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Monthly electronic issues follow each annual 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. The reading experience in virtual spaces is different than that of a printed journal. 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 will be formatted for ease of reading on the screen. Decisions about page size, typography, and composition are driven by the online reading experience, rather than to merely mimic a print version. *TAB* also makes use of the audio/video possibilities of digital dissemination.

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LAUREN CAMP



WHY I WALKED AWAY

I remember the day I said *yes*
and what *yes* looked like, the wide plate of it, the paper
I wanted to file that never appeared,
and how I left my lonely soil with apology
and extra food that first morning

for a window to sky, the sky
an ellipse of imaginary light, I remember once a week, twice
in some rooms, seeing only small desks
surrounded by winter's white willingness and knowing
I had already spilled toward their hearts, and they

into mine, how they had bruised me
even at first, the small forms of their bodies
on the sidewalk, slung from the belly
of the bus their pre-adolescent ease or uncertainty
that kept me willing to lurch

into the mantle and visceral mass
of the school I came to them in the season of wind,
exited my car to matter-of-fact, to 7AM, to the cavity
of cold, I slanted
to the gray head of morning, someone said good luck

or that was before, the least of this was the hour,
but there was ice skimmed to the curb, and wind licking
through dust, I couldn't stand up I shrank from this, afraid
but also
continued, I needed everything

everything to quiet and kept crafting new prayers
until the clang of the bell, and the Pledge filled my ears
until English and Spanish
stood side by side on weeks I could not afford to forgo, I was sick
but no one noticed, and the room

was not home and again, again it was that
children switched places every hour
and my tight mouth refused to give up on them,
so I gave up on me, but maybe also
the echoes of those lively tongues and the voices

twitched with ceded speech, the backpacks kinked
by the door and hair raised and bright,
the way some held the moon in their eyelids
who knows what it was that slipped into me,
folded me into it, and what good

are laments now? our bodies know to work and not break
I didn't make it all the way, I might
as well tell you that, what I'm getting to is the doors
to each room were edged with splinters, and some kids
stuttered, and each day I wandered past

upended tables and the thin veneer of youth, every dawdling
child, and side-by-side sweaters and I might have
done that for months
but I didn't, I was hungry
for recess and linger and night, and don't know now

if it is worse that I gave up,
or right that I found the truth of it that first day,
we each held up a hand
that first day I gave directions by color, aware of the gasps
in my statements and long bloated seconds

I told my words to the door and not to their
cracked lips and bodies in bashful shirts,
and yes, all fists fell to the bottom,
so maybe it was the shape of their thoughts
released on the carpet that kept me as long as it did

on my knees like that, I belonged with the waif-ish,
the ones not yet in focus,
the blueberry-haired, I was carried along, so I thought,
but I was fragile later in the teacher's lounge with the residue
of their thunder and patter I was even then eye-bright

and wilted beside walls painted
sticky hues of pale blue What one says in a circle
is *listen* and it goes into
the elbows and ears, and there were moments
we were circles within circles and robed in each other

and I liked that so much I was mesmerized
I don't know if I was lazy or if my body
just knew I had to walk away from the fifty eyes, I've still never
quite said all their names, each stuffed
with consonants, I still lie in my bed with their stories

every layer of road is risk, I know that,
but I said yes and entered
for a while, and later,
when an accordion played on the radio I forgave myself
for stopping

and for that *no*, which bent out of my mouth
as I sat trim in the house
on the couch I made a whole day of that *no*, didn't notice
the great glow of release, didn't know the white
certain space of tasting each letter, each part of myself.

STEPHEN CAMPIGLIO



BLUE FIELD

The subject matter is subject-less.
Subjected to this, I find the writing objective
a captivating quest nonetheless:
to combine profound indifference
with elevated interest.

Uneventful eternity,
undifferentiated expanse—
it takes momentous change
(of what cause?)

to create this and that.
My hands across my throat
cool the irritation there,
as I invoke the blessing of San Biagio,
whose hands of tallow steer sickness clear.

PAUL SOHAR



MODERN HUNGARIAN POETRY AS REFLECTED IN SÁNDOR KÁNYÁDI'S WORKS

Modern Hungarian literature reflects a society shaped by conflicting historical and political forces. It is commonly assumed that smaller countries are backwaters, where not much happens to disturb the traditional way of life, but the enormous changes the world has experienced in the past two hundred years have buffeted Hungary even more than some of the major players; every political and ideological movement, every artistic fashion, and every literary trend emanating from Western Europe have had their echoes in Hungary, albeit with some local flavor added. And often with considerable delay.

Political developments and their cultural manifestations are not always in a clear-cut relationship. Take for example the Romantic Revolution, the first major movement of modern Western literature. This liberation of the individual did not start during the Age of Enlightenment—which focused on perfecting society instead of rejecting it in favor of the individual—and not even with the French Revolution, but with the disillusionment that set in in its aftermath. No wonder, with a megalomaniac Napoleon as the guardian of the goals and values of the Revolution, who wanted to bother? Wordsworth waxed enthusiastic about the French Revolution while it was in progress, but he did nothing to translate his sympathies into political activity at home; he did not call for the head of his *own* monarch. He was happy in his country estate, away from the troubles of the world, away from society, perfect or not. Perfectible or not. He did not care. And that must have been an immensely liberating experience for him and the other Romantics right behind him, Byron, Shelly and Keats. Add to that the German *Sturm und Drang* movement, and we have not only the beginnings of modern literature but the modern age as we know it.

Unfortunately, the Romantic ideal moved eastwards at a glacial speed. During the nineteenth century, Russia was still busy trying to digest the Age of Enlightenment and look for ways to perfect society. Even more unfortunately, the liberation of the individual did not get there until it was too late, when Russia was already the captive of the perfect society, designed by Marx and Lenin according to the blueprints of communism.

Hungary lay somewhere halfway between England and Russia. Ravaged by marauders from the east for centuries and almost as backward as Russia, it was under Western rule for a change, under the Habsburgs, but still mired in a feudalistic system, and ripe for revolution both social and national. And both materialized in 1848. The Romantic ideal was subverted by political circumstances and put at the service of the revolution. Sándor Petőfi, the national poet of Hungary, was there: “If you have nothing else to sing about / but your own joys and ire, / the world has no need of you; / put aside the holy lyre”¹ (lines 25–28).

He was only 26 years old at the time and already the leading poet of his country. Well-versed in Western poetry, he managed to merge the ideal of Romanticism with national liberation, exulting in both: “Liberty and love, / These two are dear to me; / I’ll give up my life for love, / And my love for liberty!” (Petőfi, *in toto*) His words turned out to be prophetic, and he found his death on the battlefield, at the hands of a Russian lancer, a member of a tsarist expeditionary force sent by the Habsburg scheme to suppress the Hungarian bid for independence.

Petőfi gave his life for the revolution, but his spirit lived on like a firebrand for the next hundred years. This acceptance of the leadership role imposed on poets dominated the Hungarian literary scene up through a compromise with Austria in 1868 that made Hungary a nominal partner in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and through the aftermath of WWI, the Paris peace negotiations that ended with the entente powers punishing Hungary more than Austria for losing the war. Hungary

was deprived of two-thirds of her territory, including Transylvania, the province that kept Hungarian identity and culture alive all through Mongolian, Turkish, and Austrian invasions. Those were trying times that needed the solace that only poets could provide for the shared pain, and they were followed by the Great Depression and the horrors of WWII, again times that pressed poets into service as keepers of the spirit.

Throughout these times the willingness of Hungarian poets not only to portray but also to share these experiences with their people was considered part of their *ars poetica*, an integral component of literary art. But the imposition of communism by the invading Soviet Union muddied the picture, grim as it was. At first, right after liberation in 1945, communism seemed like the perfect plan for a perfect society. It offered a complete break with the intoxicating myths of the past, and promised a bright new world. It was not only old-line Leftists who rallied to the Party but a large number of young idealists, among them the budding poet, Sándor Kányádi. His poem “Dipping of the Flag”² is a rare combination of good poetry and propaganda (although a recent critic called it a fish that had lost the water around it):

Years fly by, wrinkles flourish,
gray hairs start thinning out
and so do the rows of comrades of old.
Only the red of the banner doesn't fade,
only the Party doesn't age,
it remains strong and young;
with every passing year
it grows in strength and rejuvenates.

Only the red of the banner doesn't fade,
only the Party doesn't age,
it gathers the youth of every generation,
the warmth of millions of working hands
feeds its youth to spurt and bloom—
our youth feels immortal in our hands
as we hold the red banner of
an enormous, eternal spring. (*Harmat a csillagon* 3, in toto)

This poem was composed in response to a desperate request from the editor of the single Hungarian-language newspaper for young readers. The Party authorities had given an ultimatum to the paper: print a quality poem on the front page for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Romanian Communist Party or cease publication. The editor had discovered Kányádi a few years earlier by reading a handwritten poem of his posted on a high school bulletin board.³ The poet saw the preservation of the language as his first duty regardless of politics. From then on, this poem was published every year, and the poet was established for life.

Or was he? Yes, it provided a good cover for the poet who was rapidly getting disillusioned with the heavy-handed tactics of the Party. And no, he did not accept a sinecure the Party could have given him as a loyal spokesman; he did not even

accept membership, which was a requirement for a decent job. He started the life of a chameleon, a life of passive resistance in a very measured way. He could never be critical of the system or the leadership, but never again did he give it his wholehearted support, especially when it was demanded of him and of every other writer who wanted to be published.

Stalin defined writers as the “engineers of the soul”⁴ and expected them to provide propaganda for the great project of building Communism. Stalin brutally enforced that idea when he consolidated his power (consider the suicides of the best, such as Mayakovsky, Gorky, etc., and the arrests of others like Babel, Mandelstam, etc.). After World War II, Stalin’s henchmen tried to do the same in Eastern Europe in the name of class struggle. They did not simply redefine the “engineers of the soul” as writers of advertising jingles and overblown phrases in the service of the regime, but branded those who hesitated to fall in line as enemies of the people.

Kányádi complied with these demands by carefully choosing the objects of his praise and phrasing this praise in a way that did not compromise his artistic integrity. For example, by commemorating Mayakovsky in a long poem he found a safe way to celebrate a rebellious spirit of the poet and express his socialist commitment without selling out to the increasingly autocratic Party bosses:

When he had lost not only his friends
but also his voice
and got tired of
his one true love,

this world,
he stepped through the window
and stayed standing still. (“To Mayakovsky’s Statue,” lines 1–7)

A turning point came for writers, who had just been coasting along with lip service and faint praise when the 1956 Hungarian Uprising was brutally crushed by Soviet tanks. Quite a few of them were jailed, and Kányádi would have been among them if his poem “Diary Entries” had managed to get into print back in those days and not only after the regime change in 1989:

The light, the light
on bayonet tips galore.
Not the kind of light though
I’ve been waiting for.

The wind, the wind,
swirling with soldier smell,
don’t you blow away the truth
my soul once had to tell.

The blood, the blood,
against my brain it wildly beats.
Oh god, if Thou art in heaven,
stop the blood flow in the streets.

*

Along the Danube tanks are trampling
over the revolution's fragile flora,
the blood of my blood floods the river;
why did you fire at me, Aurora?! (in toto)

The guns of the battleship *Aurora* gave the signal for the start of the Russian Revolution on November 7, 1917, in Saint Petersburg, a revolution still idealized at that time in the minds of many who hoped for a better future for mankind through the radical overhaul of social structures. The poet saw the Soviet repression of the Hungarian demands for a more democratic socialism as a betrayal of the ideals of socialism itself. Of course, the poem was never published; in fact, it was burned during a raid in the poet's apartment and only preserved in his and his friends' memory.

In the 1960s, with Stalin's shadow slowly fading away, the communist regimes of Eastern Europe tried to achieve a truce, however uneasy, with the creative writers. Under Kadar, the new Soviet puppet, the new slogan said: "If you are not against us, you are with us." Under this more tolerant policy, anything was acceptable unless it questioned the authority of the Party and the soundness of the System. But the prizes and rewards were reserved for those who continued to toe the Party line.

As to be expected, a small group of writers knuckled under and went along with the role of public servant, obediently churning out jingles for the government's massive ad campaigns. The others, at least those who continued to write, had to find indirect ways of channeling their inspiration and fulfilling their responsibility to deliver the truth. Their response varied individually, but most of their poetic channels can be illustrated by poems from the pen of Sándor Kányádi, who lived through those difficult decades with his artistic and moral integrity intact. Who else could better represent the persistence of the Hungarian spirit than a poet born Hungarian in Transylvania under Romanian rule (in 1929), where members of his ethnic minority were treated as second-class citizens, as well as subjected to regimentation by the police apparatus of a perfectible society?

Avant-garde poetry, as practiced in the West, was frowned upon by officialdom as decadent, but not forbidden outright because the message was buried in either formalistic experimentation or surrealist imagery and thus escaped the attention of the censors. Both approaches were eagerly embraced by the unofficial poets. Kányádi shows himself a master of both. Let's look at the first approach in a poem entitled "Mantra":

Deep in neutral waters
without human presence
electronic brains compute
without human presence
the precise and true picture

without human presence
of the world to come

without human presence

My favorite example of Kányádi's use of playfully surrealistic image in the employ of a deadly serious message is exemplified by the short-short poem "In Preview":

this silence will prove
to be a deaf and heavy
tongueless bell
that someone will
slowly lower over us (*Dancing Embers* 70, in toto)

Socialist aesthetics, almost by definition, had to embrace folk art in all its forms, which gave poets another inconspicuous avenue of dissent against Soviet domination. Kányádi, having been born in a small village, had his roots in folk ballads and folk songs, and he reveled in poetry written in the same vein in his opus magnum "All Souls' Day in Vienna":

My good king my sire
should high heaven's choir
allow you to be heard
please put in a word

for us to have this grand
protocol be banned
things are getting worse
surely for its curse

protect us with your cloak
so fear can't make us choke
on our tongues that we must
bite off in self-disgust (lines 161–173)

But the strategy most commonly used by poets was to avoid important subjects and to write about personal experience, about the small world they inhabited, and to leave politics out of their poetry. They turned inward because there was no other place to turn. This was the path followed by most poets, even those who tried to smuggle some nuggets of criticism into their poetry when they could. Even Kányádi felt compelled sometimes to throw up his hands and turn away from the problems of society:

I too was running
but numbed by lightning
my fear
made me take root

you on the run
keep on running
flee the storm
do not seek shelter
under my limbs (*Dancing Embers* 80, lines 13–22)

The regime change caught everyone by surprise, not only the political scientists, the ideologists, the apologists, and Western pundits, but even the poets of Eastern Europe as well. Most poets went on with their navel-gazing exercises, not knowing which way to turn, how to deal with the rapid changes.

Kányádi, clear-eyed as he is about the problems of liberation from monolithic communist domination, remains committed to his community, to the effort of shaking up his fellow countrymen so they might make better use of their newfound freedom for the benefit of all; all clans, ethnic groups, and religions instead of the situation he perceives in “Prefab Lines for Swan Songs”:

we blame each other for the same
we pile the same on each other
we nail it to each other
each is the same

we stalk each other
we fall upon each other
we strangle each other
each is the same

we suck each other’s blood
we blow each other up
we devour each other
each is the same (“Prefab Lines for Swan Songs” in toto)

Sándor Kányádi and his generation are fighting a rearguard action, while slowly yielding the field to a younger generation of poets who are totally disillusioned with the slogans and the self-serving rhetoric of the past century. The only thing they claim as their inheritance is alienation from society. Thus, it is impossible to understand poetry produced in Hungary today without being aware of the essential ingredients missing from it, the subjects it consciously avoids. Poetry used to command attention because of the important message it had to deliver, but the most striking feature of contemporary Hungarian poetry is what has been eviscerated from it. The rest is now just subterfuge, the bravado of dirty words, knee-jerk imitation of Western European nihilism, and the tattered posters for a past event, peeling with the paint from the crumbling edifice of contemporary culture. What was once the exuberant assertion of the individual human being by the original Romantics has now become the cynical denial of all societal values.

On the other hand, one could say that Hungarian poetry has finally grown up, and with the country joining the European Union, the poets are free to join their counterparts in the West in their rejection of the traditional values of Western

Civilization. Or else, one could mourn the passing of Petőfi's spirit that had survived the horrors of the last century so as to succumb now to globalization.

NOTES

¹ All lines quoted from Petőfi were translated from the Hungarian by the author but are yet unpublished. Source material cited.

² All Kányádi poems and/or fragments were translated from the Hungarian by the author, and all translations have been previously published and cited as such, except for this one, for which only the source material is cited.

³ From private conversations with Kányádi.

⁴ "The production of souls is more important than the production of tanks.[...] And therefore I raise my glass to you, writers, the engineers of the human soul." Joseph Stalin (1879–1953), from a speech at the home of Maxim Gorky, 26 October 1932.

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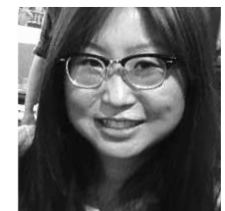
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M A R G A R E T R H E E



Book review

MEMORY CARDS: 2010–2011 SERIES BY SUSAN SCHULTZ
SINGING HORSE PRESS, \$15.00, 124 PAGES

Susan Schultz's latest book, *Memory Cards: 2010–2011 Series*, is a collection of prose poems originally written on index cards. Written on a daily basis over two years, each *Memory Cards* poem begins with a line from another poet's work: Lissa Wolsak, Norman Fischer, Wallace Stevens, Emily Dickinson, John Ashberry, George Oppen, Albert Saijo, Lyn Hejinian, and Clark Coolidge. The nine sections of the collection are also named for these poets. It seems fitting that every poem in *Memory Cards* was composed on an index card and are titled and cataloged by date. Before digitization, index cards cataloged library books and provided order. Yet, unlike library catalogs, the poems and sections in *Memory Cards* are ordered and simultaneously disordered. The diversity of poets, form, and structure in *Memory Cards* demonstrates Schultz's range and commitment to the experimental aesthetic tradition.

Memory Cards parses the poem through form and content. The memory card form performs experimentation through its organization. The lines drawn from other poets, along with the snapshot-like rhythm, offer readers a new composition of poem and memory. The short, compact shape of each poem also makes the physical experience of holding the hard copy of *Memory Cards* like holding a stack of index cards. Schultz's poems contain lines that demonstrate the contradictions in defining the poem. In "July 21, 2010," Schultz writes, "The poem never intended to be a dictator, but it insists on form, control, an ordered space." (74) Yet, as Schultz writes in "10 September 2010," "Poetry is, at best, a loss leader" (44). Instead of a dictator of "form" and "control," Schultz's "ordered space" of the memory card is forged by its unpredictability. For example, we don't expect a line from Lyn Hejinian such as "Lines in meditation—or inspection" to bridge with "look for broken pipes, rusted gutters, chipped slabs..." (95) as written in "19 March 2011." However, by doing so, Schultz's poems leap and connect seemingly disparate phenomena of "meditation" and "inspection" to the everyday such as "broken pipes." By these poetic moves, the poem holds "loss" while confronting "ordered space." Each day's poem begins to blend into the other as Schultz writes, "he took one photograph a day until frame melted into story" (17). Similarly, the collection of cards melts and blends a remarkable story of memory.

Composed of snapshots, observations, insights, names, quotes, snippets, and conversations, these poems explore the boundlessness, borders, and mysteries of memory. They are rhythmic songs that push us to rethink the privileges of remembering. As Schultz writes, "your memory is contained in a cloud" (71). In *Memory Cards*, however, Schultz offers us how your memory can and cannot be contained in a poem. As Schultz writes, "Given a prompt (snapshot, story), the child remembers something." (9) In the same way, Schultz prompts us—with her snapshots and stories—to remember "something" as well. Jumping from one line to another, Schultz offers a montage of daily life. In doing so, Schultz softens the hard edges of the index cards with empathy and insight.

In the collection, Schultz also explores the challenges of memory through her own mothering juxtaposed with her mother experiencing dementia. In the poem "July 21, 2010" Schultz writes, "*You are not my mother!* Slight memory, muscle memory." Recalling dialogue from her daughter, Schultz brings into question how motherhood is intertwined with memory.

As much as Schultz questions memory, she questions motherhood as well. In the same poem, Schultz writes, “My mother has forgotten how to walk. Her throat forgets to swallow. Parse the word” (11). As the speaker’s mother has “forgotten how to walk” and “swallow,” questions of language are juxtaposed with forgetting. The next two lines “parse” words such as *for* and *get*. Bridged through contrast, Schultz carefully and poetically explores dementia through parsing the definitions of mother and memory. In the poem, Schultz asks a painful question: “If my mother forgets me, am I misbegotten?” (9) The poem then answers with dialogue, seemingly directed to the speaker’s own daughter: “Mother is a job, he tells her; it’s the person who takes you to school, and who makes sure you’re safe. At the day’s end, she gets you back” (11).

While gently holding the tender and difficult experiences of dementia and motherhood, *Memory Cards* also includes humor. In particular, themes of Hawai’i and technology illuminate wit and irony. In “July 20, 2010,” “They come pushing their carts down Kahekili, stopping by the bridge to drink. / A little boy in orange points away from my window/frame. *It’s not a bad climate in which to be homeless.*” (10) Or Schultz writes of technology: “Those who die shall not be forgotten by the internet (12); “Love is a feeling that wikiHow can describe and attempt to assist” (17); “It’s the language that’s a commodity, says someone else’s facebook friend.” (21). As Schultz concludes in “21 January 2011,” even “Mute Hamlet” can “talk back,” or even if “you still cannot find” your home, “there’s an app for that” (67). Schultz catalogs the influences of technology such as “wikiHow,” “apps,” and “facebook” with the ironic experience of remembering, forgetting, loving, living, and dying in our digital age.

In *Memory Cards*, Schultz investigates memory through her insightful, unpredictable, and empathetic cataloging of the everyday. In reading the collection, one learns tremendously also about the poem, motherhood, Hawai’i, and technology. Each poem is a small dream we compose through order, disorder, and connection. Most importantly, Schultz reminds us how the poem, like mothers, “at the day’s end” brings us back.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Lauren Camp is the author of *This Business of Wisdom* from West End Press and writes the poetry blog *Which Silk Shirt*. Her second book, *The Dailiness*, will be published in 2014. On Sundays, she hosts “Audio Saucepan,” a global music/poetry program on Santa Fe Public Radio. Readers can find her online at www.laurencamp.com/whichsilkshirt.

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Stephen Campiglio founded and coordinates the Mishi-maya-gat Spoken Word & Music Series at Manchester Community College in Connecticut. His first chapbook, *Cross-Fluence*, was published by Soft Spur Press in 2012, with a second chapbook, *Verbal Clouds through Various Magritte Skies*, forthcoming from Cy Gist Press. His work was recently nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

MARGARET RHEE

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