

Pilgrimage to India Awakened by Clouds, Surrounded by Beauty

BY KELLI BICKMAN

As a painter, for years I have been drawn to the colorful imagery of India. The beautiful renditions of deities and demons in Hindu and Buddhist art have intrigued and inspired me enough to bring those images into my art.

As a Buddhist, India has a magnetic force that had been calling my name so loudly that I could no longer ignore it. So I sold my house in Florida and am traveling in India for a few months. I am staying at a Tibetan Buddhist Nunnery down the mountain from the Dalai Lama's temple, near a school where they teach the sacred art of Tangka painting. I am surrounded by beauty and forever changed by this experience.

This is one of the most stunning places on earth. It is no wonder the Dalai Lama settled here in exile from Tibet after the Chinese invasion in 1950.

My arrival in India was less desirable. The desperate heat of Delhi immediately arrests one's senses. It was night, darkness was everywhere, but the air still pulsated with dense pollution. My luggage was lost and my nostrils burned on the drive to the hotel, Himalayan House in the Tibetan refugee camp. Here the dotted line in the middle of the road is akin to a game of Pac-Man. They drive right down the middle, honking, swerving, and riding each others bumpers like a child's game at the country fair, only at 60 miles per hour down the highway.

Beggars approached—one arm, no arms, deformed feet and hands, a man laying in the street asking for food, water, money, anything. Sadness welled up inside of me. There is a deep hopelessness in their faces. We drove on to witness a thin, dark-skinned, naked man stumbling down the side of the highway. I asked the driver questions about this but he didn't understand my English.

He pulled into a side street with several cows lying across the road, trash piled up in deep mounds. A scraggly dog looked at us as we turned down a dark alley and I suddenly thought to myself, "What the hell am I doing here?"

The car stopped, my small bag was pulled out, and the driver

pointed up the dark soggy alley. I looked around and realized that this is where I was staying. I grabbed my bag and hurried down the street to my hotel. When I entered there was a large portrait of the Dalai Lama posted above the desk and suddenly a wave of comfort swelled up in me and I felt safe, protected, and warm. My fear was dispensed, and I knew that I was here for a reason. I am here to learn, experience, study, and witness the images my dreams have made real.

I awoke to the phone at 4:30 a.m. letting me know my luggage had finally arrived. I went out to meet the driver and saw many bodies, brown, filthy, and hungry, sleeping on the street. They sleep on the concrete dividers while rickshaw taxis, bicyclists, cows, flies, and cars go past in a mad dash to nowhere. The activity is constant and the heat is stifling. This place is madness and exhaustion. I couldn't wait to get out of Delhi.

I endured a tortuous overnight 13-hour bus ride from Delhi to Dharamsala, the home of the Dalai Lama and a Tibetan settlement. The destination was worth it. This mountain town is like a beautiful dream, robust with color, exquisite craftsmanship, and casual comfort. The center holds a tiny rectangular temple filled with Buddhist prayer wheels that monks and laypersons alike walk around spinning, sending their colorful prayers out into the universe for protection and harmony dedicated to all sentient beings. Many travelers come to study Buddhism, yoga, and meditation, drawn to this place as if a magical force calls to us in our slumber. Spiritual seekers are plentiful and radiate a peaceful exuberance that shines into the night, a mirror of the star-filled sky.

I feel fortunate to have no particular agenda other than to paint, meditate, and study. I rented a room with brilliant early afternoon light overlooking the mountain called Himalayan Paradise. The next morning I awoke to clouds. They seeped into my room and the deep mist embraced me in my slumber. Then I heard the horns and bells of the Tibetan Monks outside my window, chanting the deep chant "Om Mani Padme Hum," the mantra that encompasses all mantras:

- Reciting "Om" purifies the practitioner's ignorance
- "Ma" purifies anger
- "Ni" purifies the miser
- "Pad" purifies attachment
- "Me" eliminates anger
- "Hum" purifies arrogance



Kelli Bickman art

A morning walk brought me to the Dalai Lama's temple. I witnessed the monks seated, deep in prayer as I entered the monastery. The emotional impact of this place leaves an imprint on my heart deeper than the ocean is wide. About 30 monks were draped in their burgundy and yellow robes, heads shaved, sitting on cushions outside the main temple room chanting the most exquisite music I have ever heard. I prostrated three times, as is custom in Tibetan Buddhism, took my shoes off, and sat at the back of the group. Tears poured from my eyes like the monsoon rain as I listened and felt overcome by joy and happiness. This is one of the most stunning places on earth. It is no wonder the Dalai Lama settled here in exile from Tibet after the Chinese invasion in 1950. Or perhaps it is the presence of the Dalai Lama that makes this one of the most stunning places on earth.

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Yoga with Pahztrami—A Delicious Combination



Fly art

BY PAULETTE POWELL

Seeing his angelic face framed in long dreds, it is hard to recognize that Pahztrami is Italian. He speaks adoringly about his family. "Both sets of my grandparents emigrated from Sicily to the Lower East Side, and both sets were married at the church Mary Help of Christians at 12th Street and Avenue A, the Collettis in 1917 and the Prestiannis in 1921."

We are sitting in his small and cozy East Village flat, while we pore through beautiful antique photographs of

his grandparents, stunning couples who could easily be mistaken for silver screen stars of their day.

Pahztrami came along on May 18, 1960 in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, and was christened Steven Dominic Prestianni. In 1968, Steven moved to Valley Stream, Long Island with his family, where he felt out of place in the all-white suburb. "We were living in Brooklyn in a diverse community," says Pahztrami, "and, like many families, moved away 'to a better neighborhood.'" Like most families, they wanted their beloved Steven to be a doctor, a lawyer, or a priest. "I always had a strong inner voice and sense of being and [knowledge of] who I was that guided me," he says. "I wasn't comfortable around priests. It was like, what do they do behind those closed doors? I knew who I was, and I felt a natural connection to the Universal Life Energy that most people refer to as God. As a child I knew I didn't need a priest to connect to it."

Steven visited the Lower East Side in 1977. He felt at home and later moved to the East Village where his name morphed from Prestianni to Pahztrami thanks to his close friend, the artist Fly. "I'm either a hillbilly or urbanite, give me the city or give me the woods," he says.

Pahztrami continued to let his inner voice guide him and he would weave his life into that of a transient seeker living part of the time in New York City and the rest abroad. Traveling the world from the rural Ozarks, where he became an honorary hillbilly playing in a blue grass band, to Rome, where he entertained in the Piazza Navona as a mime. "My mime partner and I were Raggedy Ann and Andy, and for a week we performed, but finally were asked to stop because the crowd grew so large it obstructed the view of the statues," he says.

Then Pahztrami was off to rural Columbia in South America, where he built a house on a remote mountaintop. "It took an hour walk through the jungle to get to a dirt road to catch the Chiva bus to travel another hour and a half to the nearest small village," he says.

Always returning to New York, in 1988 Pahztrami took a yoga seminar with Sri Swami Satchidananda, the founder of Integral Yoga. "After the seminar people lined up to ask questions," he says. "When it was my turn to approach Sri Swami Satchidananda, he took my hands in both of his and I felt a strong current of electrical energy shoot through my spine. The rest of the evening I felt I was floating on air."

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Erik Sweet
Albany, N.Y.
Buzzing

In express of my concerns that
We are sleepwalking through other bedrooms
and walking around fractured gestures in life
other than that
Hands talk alone as we are alone
Sometimes with the feeling that our fingers are letters
sealed in time with pollen waxes
They touch our fears inside the trees that have stopped growing

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PRINTED MATTER

Rice Krispies and Soft Summer
In Ordinary Time

by Sharon Mesmer
Hanging Loose Press

There are two distinct ways of looking at the lines and words of prose. You can either focus on the actual text as an experience unto itself, or use it as a window, a means to a new experience. These two forms are so entrenched in contemporary fiction that readers tend not to think about them.

Self-consciously literary readers would say they are drawn to a book by character development. These readers are excited by the intimate detail where there is time for the characters to trim their nails and inspect the collected dirt and dried skin. To get to know a fictional someone changes how we view people in our world.

The other type of reader doesn't get past the fact that these so-called people in a book are really just gatherings of words. They are excited by a fresh turn of phrase, a way of saying something that changes how we know the world through language.

Objects in these stories become less things—two brown lunch bags, in Mesmer's story, with rubber bands containing a deck of old occasional cards—than articles of lost emotion.

The second part of Sharon Mesmer's new collection of stories, *In Ordinary Time*, also the section's title, is told in the first person. It is a series of stories about a young woman who, like the author, grows up like a weed in the sidewalk cracks of a poor Chicago neighborhood. The reader wonders, "Is this really real?" And in asking the question the reader reads for character.

The narrator in this section deals with a lot of things, including record collections and a childhood house stuffed with litter. Mesmer's lyrical catalogue of junk reminded me of Isaac Babel's early stories about growing up in Odessa. "Everything impressed itself vigorously on my soul," Babel wrote in his story "Childhood." "If people talked in my presence about a ship, I remembered the sign board, the shabby gold letters, the scratch on its left corner." Objects in these stories become less things—two brown lunch bags, in Mesmer's story, with rubber bands containing a deck of old occasional cards—than articles of lost emotion. Where a cookie might contain a smell that triggers a Proustian reverie, junk in Mesmer's fiction becomes a concrete representation of old emotion. She evokes loss when these old associations can't be attached to the piles of trash.



I dig deeper in the trunk and find Marie's and my kid clothes. [...] Looking at those photos of my family I am able to recall moments that I'd forgotten or that I thought were dreams. The particular aura of those times comes back, too, but fleetingly, and I can't hang on to it all.

It is in these innocuous cairns of trash where Mesmer begins to bend naturalism to her linguistic purpose. In the final full story, the thinly veiled autobiographical narrator is left to clean out her parents' home after her mother assumes the Paxil nirvana of a rest home. Naturalism boils off and we are left with the alkali crust of concrete language.

When I turn on the light for the first time I can

see it's just as horrible as I imagined it would be: the walls are spray-painted with "AMBROSE" graffiti, the reading chair that I set up for myself when M and Dad first moved in is buried under the beer cans and plastic pop bottles, and the floor is strewn with ripped curtains, carpets, tablecloths and sheet sets, the result of Maria and her boyfriend rifling through the trunks for stuff to sell for drugs.

At the polar opposite to naturalism is a kind of deliberately artificial writing, something that depends on the logic of language rather than

'She was never, of course, innocent. She was pure evil. But to her audience she was the Mexican Shirley Temple.'

evoking the perceived world. In my ignorance of various "isms" I'll call it "syntacticism," as opposed to realism. Where the realistic story tries to pass itself off as a life lived rather than a deliberate construction, the syntactic story revels in the ability of language to make meaning from nothing. Naturalism expects language to serve meaning. Syntacticism expects language to create meaning.

In the book's first section, *Armistice with History*, Mesmer constantly reminds the reader that this is a book made of words. The first story describes a trapeze artist, "everyone loved her, and then more than ever because of her failure, which amplified her innocence. She was never, of course, innocent. She was pure evil. But to her audience she was the Mexican Shirley Temple."

Here we find allegories, a twist ending, and the repeated appearance of a legendary band of bandit aphorists. They assault travelers with sayings, such as "The pollen of the morning glory is stored in five tiny boxes." The aphorism, as a clot of language easily separated from its sense, is the distillation of this mode of writing. In one story, Eucharis banishes St. Brave and aphorists are terrorizing the land. Eucharis achieves a degree of comfort with confusion. "It was left to Eucharis to decide exactly how what had transpired was in fact revelation."

While it is exciting to see these two modes laid side-by-side, I couldn't help but compare how adept Mesmer was with both styles. She is skilled and droll with the syntactical story, but the contrivances of those found in *Armistice with History* felt oddly out of place alongside the stark, painful, seemingly honest—and who knows how real?—stories of *In Ordinary Time*.

But the first section of the book trains a reader to read plain language closely; and, with an ear trained in this way, Mesmer's realistic stories uncover the naked syntax of everyday life. "On every page," the narrator says, "there's a shopping list, all variations on a theme: Vienna sausage, stew meat, veal sausage, milk, bread, Lotto, Rice Krispies, soft summer, Lady Bugs or 3 Ninjas, pop for Nick." —MATT BRIGGS

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THE FIRST HAY(NA)KU ANTHOLOGY

Editors: Mark Young & Jean Vengua ISBN: 951-9198-72-5, Price: \$14.95
The "hay(na)ku" is a poetic form invented by Eileen Tabios, as inspired by Richard Brautigan, Jack Kerouac, and Tabios' meditations on the Filipino transcolonial and diasporic experience. The form is deceptively simple: a tercet comprised of one-, two- and three-word lines. Many poets also created variations from the basic form, attesting to its paradoxical suppleness despite its minimalist orientation. Inaugurated in 2003, the form swiftly became popular and since has been used by poets all over the world — including the anthology's 38 poets and editors Jean Vengua (U.S.) and Mark Young (Australia).

THE OBEDIENT DOOR

Poems by Sean Finney ISBN: 0-9709179-4-5, Price: \$14.95
THE OBEDIENT DOOR was written in the belief that a poem should have its hands everywhere in your life, especially in the parts that jar. Then the poem is the compromise, where what you didn't write and the knots you can't solve both exist, and the words are unstable messengers. Finney's influences include Ashbery, Beckett, Lorca, and Chinese, Japanese, and Islamic poetry. **THE OBEDIENT DOOR** issues from a desire to know the past and its languages, to find alternatives, new lexicons, other people's boundaries to force words between. John Ashbery suggests that readers of this book will "feast on the scraps so eloquently assembled for us, which are in fact those of life itself."

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Album in Motion

Tamara Hey's Up-To-Date in Her Jaunty New Release

BY JONATHAN BERGER

Tamara Hey
Right This Minute

Tamara Hey has been performing in New York for years. She's been a regular of the acoustic clubs on and off for the last two decades, playing the lamented Fast Folk Café and The Bottom Line. Her songs have always been literate and incredibly well constructed. But in all her years performing, she has released only one album back in the late nineties.

At long last there's new product. The brand spanking new *Right This Minute* clocks in at just over 35 minutes, is great to hear, think about, and sing along to. Hey is rightfully proud of this release, saying these are her "finest songs to date." That might disservice her back catalog, but these 10 songs pack quite a wallop.

Hey has an excellent voice and good musicians recording with her, but her lyrics are what make her stand out. She's a thoughtful and intelligent storyteller. Her songs resonate like classic country fare, but this ain't country, it's pop, smart pop.

There are many links between the songs—recurring imagery, similar stories recounted from different angles, and thematic consistency. Most of the album's tracks deal with travel in one way or another.

The one-two punch of the title track and "Up in the Air" tells tales of relationships in transition. An independent woman sings about living with limited attachments, while perhaps seeking additional

attachments. The chorus of "Right this Minute" says it all, with "I don't need you to come home right this minute ... but in case there's any doubt, I wish you would."

Later, she adds, "I wanna be selfish sometimes, wanna take hold of what's mine, wanna say 'do what I say,' but I can't keep you that way."

"Up in the Air" uses the clever image of flight-time to think about a relationship, and discover that it is perhaps wanting. The song ends with the realization, "We're going nowhere—you and me; I didn't see it till now. Cause I never wanted anyone who ever needed anyone."

Themes of travel and negotiating paths run throughout the album. "Pebble in my Shoe" is about a bad relationship. "More Like Melanie" is the loveliest, most bittersweet song on the album, and it's another travelogue, taking place over the course

of a ride home after a party. Hey thinks that "Melanie" is about adultery, but she's wrong. I mean, the lyrics deal with fear of infidelity, but really, it's about that unsettling anxiety that comes from complacency. The string arrangement, conducted by her husband Henry Hey, swirls in the bridge, representing the conflicted desperation of the lyrics: "Tell me what you need that I can't give. Tell me we can be you and me again. Tell me what you see in her." The song ends with the declaration "I'll make love to you like nobody on this earth," which, coming from her angelic voice and the supporting string quartet, sounds innocent and strangely desperate. Intentional or not, it punctuates the mixing of frustration, fear, and desire. Like so much of Hey's album, it's more complex than the high-concept descriptions you'll come away with from a review.

"More Like Melanie" is like a Raymond Carver short story, a perfect moment in a small life that captures universal issues. The emotion in the words and arrangement are incredible. The song is an aching testimonial to love gone slightly off-course.

Immediately following is the ominous "Girl Talk," which has few parallels with Elvis Costello's song of a similar name. It starts with a letter delivered, and flashback reflection on the information it presents.

The device presents the sense of betrayal and isolation without ever stating outright what the letter said. It's another smart narrative, with a driving guitar line.

"Were you very lonely? And wondering where was I? Were you lonely? All that girl talk ... you could have told me."

"Rainy Rainy Cloud" and "Angeline" deal with negative friendships. "Cloud," the first, rains on the narrator's parade regarding her "new love-high." The latter tells us of a powerful figure who virtually devours the people in her life. Hey sings,

"Angeline, you know I love you, but not like that. I've never seen anyone try to and escape intact." It seems, in these two songs, Hey is seeking to clean house, to remove the negative influences in her life. In a sense, she's traveling toward enlightenment.

There's obvious and careful thought put into the song order. "Up in the Air" leads into "Rainy Rainy Cloud," sharing its sky imagery. Then there's "Sunflower," about the titular plant as metaphor for someone who needs considerate tending to reach heights, and creating a connection to the rain the prior song's metaphorical cloud brought about.

"More Like Melanie," which is talking about a girl, comes right before "Girl Talk," which is talk between girls, which



Frank Ishman photo

'More Like Melanie' ends with the declaration 'I'll make love to you like nobody on this earth,' which, coming from her angelic voice and the supporting string quartet, sounds innocent and strangely desperate.

deals with the isolation inherent within secrecy. Next appears "Under for Good," co-written with producer Art Hays, which Hey says is "about loneliness." The songs make connections, some obvious, some subtle, but there could be no other way to order the album (perhaps another way; a worse way).

All talk of lyrics, storytelling, and order would be irrelevant if the songs didn't move. While the words are clearly paramount here, Hey's voice and melodies bear up after repeated listens.

"When I listen to the songs on the new record," says Hey, "I find myself singing along with the background vocals, which is exactly what I do when I listen to any of my all-time favorite recordings."

"Girl Talk" and "Up in the Air" will make you want to sing along, though your voice probably won't measure up. "Under for Good," and "Rainy Rainy Cloud," two of four collaborations in the set, may well come back and haunt you days after hearing them.

Right This Minute is a strong collection of very good songs. You should travel to her website to get the album ... right this minute.

For more info on Tamara Hey visit www.tamaramusic.com

LITMUS PRESS

— NEW RELEASE —

FALL 2005

Inner China, Eva Sjödén

translated by
Jennifer Hayashida

Paperback, 120 pages
ISBN: 0-9723331-7-7 \$12

— FORTHCOMING —

DECEMBER 2005

Aufgabe #5

Featuring Moroccan poetry in translation, guest edited by Guy Bennett & Jalal El Hakmaoui. Issue #5 is a special issue: Re and Not Re "John Cager," a lecture by Norman O. Brown. Includes essays, poems and other writings in response to his lecture by Joan Retallack, Susan Howe, Clayton Eshleman, Rosemarie Waldrop, Craig Watson, Elizabeth Willis, Diane Ward, Ann Tardos, Jed Rasula, Andrew Jaram, Jan Heller, Anne Milin, and others. With an introduction by Richard K. Wislow.

By turns catastrophic and luminous, *Inner China*, in Jennifer Hayashida's translation, is unflinching in its gaze, economical in its language, and fearless as it enters the difficult terrain that is childhood. Here the interior and exterior worlds, the magical and mundane collide—brutally and beautifully.

Gorya Turinskya

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One Brazilian Boy's Sound

The Paula
Chamar a si Mesmo de Eu

Marcelo de Paula, a recent emigrant from Minas Gerais, Brazil, spent much of the nineties playing bass in the Brazilian rock project Vira Lisi, named after an Italian sexpot actress of the sixties. They never gained enough traction, though, and Vira Lisi broke up. De Paula produced records in Brazil, then released a couple of his own, including 2004's *Chamar a si Mesmo de Eu*, which he's brought with him to the States.

The title and strongest track seems to translate as "naming myself," a declaration of intent, an attempt to create something unique and new. De Paula's is an amalgamation of styles including rock, new jack, samba, other local rhythms, and blues.

The album starts off strong with "Quando não fala Comigo," a propulsive, energetic rocker, and "Ciranda," which simmers into a fiery closing guitar solo that fades away.

The lyrics are all in Portuguese so they present a blank slate that can mean anything. While De Paula intends to write songs in English, there's something magical about the element of imagination involved in pretending to understand these songs. Or to put it in the sounds De Paula sings, "novalê oh wes a vell in ratenau."

Whatever that might mean.

Visit www.thepaula.com.br for more on *The Paula*.

JB-

Anne Diggory

Saratoga Springs, N.Y.



(left)
Dejavu II (top) 2005 24" x 39" acrylic/wood
Everflowing Ham 2005 30" x 15" acrylic/canvas

(right)
Stream Rorschach (top two) 2005 16" x 10" acrylic/wood
The ways things happen to fall 2005 30" x 24" acrylic/wood

About the Artist

A graduate of Yale and Indiana universities, Diggory paints on location and in her Saratoga Springs, N.Y. studio. Recently her paintings were part of a public television special, "InSight" for WMHT (Albany, NY), and Blue Mountain Gallery presented the exhibition "Anne Diggory: The ways things happen to fall." For more information visit www.diggory.com

BICKMAN from page 1

After seeing the dedication and faith of these simple monks I was reminded of my own selfish and trivial concerns. Worrying about money, security, or other people's approval, or watching mindless television is a waste of energy and precious time. I have been taught that it is important to meditate on the preciousness of human birth and think about death everyday as a reminder to live our lives fully and to stay present in this moment of now. Present moment consciousness is difficult to maintain and it takes an enlightened teacher to guide us in meditation and mindfulness. Our minds are like wild beasts, always pulling us in a million different directions at once, taking our focus away from what is most important—being mindful of now, being compassionate to all beings, helping one another, loving one another, and bringing joy and happiness to every moment that we are alive. This is to be awake. This is to know God, the universe, and awakened consciousness. This place is a blessing, and I am grateful to be here.

Tashi Gomag is a temple where monks, nuns, and laypersons can be found in various modes of chant and prayer. Offerings are made to the protectors and deities and Buddha by way of water and fire. One Tibetan woman was particularly striking, dressed in traditional style with long braids. Our eyes met for a single instant as if to say, "Yes, I am your mother, sister, father, and son. We are connected." She chanted, walked slowly, and did not stop smiling the entire time. This is a way of meditation for many Buddhist practitioners. They are mindful of the soles of the feet as they touch the ground, mindful of every step taken. This practice keeps one in the eternal moment of now, this and focus on the breath. You come to realize that this is all there is. Now. The future and past no longer exist. We only have this moment. What we do in this moment affects the future, so it is most important to be mindful of body, speech, and

action and to only perform positive actions so as not to create a negative future.

Norbulingka Institute (www.norbulingka.org) is a school for preserving the sacred art of Tibetan culture. It is located several kilometers from Dharamsala, another jarring ride in a rickshaw taxi. The school itself is beautiful with a quiet, peaceful atmosphere. The Tibetans take their craft very seriously, and it is said that if a trained tangka painter paints a deity out of proportion he will accumulate negative karma. I

One Tibetan woman was particularly striking, dressed in traditional style with long braids. Our eyes met for a single instant as if to say, 'Yes, I am your mother, sister, father, and son. We are connected.'

find this interesting, because I feel it is what is in the heart that matters, and if your heart is pure, there can be no negative karma accumulated. The intention of the creator is everything.

The school contains an exquisite temple filled with the most amazing works of art, carefully created by the master painters at this school. Their stories are told in magnificent detail and color, each design mapped out in perfect proportion according to ancient instructions. I am so happy to be studying here.

I packed once again and moved to Dolma Ling, the Tibetan Buddhist nunnery. Near my guesthouse there was a Tibetan Handicapped Children's Craft Home, Nyingtob Ling, meaning Realm of Courage, and named by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Tibetan people are family oriented and the concept of nursing homes and children's homes are relatively unheard of in their culture. Caring for one another as a family unit, respecting elders, and having concern for the

handicapped are an inherent part of their traditional norms.

Unfortunately, with the 1949-50 invasion of Tibet by the Chinese, Tibet lost 1.2 million of its population. When the Dalai Lama fled into exile to Northern India, approximately 80,000 of his people followed him over the icy Himalayan passes. In Dharamsala a temporary government in exile was formed for the Tibetan people and is headed by the Dalai Lama. Endless refugees continue to flood this area.

Earning a livelihood has become difficult for many of these people. In the past they made a living from the land, livestock, or agriculture products. Today the displaced Tibetans face hardship as they make their way in a foreign culture. Taking care of family members who are nonproductive has proven difficult, if not impossible.

In response to this, the Tibetan Government in Exile has set up several homes for the elderly and handicapped. Nyingtob Ling is one of these homes. They provide vocational training and employment opportunities to approximately 40 handicapped children who live and work here. As one passes through the gates, to the left there is an old concrete building with peeling paint and walls held together by dirt and grime. The interior is filled with photographs of smiling children in various poses. They love to have their photographs taken. There is a showroom where the children, ranging in age from 10-20, display their art. Drawings, hand-made bags and purses, friendship bracelets woven with colorful thread and rows of incense bundled into neat cellophane packages are strewn

around the room. A few disabled children sit at the well-worn table and "assist" their teachers.

Last year the Finnish Embassy donated funding to build a new dormitory, dining/kitchen, and classroom, as well as a prayer hall and infirmary. The new buildings have been open for about a year and it is apparent the children are thriving here and learning to survive on their own. They are being given the skills necessary to make a living. But they have run out of funding and the infirmary stands vacant, in need of equipment and supplies. Money they make from the sale of their crafts, and it isn't much, goes directly into feeding and clothing the children.

The Buddhist nunnery where I am staying offers a very peaceful and loving atmosphere. I have rented a quiet room for \$6 a night. Lush green trees, blossoming flowers, hand-laid stone pathways, and 180 smiling Tibetan nuns with shaved heads and in cotton burgundy robes surround me. The temples are painted with beautiful deities. My handmade Himalayan paper and colorful tubes of Liquitex paint are spread out under the window on a makeshift table/bed with good light and a view of the sky and trees. I am inspired to meditate, to paint, and to simply live in the now.

To say that life begins at the edge of the unknown is an understatement.

Kelli Bickman is an artist who lives in Greenwich Village. She can be reached at www.kellibickman.net. Donations, financial support, and children's clothing or medical supplies can be sent to Nawang Lhamo, Tibetan Handicapped Children's Craft Home, Near Norbulingka Institute, Sidhpur, Dharamsala, Distt. Kangra (H.P.)

POWELL from page 1

But it was not until several years later, when he returned from one of his adventures, that Pahztrami, with dear friend Anandamali, attended the Mahayogi Mission in Tribeca. There he met the master, Sadguru Sri Mahayogi Paramahansa. Pahztrami felt another powerful connection. "I immediately started practicing at the Mahayogi Yoga Mission, and, after a year, Mahayogi sent word to me that I needed to teach," he says. "I started teaching my close friends yoga, and my class grew from there."

Pahztrami has been practicing since 1998 and teaching since 1999, except for a two-year period when he was very ill and diagnosed with Crohn's disease, a painful intestinal disorder. "I almost died, but through treatment, some holistic, some traditional, I'm now in full remission," says Pahztrami.

He is back practicing and teaching yoga, Asana, and meditation at the Sixth Street Community Center (638 E.6th St., bet. avenues B and C). The classes are Mondays and Thursdays from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and Wednesday afternoons from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. "I ask for a five-dollar donation, but I will not turn anyone away," says Pahztrami. "I want to help people to see that there are no separate parts of life, we are all one."

As I prepare to leave, Pahztrami asked me would I like to know his new name given to him by Sri Mahayogi Paramahansa. I nod please. "My name is Anandabhairava, and it means the state of being beyond the individual or mundane consciousness."

For more information about the Mahayogi Yoga Mission visit www.mahayogiyogamission.org



Russell Salamon and Kent Taylor watching d.a. levy set type for his renegade press books, c. 1963-1964.

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David Pavelich

Chicago

Square

Your imitation of
this kind of sculpture

sewn into
the perspective of

a criminal.
About ice,

appearances,
this minute of stems –

the third strategy
is to plainly see

the color
of their eyes.

A whole population
of grace we are

cool to the touch.

Evan Commander

Cincinnati

The Meteorologist

I was trained to be a meteorologist
And a painter.
I studied Plato and I studied physics.
My youth was clouded by vastness and the color blue.
Then they gave me a physical exam and
Decided my eyes weren't good enough.
I looked up and tried to find
The palm tree, then the gull,
Then the pillow cloud.
Filled with thunder, I could hear them
Clapping their well-struck ace.
The 7-day storm had cast
Another lone tree waiting to be
Reduced to shadow.
They told me, "This does not bode well
For your life as a painter either.
After all, what is an artist without great vision?
Merely a painter."
"But beauty," I replied,
"Gets away with a lot.
Especially when abstraction is the
Solid ground you are looking for."
And I can still carry myself
As far as the tip of my brush.

Rodrigo Toscano

Greenpoint, Brooklyn

Vibes

bad vibe establishment
in good vibe district

bad vibe anglo
makes anxious
bad vibe asian

makes anxious
bad vibe *latino*

noting it

*

good vibe establishment
in bad vibe district

bad vibe bartender
good vibe demeanor

good vibe tune
bad vibe lyrics

good vibe asian
makes a fool of
good vibe anglo

makes a fool of
good vibe *latino*

noting it

*

bad vibe job market
in good vibe media surround

bad vibe breaks in conversation
in good vibe human-piercing resistant armor

face mask

vital organ breastplate

night dispelling goggles

special frequencies

special forces

code

grunts

groans

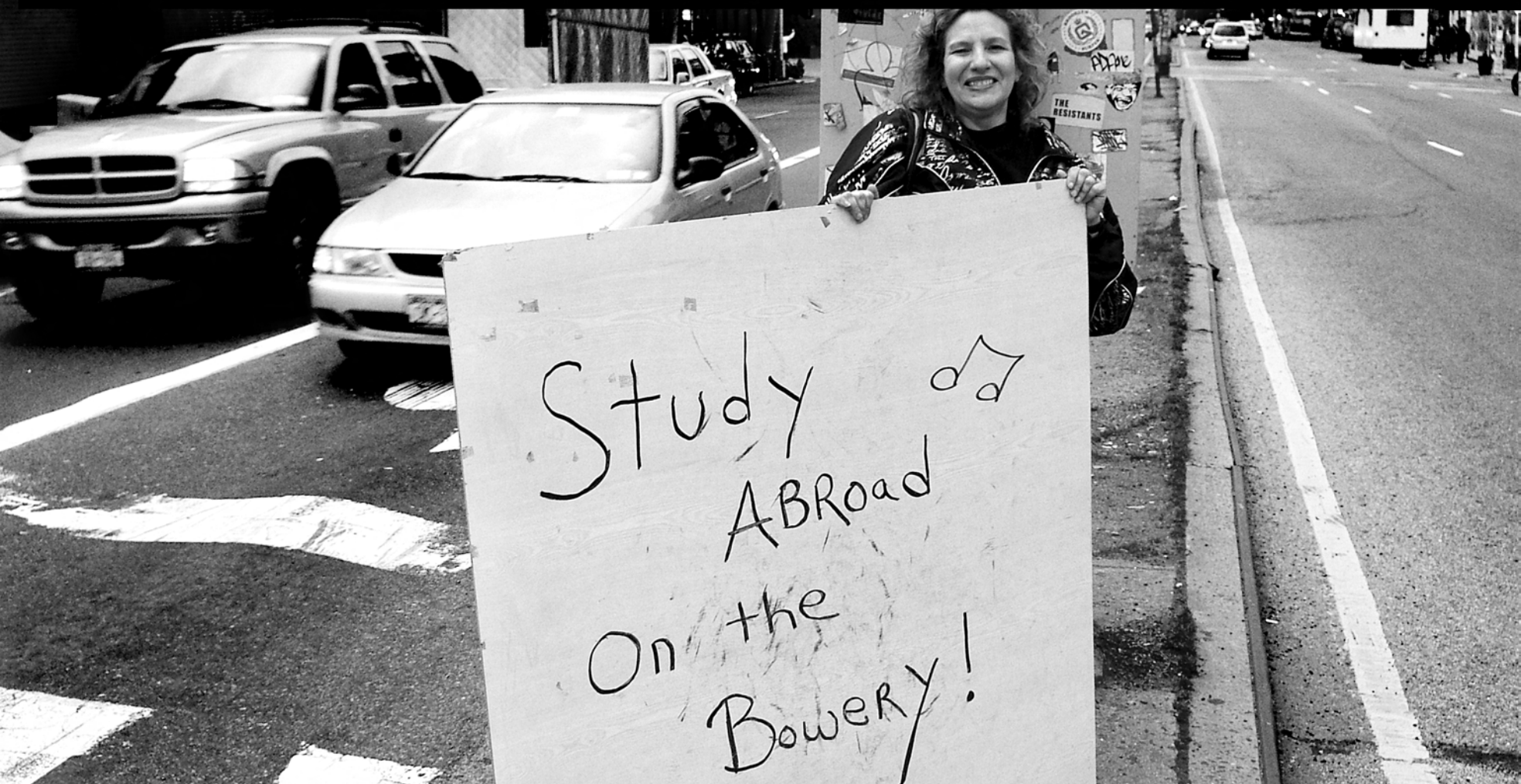
lyrics

About the Poets

Evan Commander is the author of *Planet Carpet*. **David Pavelich** is a rare books librarian at the University Of Chicago. **Erik Sweet** (cover) is co-editor of *Tool: A Magazine* (www.toolamagazine.com). **Rodrigo Toscano's** latest book is *To Leveling Swerve* (Krupskaya).

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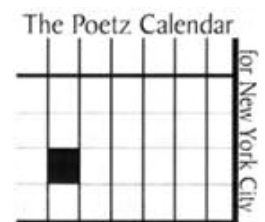
Pink Pony West Poetry Reading Series Fall 2005 lineup!

11/4-Pandora Scooter 11/11-George Held

11/18-Sabrina Hayeem 12/2-Ishle Park

12/9-Bill Mohr

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The Bowery Poetry Club.

All the waiting has finally
paid off, I have listened
to an album that is an
absolutely ideal mix of
calculated lyrics and
music. I recommend this to anyone who adores old school
Patti Smith, Lou Reed, and Nina Hagen with a fresh and new
direction.

—WRKL 910 & WLIM 1580 FM

average bible belt raised person straight into cardiac arrest.
Just on the basis of shock value alone, I would recommend
giving this band a listen.

—Streetblast Radio

Talk Engine cooks, burns, and blisters. If you're not dancing
by the end of their set, it's cause you're flying.

—Bob Holman

A good old-fashioned New York City rock album—dirty and
straightforward, with no two songs sounding alike, conforming
to no niches. It has life in its sound. It pulses. Trust me, this is
good stuff.

—Boog City

The one thing that separates Talk Engine from just about any
other band is the vocals. The talk-singing immediately grabs
the ear. ... somewhere between Blondie and the Sugar Hill
Gang, with a Diamond Dave chaser.

—Aiding & Abetting

If Lou Reed and Patti Smith had coupled, the result might
have been a child like the rocking and raw Jackie Sheeler:
sexy, angry and incendiary.

—Subtle Tea Magazine