on a separate line

I began arranging *Finnegans Wake* in short lines using a downloaded version of the text and a keyboard.

When Charles Cave got wind of how much time I was spending doing this he volunteered to write the algorithms if I would identify "the rules". His efforts on my behalf save about 85% of the work of keystroking the massive bricks of text into friendly short lines.

I hope to use this text for the on-screen version of the book to go with my spoken word.

The rules are based entirely on simple grammatical furniture and, with the exception of a bit of empty space, not one jot or tittle has been altered from the original text.

(*continued on page 44*)

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Peter Trower: Hellhound On His Trail

Malcolm Parry

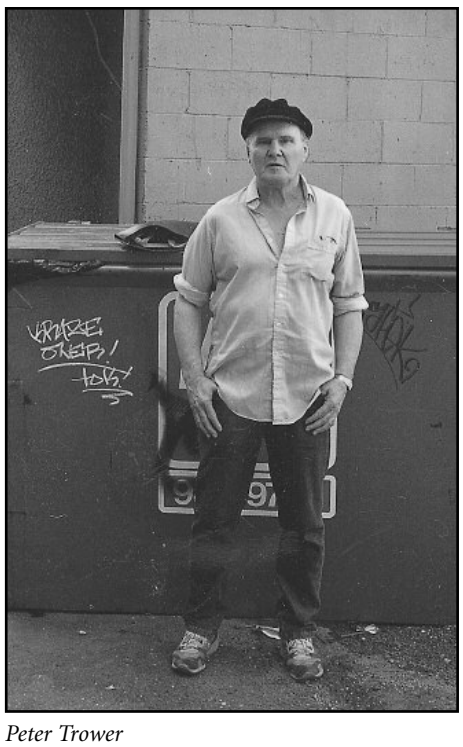
July 17, 1935. One of the world's rarest military aircraft crashed while approaching Belgium's Evere airfield. Had it not, *Hellhound On His Trail* would never have been written.

Hellhound On His Trail
Peter Trower
Ekstasis Editions, 2008,
174 pages, $22.95

Designed and built in Britain to meet a Belgian specification, the Fairey Fantome fighter aircraft began its short life as an obsolescent anomaly. With biplane wings and fixed landing gear, the Fantome – the Belgians called it Feroce — was a refined, all-metal version of the single-seaters that had flown two decades earlier, bringing fame to First World War "aces" Baron Manfred von Richtofen and Canadian Billy Bishop. By July, 1935, though, the smell of another global war was in the air. Within months, so would be a new generation of aircraft that made the Fantome — only four were ever built — a historical curiosity.

In October that year, Germany's Messerschmitt 109 first flew. Britain's Hurricanes and Spitfires followed in November and March. All three were single-winged monoplanes with retractable landing gear. They could hit close to 650 km/h, almost twice the Fantome achieved, even with its 925-horsepower Hispano-Suiza engine. And the modern machines would fight the Battle of Britain with up to eight machine guns each compared to the Fantome's four.

According to H.A. Taylor, who wrote the comprehensive *Fairey Aircraft Since 1915*, the Fantome "was probably the cleanest and certainly the most handsome biplane fighter ever produced." But that didn't prevent a crash that wrecked the prototype aircraft and killed the Fairey firm's test pilot, Stephen Gerard Hugh Trower.



Peter Trower

The news quickly reached St. Leonard's, England, where Trower's son Peter was five years old and being readied to study at Dragon School. Located in Oxford, what is now Britain's largest co-educational preparatory school had what for Pete must have been an ironic motto *Arduus Ad Sorem:* Striving Toward The Sun. The school had already graduated poet-author John Betjeman, and would enroll future novelist-biographer Antonia Fraser two years behind Trower.

It is intriguing to consider that Pete's upper-middle-class beginnings might have led to his emergence as a British literary lion. Perhaps he would have resided at an Oxford college, and eased visiting varsity students' nervousness with sherry and claret from a connoisseur cellar. Then again, had his father lived, Pete might have entered the family business and first arrived in Vancouver in the captain's seat of a British Airways passenger jet.

Instead, he stepped off a CPR train in September, 1940, and would eventually quaff vast quantities of Canadian draft lager with ragamuffin zoot-suiters, wise guys, aspiring artists and loggers of every stripe. Back in that darkest of Second World War years, though, with a Nazi invasion of Britain expected, Pete's mother had packed herself, Pete and brother Chris aboard an ocean liner that zigzagged across the Atlantic from Liverpool in a successful bid to dodge German U-Boats' torpedoes.

His mother soon married a bachelor pulp mill superintendent named Trygg Iversen, and Pete, fresh from a tony "prep" school's ordered academe, was enrolled in a classic Canadian one-room schoolhouse. The locale was Port Mellon on Howe Sound, where Iversen was posted to re-open the Depression-dormant mill. His two stepsons and 40 other children studied the Three Rs in a down-at-heel former dance hall. It was there that young Pete Trower found his métier in contributing stories, poems, drawings and comic strips to a school newspaper-cum-scrapbook.

Only one of those early works would survive: *Harry The Hat*, a poem that documented the adventures of a talking fedora. Thirty-eight years later, in a memoir titled *Pulptown Childhood*, Pete fondly remembered writing that piece. By then, his poetic style had matured, and his imagery needed no artifice.

The town stood gaunt when I was
ten years old and saw it first:
the shabby buildings loomed
like grim brown temples
in the winter chill
to gods I'd yet to learn about.
The plant, inert for years
was stirring once again
to wartime urges.
How the forest cringed
to watch that hungry monster
grunt alive.

Pete's sometimes idyllic life around Port Mellon ended with another fatal accident. Sent to cruise a stand of timber, Iversen fell into the wild Homathko River when a raft he was riding fetched up against jammed logs. His body was never found. "Thus my mother was widowed for the second time in less than a decade," Pete wrote, "and our milltown sojourn came to an abrupt and bitter end."

Not so his writing. When *Pulptown Childhood* appeared in *Vancouver* magazine's March, 1979 edition, Pete had spent decades working in logging camps, spending bohemian-style periods in Vancouver, and merging the two existences in the prose and especially poetry he wrote in beer parlours, boarding houses, beatnik coffee houses and art-student hangouts. He'd also had parts of his prodigious output published, notably in Howie White's magazine-format *Raincoast Chronicles*. Every word he wrote rang with authenticity. In an early *Raincoast Chronicles* edition, Pete traced the history of B. C. logging from the 1860s, when teams of oxen dragged felled trees to tidewater from nearby stands, to the highly mechanized industry of a century later. For city-dwelling readers, his article detailed the forestry equipment — spar trees, straw lines, bull blocks — and the jobs of those who handled that gear — chokermen, rigging slingers, donkey punchers — as clearly as artist-pal and fellow-logger Bus Griffiths would in his own articles and books.

But Pete was more than a researcher-documentarist, however competent. In that same edition of Howie's now-legendary *Raincoast Chronicles*, he expanded upon his technical know-how with characterizations that brought ordinary loggers to life. Earlier accounts, written by others less familiar with sidehill and bunkhouse life, had often portrayed so-called bush apes as romantic, even heroic stereotypes. From the start, Pete made them real people—good-natured or cranky, generous or mean, brave or cowardly, supportive or cunning, and often an all-too-human mix of all eight. Many drank heavily. Some were addicted to hard drugs, including the three Pete introduced in the first paragraph of that *Raincoast Chronicles* article, titled *Sojourn At Junkie Log*. Facing him in a northward-bound war-surplus aircraft in the early 1960s were:

"Mousey Clinton, former gangleader, not much more than five-feet tall with his dark, pinched, ghetto-child's face; Red Pell, once one of Mousey's lieutenants, deceptively gangling streetfighter in his pre-junk heyday; Bernie Grimes, older veteran of the first wartime-zootsuit gangs, gutter folk-hero with his sly-tough Irish hustler's mug and kinky red hair. All of them coming off heroin habits and sniffling or twitching periodically. All of them run out of Vancouver on floaters, and heading for camp to kick and cool out for a while."

A "floater," Pete explained, "was a form of summary legal banishment," permitted under the then-all-inclusive Vagrancy Act. Floaters were "widely used at that time by the Vancouver courts to rid the streets, albeit temporarily, of bothersome rounders and junkies the police had been unable to nail on more serious charges."

Pete had known, or known of, Clinton, Pell and Grimes when they all hung out at the Belle Bar Café in Vancouver's Skid Road district. Now they were aboard a worn-out aircraft en-route to a gyppo (independent) logging camp far up Jervis Inlet. Ironically, had his father not died in a brand-new plane of like vintage, Pete might have been basking on the opposite shore instead. On a grassy point there stood the Malibu Resort, of which a fellow logger told Pete: "Bing Crosby, Clark Gable, people like that came up in summer [to] cruise around in their fancy yachts and watch us bloody peasants busting our asses on the sidehill."

What the Hollywooders didn't see, though, was the view from high up that sidehill. When a break in logging activity up there gave Pete a few minutes pause, he made

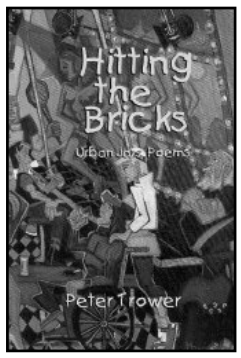
a cigarette — using the mandatory, barely combustible Chanticleer rolling paper to reduce fire hazards — and let his poet's eye wander from one spar tree down to another:


Peter Trower

"The panorama from my stump on the rim of that mountain shelf was wildly spectacular… The chewed ground spilled away, a crazy ramp of rock, stumps, log fragments, bushes and raw earth tipping down to the fool's-gold glitter of the sea. The skyline ran like a dwindling silver thread through a jack in the top of the trees we were presently using to the brown crayon of the first tree far below."

Just such a steep-sloping hillside figured in the first of many stories Pete wrote for *Vancouver* magazine in 1975 and that, 33 years later, appears in *Hellhound On His Trail*. Titled *Over The Edge*, it involved a drug-user, too. That was one-eyed high-baller Steve Littlejohn, who was driving a logging truck down an Alice Lake road in 1973 when he lost control of the fully loaded vehicle. Plunging from the road, it rolled 325 vertical feet before stopping. Littlejohn survived. Earlier, he'd escaped a head-on collision that killed another truck driver. But when a report of that accident muddled the participants' names, Littlejohn took the opportunity to lay low. Imagine Pete's surprise, months after his acquaintance's supposed death, when the rattle of pebbles on his bedroom window revealed the grinning Littlejohn — not his ghost — waving below.

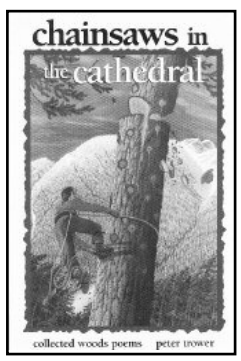
That's how the two of them arrived — grinning and waving — at *Vancouver* magazine's Hornby-and-Nelson. Pete handed over a second manuscript for consideration — I was editor at the time — and suggested the nearby Austin hotel's beer parlour as a suitable locale for discussion. That Granville-at-Davie Street joint was already the magazine's unofficial second office, where lunchtime meetings sometimes went on until the main lights flashed to signify closing time. By then, upwards of 20 writers, photographers, illustrators and others might have assembled there, including a pal of Pete's who had a shiny steel hook in place of one of his hands.



Hitting the Bricks

It didn't take long for me to get hooked on Pete's writing. Here was a man with privileged knowledge of working-level logging which, despite being a major part of British Columbia's dominant industry, had been virtually undocumented from the inside. Also, as a poet who had taken up documentary prose, Pete had an innate sense of meter that even the best-trained journalists seldom match.

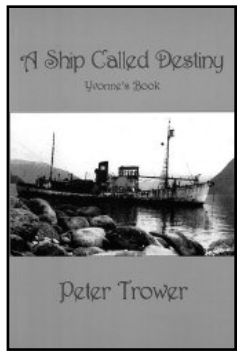
Pete reminded me then — and still does — of Richard Dana, the Harvard-trained lawyer who sailed from Boston to California in 1834, not as a ship's officer but as an ordinary seaman. Dana's subsequent book, *Two Years Before The Mast*, was unique in having a talented writer describe life in the rough-and-ready forecastle and in back-breaking labour ashore,. In it, Dana also observed acutely on Pacific Coast settlements, and viewed life-threatening storms at sea as drama but never melodrama.



Chainsaws in the Cathedral

This isn't to say Pete was the only educated dweller in bunkhouses strewn along the Mainland and Vancouver Island coasts. But his recollections of gratifying instances — a home-style meal, a new jazz record, a passed-around rum bottle — are as evocative as Dana revelling in fresh, juicy onions after weeks of stale or spoiling shipboard fare. As for putting life to long-ago fellow workers and expressing their pains, pleasures, fears, rewards, their sometime artistry and the technical aspects of their jobs, he is without peer. His status and reputation can only increase, since the working world he knew and recorded is no more. The men, machines and practices that drove British Columbia's economy are now, like the aircraft that killed Pete's dad, phantoms. Latter-day writers, filmmakers, environmentalists and suchlike may romanticize or revile what they take to be the makers of that past. But Pete Trower's voice is the true one, and future historians will surely value it above all others.

Pete fitted easily into *Vancouver* magazine's growing cadre of better writers. It wasn't because they all shared his adaptable schedules and rambunctious beer-parlour ways, but that he shared their professional determination to turn in only their best work. I still have no idea how many drafts he typed out on green paper, sometimes with phrases whited-out and their replacements neatly hand-printed in. But he always delivered manuscripts hole-punched and spindled together in binders and identified by high-school stickers that had his typed title and byline scrupulously centred. When given deadlines for commissioned pieces, he always met them. Without reading a word, you knew that Pete had sweated the details.



A Ship Called Destiny

Eight of the stories in this book had their genesis in *Vancouver* magazine. Each one was a delight when read several times through the editing and publishing process. Today, there is the even greater pleasure of reading all of them again as though for the first time — and without having to search hard for something to edit or blue-pencil.

Not everyone was so happy when the works first appeared in the 1970s and 1980s. Certain magazine personnel didn't relish what they deemed to be low-life stories peppered with unseemly words, even though Pete himself rendered one of the more egregious as "kakzacker." Our owner, ever a model of tolerance and understanding, once opined that a memoir of Pete's favourite hotel-pub, Dunsmuir Street's long-razed Alcazar, might have merited fewer words, if any at all.

But Pete's fellow writers all feted him. And time seems to have brought others around to that view. Simon Fraser University paid many more times more than Peter ever earned from magazine writing, merely to acquire the personal papers and research material he once carried around in a scruffy satchel. The academics there doubtless appreciated what Pete's fellow professional always new, namely that no one — no one — had such extensive knowledge of a key part of our shared history, and enough self-confidence to picture himself exactly as others saw him.

In that, he might remind you of Samuel Pepys, whose 1660-1669 diary records not only a most turbulent decade in British history — the beheading of King Charles I, the Great Plague, the Great Fire of London — but also pictures the diarist with an honest curiosity about his lesser side that autobiographers often gloss over.

There Are Many Ways

You will see that side of Pete in the story titled *Mike's Cat*. He didn't want to write it. He worried that it might discredit his mother, whose third husband, after beating her repeatedly, got into a fight with Pete that saw each in turn almost murder the other. But he recognized that telling a tale of domestic fury stretched to the breaking point outranked personal embarrassment. Set in a Sunshine Coast living room rather than along Skid Road or at a remote-inlet logging show, *Mike's Cat* became a personal favourite. It was also the last I commissioned from Pete in the final months of a dozen-year let-her-rip era during which good writing always came before good manners at *Vancouver* magazine.

As for good writing, some say Pete's poetry is better than his prose. Others claim the reverse. It's the kind of irresolvable question that could keep the beer coming until closing town at any of Pete's old haunts. That would include the West Hotel pictured on the cover of Pete's CD, *Sidewalks & Sidehills*, on which he recites 13 poems with musical back-up. In one of them, the 72-second *Not So Still Life With Damp Beer Tables*, Pete refers to poetry in a way that Byron and Shelley would surely have appreciated:

We were sitting with a mad girl
On New Year's Eve or the day after.
There wasn't much rhyme or reason to it.
She said: "I got wrists like everyone else, see."
She showed them to me.
There were five white worms across one,
Three across the other.
She said: "You're supposed to be a poet, baby.
What do you think of these poems?"
I said: "Those are the saddest poems I ever read,"
And watched my buddy Bleak Boy screwing her with his eyes.

Pete speaks these smashing lines not in his usual mutter, but in a clear, commanding voice that echoes his early upbringing in England. You can picture Stephen Gerard Hugh Trower using the same authoritative to give Fairey Aviation Co. officials his assessment of their Fantome fighter. He never did, of course. Had he done so, young Pete would not have lost his father, but we British Columbians would have lost an enormous part of our heritage.

Malcolm Parry was founding editor of the Toronto based business magazine* Vista, *where he won a national award for art direction. He has been a* Vancouver Sun *columnist since 1991.

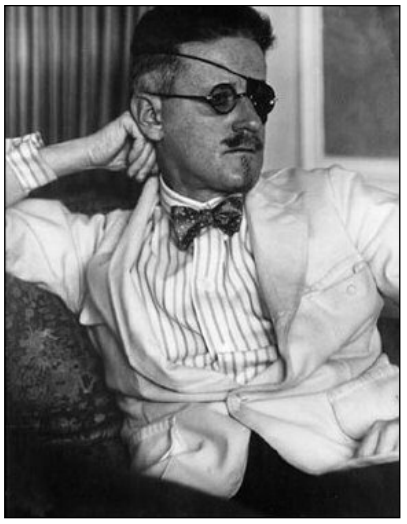
JOYCE (*continued from page 40*)

In my opinion the exceptionally dense typesetting was necessitated not by the author but by the printer, trying to get this immense book out in the most economical manner. I hope by creating a visual correlative to the text I can add a bit of air and rhythm to the page, discovering a bit of the author's pacing and grammar.

In pursuing this project it became abundantly clear to me that James Joyce meant every word, every single "missspelling" in this immensely complex book.

What about incorporating images of your Finnegans Wake calligraphy with your reading and the reformatted text? Maybe a multi-media Finnegans wake or a new type of Finnegans Wake virtual world?

In explaining my process to make a spoken word recording I haven't mentioned the peripheral creative projects which have, at every step, fed my activities. In the beginning, after creating the theatrical poster, I went on to inscribe some of my favourite phrases with ink and brush on Chinese and Japanese papers. The act of selecting was a pleasure. Unlike transcribing other authors, writing out the Joyce texts was challenging, like practicing the piano – one has to focus on every single character Joyce wrote, for he takes delight in confounding expectations. I created hundreds of these pages, and saw them posted on a variety of Joycean websites. As it went on, a number of correspondents commissioned from me their own favourite phrases. In about 2002 a batch of these originals were exhibited at a conference at the University of California at Berkeley under the sponsorship of The Riv, a man I knew as the Riverend Stirling. (His rare postings on the internet were the most cogent comments about the Wake I ever discovered.



Joyce in Paris, 1926

Before his death he wrote me a lovely letter, from which I quote:

> The lively freedom, the riverine adaptation of the literal to the littoral, the rebirth of Celtic knotwork in Chinese brush strokes – all these emerge by your creative gifts and merge seamlessly before the beholder's eyes, thanks to your authorial ability to connote the mysteries of "correctness." I do not exaggerate, though it might look as such. Robert Amos is one fine Joycean artist!
>
> It was neatening to see your cover on the *James Joyce Quarterly* 39;02 Winter 2002. May Brighid's light flicker lambently on Carol Kealiher and the rest of the James Joyce Quarterly staff for their good taste in selecting you. Keep up the good work, Robert.

With no way to have these sheets of paper mounted as scrolls, which was always my goal, I changed tack. I initiated a collaboration with a Japanese potter living in my home town. Over the course of four years I decorated about 400 pieces of porcelain with Joycean phrases, decorations (Celtic knotwork, Ming Dynasty patterns) and other imagery. These plates, bowls and cups have been a great success with my clients.

During this period it did come to pass that I was able to have my calligraphy mounted as scrolls in Taiwan and in Beijing, and in 2006 David Peacock, my friend and fellow Joycean, commissioned me to do the decor of his new top-end restaurant, the James Joyce Bistro.

THERE IS MUCH MORE TO SAY – I wrote out the entirety of the text with a fountain pen in a series of hardbound blank books, a project which took me two and a half years. And there is the evolving wonderfulness of the James Joyce Bistro, which can be glimpsed at flickr.com/photos/robertamos. But for now, enough. I am sure I have tried your patience.

Feel free to circulate this memo to anyone you think might be interested. Be assured my own work will continue. Recently we hosted Eric McLuhan for an evening at the James Joyce Bistro and I spent the next morning with him, showing these and other projects. He suggested a collaboration on the theme of the thunderwords, and immediately I inscribed some tea bowls with the hundred-letter words running round the middle.

KYGER (*continued from page 4*)

PRRB: *Before we head to Kyoto, can we get some sense of what the Pacific Northwest poets brought to arts and letters in San Francisco? A nature literacy? For example, attention to birdlife, to local flora is persistent throughout your writing…*

JK: When Lew Welch came he brought a particular kind of high energy. He also lived at East-West House for a while. Phillip Whalen's observations were always his own, from his own original and quirky mind. Snyder was more formal, using native American texts, his own work experiences, and explorations of the Pacific Northwest. I don't think it was until I moved to Bolinas in 1969 that I really entered into a close relationship with the land around me in my writing. About the birds who live here: to this day the quail are probably my closest neighbours. You get used to watching what's going on around you; you get to know what they're saying—the scrub jay announcing when someone is arriving. Bolinas is the location of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, started back around 1965 and is a very well-known organization. They started banding birds and studying them and received enough endowments and patrons that they've begun studying birds farther afield—like the penguins in Antarctica. This is a great location for birds here, with a lagoon for blue herons and American egrets, many migrating ducks. Every year when the gold crown sparrows come down from the north, with the white-crowns—they have the Gold-Crown Festival. The gold-crowns have a very singular song, three descending notes. And they usually arrive right on the autumnal equinox.

PRRB: *So you're readying for Japan… What was the feel of things as you were gearing up to leave?*

JK: Don Allen edited the second edition of *Evergreen Review* which was called 'the San Francisco Scene', because by then the San Francisco Renaissance had already mixed with this Beat thing and it was a cultural phenomenon. Something was happening. It had become a way of dressing, of semi-dropping out, of music and jazz with poetry, smoking grass—a cultural attitude that was a gigantic contrast against what the mainstream '50s were all about. Music was certainly a part of the North Beach scene—there was the Modern Jazz Quartet, Dave Brubeck, Paul Desmond, There were famous clubs to hear jazz. John Weiners gave me Olson's "Projective Verse" to read, and as a way of looking at writing and the page it was extremely important to me. Duncan had come to represent this attitude of the poet, of believing that you *lived* the life of the poet. Spicer was this cutting-edge sort of bullshit-detector all the time—whether a poem was *true*…you could tell if someone was faking it. "Poetry" poetry was out to lunch, so there was an *astute* sense of where you were coming from. These were valuable teachers.

PRRB: *And so Japan…*

JK: The four years I spent in Japan were spent more or less reading what was there in the British and American Cultural libraries. There was Cid Corman's *Origin* magazine, where I first read Lorine Neidecker …I was just practicing my own work—how to put words on the page, determining what's important; and when your emotion is going to take over, where to do your own internal editing before the work gets to the page. There were a number of figures writing or translating in the local community—Philip Yampolsky, Burton Watson, and the young poet Clayton Eshleman. Clayton was studying informally with Cid Corman—he was eager to find out things.

And then I also practiced 'sitting'. There were no books to read about Zen, in English then, and I was encouraged just to pay attention to breathing.

PRRB: *You returned to California…*

JK: After four years away I came back. Don Allen had visited and he wanted to publish my first book, *The Tapestry and the Web*. I found out that I was 'okay' as a writer, where as before I wasn't sure. Stan Persky started publishing something called *Open Space* magazine in 1964 which was very important. He put it out every month and ran things by Robin Blaser, Ebbe Borregaard, Lew Ellingham, etc. and everyone kind of turned everyone else on. I wrote a series of poems for him; Stan was still working in North Beach, so that was the cultural center.

Then there was the l965 Poetry Conference in Berkley and that essentially established certain poetry-political lines. Spicer died after that. I believe that's when Warren Tallman invited Robin to come up to Vancouver and Stan went up with him; George Stanley too, I think. Weren't they offered jobs? That made a big difference.

PRRB: *Did any other writers from that era that have an influence upon you?*

Joanne Kyger

JK: Albert Saijo. He published a little book about hiking in the sierras, and then more recently *Outspeaks*, from Bamboo Ridge Press. It's one of my favourite books of poetry. He's so direct about what he does and says. He was there at the beginning of the psychedelic 'revolution' in San Francisco. Lived at the East West House. Learned Zen meditation from Nyogen Senzaki in the late 1940's in Los Angeles. Very unaffected. He was a close friend of Lew Welch and Philip Whalen and Gary. A very modest fellow.

PRRB: *When you came back from Japan the Vietnam War was escalating. Did it affect the way you thought about your work?*

JK: Yes, but not overwhelmingly so. I lived in New York City, 1966-67, for a year and was part of a whole group there that became the Yippies. I worked doing some demonstrations with Keith Lampe (Ponderosa Pine), and 'flower power' became one of our slogans. One of the Yippie group, Ed Sanders is responsible for trying to levitate the Pentagon, although Allen Ginsberg is often given credit for that. After the Be-In in San Francisco, we decided we should have something in Central Park and called it the 'Spring Out'. People smoked banana peels. But California was still more open about having a psychedelic revolution, dropping out, and generally being more politically confrontational.

PRRB: *During your years away you travelled India with Allen Ginsberg, Peter Orlosky and your then-husband, Gary Snyder. Regarding your experience there or in Japan, can you speak to how Buddhism, or dharma practice might relate to your writing? You've mentioned at the symposium how one comes to pay attention to the moment, to details.*

JK: In India I became aware of this historical phenomena called 'Buddhism' which had 2500 years of 'moments'. Seeing the origins of Buddhism in India, the Bodhi Tree, the Deer Park at Sarnath, Vulutre's Peak, the great university of Nalanda, all in this cultural context of India, was an awakening. So 'world history' became an awareness in my writing.

In Japan, since I didn't have a teacher, I learned the patience of sitting. That there isn't really any where to 'go', although your mind surely wants to move like a rabbit.

PRRB: *You've also mentioned from your experience in India how you observed that when the Tibetans brought their diaspora down to India's historical Buddhist sites, they also brought their devotionalism…*

JK: Buddhism had not been practiced for centuries in India, although all the historical places related to the Buddha had been carefully tended to by British archeologists as part of a historical past. Then all of a sudden these places became full of the devotional energy of the Tibetans, with their friendly energy, and the power of the Vajrayana Himalayas with them.

PRRB: *You've been associated with Naropa University and its writing programs. Allen Ginsberg used to say, 'Teach what you know—your own practice, own awareness…" Anything recommended for writers who may be coming up now?*

JK: It depends on what you know. I guess there could be a certain number of frisbee players teaching their practice. But how do recognize or find what your awareness, and practices are? Travel is certainly a way to see the world and your place in it. Understanding that you are in, a part of, a lineage of writers and teachers. That you didn't invent your 'awareness', your practice—but are nonetheless individual in your own way and your understanding is unique.

PRRB: *Allen also used to say that the duty of the poet is to expand consciousness…*

JK: Yes, he said, after experiencing the power of yage, expand your consciousness so it encompasses your own death. Good advice. If you can do it. But don't you think we

KYGER (*continued from page 45*)
are already a part of that 'expanded consciousness', that it has already happened?

PRRB: *Have you any response to the idea that Allen Ginsberg 'walked out' at a certain critical moment from the Beat celebrity that ultimately killed Jack Kerouac? In '62 Allen dropped off the radar and ended up travelling in India, part of it with you and your then-husband…*

JK: After reading *Kaddish* at the San Francisco Poetry Center, he traveled to South America for six months, by himself, initially to take part in a reading with Lawrence Ferlinghetti in Chile, and then went on to travel in South America on the yage trail. He took it eight times, altogether, and then he decided he needed a teacher, which he thought he could find in India. He probably dropped out of sight from the heightened publicity surrounding the Beat Generation at that time, but returned from his travels and helped facilitate the counter-culture revolution in the early 60's. Also he never really drank alcohol, so didn't have Kerouac's problems in that regard.

PRRB: *In the various individually published accounts of that journey there are points of subtle (and not sometimes not so subtle) discrimination between how some group experiences are reported by Allen, Gary and yourself…Anything about your own personal approach in this?*

JK: My journals were written on the spot. Gary's were written after he returned, as a letter. And Allen's were edited. Being the sole woman on the trip, there were of course differences, in the physicalities of travel. But that would be true of any trip.

PRRB: *After meeting with a youthful Dalai Lama, you come away and write in your journal that Allen "Actually believes he knows it all, but just wishes he felt better about it…"*

JK: A slightly sarcastic tone, but true, I think.

PRRB: *You've already got one other new collection of poetry out following your Collected*—Not Veracruz *(Libellum). What's your sense of the poetic grounding in this mature work?*

JK: Grounding? Hopefully, the simpler, the better.

Trevor Carolan is the international editor of PRRB.

BAPTIZE (*continued from page 15*)

I went to the movies with Screaming Jay Hawkins.

We saw *Zoot Suit*. The female usher led us to a pair of seats that we could have found perfectly well on our own. When she held out her hand, Jay gave her five and said, "All reet." She just stared at him. I put some coins on her chubby palm.

We watched *Zoot Suit*, and then we left and shook hands on the pavement, him saying, "Sure wish you could play something."

He doesn't scream on *Baptize Me in Wine*. Now that I've gotten a chance to hear it again, I realize it is the penultimate drinking song, even better than my long time favourite, the original *Wine Spo Dee O Dee* by Sticks McGhee, brother of Brownie and Howard, the trumpet player.

And as for Doc Starkes and the Nite Riders' *Women and Cadillacs,* I believe it to be a better car and driving song than the much more popular *Rocket 88* by Jackie Brenston, a song Ike Turner claimed to have written and which others claim is the first rock and roll song, a claim that is absurdly ridiculous. One shouldn't even say it's the first really rocking driving song to resemble what came to be known as rock and roll. Before that was the more spirited *Rocket 69* by Todd Rhodes. Brenston visited the garage again the next year, and drove out in *My Real Gone Rocket*.

I'm told that Screaming Jay Hawkins left hundreds of songs on little tape cassettes like the one I found. Recordings of him singing straight. But even if some enterprising record company wanted to bring them out, it would probably have a rights' battle with the dozens of women claiming to be Jay's heirs. Among these songs, I have it from a reliable source, is a cover of Gene Autry's version, in turn covered by Elvis Presley of *Blue Hawai*, recorded in a hotel lounge in Honolulu.

Lord, I'd gladly allow myself to be baptized in wine to hear that.

Jim Christy is a poet, novelist, essayist, world traveller and raconteur. He has published numerous essays, novels, and collections of poetry, as well as CDs of poetry set to music.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re: "Depth Psychology East and West" by Patrick Carolan, Issue Seven, Fall/Winter 2007.

Dear PRRB:

As one of the teachers at the high school graced by Patrick Carolan's attendance, I was both impressed and depressed by his review of *The Dalai Lama at MIT*, a chronicle of papers and discussions from the Investigating the Mind conference attended by neuroscientists, psychologists, Buddhist scholars and monks. On the one hand, I wished I had been his English instructor so I could have enjoyed taking some credit for the smooth prose and nicely balanced structure of his review. However, as his Religion teacher, I was plunged into gloom by his characterization of Christianity!

Being the astute student that he was, however, I shall assume, in Patrick's defense, that he must have been absent from a most stimulating class in which I demolished the basis of the secular dogma that Christianity has hindered the development of science. Given the prevalence of anti-Christian prejudice in academia, as well as most people's uncritical acceptance of the Galileo myth, it is quite natural, having missed my class, that Patrick would repeat this frequent criticism.

As to the relationship between Christianity and science, in actual fact, the precise opposite of this criticism is the case. As Stanley Jaki, winner of the Templeton Prize for research on the interface between science and religion has conclusively demonstrated, the Christian worldview was essential for the development of science. The details of Jaki's research are too lengthy to repeat here. A general summary could be made, however, that it was only the Christian belief that the material universe was created by an intelligent God, who also created human intelligence, that gave thinkers the intellectual space to consider that using the mind to investigate the universe might result in understanding it according to rational laws.

In every other culture, the enterprise of science had been, to use Jaki's term, "stillborn." Only in the philosophical context of a Christian culture could the scientific method develop and science as an institution become established, which it did in the universities of Europe, themselves the product of the Catholic Church's openness to higher learning.

In Eastern cultures, on the other hand, there was, of course, no scarcity of intelligent thinkers and there was indeed the occasional discovery of applied science, e.g., gunpowder and eyeglasses, but no tradition of pure science developed. This was because the Hindu and Buddhist worldviews included beliefs such as the uncreated nature of the universe and the ultimate unreality of matter which were simply not philosophically conducive to a systematic analysis of external reality. It was for that reason that Eastern scholars turned instead to a study of the mind and inner reality in their search for truth.

Clearly, both East and West, science and religion can benefit from each other's approaches to the investigation of the mind, but it would neither be rational nor objective to exclude Christianity's contribution to this dialogue.

Peter Nation
Religion Department Head
St. Thomas Aquinas High School
North Vancouver BC

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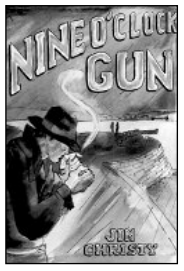

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Stephen Bett has had five previous books of poetry published. He is a member of the English Department at Langara College in Vancouver.

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Anne Swannell

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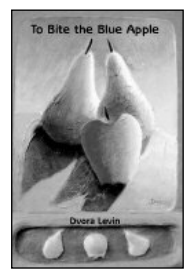
TO BITE THE BLUE APPLE

Dvora Levin



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