



TAB



THE JOURNAL OF POETRY & POETICS

VOLUME 3. ISSUE 2. MARCH 2015

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ISSN: 2169-3013

THE CENTER FOR POETRY AT CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY



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DESIGN STATEMENT

The print issues of *TAB: The Journal of Poetry & Poetics* are special editions, each published at the beginning of the calendar year. These issues reflect the mission of Tabula Poetica: The Center for Poetry at Chapman University to create an environment that celebrates poetry in various forms and venues. The annual print issue engages the reader with poetry as a material object and asks that the reader negotiate between image and text. The design of the print issues do not assume a traditional role of quietly framing content; instead, design actively shapes the reading experience. The special print editions of *TAB* will continue to experiment and explore the intersections between form and content, object and space, and reader and reading.

The 2015 print issue explores mapping as place, location, and orientation. The journal's design this year encourages reading mindfulness with the intention of getting lost, disoriented, having to navigate a way through as someone might navigate a journey and encourage discovery. The journal emphasizes the iconic ritual of unfolding and refolding maps and also the visual weight of traditional street maps in order to communicate credibility and an authoritative source of being an actual place. But this place is no place.

We examined work by Jacques Bertin, a French cartographer and a visual semiotician. In his book, *The Semiology of Graphics*, he synthesized design principals with rules applied to writing and topography. His work was dedicated to the study of visual variables (shape, orientation, color, texture, volume, and scale) of maps and diagrams to code visual combinations that would create successful map-reading objectives. We challenge these guidelines by employing visual variables associated with illegibility, including graphic density and angular illegibility. The front side of the map, which contains the poems, tightly compresses layers between text and texture, eliminating hierarchy and contrast. There is no right side up so disorientation is part of the reading experience. This is further emphasized by orientation conflict in which each poem is placed on its own angled baseline.

This back side of the map provides information about the authors. In order to discover the author of a poem, the reader must flip between the front and back of the map to determine its placement on the latitude and longitude grid. This side of the map uses photography of places so specific that the reader is excluded from knowing the place. With the common use of GPS and everyday devices that lead the way rather than show the way, this print issue empowers the reader to lead their own way.

Electronic issues, on the second Wednesday of every other month, follow the printed issue. Using these differing formats—print and digital—allows experimentation with design and materiality in a time when print and electronic dissemination coexist. *TAB* will not force either format to adapt to the other and the reading experience for each format drives the design. The electronic issues are shaped by Open Journal Systems, a federally funded, open-access system from the Public Knowledge Project designed to serve the public good globally. While the electronic files can be printed, each electronic issue are formatted for ease of reading on the screen. Decisions about page size, typography, and composition are driven by the online reading experience. In this electronic issue, the design of the author pages play into the print issue by including author bios and designating “location” on a zoomed-in part of the map. *TAB* also makes use of the audio/video possibilities of digital dissemination.

GET A COPY

To receive a complete copy of the print issue as a map, please send a check for \$10 made out to *Tabula Poetica* and mail to:

TAB, English Department
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Contributors receive complementary copies and can request additional copies. *TAB* is distributed at the AWP Conference each year.



M. K. BRAKE

M. K. Brake is a poet enamored with the plane of the page and the screaming silence of white space. She has most recently published in *Arsenic Lobster* and was a semi-finalist for Coconut Books' 2014 prize for first books. She currently is Nonfiction Editor for *New Delta Review*.

P.6

POWER OUTAGE

Garden under gas lamp flicker

leaves crunch sienna under

burnt orange my feet
tracking cobbles

Antiquity kneads the skin of my
skin-dough
lye the earth and
taste
salt
congealed horizon

find you

sepia stamp

whisper

not-quite-forgotten

Hum-wires
trill telephones
ache
{inside eardrum}
keen

I just
callus

Debutantes fluoresce
— can garbage gleam—
under styrofoam ghoul
I store their

child
locked in wall

wall locked

up

in

my

arm

Farm me Farm

the eggs spreading
freely

long ago in sun wake
only severed-arm in green

gleam

your old
lover crude

crowded with

dark brown phlegm
propositions:

my mud life my

Mary sticks

and prison

Everyone's you

girl with red lips
sweats oleander
says

*Mausoleum now
forgives
shaded eggplant blood*

Way it toughens is bitter
somehow reflected in the color

thick rash of
my ring finger question
gropes for doorbells in the dark—

I built a house for you to live in with me
you won't come see it or come near me

this pall house

— the light not you but bright

chandeliers'
queer here a
christening

call a

burning

less-noel

dial tone home...

dial tone home...

the ever-reachless
emulsified inside

the glow you groan
empty

emulate my cherry
tone cannot

stop dying/

phoning

home:

*will you bear me
poetry*

my house a house a house the house

unlit

LOST EMBALMER

sparrows larks sing weaving blanket of wet ellipses unfinished goodbye crag jut into
night profile nose crook and hollow stowed shallow breaths come blink into being
mother's blue posies in vase- shaped shriveled limb your parts all over this wake
viscera church god purpling swollen hymns like rotting flower babies left in the trunk smell
grasps my numerous cry membranes wracking cheese and cream and things you
cannot eat allergic but mainly because dead butter crackers dead but
dead letters send my organs heavy gut like swallow emptiness lump in throat cracked
glass lightbulb lump get past shred my name red strips of yours
father father love son brother mate father boy love baby pet weed love love and avalanche
memory size of gravestone palm to wear crib daisysong forgotten ringing yellow
echo in sepulchre our baby an anklet outlast nothing phantasm gold
frankincense and myrrh



SARAH HUGHES

Sarah Hughes earned a PhD in English from Georgia State University. Her work has been recently published or is forthcoming in *Atlanta Review*, *Southern Literary Review*, *Review Americana*, *The Anthology of Georgia Poetry*, and *Atticus Review*, among others. She teaches at Mercer University.

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MY HOMETOWN

You would never come here on a whim.
The ocean of my childhood
was crab grass and powdery dirt,
pathetic landscapes, the town dump
teeming with possums. We had nothing
to cheer for—no winning teams,
no movie stars to call our own—
just a gospel quartet that made its rounds
like a bullet in a chamber.

Only, at a homecoming dance,
a blonde girl was caught
under the gymnasium bleachers, kissing
a black boy's penis. Suddenly, riots.
My father had a hammer.
I never saw him use it.

I couldn't even pretend to fight.
The grammar school's gravel drive
provided ammo for a substantial battle.
We left the rocks on the ground.
There were warnings everywhere,
like foghorns, though I had
only seen foghorns in books.

In social studies, Mrs. Simmons
peered over her bifocals.
Stick to your own kind, hear?
We were eleven, terrified of sex.
Less than a handful of girls
were secretly bleeding.

Meanwhile, the teenagers kept coupling.
Their wild hands squirreled
up each others' sweatshirts
while grown-ups plotted revenge.

THE SHARECROPPER'S SON

The dead snore through their own stories.
Those farmers buried in country graveyards,
their long-suffering hands rotting in the dirt,
mean nothing to me. What matters
is the tale of a boy dismantled
by a machine. With no money
for a doctor, the others laid him
on a sour mattress under a pecan tree
and turned back to work.

My grandmother, not yet ten, kept watch.
She brought him water in a tin cup.
She trembled at his gravel breath.
He had no warning for her, or advice.
This boy was too young to have known
a woman. Only his suffering was a truth
he could pass down. He believed in
what he'd never thought *not* to believe in—
ascension, and a white choir robe,
and some immaculate treasure
his fevered hands had never held.



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BRIAN SATROM

Brian Satrom completed an MFA at the University of Maryland. He works at an online university and supports faculty as they design courses. His poems have appeared most recently in *Poetry Northwest* and *Knockout*.

FROM WITHIN

Lake Monona, Madison, Wisconsin

Acolytes of the sluggish, muggy dark,
their dozen or so rods—the tip of one dipping
into the still water—crowded around a spot

where street runoff empties into the lake, blacks
and Hmong casting from shore, some sitting
on large plastic buckets, and whites from aluminum boats

they've brought in close, a ball game on a radio, bobbers
with lights like fireflies above the surface
though fireflies don't hover above surfaces

or bob but trace part of an arc like a match
as it's tossed away. Otis Redding's plane
went down here on the way to his next show.

I doubt he knew the name of the lake, his thoughts
other places when he traveled. If you walk
this path certain times of day, you'll notice

a loon close enough to see the red in its eye,
strange in the reflection of a power plant,
of four tall smoke stacks and a city skyline.

Have you caught a fish of any kind? From within
that stillness you feel a tug. At first you're not sure
what it is, your heart thumping in your chest.

FARTHER THAN I THOUGHT

Dusk, bare oaks across the street looking
less like trees, more like cathedrals
with their columns and vaulted ceilings,
echoes and saints, we changing too among

the day's last shadows, you at our living-room window,
lights off, chin resting on your knee,

like a passenger on a train, and I,
hunched over a book in the near dark,
either a fist opening or closing. I've read

people are meant for certain moments
they come into their own, stand out, like falling snow
when lit up by the headlight of a locomotive,
like anything all of a sudden there in the branches,

owl-eyed, or reflected in a river. Though
the afternoon you and I found ourselves
stuck in traffic between protesters
and police with their shields, helmets,
M16s, I just wanted to go unnoticed, slip
through the cordon to the other side. And once,

after a storm, not sure where the others
I'd come with had wandered, up to my knees

in a snow drift next to a stream, surprised
by a ram's horn I held, how it simply
broke off in my grip, the ram I was
trying to free still stuck, blood on its head
at the stump, night coming on, trees

in their moment of transformation, I suddenly
felt far away, a lot farther than I thought
I'd gone. I like the movie about a journey,
a tin man, wicked witch, something

the wanderers search for far from home, a wizard
who shows them what they've already become.



PHILLIP STERLING

Phillip Sterling's collections of poetry include *Mutual Shores* and three chapbook-length series: *Abeyance*, *Quatrains*, and *Significant Others*. He is also the author of the story collection *In Which Brief Stories Are Told* and is the editor of *Imported Breads: Literature of Cultural Exchange*. He spent much of August 2014 on Isle Royale, as part of the National Park Service Artist-in-Residence program.

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“AND THE RUDE LEAVES FALL.”

—Wallace Stevens, “Metamorphosis”

The lawn is a rough lake
ignorant of weather. Bygones
forgotten. No rain stirs
the canoes of fallen warriors.

As if working lines in a poem
I stress the tines of a rust-licked rake
and count how many flex or bend
absurdly.

Someone may call these *Souls*
of the Dead, and welcome them,
and honor their ancient ways

in blazing ceremony at the shore’s edge.
And someone may simply hearten
to hard hours returning the yard.



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LORI WIDMER

Lori Widmer is a writer and editor with over fifteen years of experience writing for businesses and trade publications. Her poetry has appeared in *Philadelphia Stories*. She maintains a poetry blog at Poet Under Construction: www.poetunderconstruction.com.

SIDEWAYS

By This I mean
beyond the thought
along my path
between the words.

Toward the point
around the edge
under the radar
despite my caution.

Since you asked
without losing nerve
about to say
without delay.

Inside this heart
over all reason
through no doubt
aside from fact.

Across from you
into these eyes
before you say
since time began.

The background is a complex abstract composition. It features a dark, grainy rectangular area in the upper left, a large white diagonal line crossing from the top left towards the bottom right, and a dense field of white dots on a dark background in the upper right. The bottom half of the image is a solid, textured orange-brown color.

ELAINE WONG

Elaine Wong was born in Taiwan and lived in Hong Kong and Vancouver, BC, before moving to San Antonio. She is interested in exploring an interlingual poetics through creative work and research, focusing on the visuality and regenerative creativity of written signs. She is currently working on an English-Chinese interlingual poetry manuscript. Elaine teaches first-year writing at Trinity University.

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WRITING ZHONGSHAN SOUTH ROAD, TAIPEI

Low and thick as the rainclouds above,
cicadas' songs overflow the banyan trees and
gloss the poems engraved on the sidewalk—

遺忘語言的鳥呀
也遺忘了啼鳴

The characters are too old for ants,
too young for mosses, too dark for the nightingale.
They take a spin on the sculpture outside the library,
flexing lines and dots that become a new order
of questions—

」 丿 口 ㄣ ㄨ ㄛ ㄣ ㄣ ㄣ ㄣ ㄣ

Brushing in cursive,
royal palm trees on the medians study for answers.
Across the street, the quiet steps of doves
write all over the square—

由 自 中 山
中 山 由

The road's intersection

*is at the gate of freedom, cicadas translate,
each stroke a note, forming and transforming.
Traffic pauses its impatience, unscrolls the archways.*



Note: The first two lines in Chinese come from the beginning of a poem by Taiwanese poet Wu Yongfu (1913-2008), who grew up during the Japanese colonial rule of Taiwan (photo on left). The literal meaning of the lines is: “The bird that forgets language / also forgets singing.” The Chinese line in the middle records the signs on a facet of the bronze sculpture “Wisdom” (2006), which, created by Lai Tsun-tsun and installed in front of Taiwan’s National Central Library, features Chinese character components that do not necessarily have meanings (middle photo). The last two Chinese lines present a moment of Chinese character transformation: when superimposed, the characters 中 and 山 become 由. Literally, 由自中山 (yóu zì zhōng shān) means “由 comes from 中 and 山,” with 自 meaning “from,” while 中山 is the Chinese name of Zhongshan South Road and 自由, “freedom,” is the name of the square off the road, a popular gathering place for various social and political events as well as a major tourist attraction (photo on right). I walked on this section of the road almost everyday when I was researching on Taiwan visual poetry at the National Central Library from May to August 2014.

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HEIDI CZERWIEC

Heidi Czerwiec is a poet, essayist, translator, and critic who teaches at the University of North Dakota. She is the author of two books: *Self-Portrait as Bettie Page* and the forthcoming *A Is For A-ke, The Chinese Monster*. Visit her at www.heidiczerwiec.com.

WINDOWS AND DOORS: A POET READS LITERARY THEORY BY NATASHA SAJÉ
PUBLISHED BY ANN ARBOR: UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS (POETS ON POETRY SERIES), 2014

More teachers of creative writing are rejecting the tiresome rift with literary theory, so I was excited by the publication late last year of Natasha Sajé's collection of essays (many of which have appeared in other venues—*APR*, *AWP Chronicle*—in recent years) that seeks to bridge critical and creative divisions in poetry scholarship. Overall, I wasn't disappointed: there's much to admire, and Sajé's considerations of poetic styles and strategies are coupled with intelligent but accessible explanations of the various critical frameworks at play. These essays are valuable for the individual writer but also as texts in either a poetry workshop or a poetics seminar.

The "poetics" essays do a fantastic job of linking concrete techniques to their theoretical implications. "Front-Loading Syntax" demonstrates how syntax reveals the interrelatedness of form and content in poetry; the discussion of the reader-response effect of hypotaxis versus parataxis is especially interesting. In "Gertrude Stein's Granddaughters: A Reading of Surprise," Sajé defines surprise as deliberate moments that seem spontaneous but are designed to surprise the reader, and notes that surprise can be used in subversive ways against the assumptions of the reader. This essay examines the work of four contemporary "granddaughters"—Jeanne Marie Beaumont, Mary Ruefle, Belle Waring, and Amy Gerstler—whom Sajé claims have inherited Stein's ability to cultivate surprise via a sense of playfulness, postmodern without being pretentious. The excellent "Metonymy, the Neglected (but Necessary) Trope" distinguishes metonymy from the predominant metaphor, which works via comparisons that rely on assumed relationships and therefore seem more timeless and universal. Because metonymy makes substitutions by naming, it can fix a poem to a specific time or place, and Sajé argues that this very quality can reference a culture (often via capitalist branding) in order to critique that culture and can emphasize the play of language through our associations.

Several essays would be useful for teachers of creative writing as well: some of the content (etymology, prose poetry) might be adapted for more introductory classes, or the essays themselves could provoke more nuanced discussions for advanced classes. "Roots in Our Throats" describes how the numerous etymological sources of English allow poets to amplify meaning, sound, and even ideology and cultural change, through its post-structuralist slippage. (Also, there is a terrific poetry exercise suggested on page 6 that I plan to use myself.) Sajé catalogues the characteristics of the prose poem in "A Sexy New Animal" to illustrate how its brevity and speed combine with a propensity for the surreal and surprising to create subversive and unhegemonic effects. And "Dynamic Design" discusses strategies for ordering a manuscript of poetry—opening gestures, trajectory of poems, endings versus closure—with an eye toward inviting and engaging the reader.

While I was impressed overall with this collection, "Rhythm and Repetition in Free Verse" adds little to the ongoing discussion of free verse, and "Performance of the Lyric 'I'" seems like retread of Lesley Wheeler's *Voicing American Poetry* and Kate Sontag and David Graham's *After Confession*, neither of which are cited in her notes.

The biggest problem I had with this book, though, is that, in asserting connections between poetry and literary criticism, Sajé seems to have a blind spot regarding poets who work in received form and narrative, who rarely appear in her extensive

examples. In particular, in “Narrative Poetry and Its (Dis)Contents,” she complains that Dick Allen, one of the founders in the 1980’s Expansive Poetry, mischaracterized the rest of contemporary poetry, but then Sajé proceeds to do the same to this aesthetic school, treating it as a movement fixed in time to its (admittedly conservative, white, male) origins and guilty of equating its goal of “accessibility” to commercialism simply because another founder, Dana Gioia, had worked in advertising.

I would like to have seen recognition and discussion of how it has evolved and even publically broken with its founders. Like many of the critically engaged poets she cites, these writers are using formal and narrative structures to interrogate and subvert readers’ expectations and create multi-voiced dialogic texts. Marilyn Nelson in her essay “Owning the Masters” describes how the oppressing culture’s forms can be used to critique the oppressor and does so in her shattering heroic crown of sonnets “A Wreath for Emmett Till.” Moira Egan subverts the nubile female object of the sonnet sequence, making herself and her menopause the subject-object of “Hot Flash Sonnets.” Former U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey employs form to create a collage of voices representing the complex history of race relations in America. And new invented forms like the Bop and Kwansaba emphasize a communal African-American voice over the voice of the individual poet.

While Sajé’s intelligent mind could have incorporated the critically subversive possibilities of received form and narrative, this seemingly conscious omission in *Windows and Doors* leaves room for more of us poets to discuss literary theory and contemporary poetry. This collection is excellent in many ways and will be useful to a variety of poets, teachers, and students. As I finished reading this book, I knew there’s more left to be said and explored.