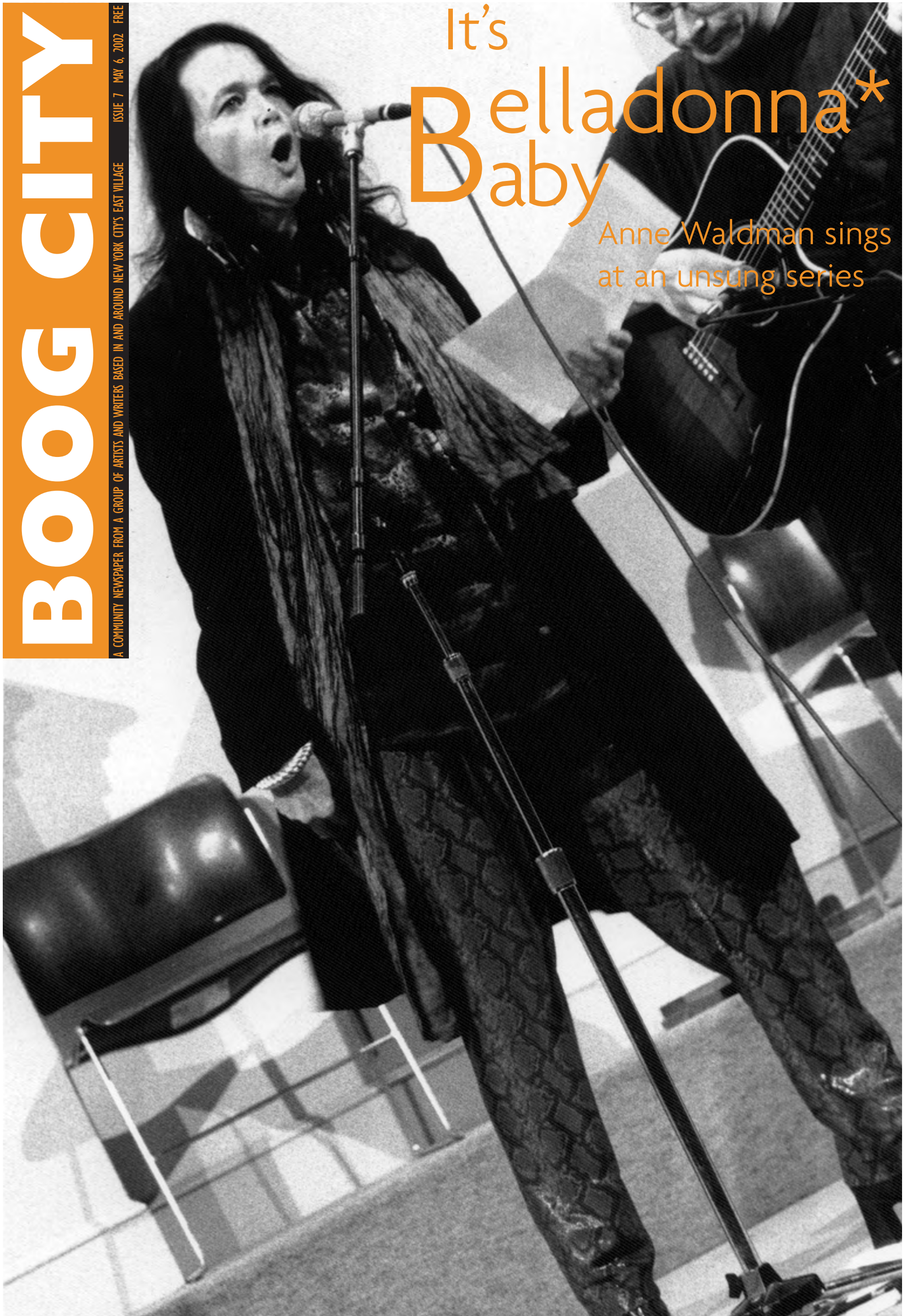


It's
Belladonna*
Baby

Anne Waldman sings
at an unsung series





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Our Schedule: *Everything Subject To Change!*
 (Watch for Grand Opening of Coffee Shop, "Best Coffee on the Block")

Tuesday, April 23 BOOG CITY 7 PUBLICATION POET PARTY BANDS 7PM \$6

Bob Hershon will read his sardonian melodia Brooklyn pigeon cucurucurus! Ed Berrigan survives another year! 9PM \$7 THE MIKE, MUMS & BEAU SHOW: Are you ready? Mike Ladd, Mums da Schemer, Beau Sia bring Hiphop Vaudeville to the Exxtremes' Exxtreme! Miss this Grand Opening at your peril.

Wednesday, April 24

7PM: Jane DeLynn's Leash – book party. Wear dog costume! 10PM, \$5: Janet Hamill & Moving Star are in residence every Wednesday in April. Now that's what I call National Poetry Month! LAST CHANCE TILL JUNE!!!

Thursday, April 25

7PM, \$5 URBANA SLAM! with Ragan Fox
 10PM, \$5 Laurel "Daddy" Barclay Untied

Saturday, April 27 PoBands (u can talk if u want to)

Battle of the PoBands!! 5 Bucks all Night
 8PM Ken Cormier Can't Shut Up Poetry \$5
 9PM Alan D Gilbert & Jason — Ambient Poetry
 10PM Ray Gang Ambient Souk
 11PM Ken Cormier Got Yr Back Poetry

Sunday, April 28 Langston Hughes! John S Hall!

4PM: \$7 "Visiting Langston: an afternoon with Mr. Hughes via David Mills and Willie Perdomo." David Mills, our preeminent portraitist of the poetry of Hughes will commemorate the centennial of Hughes' birth in a staged reading of poems by the "Shakespeare of Harlem" — the favorites and unknowns. Followed by a reading by Willie Perdomo, reading his new children's book, Visiting

Langston and his own poetry. "Langston Hughes has been reincarnated and lives in Spanish Harlem. His name is Willie Perdomo. Where a Nickel Costs a Dime is a priceless, precious package of poetry."—Claude Brown, author of *Manchild in the Promised Land*. Then our nighttime program brings on: *A whole lotta brilliant squirm and genius poetoids!* One \$7 ticket gets you:
 8PM John S Hall: Spoken Word God
 9PM Bradford Reed & the Amazing Pencilina
 10PM KING MISSILE III!

Monday, April 29

7PM to midnite! \$5 THE LITERARY KICKS "SOMETHING FOR PEACE" SPRING POETRY HAPPENING
 Todd Colby. White Collar Crime. (I think that sounds good, what do you guys think?) acclaimed WOMEN OF WORD series. Supreme Poets is reigned by the sassy Ebony Washington and will feature some of the nation's best poets and spoken word artists. Ebony is a spoken word artist who turns social commentary into art. She performs regularly with Women of Word and at the Sugar Shack, Jimmy's Uptown Cafe, Justin's and the Nuyorican Poets Cafe. Also, she has performed in the film Harlem Vibe and in the off-Broadway plays Louise (Escape Her Life) and Sex is More Than a Three Letter Word.

Wednesday, May 1

8:30 \$10 Supreme Poets Ebony Washington with Karen Jaime, Celena Cipriaso, Helena D. Lewis

Thursday, May 2

7PM, \$5 URBANA SLAM! with Patricia Smith
 10PM, \$5 Laurel "Daddy" Barclay Unhinged

Friday, May 3

6PM Coffee House Books Party for Gilbert Sorrentino's Little Casino. Mr Sorrentino will read and be signing copies, we're proud to say!
 8PM CALVIN HERNTON Praise Day

Saturday, May 4

9PM Waiting for Banjo: Everton Sylvester, top US Dub poet, leads this brilliant jazz trio. "The best poetry band this side of Heaven."

THE BOWERY POETRY CLUB

inside BOOG CITY

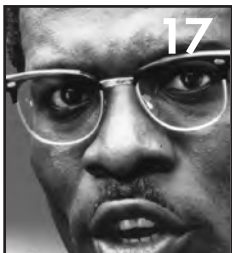
Editorial 4

Film

STEPHEN DIGNAN

The Myth of Fingerprints

Lumumba's vision of a united Africa comes to Harlem



Comics

Trane DeVore



Advertiser Index

Bowery Poetry Club	2
Belladonna*	19
Ladyfest East	20
Unbearables Arts Festival	20



Canon AE-1 28mm f 6 @ 1/60

On Location with Brian Ach



**Feature:
The Poetry Issue**

GREG FUCHS

5

Thieves of Paradise

How Yusef Kumunyakaa can save National Poetry Month

Music

JAMES WILK

6

A Punk in the Academy

What's in the water at UMass @ Amherst where Indie rockers like The Pernice Brothers and Silver Jews frontman David Berman (r.) have studied with poetry professor James Tate?

Poetry

Belladonna*

- Anne Waldman (r.) and Rachel Levitsky discuss poetry and activism
- Belladonna*, NYC's top reading series?
- Bluestockings: Buy books here



8

Boogside

10

Anne Waldman "[Things] Seen Unseen"

Poetry from NYC Public School Students 12

New poems from: Bob Hershon, Rebecca McDonald, and Edmund Berrigan 14

Printed Matter

15

Frank Sherlock on Brandon Downing's (top) *Shirt Weapon*

INSIDE NEXT ISSUE

The Food Issue

- Nancy Seewald premieres her restaurant review column
- Maureen Owen and Telephone Books
- Africa Wayne's Bar Reis reading series in Park Slope
- Joe Sacco, Serbian politico cartoonist

BOOG CITY

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the Pixies, *Death to the Pixies*

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EDIT

Bellarachel*

I met Rachel Levitsky outside the tent at the then Naropa Institute, now University, in the summer of 1998. Naropa was honoring City Lights' Lawrence Ferlinghetti, whose first title on his press, *Pictures of the Gone World*, Rod Sperry, Boog's cofounder, and I kept next to the first Boog Literature book in 1991 as we learned how to make books. We glanced first at Ferlinghetti's cover, then the title and copyright pages, and then on to the guts of the book, all the while keeping his book open alongside ours to see how we measured up to the master. I didn't know how much longer Ferlinghetti was going to be around back then, and, thankfully, he still is.

So I go out to pay homage to a man who's meant a great deal to my life and art, and outside the tent, this big white revival meeting tent that Naropa used to rent each year during their one-month intensive summer writing program, I saw this woman who I could've sworn I knew.

So I walked up to Rachel Levitsky and it wound up we didn't know each other at all, but in the journey to discover that lack of knowledge we went through our recent histories and found out that we had been in Albany studying and in New York City, too, and common friends and names were exchanged, places discussed. It was this surreal trip down a shared memory lane with someone you didn't know you were sharing it with but whom now, thankfully, the fates had caused you to meet.

Rachel was headed back to Brooklyn after that summer ended and we swapped information. I saw her a bit here and there, another one of those cool people you dig and

don't see too often but when you do it's like you've been there all along. She had run a reading series at the collectively run Left Hand Bookstore in Boulder, and now she had decided to curate one in New York City.

The collectively run Bluestockings women's bookstore was opening on Allen Street in the Lower East Side at about the same time. Bluestockings is perhaps the warmest bookstore I've ever been in, a shop I feel great about giving my money to for zines, a cookie, or a brand new book.

It was a natural that Rachel's new reading series would take place at Bluestockings, and so, in August of 1999, Marcella Durand and Akilah Oliver kicked off the Belladonna* series in grand style. Rachel launched Belladonna* Books, gathering work from each of the writers who were appearing at the monthly series, and I helped her put out monthly pamphlets to celebrate the new work. (Design geek note—Here I riffed off the design of Black Sparrow's classic Sparrow pamphlets of the 1970s once again—the first time being with a Brenda Coultas pamphlet at the Kinko's on the Hill in Boulder in the summer of 1993—putting an old Bobbie Louise Hawkins pamphlet next to Mary Burger and Camille Roy's pamphlets, the first Belladonna* Books, using the side-by-side method again.)

Bill Mazza, another member of the Rachel Levitsky fan club, has taken over my design duties and done a bang-up job. The pamphlets are looking better than ever, and, most importantly, Rachel is continuing to publish and promote work by some of the best women writing today.

I'm really looking forward to this week's Belladonna*, to hearing another mentor, Anne Waldman; kari edwards, whose postcards were the first Belladonna publications almost two years ago; and to having Rachel introduce me to yet another writer, Bhanu Kapil Rider, whose work I don't yet know and that I'll be clamoring for upon the readings conclusion.

Correction: Stacey Sledge wrote "Working Through the Mysteries of Life" in issue six of Boog City. We regret the omission.

Where to Find

BOOG CITY

The East Village

Acme	Cafe Pick Me Up	Nuyorican Poets Cafe
Alt 137	CBGB's	The Pink Pony
alt.coffee	CB's 313 Gallery	Religious Sex
Angelica's Herbs	Cedar Tavern	See Hear
Angelika Theater	C-Note	Shakespeare & Co.
Anthology Film Archives	Continental	St. Mark's Books
Barnes & Noble	Free Cell Comm.	St. Mark's Church
(Astor Place)	Lakeside Lounge	Sunshine Theater
Bluestockings	Life Cafe	Tonic
women's bookstore	Living Room	Tower Books
Bowery Poetry Club	Mission Cafe	

Also Available In

Manhattan

Here
Hotel Chelsea
Knitting Factory
Poets House
Revolution Books
WBAI
the Westbeth Theater

Williamsburg

Clovis Press
Earwax
L Cafe
L Cafe To Go
Sideshow Gallery
Spoonbill & Sugartown
Supercore Cafe

Philadelphia

Kelly's Writers House
The Khyber
LaTazza

lucky in love?

We didn't think so.
Need advice?
Email love@boogcity.com
and Philomena will do her best.
(Hey it can't get any worse then it is right now, no?)

submit to the 1977 issue

Celebrate Anarchy in the Boog City by piercing your art and/or words about 1977 to Boog City. Any and all considered. Arielle Greenberg section editor.

Deadline: May 5
Email to: cover@boogcity.com

Thieves of Paradise

Lets Organize Yusef Komunyakaa to Help Save National Poetry Month

I have a beef with National Poetry Month (NPM) but unlike Charles Bernstein, a poet and professor at SUNY-Buffalo, wrote for the University of Chicago Web site in 1999 in his screed against the Academy of American Poets sponsorship of NPM, I don't believe that "April is the cruelest month for poetry."

Three weeks ago I stopped into the Leonard branch of the Brooklyn Public Library in Williamsburg. I thought I'd celebrate NPM in my private way by studying the work of a poet who I have otherwise ignored. I liked the narrow field provided by relying on the small poetry selection of a neighborhood library because it would help check my preconceived notions of quality.

I scanned the poetry section at the library and stopped at Yusef Komunyakaa. I've heard his name a lot around the Lower East Side poetry scene. The title, *Thieves of Paradise* (Wesleyan University Press, 1998), juxtaposed with the cover art work—a detail of Benjamin West's "Penn's Treaty with the Indians, 1771-1772"—intrigued me as a deft blow to the often benign portrayal of colonial history.

The poems in *Thieves of Paradise*, says the dust jacket, are defined by Komunyakaa's investigation into African-American life during the post-Vietnam War years. Dust jacket copy is always simultaneously over-the-top and never enough. There is more to *Thieves* than updated colonialism and Black life in the 1970s; there is the entirety of African diaspora written through a down-to-earth New York School voice. The poems raise a wide-range of issues—Blackness, colloquial language, culture, gender, imperialist history, racial identity, and sexuality.

Poetry is the perfectly suited medium to critique culture, instigate change, espouse radical ideas, and celebrate the body electric. It is immediate; it does in one page what might take volumes to explain in prose. It tolerates a multiplicity of goals. It is often enhanced by collage, cut-up, or simply jumping from one idea to the next. It reflects our vast complex history, yet it can succinctly articulate, the basic conflicts that have defined human interaction. "Dad was saying they've duplicated us/ for eons & can read minds,/ & there are two elders/ who know where their portraits/ hide in a cave of red ochre,/ that all we have to do is/ watch the animals to know/ if they desire to govern the air," writes Komunyakaa.

Without having done my homework on the subject I could easily imagine other critics and poets accusing Komunyakaa of being anachronistic, bourgeois, or even neo-Modernist. He works in conflicting traditions by making many art history, jazz, and literary allusions within a casual New York School style, most readily signified by a flagrant use of the ampersand. He is not bombastic. I can almost hear a variation of Bernstein's accusation hurled at the Academy of American Poets in critique of Komunyakaa. "National Poetry Month is about making poetry safe for readers by promoting examples of the art form at its most bland and its most morally positive."

Bernstein's not far off the mark, except I think he's simultaneously too generous and narrow in perception. His accusation defines the year-round programming of the Academy not only its NPM scheduling. Yet Bernstein doesn't acknowledge that a lot of cool unofficial poetry events are held to celebrate NPM. Also, he doesn't allow that, like Komunyakaa's work, the radical potential of poetry is often fulfilled through accretion not disruption. Furthermore, the deeper problem with NPM, and all nationally recognized months for marginalized art forms and peoples, is its blatant tokenism.

Reading Komunyakaa's *Thieves* during NPM I haven't been able to not think about Black History Month. Clearly, the honoring of Blacks for a month out of the year doesn't get us any closer to living in peace, making reparations for slavery, or redressing racism. Nor will celebrating poetry one month a year achieve fostering an understanding of alternative, progressive, radical, or simply different forms of communication. No amount of corporate underwriting of curriculums, documentaries, exhibitions, or readings will bridge these cultural crevasses, not when the corporations are the figurative, and literal, thieves of paradise.

The Academy, as sponsor of NPM, says it works with partner institutions, including the American Booksellers Association, the American Libraries Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, the office of the U.S. Poet Laureate, and the

"The important message to spread is that poetry is more than decoration, that it is a living art that can radically change our lives."

Urban Libraries Council, to provide materials and assistance to participants across the country. The Academy provides free resources for poets, teachers, librarians and booksellers through its Web site, including tips for developing effective poetry programs and displays; a listing of major national poetry awards and events; discussion forums; and exhibits featuring poems, biographies, photographs, bibliographies, and audio clips.

The Academy's stated seven goals for NPM are

1. To highlight the extraordinary legacy and ongoing achievement of American poets.
2. To introduce more Americans to the pleasures of reading poetry.
3. To bring poets and poetry to the public in immediate and innovative ways.
4. To make poetry a more important part of the school curriculum.
5. To increase the attention paid to poetry by national and local media.
6. To encourage increased publication, distribution, and sales of poetry books.
7. To increase public and private philanthropic support for poets and poetry.

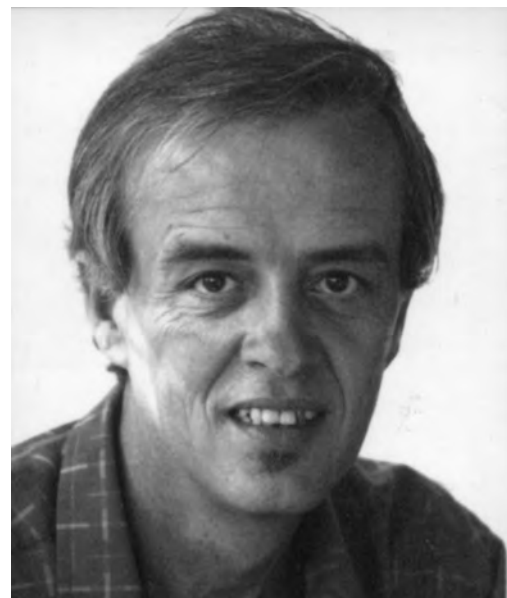
Laudable goals all, but, to this extent, the Academy is merely a good will ambassador to the presumed uninterested-in-poetry masses. This is elitist and falsely founded. Actually I think more people than imagined are into poetry. Song is poetry with music. The hip-hop generation is founded on poetry. The bible is full of it. Advertising is rotten with it, albeit often crappy. The important message to spread is that poetry is more than decoration, that it is a living art that can radically change our lives.

Instead of bringing poetry to the people, we should concentrate on bringing people to the poetry. How? Simply through an effort to get more poetry into the schools at an earlier stage and publish more poetry books.

I would rather the Academy use its influence and fundraising capabilities to organize schools to hire young and radical poets as teachers. It can educate English professors to come to contemporary poets and poetry on its own terms instead of merely searching for work that meets them on their already established terms, the previously prescribed philosophies of poetry. To this end, the Academy could help fund and facilitate more contemporary and radical poets to speak in schools from grades K through post-graduate. Finally, to fund more small presses that already have the interest and experience in publishing poetry. If they accomplish this last goal, then I'd ask that they persuade *The New York Times* to review small press poetry.

Of course this would mean organizing the administrators and poets that are the Academy to change the agenda of NPM. Perhaps we could start by writing or talking to Komunyakaa. He is on the Academy's Board of Chancellors. He teaches at Princeton. Email him: angleseyzoe@att.net. He must recognize the limitations of national anything months. The poems in *Thieves* would suggest that he would be sympathetic to this redirection of NPM. He writes, "Every spring, sure as dogwood's clockwork, someone hacksaws off Odysseus' penis." Perhaps now is the time to redirect the feel-good funding by the thieves of paradise toward more pleasurable and practical goals.

A Punk in the Academy



Jorie Graham photo/Selected Poems/Wesleyan University Press

What's in the water at UMass @ Amherst, where indie rockers like the Pernice Brothers, the Silver Jews, Rising Shotgun, and the Figments have all studied with poetry professor James Tate? **BOOG CITY** music editor James Wilk finds out

There's a certain point in each evening when I have to put on some really soul-shattering rock-and-roll music and comb my hair into this special caveman fright-wig.

—James Tate from “Read The Great Poets”
Viper Jazz, 1976

Bob Dylan had Allen Ginsberg; Lou Reed had Delmore Schwartz; Jim Carroll, Ted Berrigan; and Stephen Malkmus, John Ashbery's *Hotel Lautrimont*. Perhaps harkening back to a time when poets were pop musicians in the guise of wandering bards, rockers have always looked toward poets for inspiration and guidance in their own work. Today, bands like the Pernice Brothers, the Silver Jews, Rising Shotgun, and The Figments, all claim poet James Tate as their official muse.

James Tate was born in 1943 and grew up in Kansas City, Mo. where he told *Cross Connect* web journalist Mike Magee that in his early years he would go to jazz clubs five or six nights a week and that he loved to hang out with jazz musicians after hours. His first volume of poetry *The Lost Pilot*, published when he was only 23, was the recipient of the prestigious Yale Younger Poet's Award in 1967. By 1971, his early success helped to secure him a job teaching at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst (UMass), where he still teaches. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his *Selected Poems* in 1991, and three years later he won the National Book Award for

his next book, *Worshipful Company of Fletchers*. His latest book, *Dreams of a Robot Dancing Bee*, just published by Verse Press of Northampton, Mass., is his first collection of short stories.

Joe Pernice, David Berman, Chris Stroffolino, Brett Ralph, and Matthew Zaprunder all studied poetry with James Tate in the late '80s and early '90s and went on to their own musical careers. I recently spoke with all of them except Pernice, who's Pernice Brothers album *The World Won't End* (Ashmont) was on many critics best of 2001 lists, who is currently touring Australia.

David Berman's Silver Jews, are probably the most successful of the Tate bands. Founded in 1989 at the University of Virginia with future Pavement members

Stephen Malkmus and Bob Nastinovich, the band was put on hold while Berman attended UMass and studied with Tate. “I will always read James Tate,” says Berman. “He is a great entertainer, sharp as fuck and insanely superior to the effete dorks in his field. A personal hero of mine since I first read his *Selected Poems* when I was 22.”

Buoyed by the success of their first full length album, 1994's *Starlight Walker* (Drag City), the Silver Jews' laid-back countrified indie-rock was well received by the burgeoning pop underground. Berman scrapped the Pavement connection in favor of using New Radiant Storm King from Northampton as the backing band for his next album, *The Natural Bridge* (Drag City). 1998's *American Water* (Drag City), brought Malkmus back into the mix as well

I will always read James Tate. He is a great entertainer, sharp as fuck and insanely superior to the effete dorks in his field. A personal hero of mine since I first read his Selected Poems when I was 22.
 —David Berman, *Silver Jews*



Math Robison photo, courtesy Drag City

as Stroffolino on keyboards and trumpet. Berman also released his first book of poems, *actual air*, on Open City books at this time. The Silver Jews' most recent album, *Bright Flight*, was released last year by Drag City.

"It's cool that someone like David Berman can record for Drag City, a fiercely independent label, and have a first book be the first book on a press like Open City, and get reviewed in *The New York Times*," says Brett Ralph of Rising Shotgun, "I think that's kind of amazing that could happen."

Ralph is no stranger to music and poetry himself. He formed Malignant Growth, the first hardcore band in Louisville, Ky. in 1982. Malignant Growth evolved into Fading Out, whose 1985 album was finally released by Palace Records in 1996. Stroffolino calls their music "Hardcore with a human face."

Ralph broke up the band in 1988 when he moved to Amherst to study with James Tate at UMass and concentrate on his own poetics. "As a writer and teacher he has ended up being quite influential in my work just because of the breadth that he allows himself in a poem ... I think that there are a lot more kinds of hallucinatory corners in my work, thanks to Jim, and in my songwriting, too," says Ralph.



Since completing his degree at UMass, Ralph has played and recorded with Will Oldham, members of Slint, and Glenn Danzig. His latest band, Rising Shotgun, whose first album *Don't Forsake Kentucky*, recorded by Steve Albini and featuring the ubiquitous Stroffolino on keyboards, will be released this summer (contact: empireky@bellsouth.net to pre-order). Ralph describes the sound of the record as falling somewhere between David Allen Coe's out-

law country and the MC5's raw rock attack.

As for Tate's appeal to musicians, Ralph says, "I think that the kind of person apt to be a maverick and a marginalized person, that is someone involved in indie rock or punk rock or underground music, would be the type of person who would be into Jim's poetry. I think they are both marginal, quirky, weird areas."

Verse Press co-founder Matthew Zapruder is the latest editor of Tate's quirky, weird areas. Zapruder is also the guitarist for the Northampton band The Figments, which occupy the same country-indie-pop territory as all of the Tate bands, something Zapruder attributes to them all evolving out of Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley music scene of the mid-'90s which he describes as "country-folk."

As for Tate's influence on his students, Zapruder says, "it was more the particular example of him as an artist that has a lot to do with why these people had the faith and courage to go toward songwriting

instead of doing something purely avant-garde ... if you listen to Pernice or Berman or even our music, it's not afraid to be straight ahead ... One of the most iconoclastic things you can do nowadays in poetry is to try to communicate ... and that is the team that we're all on, and I think that Tate is right there, and I think that there is a comparable thing in the music."

The Figments latest album sounds like a country version of Pavement, one that's not afraid to play it straight. His first book of poetry, *American Linden*, will be available from Vermont's Tupelo Press this summer.

"I think that a lot of us felt rock 'n' roll was where the energy was," says Stroffolino. "We're all relatively young people, and at the same time when we read Tate maybe we felt that same sense of pathos of rock lyrics, and the kind of funkiness, quirkiness, and just a weirdness that had a similar sensibility to rock and roll." Or as Zapruder would have it, Tate's "kind of a punk rocker in the academy."

James Tate's Many Voices

by Chris Stroffolino

Much in the same way that Greil Marcus described Bob Dylan's singing in *The Basement Tapes* as personally inhabiting a multitude of voices and masks signifying "the old weird America," Chris Stroffolino, in his 2001 collection of essays *Spin Cycle (Spuyten Duyvil)*, discusses in his "James Tate: An Introduction," Tate's use of persona in his poetics.

It isn't that Tate entirely rejects earlier personae and stances in *Worshipful Company of Fletchers*. Rather, he is able to make them more convincing by grounding them in a more engaged, if less municipally mediated, sense of solitude as a social act. He is able to render his ethos more convincing, not by condescending but by more sincerely entertaining other stances that may seem to stand in opposition to it. In "Loyalty" (which can fruitfully be read as a rewrite of, or at least an "answer-song" to, fellow Amherstian Emily Dickinson's "My Life Had Stood A Loaded Gun") Tate takes on the role of a dog loyal to a general. In "I Got Blindsighted," the speaker compares himself to his contemporary, Robert Zimmerman [Bob Dylan], whom he obviously admires immensely, but with whom he contrasts himself. The speaker, a man of inertia, imagines Dylan, a man of

action (and in this poem his nemesis), talking to him:

What would he say? So now, at last,
 you are growing up, into a thing thing
 We can expect you to do better soon.
 Your sad times are reason for celebration.
 Misfits fit right in, like a beautiful stem
 of something with no flower, no power,
 just an upward reaching with no end. . . .

A harsh characterization of what Dylan (who sang "you'll find out when you reach the top, you're on the bottom") would say yet Tate self-consciously blurs it with other voices that tease and torment him. As so often in Tate, it is not even entirely clear if this is intended to be Dylan talking to Tate or Tate talking to Dylan. Again we see identity as a process of crossing forth and back (rather than a blur) for Tate as he leans his head out far enough from desolation row to give himself up to the realization that the enemy within often takes the form of another.

Tate's concern with the question of socially engaged poetry is even more evident in the next poem in the book, "The New Chinese Fiction." If we read this poem as a description of the speaker's (and by implication Tate's) attitude towards

new Chinese fiction, we could justifiably see it as a "sophisticated" American's patronizing and condescending glance at a Chinese culture's baby-steps towards "western ways" (similar to the poem Charles Bernstein made out of a letter from his Chinese translator). For instance, there seems to be some snootiness when Tate writes:

Poor brethren, do you have any good prose yet?
 The New Chinese fiction is getting better,
 I suspect, people walking and talking and thinking
 and fussing,
 with a nest to fly out of, with less intimate footing

Yet if we consider the centrality of the subjective correlative elsewhere in Tate and notice the specific verbal echo of "I Got Blindsighted" in which "Dylan" tells the speaker, "we can expect you to do better soon," we can see this characterization of the "poor brethren" as first and foremost a self-characterization; the question he asks the "Chinese" is the same question his idea of "Dylan" asks him. Fiction is a genre (like the songs of Dylan) that is generally more popular than the kind of poetry Tate writes. From the perspective of a lyric poet who resides in America, fiction may represent "the other side of the world," hence "Chinese."

It's Belladonna* Baby

Poet Anne Waldman (below) visits one of the City's best reading series this Friday. Here she and its curator, Rachel Levitsky, discuss poetry and activism



Greg Fuchs photo

RL: (Something on my mind) You've mastered/invented a poetics of world merged with self, constant and various — the voice is many headed but not cut off. Is there distinction/boundary between the writer self and the public? Is it an artificial line? Do you distinguish a line between outside and inside or "personal" space? How? Is the notion of such a line one of bourgeois corruption? (mine)

AW: No, the distinction/boundary is not between the writer "self" and the "public". The real distinction, boundary, dichotomy as I see it in this version of the world we live in— is about creating or minimizing suffering. If you've taken a bodhisattva vow you'd better well keep sane and focused and work to alleviate suffering as best you can. I am fairly synchronized about that view, not that one is a saint all the time. As poet, as teacher and director of projects etcetera there's a lot of responsibility to "other". By writer self you mean the mousy one who stays at home & works in private, engaged in all sorts of tricks & deceptions and sly careerism moves? or just makes beautiful art? (I could go with that) Is the public self the "face" you show to the world? or more about generosity? You want the writing, the performance to wake people up. And you want to include other minds, other worlds, other experiences than your own (or that you "own") in all this. The thrust of the work & I include the teaching, editing, travel, cultural activism, performance — is an offering to the phenomenal world and its community — or rather an offering towards the health of community. My poet's job is one of being citizen, it's the upaya of poetry, or skillful means, that allows me to breathe in association with "other". It's what I know how to do best. It's hard to work in isolation. Yes, a false line. The making of poetry and of making worlds around poetry is not necessarily a higher moral ground but it certainly cuts the idea of bourgeois compartmentalization. And accumulations. People make all sorts of compromises to buy time for their work — that's how it is seen — I wonder about that rational. Not that good work doesn't emerge but there's a risk of poetic materialism. As we've seen with recent events, there's no hiding place down here. There's the pratitya-samutpada — or interconnectedness — going on all the time, like it or not. As human animal, of course, you have a private life — you need to lie down, eat, read a book, have a conversation, read to a child, but all that is not separate from your ultimate body, speech, mind and how you strive to be out there impeccably on the battlefield of Mars the charnel ground of war and poetry and love. There's a death wish in our culture, I opt for the shining & transmuting opposition to that sad morbidity — which posits imagination as antidote.

RL: I think I asked that question because of my own anxiety — not climbing a writing ladder as much as writing itself seems to require a kind of remove from being over stimulated. I sleep a lot, dream — for the sake of my own happiness and imagination — but that takes me away from the world. Generosity and love require a certain amount of extra, which I sometimes deplete in the social expenditure. But, I am thinking lately, in the wee hours when I am writing my talk for a panel on Rebel publishing and worrying about being particularly 'good' that it's being overly self-conscious that can take one out of circulation as well. I would like, for example, to be a better member of my union local, but I can't consistently find the time. So I do what I can and feel slightly uncomfortable within my limits while at the same time indulging them.

AW: How do you see the current poetry community (NY/SF nexus) — as clique-ish or supportive, responsible to itself and the world — or self involved? What role does the Internet play for you? Are you in touch with writers in Palestine/Israel? What actions are planned by poets in coming months? What are the challenges for your own work? Speak about your sense of performance/collaboration ...

RL: A lot of people seem to be talking about community lately and asking each other. It's not a new conversation, in fact it seems to be the one I have over and over again with New York and San Francisco poets. Luckily for us and our conversation, these communities keep changing. I for one feel a change happening in NY. I can't speak as much for SF though I do know the Poet's Theater Jubilee was incredibly energetic, and was supported by and supportive of the poets there. Camille Roy is doing great work through New Langton — her and Tisa Bryant are planning a series called (something like) "poets in diaspora" which is a fantastic way to think about identity in America — i.e. linking it to emigration and exile — issues which lead to a conversation on Palestine/Israel and us (me) as poet(s). I'm timid about this issue because my experience is that there is a certain amount of knee jerkiness and anti-Semitism on the Left. I personally think that Sharon (mass or serial murderer) needs to be tried for war crimes and secure borders/Palestinian Statehood need to be established immediately, not to mention the law of return for Palestinians (Jews in Israel have this — in which any Jew is immediately recognized as a citizen, an issue which is vast in it's own — Dan Machlin recently told me that the children of German Jewish WWII era exiles could claim German naturalization — so that not only could I — a Jewish woman in 2002 — be a citizen of Israel but of Germany as well—my mother is an exile from 1939 Germany — while Palestinians live in refugee camps and places like Jordan where they are treated similarly to the way Jews were treated in Europe in the 19th Century — what do the historical ironies teach/tell?). But Israel is not the same as South Africa, for example, and the war on the Palestinian people, while it is a war on the Palestinian people is not the same as the gassing of the Kurds or the genocide in Rwanda. I'm not comparing atrocities in terms of bad and worse, I'm saying we need, especially as poets, to stay in the particulars, to bear witness to all the human stories/tragedies/the specifics of history. I haven't yet made contact with Israeli poets, I'm meeting with an Israeli gender activist/anarchist tonight and will ask her if she can help me make a contact — thanks for reminding me (more reason to talk to each other). Again there is a way in which over-stimulation and sadness shut us down — what you, Anne, call the death wish.

After the towers fell all I could do was collaboration. A mixture of lacking the ego for individual writing and needing support. I think this has changed the New York community. New projects seem more collaborative, political, cross-genre, less ego-based. Are people being nicer and less clique-ish? More difficult to answer. The same people probably have the same habits, but new activities are bringing in new people, and that helps. I try to stay open in terms of scenery. I find otherwise the conversation does stagnate. If I like a person's work that I come across, I tell them ...

As far as the Internet — great for literature, bad for personal communication. BE CAREFUL when having serious personal exchange on email. The lack of signature changes everything. I love books, but I also love looking up people I'm interested in and getting instant gratification, not to mention how easy it makes it for me to do press for my reading series. I don't get

There's a death wish in our culture, I opt for the shining and transmuting opposition to that morbidity — which posits imagination as antidote.

too bogged down in technology, I'm a dreamer, teacher, writer, lover, friend, reader, my time is spent. But I love that other people get off on it because those people improve my life and make more possible! I learned a long time ago when doing activism 24/7 — that it's best to keep the criticism of those who do good work to a minimum — even if it's not your idea of how things should be done.

Projects for poets — a while back some of got together and wheat pasted slogans and anti-war poems, I'd like to do that again—it's a small effort but makes a visible resistance.

Questions for you:

How should we negotiate being american in these times?

What's So Special About Belladonna*?

By Juliana Spahr

There really is not another reading series in New York City (perhaps all of the United States?) where you can get a threesome like Anne Waldman, Bhanu Kapil Rider, and kari edwards reading in one night. All are reading together in the Belladonna* series on April 26 at 7:00 pm. Waldman is a well-established literary figure, the former director of the Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church, and, with Allen Ginsberg, the cofounder of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University. Rider is the author of the just published, *The Vertical Interrogation of Strangers*

(Kelsey St. Press, 2002). Her works are full of nomads, immigrants, cyborgs, and wolf girls. edwards, author of *Post/Pink*, a work that intersects with/interacts her gender activism. All promise to be good. But more importantly, all have things to say about gender.

This is what I like about this series over all other series: it is curated by Rachel Levitsky who seems to have a knack for putting together readers who have things to say to each other but in unusual ways. I've been to all the readings in the spring series so far. And those who have been

Please see Spahr page 16

AW: Be kind, stay informed. Be gentle, responsible. Take moral, ethical responsibility by knowing the decisions the USA government makes and if you don't agree (!) oppose and make known your views. Stay on the case as much as you can. This is crucial. Study interesting, ranging instructive American artistic, cultural, utopian matters. Reclaim certain heritages. See where sanity and "vision" prevailed & where they failed and why. Listen to the great indigenous music. Look to the Native

Please see Waldman page 16

Bluestockings: Buy Books Here



by Judi Silverman

While many independent bookstores are folding due to high rent and corporate/dot-com competition, Bluestockings, the women's bookstore and café in New York City's Lower East Side, lives and challenges downtown malling.

True to its name, Bluestockings promotes the empowerment of women and trans folks through education, words, art, and activism. It is collective-run with a volunteer body, and it strives "to be an organizing site in the struggle for social, economic, and environmental justice.

"Recognizing the links between oppressions, our goal is to be trans-inclusive, multi-lingual, open to all sexualities and spiritualities, inter-generational and to challenge racism, classism, ablist, sexism, ageism and sizism."

At the heart of its mission is a grass-roots sensibility to provide local resources. The col-

Please see Silverman page 16

B O O G S I D E

excerpt from

[THINGS] SEEN

UNSEEN

I am the members of my mother the member of all my tribe I am the wearer of snakes the beater of men the egg-beater of men the whip top of men I am the barren one 'til today and many are my sons are my sons I am she whose wedding is great whose empathy soars in war who wields the shield all the weapons of 10 directions in space I am the subsidy of the low and wicked I am the toil of all Jerusalem my eyes are firebrand meteors to light your way I won't go there over there because I am here living the good life the same life the yuppie housewife life of a lovelorn mistress life of all my people's people the life of grandiloquent suburban despair and desire I could be a prime candidate for betrayal but I trick the fiend the flibbertigibbet I flick my tongue at his sloppy mindset his sad body fluid his loathsome temper his old skin I strike up – palsy – with a thunderbolt I am friend to the storm king the storm windows no one knows the code the name the constellation I will inhabit in space I cry to be hidden but no one can be hidden under this new code this code of middens of ash and shell and dream of labour of telephone of plastic of glass of wood and all its constituents including fiber, of insect dung of scarab lore of wasting away in the desert waiting for a mirage of good fortune to steer my course by it will be steered it will clear the dust storm will abate the over of all

the enemies will open wide they will put down their rusty armaments they will wage war
no more they will hang the swords from trees innocuous now out of the hands of men and
as I woman I will watch I will witness I will recall any stumbler any falterer I will track
the liars and abusers to their graves I will tear up their scrolls their mighty
warmongering poetry their lasting flame of crude moans because their lot is to be white
to be male to be privileged to be of greater arrogant sex pain than the ones who really
suffer never forget the sufferers of field of stream of mountain of meadow of dungeon of
cavern of full fathom five of Hawaii five o of Havana of harvest time of constabulary
withholding of tax evasion of draft dodging of being profiled for color, for race, for
ideological metaphoricalness for religious belief to be an artist of regret isn't your
calling to be an artist of remorse is not for you to be an artist of doom and gloom forget it
to be a chance operation is more your style as long as the waters part the breath is held
and you survive to carry on the examination of evidence of choice of love of dark pogrom
of prison of death camp of trapped in Nablus of trapped in the Church of The Nativity of
elected officials that were never my choice or yours to keep the men honest and
functioning to abdicate control so that people are happy and free and not one is hit upon
no one is subjected to the indignities of false love of fallacious love of folly love of freak
love of wearing out of syllables love of treason love of dis-the-women love. Avaunt thee
warlock!

from the Journal "Time Goes By/ Please Return If Lost This Book This Way" Fall-Winter
2001-2002. Copyright 2002 by Anne Waldman
excerpted from BELLADONNA* Book #26



Poems From P.S. 56M

Lower East Side

from a Bestiary

The Falcon

Lord of the sky
Sweep down and fly me to your
kingdom.
Show me places of great beauty
And I'll show you freedom.

Hewlyn Rodriguez

Mr. Higgenson's class, 8th grade

The Cat

Purring around licking
his paws,
and going down the
elevator out of the
door of Macy's
with it on my back
all the way down
to my ankles.

Christina and Melissa Rodriguez

Mr. Higgenson's class, 8th grade

Mocking Bird

I have a live tape recorder
Sitting in a cage.
Sometimes I can't turn it off
And it gets really annoying.

Yanel Parey

Mr. Higgenson's class, 8th grade



The Rabbit

Small and foolish
They are everywhere.
Avoiding dangers.
Running away from troubles.
Like cowards and like you.

The Monkey

I turn my head and there
I see you. I turn my head
The other way I see another you.
I look at myself I see another
Of you in me. We are all monkeys.

Stanley Lu

Mr. Higgenson's class, 8th grade

Andy May

Ms. Rosen's class, 7th grade

Poems From P.S. 140

Lower East Side

Untitled

I hate when
a loud fight between
eyelashes beating
happens
If you look up
In the kitchen

Leannette Anzules

5th grade, Ms. Cowhey

Last Night I Dreamed

I dreamed that I fought a monkey
and he put my eyes in my toes. They
sent me to the hospital in Brooklyn
and the doctor was Jay-Z and he
put a silver bandaid on my knees.
He must have paid mad lot of
money for those bandaids. They
cost like 3 million dollars. He said
"Hola" to the pretty nurse. He said
that sticks and stones may break your bones
but remember, "You're the great one."

Jahmel Sanders

5th grade, Ms. Cowhey

Untitled

This is me
when I was
one years old.
I am a tan
color and butt
fat. My arms
look fat like
a water bottle
filled with frozen
water, but my
body is warm
and moist. My
stomach is as
big as the pink
balloon that I have
in my hand.
My uncle
is passing
me a red
heart lollipop.
He knew that
I love to eat.
He knows that's
my favorite
treat.

Shannon Sanchez

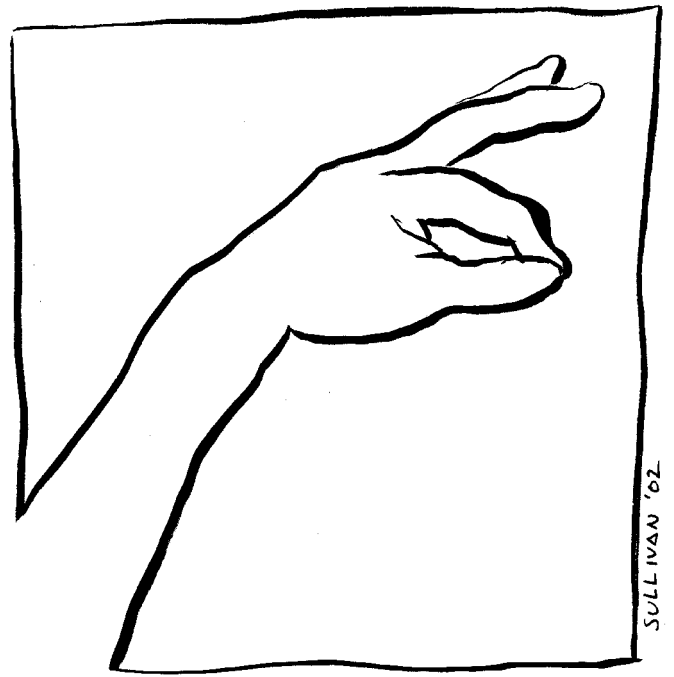
5th grade, Mr. Muraco

Teachers & Writers Collaborative—a nonprofit organization—was founded in 1967 by a group of writers and educators who believed that writers could make a unique contribution to the teaching of writing. T&W brings writers and educators together in collaborations that explore the connections between writing and reading literature and that generate new ideas and materials.

Joanna Fuhrman and Matthew Burgess's residencies were funded by The New York Times Arts Recovery Fund.



MONKEY



RABBIT



CAT

If You Look into a Mirror Your Face Will Crack

Your back will become your front and your front will become your back. You will see something different. Not yourself, but a splitting replica or image. Your voice will become horse, your skin dry. Your mind is a storm cloud of blank and your heart has nothing in it. You see a stranger tall and lean with gleaming eyes and sparkling teeth. You wonder...wonder who is that you, a twelve year old kid.

Chris Cepero

Ms. Rosen's class, 7th grade

The Old Days

This is my father here.
He's wearing an orange shirt
with jeans on.
He's wearing sneakers.
He's just daydreaming
sitting in the living room.

This is my step mom.
She's just staring at a
tree. I don't know
why.
I think there's an apple
I think, a green apple
(Perhaps)

Vanessa Collado

5th grade, Mr. Muraco

Being Inside a Changing Head

Going inside a student's head I see
an idea sparkling and flashing in the dark head
bringing the head to life
I hear drums roll booming and golden
Cymbals clashing loud enough for everyone to hear
I feel a trumpet thrashing and moving violently, vibrating notes in the head
I hear the ticking and tocking of a metronome
moving slowly to the left and right
At the top of the head I see a sun glowing fierce
lighting up the head and turning sad music into joyful music
I see a streak of lightening in the student's head, starting to turn red
Suddenly the sun goes out and it is all dark
I smell the scent of hotdogs and hamburgers in the student's head
I hear the melody of a piano and feel the rhythm of musical notes dance
all around me
But best of all, I see tons and tons of data, moving and jumping around
little by little the info gets bigger and brighter
until the whole head is lighted up to a yellowish gold,
slowly the head started to fade
It fades until I am back in my own room
hearing my mom yell at me.

David Pan

Ms. Rosen's class, 7th grade

Rebecca Reynolds

Bridgewater, NJ

Primer

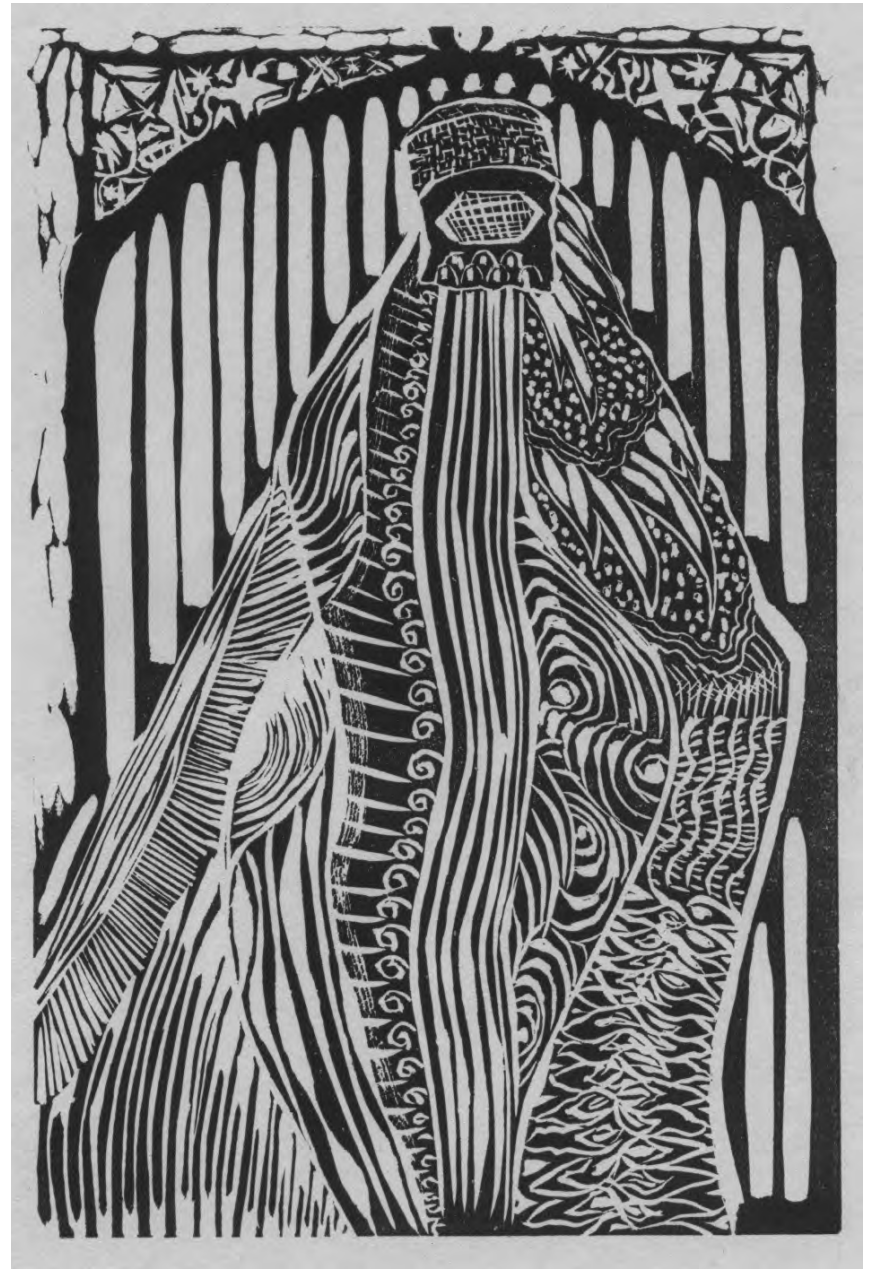
1. Where the language sets out to instruct, disregard the instruction.
2. The text neglects you, the lettering is hair. The birds
3. roost on the banks like fagged extras
4. in the wake of lambs. Maybe sound
5. fills the seventh day.
6. *The wind does not designate an object but substitutes for its loss.*
7. The body wavers
8. between rims, always suggesting itself, as it settles
9. in the wool and the musk. The heft, I accept,
10. (we were forewarned) without guessing its loves. Nor
11. is the formatting always deliberate. Indeed,
12. there's so little for me to decide
13. when the original typeface recurs like a state flower.
14. And daily, I spend so much time at the machinery, sustaining the millionaires,
15. who don't even know it, or help with the words.
16. Then the software insists I am writing a letter, or worse,
17. an outline. So the format is maintained, albeit arbitrarily. I'm not sure
18. there's any more freedom in the Jeffersonian blueness
19. buttering the sky behind twigs
20. on the tips of inflorescence. Each variant, underscored,
21. so no one gets caught with their pants down, so to speak,
22. for crimes against spelling. Although
23. I would love that deviance: a woman, thick
24. with unexpected beauty. Not what *they* would call beauty.
25. *X openly calls for a writing that no longer yearns for the unified sigh.*
26. O Maple Tree.
27. O New Jersey.
28. Today the mechanic shows me the clean
29. brain of my transmission. My period begins. The robins
30. are mute as a rash of forsythia. What prescience there is
31. pales, amid
32. the perforations of a land
33. ghosted with ironsmiths and magnolia.

Edmund Berrigan

Park Slope

Prose Poem

I have always felt a deep disregard for the so-called ancient civilization. We tread our naked plaster parasite. My god is a feather in water. It is elemental to be protruding in such a way as to unbalance sexuality from the poor to the rich, like west to East St. Louis as if my heart would burst with pride. I would like to walk to you for a while because as a destination there are many mornings of songs flying over the walkways and airports of foreign countries we take for what we're worth. I touch parts of me I can't really touch. There is this morning that is holding onto us with some static. Do we really deserve such a flavored manifestation of the gentle bivouac? We have become that are meddling with things held by a complicated honesty and paranoia. No, not me, but someone I admire breaks out in no purpose. Would you be my cemetery and hold these century old rock hands?



"Where are you" lino cut NY 2002 Karine Duteil

Bob Hershon

Boerum Hill

My Passage Through Grub Street

What luck, Marcella, to hook on as an editor Of *Dog World* after *Cats* magazine folded! But take care- this might lead you to the editorship of *Modern Salamander* or *Today's Hippo* and when you try for the job at *Hammer and Tongs Journal*, they'll say Sorry, but you're in the bow-wow trades, you couldn't write about fire and steel. I speak as a former editor-in-chief of *Hosiery and Underwear Review*. I once knew more about socks than almost anybody and if you'd known me in those days, you would have received the occasional package with a dozen pair of argyles in assorted sizes. I used to bundle up the samples and just send them to everyone I knew. But not underwear. Underwear, you were on your own. And you probably shouldn't try this with puppies. Maybe little packages of Alpo would be okay. After writing for *Footwear News* and *Woman's Wear Daily* and *Intimate Apparel* I cried: enough! I was looking for bras instead of models. Enough! I quit my job, I left my wife, I sold my kids, I burned down the house. I transformed myself into the wild, unpredictable devil I am today, quite likely to run barefoot through any assembly, master of the silent tap dance, my lifetime supply of white crew socks thrown to the four winds and rising to the clouds! Actually, I took a job writing speeches. Say, I don't know how you do it, the speechgiver would say, it sounds just like me. But it didn't, it sounded just like *me*, except for the god bless thises and the god bless that's. So I figured I'd better keep moving before I *did* sound just like him and I gave up writing for money and started writing poems for bits of red ribbon and chunks of blue glass, fine ribbon, shining glass.

Brandon Downing's Secret *Shirt Weapon*

Someone is watching from inside Brandon Downing's first book, *Shirt Weapon* (Germ Monographs, 2002). Two lights glare from its cover's darkness, not unlike eyes behind a mask. There is no name and no title—just trees and night. This image initiates curiosity and questioning. Who wrote this? What's it called? What are we getting into?

The *Shirt Weapon* begins with a polyvocal section entitled, "You." Each narrative poem and inner monologue has a different persona as speaker. While Rimbaud said "I" is an other, Downing seems to say "I" is a mutha.

FRANK SHERLOCK

Facets of experience are retold in the voice of a traveler, a detective, a Texan, a tourist, a painter, and a sailor to name a few. The prickly and provocative "Benjamin" begins:

I painted him, with two other kids, black paint
He played on the team that had niggers on it

And all I see in Paris now is black people

Thirty years later, Wow. Might as well be six thousand, five hundred

This is spoken in the voice of a big-



David Kirschenbaum photo

While
Rimbaud
said 'I' is an
other,
Downing
seems to
say 'I' is a
mutha.

oted curmudgeon who has watched the world change before his eyes. The "I" is out of touch with his own world, angry and clueless. The slur is employed as lightning rod, challenging the audience to address issues of contextuality and personae in experimental writing.

Downing frames the collection with quoted introductions and a poem, simply titled "4 Quotes". The speaker isn't given credit in any of them. We're left to decide whether they are the poet's own work or appropriated. This needles the "desire for authenticity," or what critic Stuart Home calls "the most cynical of all pseudo-needs manufactured by bourgeois ideologists."

"68 Quick Poems" were originally written as sticker poems. The taut and brief verse was intended to be posted on all manner of walls, street signs or anywhere the holder might find publicly (or privately) relevant. Although the poems are numbered, they do not appear chronologically. Their conscious rearrangement allow the option of accepting the order presented, or taking the pieces in a numbered order. Places, both real and imagined, loosely thread these pieces together. In "No. 18" he writes:

There's nothing but urine
All over the grass!
This "forest" smells like gin!

Many of the poems are ejaculatory. All of them are six lines or less, and alive with exclamations. This contrasts sharply with "Lofty," the book's final section. Here we are introduced to a section laced with sonnets and other more stylized poetry. In the poem "Natural Sonnet" Downing writes:

This is the element, the outlet, the eyes, the weather,
I want to be younger than you, forever
But I will kneel before no wildlife, I will kneel before no wildlife

The sonnets take us to a bridge between 19th century Romantic imagery and 20th century Modernist themes. Nature holds a heavy presence in each of the pieces, while there are hints that the speaker is ready to embrace the age of machine. Once again, the poems refuse to settle into a style, a form or era in which we think we have them figured out.

The title poem proclaims, "my shirt is my weapon. My enemy tyranny." Almost at the last minute, the poet finally changes his shirt in the light, where we just might see him. Or can we? From "Goodbye":

My aptitude. My sheets. Partnerships. The cursor. The universe. Movies...& then nothing.
Was twisted! They filed past it. Eleven songs. Closing of the boy. Birdies looked away.
But not with relief. Because it meant me. Me. I left.

Shirt Weapon's vocal personae are shed as quickly as we entertain getting used to them. Brandon Downing takes an unflinching turn from the anesthetic (post-9/11) trend of comfort poetry, opting to stand with his narrative "others" in the night glow of his aesthetic vision.

It's Belladonna* Baby

SILVERMAN from page 9

lective is creating a plan to make sure it will remain available to its historically rich neighborhood and community. Outreach includes an educational anti-racist initiative and Sister Overpass, which supports women of color and creative expression.

On any given week you will find at Bluestockings books by and for women, author readings/signings, activist forums, screenings of films by women, a revolving art show, an open mic, music, discussion groups—even dyke knitting circles and hand-made vegan baked goods.

The money generated through book sales is recycled, and passing the strawberry around for donations doesn't begin to cover expenses. Therefore Bluestockings is in the process of gaining non-profit status as an organization linked to the

SPAHR from page 9

with me have gotten an excellent introduction to how contemporary writing is refiguring the complicated issues of gender, race, and, at moments, class. Highlights from readings earlier in the season: Deborah Richards reading her retellings of *Imitation of Life* with Norma Cole reading about internal space in heady philosophical language; Jocelyn Sainenberg reading about immigration from *CUSP* with Barbara Einzig reading from dreams; and Carla Harryman reading about utopian sex in urban spaces from *Gardener of the Stars* with Gail Scott on trying to get laid in France from *My Paris*.

The readings are informal and are held on the last Friday of each month at Bluestockings, a collectively owned and operated women's bookstore at 172 Allen St. on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. The bookstore is small and loaded with books. The display table leans precariously. There are never enough chairs. And there seems

bookstore. But Bluestockings still needs your support, so stop by, browse the books and flyers, have some tea. Bring your art, your best girl friend, your mom. Find out how to get involved in the upcoming Dyke March and Ball (which, as far as I know, still does not have a venue due to the closing of Charas). Volunteer your time or use the space to hold your own event.

Word up: The term "Bluestockings" originates from the 18th century literary salon, which was the one place where women could exhibit their erudition.

Established in France, some English women—the Blue Stocking Society—formed predominantly female salons. They sought the elevation of women's status through moral and intellectual training, and the female solidarity reached well beyond the salons. The Bluestockings began the process of questioning women's role in society.

to constantly be some dance performance going on upstairs. Yet the readings, and this is what matters, are excellent. Belladonna* might be the most consistently best reading series in New York right now. Readers are always women who are doing politically engaged and experimental work.

The night begins with a very short open mic event. Levitsky keeps time here under tight control. I've never been a big fan of the open mic before a long night of readings but here it actually works well to build community without overwhelming audience members. Most readings feature two readers. In its two-year history, Belladonna* has had writers such as Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, Nicole Brossard, Fanny Howe, Erica Hunt, Lisa Jarnot, Camille Roy, and Cecilia Vicuña read, among others.

Levitsky also publishes commemorative pamphlets of readers work that are sold on the night of the event. And, if you still haven't gotten your fill, a salon is often held the same weekend with the writers at Levitsky's apartment.

WALDMAN from page 9

American cultures for guidance about how to take care of environment and other life forms. Don't instantly be down on everything American. Shift the paradigms. Turn off the television set. Don't waste energy in constant "reactive" mode. Protect endangered species — cross every boundary. Read a book of "American" poetry a day (for starters). etc.

RL: We have a disgusting amount of power, our good times are based in the suffering of others around the world. Even the English language feels implicated. And how do we confront the big Brother aspect of the reign of capitalism as every time we use a cell phone or easypass at the tollbooth we support the mechanisms of surveillance. Or is that an issue at all?

AW: Yes, certainly be aware of how we live and thrive on the suffering of others. Try to minimize that suffering as much as possible. See the role you play. You are not in some exclusive little box. Watching the opera, the ballgame, whatever. Stop compartmentalizing your life. Boycott activities and business that exploit other beings, extract support from "fun hog" realities. Check out your actions - see if they are "gewa" (virtuous) or "megewa" (unvirtuous). Don't walk around in a fog - confused, ignorant. Take responsibility for your deeds. Understand cause and effect. Help your friends if they are off base and causing harm. Don't look away with idiot compassion. Check out your deceptions (of self and other) - Use language mindfully - gentle speech, less babbling. Be straightforward, don't exaggerate. These things are all in the meditator's code book. Deconstruct patriarchal sexist racist violent language. Be a good lover, not a liar, and a cheat. Encourage multi-lingualism. Encourage difference - sexual. Guard rights of all citizens. See that USA is more than "American". Stop exporting garbage and arrogance. Question privilege. Fight consumerism in the young. Speak up instead of buying one more useless toy. Watch the sexism and objectification of women's bodies - always out there to sell something. Yes surely, global positioning, surveillance, weapons in space it's a more dangerous reality as more of our civil freedoms are in question and actually erased. Understand the communication tools you use. Don't be naive. That you are either for or against the war on terror ... that you are unpatriotic if you don't want to pay taxes to support the endless war ... This is crazy. We will be judged by future generations, believe me, if there are any beings left to think, feel - any planet left to live on. This assault on our world particularly by the West - will be seen as a holocaust of major proportions. The genocide since WW II is also particularly egregious. Our leaders need to be held accountable. Clinton's shocking stupidity in Rwanda - let him be judged and called to account, just one example. This is lethal stuff we need to come to terms with. Learn from our deep errors, our selfish existence, constantly putting ourselves before others - before the good of others. I think we have to also guard against extreme American isolationism. It was interesting to spend some time in Europe last fall - in a Europe that is having more "voice" these days. Also visiting Indonesia and Vietnam 2 years ago. In spite of the chaos, the bad management, the dangers of violence bred by poverty and disenfranchisement, there are other places gaining power, momentum. That have intelligence and imagination. The fortitude of the Vietnamese - especially people in the north - is incredible. Other parts of the planet can't be ignored as we have seen by the events of last September. Arab nations are on the move ... USA could be the colossal aging dinosaur. Overall we have to remember every life is precious, American grief is not bigger and better than anyone else's. Mourn all the fallen, all the misguided, all the victims. Try to visualize them in your heart.

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The Myth of Fingerprints

Lumumba's Vision of a United Africa Comes to Harlem

BOOG CITY Film

Declaration of Principles

1. To deliver news for film lovers about motion picture makers: worldwide.
2. To converse with filmmakers, their casts, and crews about their craft.
3. To listen to what readers want and go from there. Then ... wing it.

Harlem's Digital Soul Cinema
Showing *Lumumba*
imagination film festival

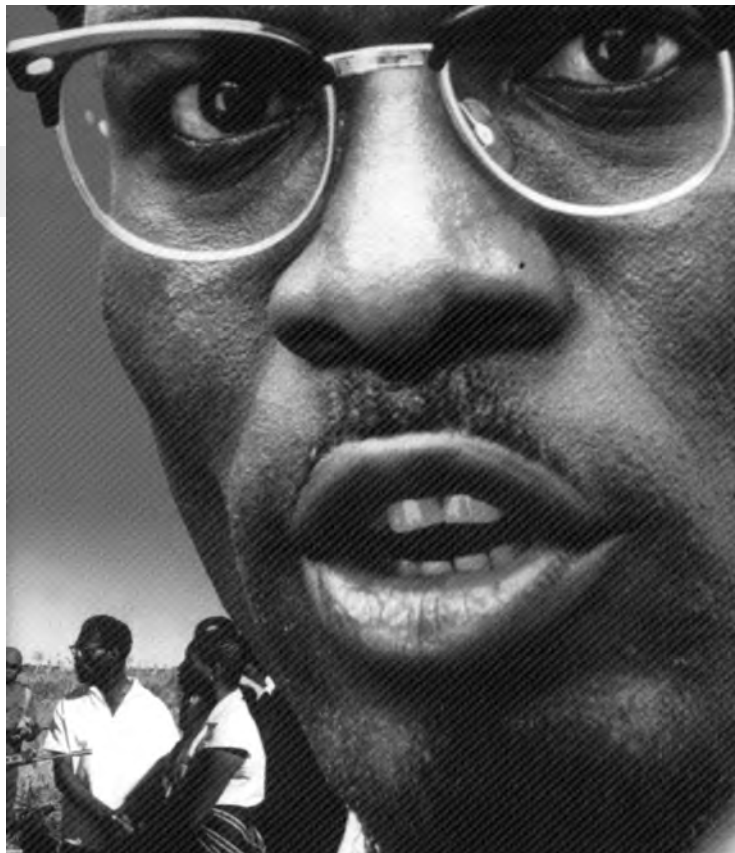
STEPHEN DIGNAN

May 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31
7:00 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.
135 W.118th St., NYC
\$7

This is a great film about great things. Director Raoul Peck has outdone himself on this one, (see his interview on the African film fest Web site, www.africanfilmny.org) and audiences in South Africa are taking notice. Dr. Sotha of aintitcool.com's African offices reported that *Lumumba* had already exceeded the box office figure estimated for its entire run in South Africa, since its release at the Cinema Nouveau festival in Johannesburg and Cape Town, this March. He reports: "*Lumumba's* print average for its opening week jumped to just over \$2,408.03 USD, a major achievement for any film in South Africa," he reports. "The figure achieved for *Lumumba's* second weekend at the SA box office is an increase of 8% on the opening weekend. This fact is yet another major achievement for any film. Most films are expected to drop by at least 30%, when compared to the opening weekend's box office returns." All this was reported in his coverage of Cinema Nouveau's fest on March 10, 2002 at www.aintitcool.com. Harry Knowles has a site to scope; see my review of his book *Ain't It Cool: Hollywood's Red-headed Step Child Speaks Out* in our next issue.

Lumumba is a compelling political thriller that tells the story of the assassinated African revolutionary leader Patrice Emery Lumumba. Called "the politico of the bush" by journalists at the time, Lumumba rose rapidly to the office of Prime Minister when Belgium the Congo gained independence from Belgium in June 1960.

Lumumba's vision of a united Africa was dangerously unpopular among imperial powers. The Belgian authorities, whose colonial hand was not so easily withdrawn, and the CIA, who supported Lumumba's former friend Joseph Mobutu in order to access Congo's resources and maintain their upper hand in the Cold War power balance, were among his enemies. The architects behind Lumumba's brutal death in 1961, nine months after becoming the country's First Prime Minister,



recently became clear and are dramatized for the first time in *Lumumba*.

Filmversations

Interview With Moikgantsi (moo-khan-tsee) Kgama (kama), founder and executive director of imagination. Her executive producer and partner is Gregory Gates.

Boog City: What made you found the imagination film festival?

MK: As a child I was extremely disappointed by how I saw communities of color represented in the media. Being of both South African and American parentage, I have a pretty well rounded perception of the Diaspora and I knew that something was amiss. As a kid, I thought that by being an actress I could effect change. And then I realized that actors don't really control content and thought I'd like to produce and direct. However, I looked around and saw that there are tons of talented directors and producers, and began to wonder where they show their work. I saw a need, and for the last 4 years I've been building the imagination brand with the goal of filling the need for an exhibition venue that will exclusively support independent directors from the African Diaspora.

BC: What else?

MK: We were founded out of the desire to make edifying entertainment accessible to communities of color. By showing these films in the

Black community and following each showing with a short discussion, we hope to demystify the indie flick and provide a quality alternative to Hollywood stereotypes. Most of what comes out of Hollywood is mental and spiritual junk food. Our goal is to harness the transformative power of cinema and use it to galvanize spirits and hopefully create activism and discourse. And, we're ecstatic to set the tone by launching with *Lumumba*, one of the best films in the history of African Diaspora cinema.

BC: What else can you tell me?

MK: I worked in independent film in several capacities (including associate producer) for a couple of years and I worked for The Sundance Film Festival in 1998. I was able to build some solid relationships. imagination has produced events for The Urbanworld Film Festival and I have a good relationship with its founder, Stacy Spikes. I also worked with pioneering black independent film distributor Kay Shaw. In fact, they both serve on imagination's advisory board along with Eileen Newman and Duana Bulter from Film Video Arts; Warrington Hudlin; Nelson George; Kisha Cameron, associate producer of *Bamboozled*; Tracy Moore Marable, Alyce Emory, and Themba Sibeko. We have developed a great support network. We're leveraging these relations to secure quality films.

You can contact Moikgantsi Kgama and her partner Gregory Gates at imagination@onebox.com or (866) 841-9135 x7482 (voicemail/fax.) See *Lumumba* in May in Harlem! www.imaginationfilmfestival.org

Attention Burgeoning Film Societies and Dreamers

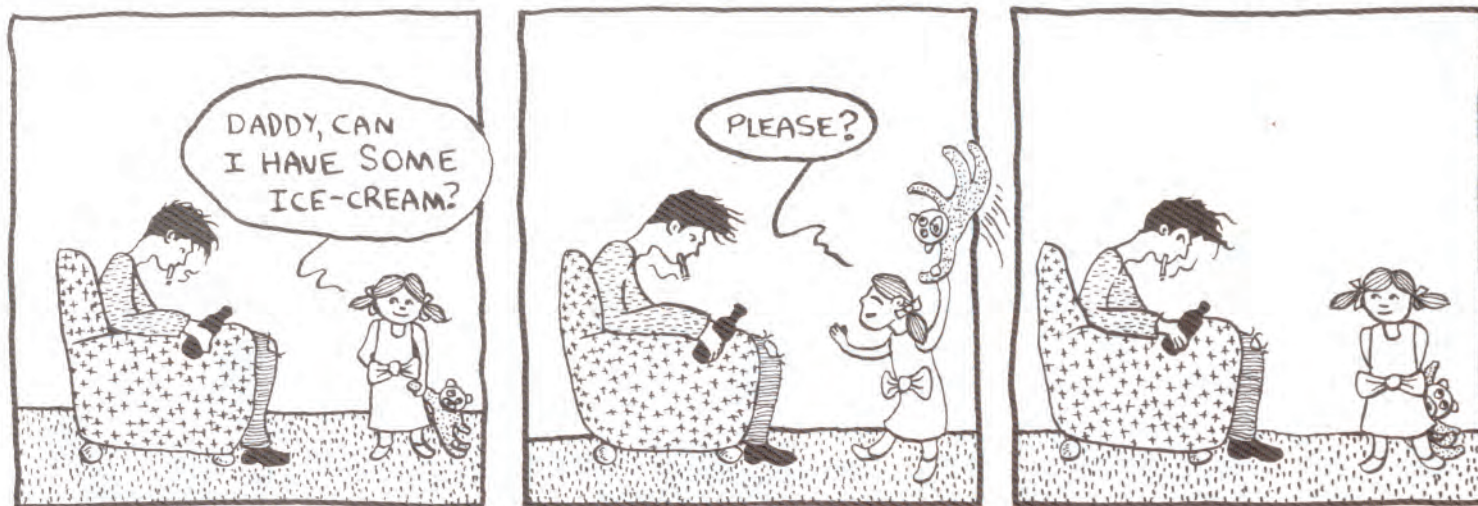
The space at 135 W. 118th is available for screenings and pre- thru post-production. Contact Mishka Brown and her partner, Bill Mack. They also consult for fledgling filmmakers, from grant writing to post production services.

For more info: mbrown@aerolith.com.

The Seldom Scene Pictures to see in NYC

After the War, Before the Wall:
German Cinema 1945-60
Organized by The Film Society of Lincoln Center and the Goethe Institute.
Through May 5, 2002.
Looks like a great program.
www.filmlinc.com for details.

'Our goal is to harness ... cinema and use it to galvanize spirits and ... create activism and discourse.'



Trane DeVore comic

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3. Cecilia Vicuña, *Bloodskirt*, trans. Rosa Alcalá
4. Fanny Howe, parts from *Indivisible*
5. Eleni Sikelianos, from *The Book of Jon*
6. Laura Mullen, *Translation Series*
7. Beth Murray, *12 Horrors*
8. Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, *Audience*
9. Laura Wright, *Everything Automatic*

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11. Kathleen Fraser, *Soft Pages*
12. Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Draft 43: Gap*
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15. Adeena Karasick, *The Arugula Fugues VII-VIII*
16. Aja Couchois Duncan, *Commingle'd: Sight*
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19. Lynne Tillman, *chapters from Weird Fucks* and "Dead Talk"
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22. Norma Cole, *BURNS*
23. Jocelyn Saidenberg, *Dusky*
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For more info, check out www.ladyfesteast.org

Unbearables Arts Festival

May 2002

Wednesday May 8 8-11PM
Tsaurah Litzky presents
"Wet Wednesday: An Evening of Erotica"
at Fusion Arts
57 Stanton St. (212) 995-5290

Sunday May 19 12 - 7:30PM
Unbearables first annual
Lower East Side Street Fair
Stanton St. btwn. Forsyth & Essex

P.A.N. Arts 8 - 10PM
at Collective Unconscious
145 Ludlow St.

Saturday May 4 6 - 9PM
Opening: "Faith to Faith"
art opening and reading
at Tribes Gallery
285 E. 3rd St. (btwn Ave C&D)

Wednesday May 1 6 - 9PM
Opening: "Corporate Delecti"
art opening and reading
at Fire Patrol No. 5
307 W. 121 St.
(btwn Manhattan & 8th Ave.)
(212) 316-2609

Friday May 31 6PM
Lee Klein Presents:
The Unwearables Fashion Show
at the 63rd West 23rd Pier

Monday May 6 8 - 11PM
A Night at Tonic with
Steve Dalachinsky
at Tonic
171 Norfolk St.
(btwn Delancy and Rivington St.)

Shalom Presents:
"An Evening with
Andrei Codrescu"

Fusion Arts \$5
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