Introduction


We also continued our efforts to make living writers accessible to students and the general reading public. In May, the Four Short Story Writers of the Apocalypse passed through town, featuring appearances by Robin Hemley, Caitlin Horrocks, Melissa Pritchard, and Doug Dorst. The fabulous four led a workshop and panel at the Kentucky School for the Blind, navigated a challenging Q & A, and hosted dinner at Café Loulou for students. In November 2011, we celebrated the music and poetry of Cuba, which coincided with an exhibition of Cuban Art at the 21c Museum Hotel in Louisville. In April, our reading series at 21c packed the gallery and spilled onto 7th Avenue, where the crowd listened to Bruce Smith and Nikkey Finney from under umbrellas and drenched baseball caps in pouring rain.

Lately we’ve experienced great luck in signing new manuscripts (see “In the Works”), and look forward to numerous titles already in production. Of special note are essay collections by Elena Passarello and Patricia Vigderman, not to mention the mysterious, structurally inventive Moth; or how I came to be with you again, by Thomas Heise. We’re proud to call poet Kiki Petrosino a Kentucky resident, as she now teaches at the University of Louisville. Her sophomore collection Hymn for the Black Terrific appears next summer.

Welcome to our new catalog! We’re so grateful for your interest in, and dedication to, quality literature.
“Reading Patricia Vigderman is like attending an ideal dinner party, where everyone has read your favorite books. Her essays wind particular passages of Proust, or George Eliot, or W.G. Sebald around personal moments; David Foster Wallace’s story ‘The Depressed Person’ is threaded throughout an essay about her own relationship with a loved one’s serious depression. Vigderman’s responses are fresh and original and her sounding of our collective literary treasures are likely to send you back to read them again, now overlaid with her embroidery.” —Mona Simpson

Possibility: Essays Against Despair attempts to translate some of life’s disordered events into the orderly happiness of art. The book includes encounters with manatees, children, and snakes; with Henry Adams, Marcel Proust, and W.G. Sebald; with Texas landscape, Vertigo, and Vermeer. Vigderman has a stylist’s passion for revelatory detail, and for the pleasure of immersion in a world. Smart, generous, and probing, her discoveries play with direct experience, exploring the interaction of life and art as “magic you can walk in and out of.”

PATRICIA VIGDERMAN is the author of The Memory Palace of Isabella Stewart Gardner (Sarabande Books, 2007). In 2010 she was a Literature Fellow at the Liguria Center for the Arts and Humanities in Bogliasco, Italy. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Gambier, Ohio, where she teaches at Kenyon College.
“The beauty of Elena Passarello’s voice is that it’s so confidently its own . . . what she’s saying is always unexpected, and full of information. I began randomly with her essay wondering what the space aliens will make of ‘Johnny B. Goode’ on the Voyager gold record, and couldn’t stop after that.”

—John Jeremiah Sullivan

“In this funny, visceral collection of essays, Passarello explores the ways our voices can entertain us, connect us, ruin us, vent our pains, and tether us to a place or tradition. Subjects range from . . . Marlon Brando’s gut-wrenching ‘Stella!’ in A Streetcar Named Desire [to] the punctilious mouth diagrams of Frank Sinatra’s ‘Tips on Popular Singing’ pamphlet. . . . This striking debut is graceful even in its portrayal of the most barbaric groans and yelping cries.”

—Publishers Weekly

ELENA PASSARELLO is an actor and writer originally from Charleston, SC. Her essays have appeared in Creative Nonfiction, Gulf Coast, Slate, Iowa Review, Normal School, Literary Bird Journal, Ninth Letter and in the music writing anthology Pop When the World Falls Apart. In 2011, she became the first woman winner of the annual Stella Screaming Contest in New Orleans. She lives in Eugene, Oregon.
Clangings

Poems by Steven Cramer

November 2012

Schizophrenia may be characterized by a surfeit of language, a refurbishment of our used-up words with musical connections every day speech and sense cannot provide. These riffs are “clangings,” and Cramer imagines them into a poetic narrative that exults in both aural richness and words’ power to evoke an interior landscape whose strangeness is intimate, unsteady, and stirring.

“Humane from its aching heart to its flummoxed nether regions, whipsmart, formally acute but unfussy, and entertaining as all hell—Steven Cramer’s new book shreds our airwaves with an inventiveness that is rare. Rare, as in once-in-a-lifetime-if-you’re-lucky rare. It balances perfectly on the knife-edge of improvisation and necessity. Clangings is magnificent.”

—David Rivard

STEVEN CRAMER is the author of four previous poetry collections, including Goodbye to the Orchard (Sarabande, 2004), which won the 2005 Sheila Motton Prize from the New England Poetry Club and was a 2005 Honor Book in Poetry by the Massachusetts Center for the Book. Recipient of fellowships from the Massachusetts Artists Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts, he currently directs the Low-Residency MFA Program at Lesley University in Cambridge.
The poems in Kiki Petrosino’s second collection fulfill the promise of her debut effort, *Fort Red Border*, and further extend the terms of our expectations for this extraordinary young poet. The book is in two sections, the first a focused collection of wildly inventive lyrics that take as launch pad such far flung subjects as allergenesis, the contents and significance of swamps, a revised notion of marriage, and ancestors—both actual and dreamed. The eponymous second section is a cogent series, or long poem, based on a persona named “the eater,” who, along with the poems themselves, storms voraciously through tablefuls of Chinese delicacies (each poem in the series takes its titles from an actual Chinese dish), as well as through doubts and confident proclamations from regions of an exploratory self. *Hymn for the Black Terrific* has Falstaffian panache; it is a book of pure astonishment.

KIKI PETROSINO’s debut collection, *Fort Red Border* (Sarabande Books, 2009) was praised by *The Believer* and shortlisted for the 2009 *ForeWord* Book of the Year in Poetry. In 2011, her poem, “Allergenesis,” was featured in the Op-Ed section of *The New York Times*; other poems have appeared in *Tin House, FENCE, Jubilat, Gulf Coast*, and elsewhere. Petrosino teaches at the University of Louisville.
In her first collection of short stories, Laura Kasischke exposes the dark heart of the domestic—it’s wrapped in shabby silk, tucked away in a dresser drawer. Memorial statues and raggedy dolls seem to come to life, a man listens to the electric menace of suburban power lines while he struggles with his failed marriage, and the little boy and his dog knocking on the door might be Death in disguise. Surreal and darkly comic, these are stories that know the unexpected graces and random collisions that drive and haunt us.

“Kasischke writes with wordly-wise profundity and sudden beauty but also sly humor. . . . We are both shocked and transported by the author’s potent and poetic storytelling.” —Elle

LAURA KASISCHKE has published eight collections of poetry and eight novels. She has been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, two grants from the NEA, several Pushcart Prizes, and the NBCC Award in Poetry for Space in Chains. She lives in Chelsea, Michigan, and teaches at the University of Michigan.
Thomas Heise’s adventurous book-length project, *Moth; or how I came to be with you again*, is best described as a poetic narrative, written in columnar, densely lyrical sections. It’s built around a speaker who is trying to fuse together his present and past, the pieces of which include abandonment by his parents, his childhood in an orphanage, and a strong sense of disconnection from his adult life. The story loops and makes vertiginous drops into the speaker’s past, across several cities in Europe. It recalls W.G. Sebald, Beckett, Thomas Bernhard, and Antonioni’s films. Heise’s language is precise (dirigibles “no larger than a fennel seed”) and his lush, unfolding sentences offer a great, gorgeous pleasure. *Moth* is a haunting, one-of-a-kind novel that will stay with the reader for a long, long time.

Book of Dog

Poems by Cleopatra Mathis

JANUARY 2013

“These new poems proceed from devastating circumstances: they are wilder, more moving, and more beautiful than anything else she has done.” —Michael Ryan

“These severe poems trace the trauma of rupture, written out of a shocked and diminished present where life is reconstituted in doubtful ways. Yet Mathis’ soulful generosity and artistic courage show us a solace in begrieved solitude; and as she documents her first stunned new steps forward, we marvel at her freshly seen community of comrades—a spider, a bat, a day-old mouse, and a wonderful companion “new dog,” whose eager “what now, what now?” becomes a figure for resilience and the prospect of hope. The deepest gift of Book of Dog is precisely this hope, this “waiting to be charmed.” —David Baker

Born and raised in Ruston, Louisiana, CLEOPATRA MATHIS is the author of six books of poems. Prizes for her work include two NEA grants, the Jane Kenyon Award, and the Robert Frost Award. Mathis directs the creative writing program at Dartmouth College.
Jeff Dolven’s poems take the guise of fables, parables, allegories, jokes, riddles, and other familiar forms . . . but something is off. In each poem, an uncanny conceit surprises the form, a highway paved with highwaymen, a school for shame, a family of chairs. Dolven makes these strange wagers with the grace and edgy precision of a metaphysical poet, and there are moments when we might imagine ourselves to be somewhere in the company of Donne or Spenser. Then we encounter “The Invention: A Libretto for Speculative Music,” which is, well—surreal, and features a decisively modern, entirely notional score. The daring of this collection is not in replaying the fractured polyphony of our moment. Speculative Music gives us accessible lyrics that still manage to listen in on our echoing interiors. These are poems that promise Frost’s “momentary stay against confusion” and, at the same time, provoke a deep, head-shaking wonder.

Easy Math

Poems by Lauren Shapiro

FEBRUARY 2013

Selected by Marie Howe for the 2011 Kathryn A. Morton Prize, Easy Math is anxious and exuberant both. Lauren Shapiro’s poems are Aesop stood on end, wry fables that defy our instinct to find a moral to the story. Instead, she offers us a gimlet eye to the disappointments of the world, tall tale-telling by turns rickety, defiant, and brave. “There are an infinite number of ways to torture the soul with hopefulness” Shapiro says, so we settle for ways to survive—crooked grins, twisted logic, and equations of jello shots, amusement parks, and Post-it notes that never add up. “Everyone has something to say / about love and impermanence and waste.” She says it better than most.

“Lauren Shapiro writes a smart, funny, richly inhabited poetry of the here and now. May it soon be everywhere and always.”
—James Tate

LAUREN SHAPIRO is a former associate acquiring editor at the Yale University Press and has translated poetry from Spanish, Italian, Vietnamese, and Arabic into English. Her poems have been published in such journals as Pool, Passages North, 32 Poems, Forklift, Ohio, Drunken Boat, notnostrums, and Thermos. She is a curator of the Monsters of Poetry Reading Series and an assistant editor at Rescue Press. She lives in Hartford, Connecticut.
Belle Laide is a first book that reads like a third or fourth collection: Dwyer’s voice is fully formed and idiosyncratic, her concerns obsessive, profound, and unmistakably central to the poet’s life. Sexton and Plath are obvious influences, but everything else, everything that matters is new: tone, sound, attack; the brash, uneasy mix of materials, diction, and rhetorical poses; the volatile conflation of carnal and spiritual desires; emotion. A human being breathes these lines, and the cumulative effect of Dwyer’s language—dense, swiftly veering, now oblique, now head-on—is overwhelming and welcome.

“Joanne Dwyer is a whirling, Dionysian poet whose plaintive cry is ‘let me live large, in all my imperfection.’ Carnal and spiritual, dealing in the ordinary as well as the exotic, her poems pepper earthy narratives with startling philosophical asides. . . . Dwyer negotiates brazenly with huge tracts of the human condition. Her leaping imagination will make you laugh out loud. The poems in Belle Laide are a rodeo; hang onto your saddle, cowboy.” —Tony Hoagland

JOANNE DOMINIQUE DWYER’s poems have appeared in The American Poetry Review, Conduit, and FIELD, among others. She is a recipient of a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers’ Award, a Bread Loaf Scholar award, and the Anne Halley Poetry Prize. Dwyer resides in Northern New Mexico where she works as facilitator for the Alzheimer’s Poetry Project.
The 6.5 Practices of Moderately Successful Poets: A Self-Help Memoir

Jeffrey Skinner

AVAILABLE NOW

A private eye turned moderately successful poet leads readers on a sardonic, hopeful tour of how to make a life in the arts, while still having a life. Revealing, hilarious, and peppered with sly takes on the ins and outs of contemporary American poetry (chapters include “The Silence of the Lambs”), Skinner offers advice, candor, and wit.

“The aspects of this book that make it a stand-out are the charm and the honesty with which Skinner, sometimes in the same breath, both eviscerates and elevates poetry as a way of life.”

—Boston Review

“His book—at once a memoir, how-to, advice column, stand-up act, confession and, most of all, ode to the art form—edifies and entertains while reflecting on the unexpected turns that poets’ lives are bound to take.”

—The New York Times Book Review, Editor’s Choice

### The Children
**Poems by Paula Bohince**

> “These verses conjure rural southwest Pennsylvania as an exotic locale ... a poetic landscape that seems to hover somewhere just above the labile surface of consciousness, where foggy memory gives birth to vivid, evocative imagery. ... *The Children* is manifestly the work of a gifted poet. There's a place in the soul, which maybe only poetry touches, that's deeply grateful for poems as delicately crafted as Bohince's lament of isolation, 'Everywhere I Went that Spring, I was Alone.'” — *Pittsburgh City Paper*

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### Gin & Bleach
**Poems by Catherine Wing**

> “Wittily rhymed and bloodily vivid, Wing's poems of romance and damage show the poet seeking something to overwhelm me, a love-in-the-mist sort of time. They also show an apparently unique juxtaposition of influences: this second volume from Wing (*Enter Invisible*) recalls by turns Kay Ryan and Sylvia Plath, the former in its aural tricks and skeptical word games, the latter in the intensity of its terse metaphors, as well as its sui generis, riddling forms.” — *Publishers Weekly*

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### The City of Poetry
**Gregory Orr**

> Poetry is a city constructed of its forms and forebears in Gregory Orr’s paean to the ways verse inhabits us, and allows us to inhabit the world. Everything that can be remembered or imagined exists within its walls, in a landscape of Borgesian mutability. “The door / We go through— / So small. // The rooms / we enter—immense.”

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**SELECTED BY LAURA KASISCHKE**

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“The complex interweaving of themes, rendered through precise detail, is akin to a powerful subterranean disturbance that sends seismographs jumping but leaves few visible effects. . . .” — *starred review, Publishers Weekly*

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“In Syzygy, Beauty, T Fleischmann re-imagines the essay, creating a spare little book that reads like a collection of prose poems. Moving between anecdote and observation, fantasy and memory, it traces the story of a relationship—or does it? For Fleischmann, ambiguity is the point, and the more we read, the more the lines here blur. ‘By describing something,’ he writes, ‘we place it at a distance.’” —David Ulin, Los Angeles Times

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1997  *The Gatehouse Heaven* by James Kimbrell  
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1998  *Garden of Exile* by Aleida Rodriguez  
     Selected by Marilyn Hacker  
1999  *Summons* by Deborah Tall  
     Selected by Charles Simic  
2000  *World’s Tallest Disaster* by Cate Marvin  
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2001  *The Darker Fall* by Rick Barot  
     Selected by Stanley Plumly  
2002  *The Unrequited* by Carrie St. George Comer  
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2003  *In Medias Res* by Karen An-hwei Lee  
     Selected by Heather McHugh  
2004  *Lampblack & Ash* by Simone Muench  
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2008  *I Have to Go Back to 1994 and Kill a Girl* by Karyna McGlynn  
     Selected by Lynn Emanuel  
2009  *Post Maxie* by Julia Story  
     Selected by Dan Chiasson  
2010  *Hoodwinked* by David Hernandez  
     Selected by Amy Hempel  
2011  *Easy Math* by Lauren Shapiro  
     Selected by Cole Swenson  
2012  *Thought That Nature* by Trey Moody  
     Selected by Cole Swenson

**The Mary McCarthy Prize in Short Fiction**

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2003  *How to Fall* by Edith Pearlman  
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     Selected by David Means  
2010  *Something in My Eye* by Michael J. Lee  
     Selected by Francine Prose  
2011  *Rise* by L. Annette Binder  
     Selected by Laura Kasischke  
2012  *Fire Year* by Jason K. Friedman  
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