

# Fact•Simile

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VOL. 2 No. 2

AUTUMN 2009

FREE



**FEATURING AN INTERVIEW WITH KEITH & ROSMARIE WALDROP**

+New work from: Dale Smith

Anne Gorrick

Billy Cancel

George Moore

Peter Davis

& more

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**FACT-SIMILE EDITIONS**  
**FACT-SIMILE MAGAZINE**  
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**FACT-SIMILE** is edited and published by  
Travis Macdonald and JenMarie Davis

## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers:

Welcome to the Autumn/Winter 2009 issue of *Fact-Simile*. This issue marks our second anniversary of publication and we couldn't think of a better way to celebrate than a collaborative interview with that dynamic duo of the avant-garde: Keith and Rosmarie Waldrop. Since the conclusion of this interview, Keith's text *Transcendental Studies: A Trilogy* has been honored with the National Book Award for Poetry. We, the editors at *Fact-Simile*, would like to hereby offer our most heartfelt congratulations!

Issue 2.2 marks our first foray into what will, hopefully, be a regular element of *Fact-Simile* going forward with Dale Smith's insightful review of *Collapsible Poetics Theater* by Rodrigo Toscano. In addition to accepting third-party reviews for publication, we've also begun accepting titles for review on our blog at [www.fact-simile.com](http://www.fact-simile.com). The response to this latest development has been overwhelming and we have lots of wonderful reading material already on hand, so please feel free to query if you have a title you'd like considered.

As you flip through these pages, you'll see we've been hard at work on a number of projects over the past six months. For starters, we recently released the *A Sh Anthology* with a very successful reading at The Dikeou Collection in Denver. This handmade book-box-object made from recycled Nat Sherman cigarette boxes contains 10 scrolls with work from an exciting array of young writers and is available on our website while supplies last.

In addition, we are delighted to announce the official release of two *Fact-Simile* chapbooks; from Joseph Cooper and Matt Reeck. *Points of Intersection* by Joseph Cooper is a leather-bound, reporter-style book and *Midwinter* is a small, accordion-fold book (with accompanying magnifying glass) written by Brooklyn poet Matt Reeck.

Last but not least, we here at *Fact-Simile Editions* invite you to help us welcome in the new year with a limited edition 2010 calendar featuring the intricate typographic gestures of Andrew Topel. This series of 12 monthly broadsides is printed in a limited edition of 100 on Arches and is available for just \$15 plus shipping.

Of course, with all the new and exciting things happening here at *Fact-Simile*, we've also taken the time to compile a group of amazing writers from around the nation for your enjoyment. So, without further delay...

Happy Reading,

Travis & JenMarie  
The Editors

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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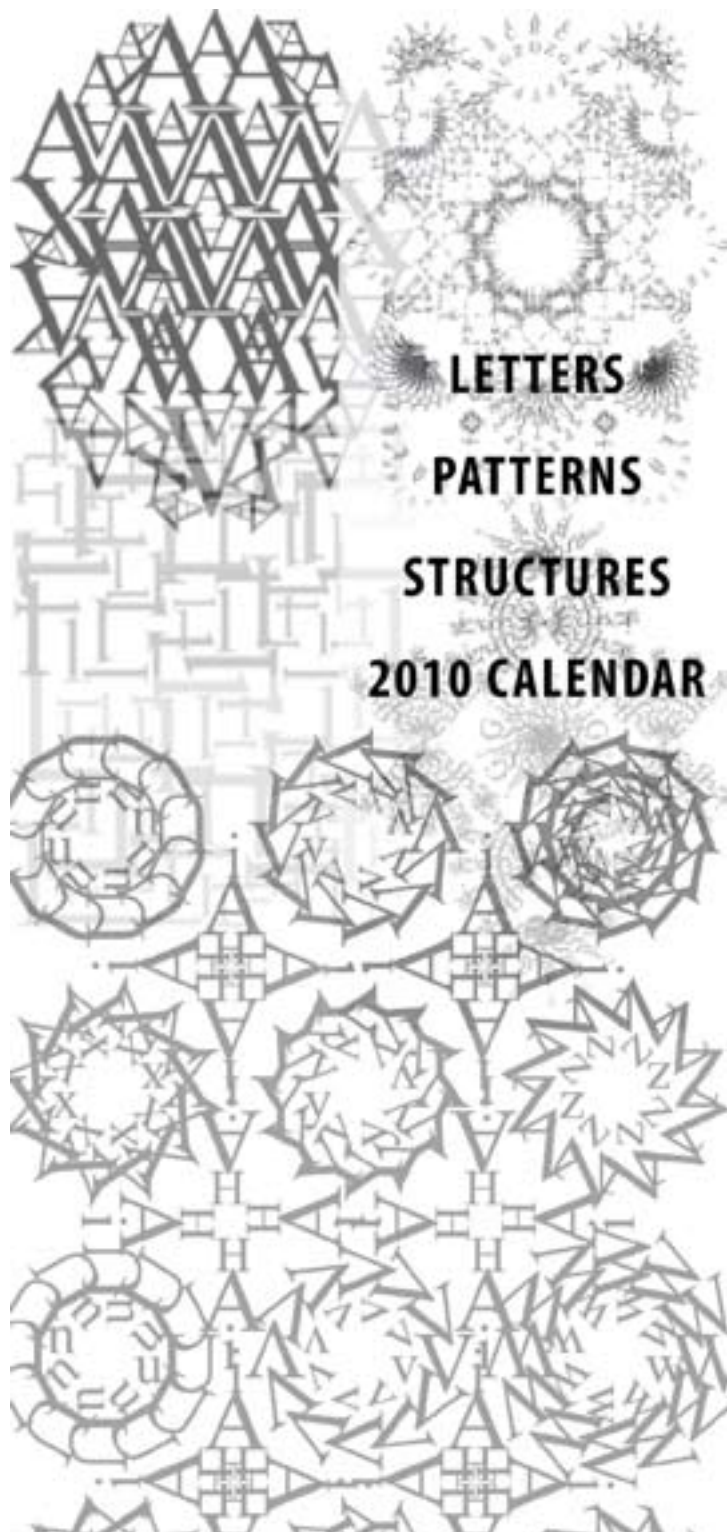
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## CO-LAB: AN INTERVIEW WITH KEITH & ROSMARIE WALDROP

By JenMarie Davis & Travis Macdonald

**Fact-Simile:** Keith & Rosmarie, thanks so much for agreeing to do this interview and for sending along what sounds like a wonderful package of reading materials. I'm sure I speak for both Travis and myself when I say that we can't wait to sink our eyes into everything enclosed. In the meantime, we were hoping to start things off with the question below. Please feel free to answer in any manner/format you desire. Also, we would be delighted to include one or two of your collaborations in the upcoming issue as well, if that's possible. But I'm probably getting ahead of myself...to the interview:

According to the French writer Jacques Roubaud: "When Rosemarie Waldrop writes poetry, when she writes poems, she writes her poems: the poetry of Rosemarie Waldrop. When Keith Waldrop writes poetry, when he writes poems, he writes his poems:

the poetry of Keith Waldrop. But when Rosemarie and Keith, when Keith and Rosemarie write poems together, whose are those poems? They are the poems of a third poet, whose name and gender and origin and language we do not know." Perhaps introductions are in order. Who is this third poet?

**Rosmarie:** We're a little in and out these days...Also, you got my name right in your address, but in the Roubaud quote you consistently copied it as Rosemarie. Please note it is Rosmarie, without middle e always! It is true that our collaborations do not quite sound like either Keith's

poems or mine. Which shows once again that the BETWEEN is fertile ground. I've often said so because of my personal situation between the cultures of Germany and the USA. But it's not just my personal situation: our reality is no longer substances, but systems of relations, "no longer things, but what happens BETWEEN things," as Charles Olson paraphrases Whitehead.



So, just as sitting between two stools may not be the most comfortable place, but keeps you moving, writing in collaboration with Keith does not always work, but when it does it seems to move us to a different place from our individual writing.

**FS:** My apologies for the misspelling. I wrote my masters thesis on *Curves to the Apple*, so I assure you it was an auto-correct issue with my computer. Which brings me neatly to our next question. You say that "our reality is no longer substance, but systems of relations." Language seems the most obvious of these empty systems. How does this

new reality affect your collaborative language? How does it affect and/or inform your other collaborative acts, i.e. publishing & translation? "No longer" implies a changed past, when did this shift in our collective reality occur?

**RW:** I'm delighted that you wrote on *Curves*!

I had thought Keith would answer this time, but he uses the fact that your question takes off from what I said as an excuse not to!

This "next question" is not one but a whole batch! Starting from the back: I suppose the shift came in science in the early 20th century, with the structure of the atom, quantum and relativity theories, etc. At least that's when it began to filter down into general consciousness. Whitehead's *Process and Reality* was published in

1929, but I assume he was lecturing earlier on "occasions" and "events" replacing the idea of substance. In literature we get Pound editing Ernest Fenollosa's *Notes on the Chinese Written Character* in 1918: "A true noun, an isolated thing, does not exist in nature. Things are only terminal points, or rather the meeting points, of actions, cross-sections cut through actions, snap-shots. Neither can a pure verb, an abstract motion, be possible in nature...thing and action cannot be separated."

The most obvious way relation affects our language when we collaborate is

that we allow ourselves to play with the other's manner. With the result that in some of our earlier pieces, e.g. *Until Volume One*, we are now not always certain who wrote which part. Whereas in my own writing, if something "Keithic" occurs to me I normally censor it.

Translation is an even more interesting case, but I think you should maybe specifically ask Keith about this one.

**FS:** Keith, I'm afraid we're not going to let you off that easy...How does the act of translation function in this post-Pound/Whitehead reality? What do you do when you find something "Rosmarie-ic" in your individual work?

**Keith:** About translation, what puzzles me most at the moment is how it happens to be interesting to so many people. In my earlier years, I was consistently turned down or talked down when I tried to publish translations. I was told often that translation is impossible, so why try? Now everybody wants them. What happened to reverse the current? (I admit this may sound more like a question than an answer, but I mean it merely to express the situation.) Of course, strictly speaking, it is impossible.

**FS:** Okay, so in your own words: "If translation [strictly speaking] is impossible...why try?"

**KW:** For the same reason I write poems, or write anything: it's good to reach, even if you can't grasp. That's why writing, and translating, stays interesting, because it calls for your best.

**FS:** Are you avoiding the question of "Rosmarie-ic" intrusions below?

**KW:** I don't find any Rosmarie-ic intrusions.

*cont'd on page 35*

## KEITH & ROSMARIE WALDROP

### Turn Now<sup>1</sup>

to one side of the heart  
so obstinate  
between

a love affair? sits down?

what ought to be  
and fresh

you'll understand  
how  
entirely he stopped  
forgetting

\*

although respectful of  
the world  
for turning

motionless  
salacious

at all times  
the elephant

\*

fleas unlike  
lice

though rarely: hairs and pairs  
of short, blunt, hooked

processes called anal  
hold on

the larva (fig. 55) has  
no legs unlike



\*

in further  
the spherical attraction

of cause could  
with ensuing

yet to suppose that square law  
be to a water drop  
be moving

\*

cannibalism may vary  
according to  
the blind  
more often transcendental  
member  
and pointed parts

\*

crystal covered  
with  
across

even worse on foot  
my childhood  
clear as now

crystal  
clear  
with disappearance

---

<sup>1</sup>This poem first appeared in *PHOEBE*, the magazine of George Mason University.

**PETER DAVIS**

## Poem Addressing Assumptions and Various Possibilities

Since you're reading this poem, I'm assuming you're enjoying yourself. Or you feel obligated to read it. Perhaps, as a friend or student or something, you feel you must really see what this is about. You want to be fair to me as a person and so you keep plowing through it, even through this clause, intent on living up to your end of the friend-or-student-of-the-poet-bargain. It would be cool for me if this poem were assigned to you in one of your college-level English classes—if so, congratulations on taking your studies so seriously. Sometimes it is only through education that we can discover stuff as cool as this poem. I hope you feel good about yourself for learning. Also, I hope you'll project some of those good feelings on me. It's possible you might be reading this poem because you've been prodded to by your government, mom, or doctor. But I hope you're reading this mainly because you like it so much. Because you're, like, "Dude, this poem is fucking terrific!" And, "This quoting of me really rocks!"

## Poem Addressing Self-Hatred, Environmental Factors, and the Importance of Your Existence

If you're not enjoying this poem but you're still reading it, I think you should consider a couple of things. For one, you may not be enjoying this poem for external/environmental reasons. For instance, you may be in an airport and outside they are doing construction work and there is a persistent banging that you consciously think isn't very bothersome, but, unconsciously, your body and mind may be absorbing some of the irritation created in the universe by the rather large construction equipment. Or you could have your screaming child or children clinging on your leg, wanting juice, or to eat your cigarettes, or something. It's possible you may need a cigarette, though it's more possible that if you smoke you should quit, because, ultimately, that will make you feel better and then you will be more likely to enjoy this poem. You would even feel indebted to this poem for your health! Maybe you are feeling bitter about a recent divorce or are troubled by something in a personal relationship. You may have other health or interpersonal problems. What I'm trying to say is that you might not like this poem for reasons that have nothing to do with what is written here.

Poem Addressing How I Kneel at Your Feet, Worshipping You Because, Like any Religion,  
You Deserve Worship

Whether you are happy with this poem or not, I appreciate you staying here with me. The thought of you is creating a kind of warmth in this basement that I'm sitting in now. Thank you for being here with me. Holding me, as it were, within the infinite hope of your plausibility. I will be beholding your beauty and your potential glory forever, which illuminates this tiny insect-like cave.

**RAY SUCCRE****The Manner of a Low Sky-Creep**

And the manner of the monotone, the undercast white,  
and the spitting, gravid, wallowing gourd of mist  
that brings grim moods and coats, the stirring cold,  
the white or flippant grey, Winter, this non-personified man,  
this shrill cult of submission to cold.

The sputum beetles down, not all at first, then all.  
The Fall is gone, having stood before horns blowing misery,  
left us in a suspension, after and under its tepid warmth,  
as Winter bitches his fingers in the earth,  
and turns us over to the long and hard way.

**DUANE LOCKE**

## Things Happen Without any Conscious Design

A choreographer of signifieds, the ballet took place  
On a rice-paper, gilt-edged scroll, unrolled,  
Finite, infinite,  
Smooth, stippled,  
Telluric, tel quel, tenebrous, a twilight tulip,

All the dancers wore azure shoes, the stockings,  
Waterfalls

Of

Snowflakes, disconnected atmospheres of faraways,  
The earth rendered a radical, radial forever,

But when spotlight seen  
The pink powder on faces  
Prowled

On gray gravel, blued, paths purled through  
Dark bamboo,  
The tissue-paper, backlit moon  
Burned catechisms  
Of a cautious chorus of chained clarinets attired  
In chartreuse dresses.

If were as if the agora were an aporia. None  
Could speak the familiar language of commerce  
And coercion. Communication was glossolalia,  
Grandiloquent as  
The grand daughters of conjunctions, colons,  
Semicolons, or commas.

Glossesd by swamp savants,  
Cypress  
Tree frogs,  
So that every sound that arose  
From a graphic inscription  
Had  
A pale green tint.



**MONICA PECK**

notes on a recent encounter with a poached saber-toothed gorilla by a.p. orria

three of us happened into a clearing the other morning and there it was: the slaughtered carcass of a saber-toothed gorilla –

from whose long knuckles grow distinctive saber-like teeth<sup>2</sup>

although these calcium deposits are on the hands and feet of the saber-toothed gorilla – for some reason they are classified not as claws, but teeth, fangs or tusks –

perhaps it is the funnel shape of the deposits – and the nervous branching within their roots

when fully-functioning these gorilla's fingers make for a formidable foe

we had obviously interrupted poachers – who had fled the scene before being able to finish – so we set about removing the teeth ourselves – to deprive the criminals of any chance for financial gain after their murderous deed –

a horrible bloody task – night fell – and there we were – when the lights from a helicopter flooded our scene – we couldn't expect anything but an immediate arrest –

luckily – we were on a cruise ship and had been role-playing in a virtual reality machine – that's why everything seemed so real –

that's this ship's gimmick – everyone pretends to be a poacher –

in the end, I still feel rotten for having cut up the corpse – and for the inadvertent rise of greed in my belly when I'd calculated our potential fortune once we'd sold the teeth

---

<sup>2</sup> Much like the duck-billed platypus' venomous claw in shape – though the gorilla is not venomous – nor are any primates to my knowledge.

**BILLY CANCEL**

## Uneasy Slice of Fantasy Mechanism

after recent indulgence our usage was shackled  
family fun sky peeping in hindsight  
the anti had landed &  
it all looked so impoverished

OVERWHELMED DOMINANCE summoned  
me to SOMBRE PALACE...  
no more Generous Exhibition!  
farewell Glittering Unusual!

## By First Light Hyrcania's Strange Coast

& GENERATION WITLESS began to chant  
“We Shall All Lose Count!” & “Meet Us At  
The Ambush!” i wished for nothing more  
than to disembarass myself from this mob.

**MARK DECARTERET**

from Feasts/Week 6

**st jerome emiliani**

orphans will often

inherit these phonecalls where

there's little but breath

**st caedmon**

the bell of the cow

sounds celestial next to

this cell's hellish choir

**JOHN CROSS**

## Mathias sets out to study song

Mathias went down to the sea pierced his eyes all in black  
upon his head tears at his hair must go begging begun to flicker must go begging  
it rained tears at his hair must go begging begun to flicker must go begging  
regions of moon upon his head in place of the sun in place of the sun all in black  
all in black must go begging Mathias goes down to the sea upon his head tears at his hair

all in black must go begging regions of moon in place of the sun folding and unfolding  
Mathias went down to the sea upon his head must go begging  
begun to flicker must go begging a photograph number of release in place of the sun  
pierced his eyes regions of moon  
in place of the sun the maker releases  
risen earth in place of the sun in place of the sun pierced his eyes

number of release pierced his eyes regions of moon number of release all in black  
must go begging  
upon his head tears at his hair must go begging  
regions of moon number of release years had dawned a light must go out before  
risen earth Mathias went down to the sea pierced his eyes

## Mathias sets out to study birth

a hole off center blazing from body to soft ear  
dragged on as Mathias could carry gender shriek at first he stood still  
a hole off center he thought dark birds

dark birds blazing from body very bareness stripped trees  
a hole off center braves the debris

at first he stands still blazing from body gathered up gender shriek  
blazing from body as he could carry  
like skin sky stands very bareness

like skin stripped trees dark birds  
bolts gears twisted wire dark birds dark birds dragged on  
black crayon to cover black birds gathered up as Mathias could carry



Mathias rose from the couch particularly tired

*[he] had a genius for brushing up against a woman, a child, a bird and passing it by, then filling the void with a woman, a child, a bird. [he] knew nothing about a woman, a child, a bird for that matter:*

*"he don't plant a woman, a child, a bird  
don't plant a woman, a child, a bird  
them that plants them is soon forgotten  
but old Mathias he just keeps rollin' along"*

*a woman, a child, a bird is the correlate of a woman, a child, a bird. a woman, a child, a bird exists only as a function of a woman, a child, a bird, and of circuits; it is a woman, a child, a bird on the circuits that create a woman, a child, a bird, and which a woman, a child, a bird creates. a woman, a child, a bird is defined by entries and exits; something must enter a woman, a child, a bird and exit from a woman, a child, a bird. a woman, a child, a bird imposes a frequency.*

Mathias sets out to study the narrator

pulling shut to be held dreams of animals suddenly woke  
Mathias through Mathias makes it louder  
hissing through its thin blue shell

Mathias hissing through jarring back suddenly woke  
baring his teeth dreams of animals

against his mouth suddenly woke  
dreams of animals makes it louder

## FRANCESCO LEVATO

pages 44-45 from War Rug

It has become ritual                  this running  
to the rooftop

in search of smoke, divination  
in how its column contorts

writhes up from a point  
a little too close.

What does it say

that from its charcoal stained black  
I can tell a neighbor

gestured wrongly,  
asked too many questions,  
may have spoke out of turn;

that I am thankful the flames  
haven't touched my house, welded fingers  
together as I covered my face

that I won't  
be one               to pick meat from bones,  
                sift fragments from cinders  
to assemble a whole,  
                            that all I need  
to know of fire  
                            is unrelated to warmth.

\*\*\*

[ IMAGE:

A civilian tries to extinguish a flaming van  
with a bucket of sand. ]

\*\*\*

## ANDREW MCEWAN

### from repeater

*ASCII is not art. It's a code, a way of hiding things within smaller things... The codes covered here are the beginning of a crude alphabet for our new machines' pidgin, a baby language, for better and worse, mindlessly mumbled sub-atomic particles of thought.*  
 – Tom Jennings

i

0 a figure at the far end of headlights' trace

1 bulimic transmitter sends into expanse

1 latches onto preordained schemata

0 a figure of headlights' trace

1 arrangement of connections that either sever or don't

0 a figure as the far end of light's constant movement

0 a figure and a vehicle connected

1 proof of existence that propels any machine

j

0 two hands clasp

1 a coordinate system constantly repositions

1 maintains severed constellation distance

0 one hand limits another

1 reports an isolated cohesion

0 two bodies push together at the hand

1 physicality supplants physicality as the severed wires of space

0 autonomous bodies' futile conjoin

k

0      when children create is it through removal or affixation

1      poem begets machinery begets

1      code begets sender begets

0      do children remove to purge

1      receiver begets code begets

0      do children affix to compensate

1      numbers begets letters begets

1      words begets poem's machinery

1

0      in and out of the computer people walk

1      code is not more circular than zero

1      code is more circular than a string of zeros

0      mimic, receive, the people continue toward horizon of bits

1      code is conceit


1      code is how it is used

0      peopled swerve encodes meaning in the walls

0      people stand – continue, the hum of iterate movement

## MICHAEL ALFARO

Keyboard<sup>1</sup>

[Esc] [F1] [F2] [F3] [F4] [F5] [F6] [F7] [F8] [F9] [F10] [F11] [F12] [Num] [Prt Sc] [Delete] [Pause]  
 | ~ | | ! | | @ | | # | | \$ | | % | | ^ | | & | | \* | | ( | | ) | | \_ | | + | | BackSpace | | Home |  
 | | ` | | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | 6 | | 7 | | 8 | | 9 | | 0 | | - | | = | | ← | | |  
 [Tab] [Q] [W] [E] [R] [T] [Y] [U] [I] [O] [P] [ { ] [ } ] [ | ] [PgUp]  
 [CapsLock] [A] [S] [D] [F] [G] [H] [J] [K] [L] [ : ] [ " ] [↵Enter] [PgDn]  
 [ ↑ Shift ] [Z] [X] [C] [V] [B] [N] [M] [ < ] [ > ] [ ? ] [ ↑ Shift ] [End]  
 [Ctrl] [Fn] [  ] [Alt] [ ] [Alt] [Ctrl] [Ins] [ ↑ ]  
 [ ← ] [ ↓ ] [ → ]

---

<sup>1</sup> Found poem.



**MARK TERRILL**

## Self Portrait in Aisle Seven

Not a single day  
without its arduous impiety

just something else  
you have to work your way through

like a sudden loss of personality  
or a ribald extension of character

or like anything else that smacks you  
upside your febrile cognizance

while cruising down aisle seven  
of the supermarket on a Friday afternoon.

**ANNE GORRICK****Graham Cracker Ragas**  
*for Martha Gorrick*

Agar corked to karma

Her cargo's tragic mark

armor and okra  
groat and argot

Let's chart her vigorous charm

But, the math harms her

Roughly Torah girthed

March caromed against her tricks

ghat grim, roach marred

Let's add two gar to her ark  
Tar against a torched art

Both rag-hearted and rag-armed  
heart mocked, the "ah" in "hark"

Her charred trigonometries tacked as stars

The difference between art and harm

He Left a Codicil in the Kiln  
*for Lou Dimock*

Slink in moonlit  
slunk in misconduct

What is the difference in conduction between milk and oil?

Pieces of silk buried in soil...

The limits of a cuckhold's minions

He hid in oilskin  
He clicks the moon's dilution

When the lotus outsold the kilt

Comic or colic?

When I tell and what is untold

Under a mink moon  
nouns stunned in night-soot  
ink skims across the starloom  
knitted in milt and mint

He is trapped in a tin sulk  
a kimono knotted around his kilos  
the mark of the clinic

Lotus-slim, oilskin, slummed

Thrush  
*for the Smith kids*

Triple elision

Teething stars  
hint eden

She's full of scrolls

The tile yell  
all is on it

tease out a hint of mane

myths of shale  
and lilies

anneal, limn

name everything

Noh soire over Seine

on Lent

sine figures lean

caught in the hymn seine  
unseem and seem, tin

## ADAM STRAUSS

## Aporias 1

Traced                      on vellum in                      the flashiest spine possible  
    Plumbs: depth                      becomes                      crushing breath:  
 A redaction a                      reaction of                      the body as                      we                      know it.  
    Roses                      close up for the night                      narrates.  
    Glorious aporias go                      spelunking—one spelling  
 Chun King through their gait chucking                      a cap                      floats downstream  
    Banking                      at an isle whose every extremity is a dive: swan song  
 The muck a trumpeter steps up                      thus let's dip thus let's slip and                      slide a  
    Straight shot to lively.  
    Alembic fosse                      fossilizes a limbic                      fissure occurs  
    Freshening what looked like the                      final day of a freshet:  
    Love is a freshet. Limpidities rehearse. Truth limns lies. Limbs lie.  
    Love                      endlessly defines                      indefinite.  
 What is a period? A period punctuates establishing perplexity. What is perplexity?  
 Perplexity is an instance. What is an? An is that which comes with an after. What is  
 after? After is noon and before math. What is and? And is part of some rhetorical  
 structures? What is rhetoric? I love you. What is you? You is a bloodstream.  
 What is is? Is is itself. What is itself? Itself is impossible. What is impossible?  
 Impossible is more than one and less than nothing. What is nothing? Nothing is what  
 nobody's noticed yet. What is noticed? Noticed is eyes opened or closed depending.  
 What is eyes? Eyes is the round things ophthalmologists bring to procedure classes.





Painters' Exhalations 434  
*after Hans Hoffman's Nocturnal Splendor*

The eye in constant mourning  
cannot imagine  
answers atop the unfolded page of night's  
dramatic questions. The philosopher  
has not slept, not yet acquainted self  
with time's many changing silhouettes,  
delineating  
moon's hiding and  
grass's rise into fully sharpened  
blades.  
His mind, mechanical, and  
the logic churning his isolation  
has caused many doors to stay  
ajar, though his body cannot  
explain its reputation for  
lying still.

Painters' Exhalations 435  
*after Winslow Homer's High Cliff, Coast of Maine*

The martial artist's gnarled knuckles,  
his hand of symbolized granite,  
toughened from constant consistency  
training to obscure pain, slamming  
velocity into immovable brick  
and the antiquated skin of an oak's  
massive back.  
Time has shaped a normalized deformity.  
The hand, acclimated to idealized tool,  
discreet weapon.  
Akin to the ebony rock, planted  
whole near a sea of continuous borage,  
crashing with criticizing gall, a parent's  
tongue forcing dissipation of idealized  
identity. The rock, disposition of  
existence gathered around memorial force,  
a body of kingdom built upon laughter  
towards an inferior legacy.

*cont'd from page 8*

**FS:** Is this a shared email address?

**KW:** Yes.

**FS:** What about in your lives as editors/publishers. How does the collaborative act function within this framework?

**RW:** I want to come back to translation, which is a very interesting collaboration even if it is in one direction rather than back and forth. Keith has often said it very well: translation allows you to write something you would not be able to write on your own. This is probably the real reason for translating: you find a text you admire—you wish you had written it, but know you couldn't possibly have—so you “write” it by translating it.

As for editing/publishing. Our tastes are rather similar, so there is a fair amount of agreement. But we don't have to agree on a ms. If one of us is totally enthusiastic we do it (assuming we have the time and money)—even if the other does not see it. While we were still printing the Burning

Deck books letterpress in our basement it was very simple: whoever really wanted the ms. had to do the work typesetting and printing. Now that we typeset on the computer like everybody else and have the printing done outside, the work divides more on the lines that I do the inside (mostly because I'm more comfortable with the computer), whereas Keith does the covers, mostly as collage.

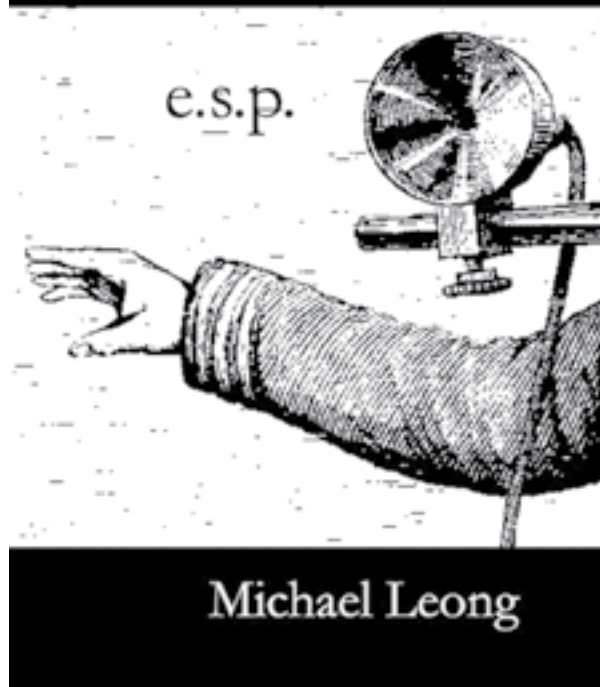
**FS:** Keith, is collage, like translation, a one-way collaborative act? An editorial one? How do the two differ beyond the obvious matter of medium?

**KW:** I use collage elements as a painter uses paints or inks (which I use also).

Used in collage, elements lose (at least to a large extent) the character they have in their original setting. If they do not lose enough of that character, they remain quotations, not collage elements.

**FS:** Rosmarie, I can't help but notice that your work with Keith, *Flat with NO Key* in particular, tends to structure itself in a layered manner in which the edges of individual thought are visible, but consistently blurred by repetition and variation. Is collaboration, then, necessarily an act of collage?





**RW:** In our case it certainly is. But I am amused at “the edges of individual thought are visible” because when we collaborate we also occasionally allow ourselves to imitate the other’s manner. Not so much in *Flat with NO Key* as in earlier sequences. With the result that when we collected our collaborations for *Well Well Reality* (Post-Apollo Press) we couldn’t always remember who had written which parts.

*The rules are important, they help make it all happen.*

**FS:** In light travels and *Flat with NO Key* the collaborative patterns seem light-hearted. The repetitions jump like a private joke between two writers. This patterning seems to hinge primarily on

the sound of language at work rather than its image. In *Curves To the Apple*, on the other hand, there seems to be more at stake in the narrative and the patterning of language is both sonic and image-based. How does the act of collaboration affect one’s attention to language? Does play necessarily replace the pursuit of image-based structures?

**RW:** I don’t think the act of collaboration necessarily affects one in any particular way. It just happens that Keith and I have gotten more playful in these particular collaborations. In my own “singular” work I mostly write sequences.



*e.s.p.*

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This requires a certain continuity, hence narrative or mock-narrative elements, repeating images, etc. In the collaborations I tend to think more in terms of the single poem.

**FS:** Structure seems to play a key part in your collaborations, particularly in the alphabetic arrangement of *Flat with NO Key*. How do you arrive at a given structure? Is it a goal from the beginning or something that arises over the course of the collaboration?

**RW:** We always set one or more formal parameters at the beginning. In *Flat with NO Key*, there were 3 rules.

*[W]hen we collected our collaborations...  
we couldn't alway remember who had  
written which parts.*

1. Each person would either repeat or modify the lines of the preceding stanza plus add 1 line.

2. Each line had to have at least 1 word beginning with the letter that is the title of the poem.

3. The word beginning with the title letter had to be kept whereas the rest of the line could be changed. E.g. "B":

"The ferry boat comes out of the mist." "Boat" has to be kept, but stanza 2 has it "emerg[ing] from a realm of shells" and, in the second line, "into a region of bone." Now "boat" and "bone" have to be kept, so the 3rd stanza becomes:

*The boat emerges from shells and mist  
into a region of bone  
ferrying the definition of between*

In *Until Volume One*, each poem had to have the word "until" in the middle, and the author changed on this word. If you initiated the poem you could either write the first half leading up to



"until" or begin with "until" and write the second half. Then your partner had to complete the poem.

The rules are important, they help make it all happen. Most of our attempts that fizzled out had rules that were either too lax to be generative or too complicated and therefore stifling.

Though of course others fizzled out because one of us was simply not in the right mood.

**FS:** Keith, with Baudelaire's *The Flowers of Evil*, you chose the verset as a vehicle for your translations... How does this device interact with Baudelaire's original rhythm and tone?

**KW:** *The Flowers of Evil* of Baudelaire are in various French meters and rhymed. An English translation cannot use the same meters, since they do not exist in English. English meters can be used, of course, and often have been. There are also versions in free verse and others in prose. A translator must choose whatever he or she finds possible to use. I felt I could get closer to Baudelaire's tone by using versets, a sort of measured prose. And I consider his tone to be the most important thing--though I might add that prose also makes possible versions closer to the meaning of the poems. That something is lost in crossing from French to English is hardly surprising, but I kept what I could. I hope it is not taken (at a glance) to be a "literal"

prose trot. It has its own rhythm answering, I hope, to his.

**FS:** I'm afraid that's about all the time we have. This issue needs to get to press in the next couple of weeks. Keith, we'd like to offer our heartfelt congratulations for the recent National Book Award nomination! It is an inspiring list this year to be sure...

We'd like to close with the question of literary lineage. Who are the writers you look to, past and present?

**RW:** This is hard to answer because there are so many! But the writers who have "fed" my writing most would be Rilke, Emily Dickinson, Pound, Creeley, Oppen, Gertrude Stein, Kafka, Musil, Valéry, Wittgenstein, Agamben, William & Henry James, Edmond Jabès, Claude Royet-Journoud, Anne-Marie Albiach, Emmanuel Hocquard, Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, Lyn Hejinian, bp nichols, Cole Swensen, Norma Cole, Yoel Hoffmann...

**KW:** Earlier English writers I look to most often include Pope and Marvell. Modernist authors who have meant





much to me include Pound, Stevens, Queneau; in the next generation Oppen, Bronk. The work of Claude Royet-Journoud has meant much to me.

**FS:** And, finally: what projects, collaborative or otherwise, are on the horizon?

**KW:** I'm translating several French poets, including B  n  dicte Vilgraine, and working towards a large gathering of poems and a prose work.

**RW:** I suspect our next collaborative project will have to be editorial: putting together an anthology for Burning Deck's 50th anniversary in 2011. On my own, I've started a series of poems that derive their vocabulary from dictionary definitions, there is the "Hidden Haiku" project that will abridge classics to 17 syllables, and there are several translation projects (a couple more Jab  s books, an Austrian writer, Brigit Kempker).

**FS:** Thank you both so much for your time!



**Bird Dog:** A dog used to retrieve game birds. To follow a subject of interest with persistent attention. A scout . . .

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## IN REVIEW

### COLLAPSIBLE POETICS THEATER

by Rodrigo Toscano

Albany: Fence Books, 2008

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Reviewed by Dale Smith

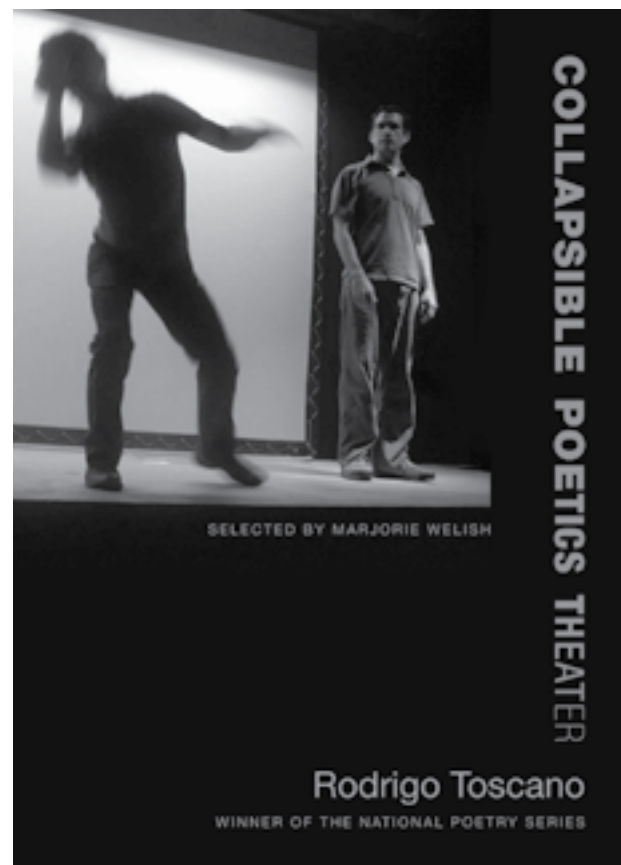
Elocution is a word we no longer often hear in relation to poetry, or in association with much of anything else for that matter. The knowledge of physical presentation, vocal emphasis, and bodily performance was banished mostly to speech departments and acting studios with the arrival of radio, film, and television. But poets once performed their work with attention to physical presentation. Wordsworth, for instance, recited his poetry in grand style while Coleridge opted for a more subdued approach. The Beats stood on tables, set things on fire, inviting an element of dangerous play into their readings. We are more accustomed now to the lone speaker before a podium who banters a little between poems, although Slam Poets and other performance-based authors improvise for an audience with an eye to elocutionary style. Rodrigo Toscano's *Collapsible Poetics Theater* does something quite different. His words, like scripts to a play, create a raw outline that forms the basis for more kinetic and multi-vocal performances, (some of which are available for online viewing). His book, then, should be read with an eye to the physical gestures, facial expressions, and bodily synchronizations that motivate his placement of words on the page. Using print, performance space, and digital media, Toscano's interactive project strategically perverts the private reading of a text with the public carnival of performance.

Significantly, these masques, dialogues, "anti-masques," plays and radio plays, "body movement poem[s]," and "modular poetic activities" are written for quick production, using actors and non-actors who coordinate their readings to give physical presence to the work. To accomplish this, Toscano invests in public and private language, the transgression of social boundaries, and the coordination of communities to rehearse and resist cultural and ethnic tropes. "Pig Angels of the Americlypse," for instance, an absurdist and incongruent "anti-masque," hinges on the recurring Spanish word *buscar*—to seek. Combining Spanish and English, it presents a parody of corporate culture in the form of four players who busy themselves with a fax (pronounced "fahks") machine while discussing issues of trans-national immigration and enculturation. While such broad topics easily could distract an audience, Toscano's satiric, but probing, vocal and visual performances are based

on bilingual dialogue that re-contextualizes and subverts a reading:

{P1} The sun *the sun*... {P1 jolts back by glare;  
P2 & P3 straining to see it (directly below)}  
{P2} And these puercos {snorts like a pig}  
{sneering} *sin destino*.  
{P1} "Se busca"?  
{P2} "Wanted"—"is sought"—"we seek"  
{P3 takes out a pencil; makes a gesture for each  
word (clearly visible to the spectators)}  
Se busca—  
lapiz {"pencil"}  
filoso {"sharp"}  
ambriento {"starving"} (36)

The quick, bilingual pace defamiliarizes the guarded perceptions of ethnicity and power relations, reorienting problems of cultural identity from more common media discussions. The "puercos...sin destino" (37) (pigs... without destiny) return throughout as players riff on common cultural tropes of office and national politics. "Oof," shouts player 3, "Dual citizenship, *that's* / tight underwear" (37). Here a dramatic critique of national sovereignty complicates the relations of self to citizenship. This downplay of "dual citizenship" suggests an impasse



where notions of allegiance to nation-states are complicated by other identifying codes. Player 1 announces, “Nationstate *up*—personal dreams *down*—got it?” (40), signaling a disaffection with such global identifications. As Player 3 asks, “Who are the *real* Americans of today?” (40).

This questioning of what constitutes “real” Americans associates with a number of cultural obsessions with identity. The meaning of the question relies on how it is spun. Although he plays on a patriotic trope routinely announced by conservatives (think Rush Limbaugh), the notion of a “real American” in this situation retains deeper associations to self-identity and ethnicity. Toscano examines this in relation to the ironic speed of contemporary global travel by which a peregrination of ideas, words, goods, and identities motivates American “citizens” to perform their cultural allegiance with increasing desperation. One suggested improvisation, for instance, implies a rapid collapse of cultural identity:

“Hey-a Dan, my man, how was your trip to Canada?” “Cool cool, except, well, my Walmart card, you know, didn’t uh, but the *Target* card, *plus* my visa to Serbia—“Serbo-Italians!? coming *out* of Kentucky, now, don’t they have—“ “yeah, a

Starbucks card, in *this* instance, is uh, *helluh*...hellah better than a chain cutter on load...” (41).

These neo-Liberal voices reveal a consciousness organized by corporate brands and ethnic identities: place is absent

as these constructed selves find their orientation through products. “[Y]ou know what I want, Dan, like, right now,” the voices continue, “‘Pyramidal Orientation’ ‘a bucket of duty-free fried chicken’ ‘for the road’ ‘no, for here’ ‘where’s here?’” The obvious turn—“where’s here”—figures prominently: how does the

subject find cultural meaning in an endlessly proliferating global marketplace given the absence of a strongly constituted sense of place?

The insistence on poetry as a collective, public, and political activity shapes this work, too. Toscano’s preference for the rhetorical over the formal, for communal action over representation, leads him at times to invite some badly needed critical reflection from his peers. (From the looks of the images online, the audiences are composed of people generally sympathetic to Toscano’s project and who are familiar with contemporary avant-garde poetry.) “*Aren’t you just an aging adjunct?*” Toscano writes. “*In the style of a*

*These neo-Liberal voices reveal a consciousness organized by corporate brands and ethnic identities: place is absent...*

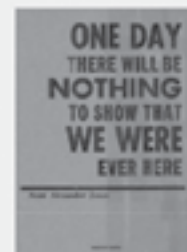
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### ---One Day There Will Be Nothing To Show That We Were Ever Here, by Scott Alexander Jones

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*Grangerian chant / we should chant...now...together...in concert... / Aren't you just an aging / McHomo / Cogitans / pan-fried / monkey?"* (84)? Such acting out shows off Toscano's self-critical commitments, allowing him to transcend, through the many voices of his theater, his own identifications as a poet, actor, and labor activist, among others. "This / ever-shrinking / ancient-future / ritual of 'indie' / sexpression // mc'fumbles / and mc'quips / of economic / confidence" (85) might address with stark impact some of the political assumptions consciously or unconsciously maintained by an audience of contemporary poets.

While these performances reinforce certain socio-political desires for an audience already mostly in agreement with Toscano's project, it would be interesting to see some of these played before auditors of more diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Moreover, readers without access to the plays are at a disadvantage, for the flatness of the page only distantly correlates with the kinetic movement of the stage. Despite this, his theatrical performances invest in a public act to search (*buscar* again) for relations between seemingly disconnected phenomena. He asks his audience to reflect on how we speak to one another and how we see others for whom representation is more problematically coded. Opening or expanding those codes in order to adapt to new situations can reorient perspectives to complex and contested social environments.



Dale Smith is a poet and rhetorical studies scholar at the University of Texas at Austin. He writes about cultural memory at the blog *Sycamore and Flowers*.

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## BIOS

Michael J. Alfaro is publisher and editor of Silenced Press ([www.silencedpress.com](http://www.silencedpress.com)). He lives in Columbus, Ohio but he has been thinking about Portland.

Billy Cancel is a Brooklyn based English poet, he has been published in numerous presses in the UK & US as well as having his sound poetry featured on-line. Billy Cancel has performed at The Poetry Project amongst other NYC venues & also publishes & distributes his own chapbooks. He is also in the noise poetry band Farms.

John CROSS earned an undergraduate degree at the University of CA, Los Angeles, and an M.F.A. from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. His work has appeared in *New American Writing*, *Volt*, *Forklift Ohio*, and other journals and was awarded the 2001 Mary Roberts Rinehart Award. His chapbook, *staring at the animal* (Tupelo) is forthcoming. He lives in Los Angeles, with his wife and four cats, and teaches at Westridge School in Pasadena.

Peter Davis' first book of poetry is *Hitler's Mustache*. His second book, *Poetry! Poetry! Poetry!* is forthcoming in 2010 from Bloof Books. He's recently had poems in journals like *Double Room*, *Fou*, *Shampoo*, and *Spooky Boyfriend*. You can check out his website: [artisnnecessary.com](http://artisnnecessary.com).

Mark DeCarteret's saints have appeared in *Alba*, *beard of bees*, *horse less*, *can't exist*, *Omphalos*, and (soon) *elimae*. Other poetry in *AGNI*, *Caliban*, *Chicago Review*, *Conduit*, *Cream City Review*, *gutcult*, *h\_ngm\_n*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Killing the Buddha*, *Mudfish*, *New Orleans Review*, and *Third Coast* as well as the anthologies *American Poetry: The Next Generation* (Carnegie Mellon Press, 2000), *Thus Spake the Corpse: An Exquisite Corpse Reader* (Black Sparrow Press, 1999) and *Under the Legislature of Stars: 62 New Hampshire Poets* (Oyster River Press) which he also co-edited. Work is also forthcoming in *Boston Review*, *Coconut*, *failbetter*, *Salamander*, and *Superstition Review*. He was recently selected as the seventh Poet Laureate of Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Anne Gorricks' poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in: *American Letters and Commentary*, *Copper Nickel*, *The Cortland Review*, *def*, *Dislocate*, *eratio*, *Fence*, *Filling Station*, *Gutcult*, *Hunger Magazine*, *No Tell Motel*, *Otoliths*, *The Seneca Review*, *Sous Rature*, *Sulfur*, *Wheelhouse*, and *word for/word*. Her first book, *Kyotologic*, is available from Shearsman Books (Exeter, UK). She curates the reading series Cadmium Text, featuring innovative writing from in and around New York's Hudson Valley. More about the readings at [www.cadmiumtextseries.blogspot.com](http://www.cadmiumtextseries.blogspot.com)

Poet, translator, and new media artist Francesco Levato is the executive director of The Poetry Center of Chicago. He is the author of *Marginal State* and *War Rug*, a book length documentary poem. His work has been published internationally in journals and anthologies, both in print and online, including *Drunken Boat*, *The Progressive*, *XCP: Cross Cultural Poetics*, *Versal*, and many others. His poetry-based

video artwork has been exhibited in galleries and featured at film festivals in Berlin, Chicago, New York, and elsewhere. For more information please visit [www.francescolevato.com](http://www.francescolevato.com).

Duane Locke lives hermetically by ancient oak, an underground stream, and an osprey's nest in rural Lakeland, Florida. He has 6,418 different poems published in print magazines, *American Poetry Review*, *Nation*, etc. and e-zines, *CounterExample Poetics*, *Pen Himalaya* (Nepal). And 21 books of poems. His three latest books, 2009, are *Yang Chu's Poems* (376 pp.) *Crossing Chaos, Canada* (order from publisher or Amazon); *Voices from a Grave* (40 pp.) erbacce, England (order from erbacce), and *Soliloquies from a High Wall Hidden Cemetery* (37 pp.) Differentia Press, California (Free download, [www.differentiapress.com](http://www.differentiapress.com)).

Andrew McEwan is from Bright's Grove, Ontario, and currently attends the University of Toronto. He has work published in *Dandelion*, and forthcoming in *Misunderstandings Magazine* and an anthology, *Gulch*, published by Tightrope Books. He is also the 2009-2010 editor of the Acta Victoriana literary journal at the University of Toronto.

George Moore has collaborated with painters, sculptors and conceptual artists in Spain, Portugal, Iceland and Canada, and his poetry has also appeared recently in England, Ireland, and France. He was a Neodata Fellowship recipient in 2009, a finalist for the Richard Snyder Memorial Prize in 2007, and earlier for The National Poetry Series, The Brittingham Award and The Anhinga Prize. He has new work with *Temenos*, *Bathhouse*, *Zone*, *Diode*, *International Zeitschrift*, *Diagram*, *Stickman Review*, and poetry previously in *The Atlantic*, *Poetry*, *Northwest Review*, *Colorado Review*, and elsewhere. Moore's eBook, *All Night Card Game in the Back Room of Time*, is available from [Poetschapbooks.com](http://Poetschapbooks.com) (2008), and his collection, *Headhunting*, was published by Edwin Mellen in 2002. He teaches literature and writing with the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Monica Peck is a writer and teacher in the Bay Area.

Felino A. Soriano (b. 1974, California) is a case manager and advocate for developmentally and physically disabled adults. He edits/publishes *Counterexample Poetics*, [www.counterexamplepoetics.com](http://www.counterexamplepoetics.com), an online journal of experimental artistry, and Differentia Press, [differentiapress.blogspot.com](http://differentiapress.blogspot.com), dedicated to publishing e-chapbooks of experimental poetry. As a poet, he has authored ten collections of poetry, including *Among the Interrogated* (BlazeVOX [books], 2008), *Search among the Absent Found* (Recycled Karma Press, 2009), and *r* (please press, 2009). The internal collocation of philosophical studies and love of classic and avant-garde jazz is the explanation for his poetic stimulation. Details are at his website, [www.felinosoriano.com](http://www.felinosoriano.com).

Adam Strauss has poems out in *BlazeVox* and *Otoliths*, as well as work forthcoming in *Drunken Boat* and *The Colorado Review* as well. A chapbook, *Address*, is available from Scantily Clad Press.

Ray Succre currently lives on the southern Oregon coast with his wife and son. He has been published in *Aesthetica*, *BlazeVOX*, and *Pank*, as well as in numerous others across as many countries. His novels *Tatterdemalion* (2008) and *Amphisbaena* (2009), both through Cauliay, are widely available in print. A third novel, *A Fine Young Day*, is forthcoming in Summer 2010. He tries hard.

Mark Terrill shipped out of San Francisco as a merchant seaman to the Far East and beyond, studied and spent time with Paul Bowles in Tangier, Morocco, and has lived in Germany since 1984, where he's worked as a shipyard welder, road manager for rock bands (American Music Club, Mekons, etc.), cook, postal worker and translator. The author of 15 volumes of poetry, memoir and translations, he recently guest-edited a special German poetry issue of the *Atlanta Review*, which includes his translations of Günter Grass, Peter Handke, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann and others. A three-time nominee for the Pushcart Prize, his own work has been translated into German, French and Portuguese, and he's given readings in various venues in Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris and Prague. His latest chapbook is *The Salvador-Dalai-Lama Express from Main Street Rag*. Other recent work published or forthcoming in *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Hanging Loose*, *Sentence*, *Noon*, *Washington Square*, *The Prague Revue*, *New Madrid*, *Hitotoki*, *Zen Monster* and elsewhere. He currently lives on the grounds of a former shipyard near Hamburg, Germany with his wife and a large brood of cats.

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