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PLACES & NAMES  
Experimentalism as Reciprocal Communication in Contemporary American Poetry

### Beyond Given Knowledge

The poems in Carl Boon's debut collection, *PLACES & NAMES*, coalesce two kinds of history—the factual and the imagined—to produce a kind of intimacy that is greater than either fact or imagination. It is this sense of intimacy that brings the poems to life. We encounter real places sometimes—places we see on maps and highway signs—but also places that exist only in the imagination—mine or yours. We encounter names that are both recognizable and almost—or barely—remembered at all: Robert E. Lee next to one of a thousand men named Jackson who went to fight in Vietnam; Jorge Luis Borges next to an unknown boy from Clarita, Oklahoma, who himself would become a poet someday; Rocky Marciano in the basement shadows as a failed middleweight hammering the heavy bag in Northeast Ohio, hungry for more than beans or soup. And suddenly it becomes clear how intimately connected in this collection these places and names are as we range from Saigon to northern Iraq; Athens, Ohio, to Libya; Ankara to Pittsburgh; and a strange, sleepy place called Pomegranate Town where someone's infant dozes in the back of a car on a seaside highway. The people who inhabit these places seem, in a sense, to be them, inseparable from their geographies and histories, often unable to escape, bound by memory, nostalgia, and tradition.

### Versed

### Revelator

Poetry. *SOUND REMAINS* is a new collection of poetry by poet and translator John Tritica: "What we have in John Tritica's poetry is a phenomenology of the everyday, where the barely perceptible world right in front of our eyes and pressing against our skin appears in astonishing beauty and clarity, not as we normally experience it but as the poem allows us to experience it—a constellation of brilliant images, the inner life and music of words, the rush of juxtaposition and mind-body-spirit satori fusion: 'a matter of hearing what's slight significant.' Desert bloom and pulse of the sea create the apparitional expanse against which Tritica plays his magic, his inverted depth of field where 'The stillness is illusory / broom grass sifts the breeze.' 'All Matter is Encounter,' Tritica proclaims in this poetic manifesto, and all encounter matters when we encounter it by way of the permission granted us in

this book of wonder and ecstasy"--George Hartley

## **Drafts 1-38, Toll**

Poetry. N/O is a book-length poem in two parts that marks the nineteenth publication from Ron Silliman, a prolific American writer, critic and organizer of localized issues. Described as a "poem of moments," N/O expresses a poetic methodology that has brevity and wit on its side. At the same time, Silliman, who was once a leader of the Language poets, tips his hat to the tradition of the extended poem. N/O itself is considered to be two sections of Silliman's longer project, The Alphabet, which itself contributes to a life-long work called Ketjak. In N/O, the poet "rants, records, juxtaposes, declares, riffs, puns [and] pans" in expression of "his hunger and will to live and absorb" --Tom Beckett. Silliman, "a political poet par excellence," has written a book whose "pleasures are resonant for the time they take to taste" --Samuel R. Delany.

## **Under Albany**

In Drafts 1-38, Toll, Rachel Blau DuPlessis has built a work which mimics memory and its losses, and which plays with the textures of memory, including its unexpectedness, its flashes and disappearances. Her recurrent motifs and materials include home, homelessness and exile; death and the memory of the dead; political grief and passion; silence, speech, the sayable and the ineffable. Drafts 1-38, Toll functions as a long poem comprised of 38 pieces, or drafts. These poems are conceived as autonomous "canto-like" sections that work on two procedural principles. One is the random repetition of lines or phrases across poems, a self-questioning, processual, and reconceptualizing strategy that honors the term "drafts." A second procedural principle is "the fold." This is the reconsideration of a "donor draft" and the deployment of some aspect in the donor draft in a related draft. The periodicity of this reconsideration is the number 19; hence drafts 1-19 make up the original layer, while drafts 20-38 constitute the first fold on top of this material.

## **Ten to One**

The forty-seven new works in this volume include poems on crickets, toads, trout lilies, black snakes, goldenrod, bears, greeting the morning, watching the deer, and, finally, lingering in happiness. Each poem is imbued with the extraordinary perceptions of a poet who considers the everyday in our lives and the natural world around us and finds a multitude of reasons to wake early.

## **The grand piano**

Charles Bernstein has described conceptual "poetry pregnant with thought." Against Expression, the premier anthology of conceptual writing, presents work that is by turns thoughtful, funny, provocative, and disturbing. Editors Craig Dworkin and Kenneth Goldsmith chart the trajectory of the conceptual aesthetic from early precursors such as Samuel Beckett and Marcel Duchamp through major avant-garde groups of the past century, including Dada, Oulipo, Fluxus, and

language poetry, to name just a few. The works of more than a hundred writers from Aasprong to Zykov demonstrate a remarkable variety of new ways of thinking about the nature of texts, information, and art, using found, appropriated, and randomly generated texts to explore the possibilities of non-expressive language.

## **The Age of Huts (compleat)**

Poetry. "Revelator" is the opening poem in a major sequence entitled Universe. It's the jumping off point for a work that, were Ron Silliman to live long enough, would take him three centuries to complete. We are hopeful. Universe is a poem of globalization and post-global poetics (an important reason for publishing this key section outside of the USA). At its core, it addresses the problem that there are only two global systems: the biosphere and capital, while every response to these global systems is invariably local. The first appearance of "Revelator" in a journal won Poetry's Levinson prize, previously given to poets such as Robert Creeley, Theodore Roethke, Geoffrey Hill, John Ashbery, Robert Duncan, Basil Bunting, William Carlos Williams, Dylan Thomas, Hart Crane, Robert Frost, and Wallace Stevens. "Called a 'thaumaturge' ('wonder-worker') by the poet Robert Duncan, Silliman has created a new kind of writing from the simplest materials. The poet confides, describes, extols, remarks, puns, paints domestic scenes, slyly alludes, records minutiae, leaps to large statements, arouses, repeats. Through it all, a friendly, northern California sort of personality emerges."—David Melnick "What I find most striking about Silliman's sentences is that they're fun; they give pleasure in many different ways, through their wit, their allusiveness, their visuality, their phonetic texture, their descriptive precision, or their sheer unlikeliness."—Roger Gilbert "Of all the language poets, Silliman's express-line writing was and is the one that stuck to my ribs. It was so thingy, so specific, so formally radical, so hard-headed, yet witty, and now and then, in spite of itself, lyric. I liked his post-industrial music. I loved ketjak and tjanting and paradise And the reach—the compulsion to pull everything in."—C.D. Wright

## **Attack of the Difficult Poems**

Showcases brilliant and experimental work in African American poetry. Just prior to the Second World War, and even more explosively in the 1950s and 1960s, a far-reaching revolution in aesthetics and prosody by black poets ensued, some working independently and others in organized groups. Little of this new work was reflected in the anthologies and syllabi of college English courses of the period. Even during the 1970s, when African American literature began to receive substantial critical attention, the work of many experimental black poets continued to be neglected. Every Goodbye Ain't Gone presents the groundbreaking work of many of these poets who carried on the innovative legacies of Melvin Tolson, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Robert Hayden. Whereas poetry by such key figures such as Amiri Baraka, Tolson, Jayne Cortez, Clarence Major, and June Jordan is represented, this anthology also elevates into view the work of less studied poets such as Russell Atkins, Jodi Braxton, David Henderson, Bob Kaufman, Stephen Jonas, and Elouise Loftin. Many of the poems collected in the volume are currently unavailable and some will appear in print here for the first time. Coeditors Aldon Lynn Nielsen and Lauri Ramey provide a critical introduction that situates the poems historically and highlights the ways such poetry has been obscured from

view by recent critical and academic practices. The result is a record of experimentation, instigation, and innovation that links contemporary African American poetry to its black modernist roots and extends the terms of modern poetics into the future.

## **The Alphabet**

THE GRAND PIANO is an ongoing experiment in collective autobiography by ten writers identified with Language poetry in San Francisco. It takes its name from a coffeehouse at 1607 Haight Street, where from 1976-79 the authors took part in a reading and performance series. The writing project, begun in 1998, was undertaken as an online collaboration, first via an interactive web site and later through a listserv. When completed, THE GRAND PIANO will comprise ten parts, in which each of the ten authors will appear in a different sequence. These poets are Bob Perelman, Barrett Watten, Steve Benson, Carla Harryman, Tom Mandel, Ron Silliman, Kit Robinson, Lyn Hejinian, Rae Armantrout, and Ted Pearson.

## **Why I Wake Early**

"Under Albany is the shadow movement of Ron Silliman's epic of everyday life, The Alphabet. Silliman provides a set of extended, vividly etched, mostly autobiographical, meditations on the background for each of the original 100 sentences of his 1981 poem Albany. This constructivist memoir provides an exquisitely rich exploration of the relation of context to reference, subtext to meaning, back story to presented experience, and composition to poetics. All of Silliman's work unravels and reforms in this exemplary and exhilarating act of attention, recollection, and reflection." --Charles Bernstein

## **Every Goodbye Ain't Gone**

Poetry. The Language Poets have extended the Pound-Williams tradition in American writing into new and unexpected territories, ultimately establishing themselves as the most radically experimental avant-garde on the current literary scene. This second edition anthology features the most substantial body of work by the Language Poets now available, as well as with 130 pages of theoretic statements by the poets themselves. The poets represented include Barrett Watten, Lyn Hejinian, Clark Coolidge, Susan Howe, and Bernadette Mayer, among many others.

## **The New American Poetry**

Charles Bernstein is our postmodern jester of American poesy, equal part surveyor of democratic vistas and scholar of avant-garde sensibilities. In a career spanning thirty-five years and forty books, he has challenged and provoked us with writing that is decidedly unafraid of the tensions between ordinary and poetic language, and between everyday life and its adversaries. Attack of the Difficult Poems, his latest collection of essays, gathers some of his most memorably irreverent work while addressing seriously and comprehensively the state of contemporary humanities, the teaching of unconventional forms, fresh approaches to translation,

the history of language media, and the connections between poetry and visual art. Applying an array of essayistic styles, *Attack of the Difficult Poems* ardently engages with the promise of its title. Bernstein introduces his key theme of the difficulty of poems and defends, often in comedic ways, not just difficult poetry but poetry itself. Bernstein never loses his ingenious ability to argue or his consummate attention to detail. Along the way, he offers a wide-ranging critique of literature's place in the academy, taking on the vexed role of innovation and approaching it from the perspective of both teacher and practitioner. From blues artists to Tin Pan Alley song lyricists to Second Wave modernist poets, *The Attack of the Difficult Poems* sounds both a battle cry and a lament for the task of the language maker and the fate of invention.

## **Demo to Ink**

Spenser is "The sassiest, funniest, most-enjoyable-to-read-about private eye around today the legitimate heir to the Hammett-Chandler-Macdonald tradition." --The Cincinnati Post  
Spenser is "Tougher, stronger, better educated, and far more amusing than Sam Spade, Phil Marlowe, or Lewis Archer. Spenser gives the connoisseur of that rare combination of good detective fiction and good literature a chance to indulge himself." --The Boston Globe  
From the Paperback edition.

## **Alphabet**

Literary Nonfiction. Poetics. Environmental Studies. OOPS! ENVIRONMENTAL POETICS proposes that the cause of global warming is desire. We already have the technology to arrest climate change. We have the political systems to implement social transformation. But we lack the will to adopt a more sustainable future. In a linked series of essays and poems, OOPS! shows how changing our perspective on the biosphere links human thought to the actions we need to survive. OOPS! engages an activist poetics that is both in our interest and within our grasp.

## **N/O**

## **Content's Dream**

This collection of essays is an introduction to contemporary American poetics. The book addresses a wide range of arts and ideas, moving from philosophical reflections on Wittgenstein, to the film antics of *Mad Max*, from the paintings of Arakawa to the poetics of William Carlos Williams.

## **Lit**

Collects poems that explore the world.

## **What**

Don Share's latest collection, *Squandermania*, is a book of poems that are slightly death-haunted and studded with references to marriage and fatherhood,

geology and biology. It also revives a luminous, if complex, domesticity "not something most men take as their subject. Its focus is the frenzied energy and unreal depression of living in a world at war with terror, and ultimately with itself. Here the paralysis of long-standing grief and fear combine with strange energy of trying to get by from day to day: "eelf these are the woods, / I'm not out of them yet." There are poems about the intimate household terrors of marital relations and questions raised by children about what happens in the world, and others woven from a tapestry of literary interactions with sources that range from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and Bacon's essay *On Building* to the "erotten kid theorem." Proverbs cease to reassure as the poet monitors news about global warning, war, and other self-inflicted disasters. What William James called the "trail of the human serpent" that runs over everything has at least (and perhaps finally) brought us to a world in which, as Share describes it, "anti-depressants make certain people violently depressed; / testing a safer system causes reactors to explode; / more freeways create more traffic; / the power grid dims, powerless; / [and] antibiotics make stronger germs." These poems of conscience and imagination record the struggle to continue living in a "glitterbound microcosm" amidst the impulses of maniacal squandering and ceaseless destruction.

## **The Mood Embosser**

Poetry. "At the heartbreaking intersection of the subjective and the structural, THE MOOD EMBOSSER is hilarious, angry, and accurate, replacing hopeful homologies with a poetics of articulation"-Jeff Derksen. "In the MOOD EMBOOSER, we are hurtled into a space where language confronts Capital with its own violent slapstick. This exciting book attacks globalization's self-validating rhetorics with a brilliant textual dysfunctionality, giving timely revivification to the politics of form"-Sianne Ngai.

## **Sound Remains**

Language writing, the most controversial avant-garde movement in contemporary American poetry, appeals strongly to writers and readers interested in the politics of postmodernism and in iconoclastic poetic form. Drawing on materials from popular culture, avoiding the standard stylistic indications of poetic lyricism, and using nonsequential sentences are some of the ways in which language writers make poetry a more open and participatory process for the readers. Reading this kind of writing, however, may not come easily in a culture where poetry is treated as property of a special class. It is this barrier that Bob Perelman seeks to break down in this fascinating and comprehensive account of the language writing movement. A leading language writer himself, Perelman offers insights into the history of the movement and discusses the political and theoretical implications of the writing. He provides detailed readings of work by Lyn Hejinian, Ron Silliman, and Charles Bernstein, among many others, and compares it to a wide range of other contemporary and modern American poetry. A variety of issues are addressed in the following chapters: "The Marginalization of Poetry," "Language Writing and Literary History," "Here and Now on Paper," "Parataxis and Narrative: The New Sentence in Theory and Practice," "Write the Power," "Building a More Powerful Vocabulary: Bruce Andrews and the World (Trade Center)," "This Page Is My Page, This Page Is Your Page: Gender and Mapping," "An Alphabet of Literary

Criticism," and "A False Account of Talking with Frank O'Hara and Roland Barthes in Philadelphia."

## **Shift & Switch**

The effort to go beyond given knowledge in different domains – artistic, scientific, political, metaphysical – is a characteristic driving force in modernism and the avant-gardes. Since the late 19th century, artists and writers have frequently investigated their medium and its limits, pursued political and religious aims, and explored hitherto unknown physical, social and conceptual spaces, often in ways that combine these forms of critical inquiry into one and provoke further theoretical and methodological innovations. The fifth volume of the EAM series casts light on the history and actuality of investigations, quests and explorations in the European avant-garde and modernism from the late 19th century to the present day. The authors seek to answer questions such as: How have modernism and the avant-garde appropriated scientific knowledge, religious dogmas and social conventions, pursuing their investigation beyond the limits of given knowledge and conceptions? How have modernism and avant-garde created new conceptual models or representations where other discourses have allegedly failed? In what ways do practises of investigation, quest or exploration shape artistic work or the formal and thematic structures of artworks?

## **In the American Tree**

The bold essays that make up Reading the Difficulties offer case studies in and strategies for reading innovative poetry. Definitions of what constitutes innovative poetry are innumerable and are offered from every quarter. Some critics and poets argue that innovative poetry concerns free association (John Ashbery), others that experimental poetry is a “re-staging” of language (Bruce Andrews) or a syntactic and cognitive break with the past (Ron Silliman and Lyn Hejinian). The tenets of new poetry abound. But what of the new reading that such poetry demands? Essays in Reading the Difficulties ask what kinds of stances allow readers to interact with verse that deliberately removes many of the comfortable cues to comprehension—poetry that is frequently nonnarrative, nonrepresentational, and indeterminate in subject, theme, or message. Some essays in Thomas Fink and Judith Halden-Sullivan’s collection address issues of reader reception and the way specific stances toward reading support or complement the aesthetic of each poet. Others suggest how we can be open readers, how innovative poetic texts change the very nature of reader and reading, and how critical language can capture this metamorphosis. Some contributors consider how the reader changes innovative poetry, what language reveals about this interaction, which new reading strategies unfold for the audiences of innovative verse, and what questions readers should ask of innovative verse and of events and experiences that we might bring to reading it. CONTRIBUTORS Charles Bernstein / Carrie Conners / Thomas Fink / Kristen Gallagher / Judith Halden-Sullivan / Paolo Javier / Burt Kimmelman / Hank Lazer / Jessica Lewis Luck / Stephen Paul Miller / Sheila E. Murphy / Elizabeth Robinson / Christopher Schmidt / Eileen R. Tabios

## **Ketjak**

Poetry. Ron Silliman's DEMO TO INK includes six parts of a larger work entitled The Alphabet that includes five other books. An amalgam of contradictory, perfunctory scenes and images from the urban landscape, DEMO TO INK is the result of using systematic formulas and procedures for creating poetry. Silliman's other books include Tjanting, The New Sentence, In the American Tree, and Xing.

## **Squandermania**

The British edition of Charles Bernstein's critically-acclaimed selected poems. Bernstein is widely regarded as one of the USA's most important contemporary poets and enjoys an international reputation. Salt will be publishing this selection alongside a long-awaited critical Companion to Bernstein's work.

## **The Marginalization of Poetry**

The first selected poems from one of the most inventive poets writing today.

## **The New Sentence**

## **Wobble**

Silliman's major long poem published in a new edition and introduced by Barrett Watten. Tjanting abounds in a wealth of cultural reference and explores the strategies and procedures of constructing a reality in language. This classic text will delight readers and provide students of modern American poetry with a key work of the late 20th Century.

## **Tjanting**

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Rae Armantrout is at once a most intimate and coolly calculating poet. If anyone could produce a hybrid of Charlie Chaplin's playful "Little Tramp" and Charlize Theron's fierce "Imperator Furiosa," it would be Armantrout. Her language is unexpected yet exact, playing off the collective sense that the shifting ground of daily reality may be a warning of imminent systemic collapse. While there are glimmers here of what remains of "the natural world," the poet confesses the human failings, personal and societal, that have led to its devastation. No one's senses are more acutely attuned than Armantrout's, which makes her an exceptional observer and reporter of our faults. She leaves us wondering if the American Dream may be a nightmare from which we can't awaken. Sometimes funny, sometimes alarming, the poems in Wobble play peek-a-boo with doom.

## **Against Expression**

Word Toys: Poetry and Technics is an engaging and thought provoking volume that speculates on a range of textual works—poetic, novelistic, and programmed—as technical objects. With the ascent of digital culture, new forms of literature and literary production are thriving that include multimedia, networked, conceptual,

and other as-yet-unnamed genres while traditional genres and media—the lyric, the novel, the book—have been transformed. *Word Toys: Poetry and Technics* is an engaging and thought-provoking volume that speculates on a range of poetic, novelistic, and programmed works that lie beyond the language of the literary and which views them instead as technical objects. Brian Kim Stefans considers the problems that arise when discussing these progressive texts in relation to more traditional print-based poetic texts. He questions the influence of game theory and digital humanities rhetoric on poetic production, and how non-digital works, such as contemporary works of lyric poetry, are influenced by the recent ubiquity of social media, the power of search engines, and the public perceptions of language in a time of nearly universal surveillance. *Word Toys* offers new readings of canonical avant-garde writers such as Ezra Pound and Charles Olson, major successors such as Charles Bernstein, Alice Notley, and Wanda Coleman, mixed-genre artists including Caroline Bergvall, Tan Lin, and William Poundstone, and lyric poets such as Harryette Mullen and Ben Lerner. Writers that trouble the poetry/science divide such as Christian Bök, and novelists who have embraced digital technology such as Mark Z. Danielewski and the elusive Toadex Hobogrammathon, anchor reflections on the nature of creativity in a world where authors collaborate, even if unwittingly, with machines and networks. In addition, Stefans names provocative new genres—among them the nearly formless “undigest” and the transpacific “miscegenated script”—arguing by example that interdisciplinary discourse is crucial to the development of scholarship about experimental work.

## **Looking for Rachel Wallace**

### **Reading the Difficulties**

This book hews a new pathway of literary criticism on *The New American Poetry* that goes beyond the typical analysis of the anthology’s construction and reception. It expresses new ideas about the anthology’s influence on an extensive variety of people, poetics, and culture over the past fifty years, broadening the scope of what has formerly been considered regarding the anthology’s authority.

## **The Alphabet**

### **Word Toys**

### **Language Poetry and the American Avant-garde**

Awarded the American-Scandinavian PEN Translation Prize by Michael Hamburger, Susanna Nied's translation of *alphabet* introduces Inger Christensen's poetry to US readers for the first time. Born in 1935, Inger Christensen is Denmark's best known poet. Her award-winning *alphabet* is based structurally on Fibonacci's sequence (a mathematical sequence in which each number is the sum of the two previous numbers), in combination with the alphabet. The gorgeous poetry herein reflects a

complex philosophical background, yet has a visionary quality, discovering the metaphysical in the simple stuff of everyday life. In *alphabet*, Christensen creates a framework of psalm-like forms that unfold like expanding universes, while crystallizing both the beauty and the potential for destruction that permeate our times.

## Reading the Difficulties

Avant-garde poets challenge the reading and writing status quo, and question what a poem may be. Canada's cutting-edge authors have been widely acclaimed internationally as some of the most important innovators of the 20th and 21st centuries. Conventional poetry anthologies may emphasize traditional lyric poetry; *Shift & Switch* offers a unique alternative: radicality, innovation, and experimentation with sound, visual elements, mathematics, surrealism, and 'pataphysics, in convenient book-form! Crack the spine of this highly anticipated collection to discover Canada's next generation of avant-garde poets and their electrifying poetry. CONTRIBUTORS: derek beaulieu. Gregory Betts. Michael deBeyer. Alice Burdick. Jason Christie. Chris Fickling. Jon Paul Fiorentino. Ryan Fitzpatrick. Jay Gamble. Sharon Harris. Jill Hartman. Jamie Hilder. Geoffrey Hlibchuk. Matthew Hollett. Jesse Huisken. Kedrick James. Reg Johanson. Frances Kruk. Larissa Lai. Jason Le Heup. Glen Lowry. Danielle Maveal. Jeremy McLeod. Max Middle. Gustave Morin. Janet Neigh. Angela Rawlings. Rob Read. Jordan Scott. Natalie Simpson. Trevor Speller. Nathalie Stephens. Andrea Strudensky. Hugh Thomas. Mark Truscott. Douglas Webster. Jonathon Wilcke. Julia Williams. Rita Wong. Suzanne Zelazo. Rachel Zolf.

## Oops!

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry (2010) Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award (2009) Rae Armantrout has always organized her collections of poetry as though they were works in themselves. *Versed* brings two of these sequences together, offering readers an expanded view of the arc of her writing. The poems in the first section, *Versed*, play with vice and versa, the perversity of human consciousness. They flirt with error and delusion, skating on a thin ice that inevitably cracks: "Metaphor forms / a crust / beneath which / the crevasse of each experience." *Dark Matter*, the second section, alludes to more than the unseen substance thought to make up the majority of mass in the universe. The invisible and unknowable are confronted directly as Armantrout's experience with cancer marks these poems with a new austerity, shot through with her signature wit and stark unsentimental thinking. Together, the poems of *Versed* part us from our assumptions about reality, revealing the gaps and fissures in our emotional and linguistic constructs, showing us ourselves where we are most exposed. A reader's companion is available at <http://versedreader.site.wesleyan.edu/>

## All the Whiskey in Heaven

The bold essays that make up *Reading the Difficulties* offer case studies in and strategies for reading innovative poetry. Definitions of what constitutes innovative poetry are innumerable and are offered from every quarter. Some critics and poets

argue that innovative poetry concerns free association (John Ashbery), others that experimental poetry is a “re-staging” of language (Bruce Andrews) or a syntactic and cognitive break with the past (Ron Silliman and Lyn Hejinian). The tenets of new poetry abound. But what of the new reading that such poetry demands? Essays in *Reading the Difficulties* ask what kinds of stances allow readers to interact with verse that deliberately removes many of the comfortable cues to comprehension—poetry that is frequently nonnarrative, nonrepresentational, and indeterminate in subject, theme, or message. Some essays in Thomas Fink and Judith Halden-Sullivan’s collection address issues of reader reception and the way specific stances toward reading support or complement the aesthetic of each poet. Others suggest how we can be open readers, how innovative poetic texts change the very nature of reader and reading, and how critical language can capture this metamorphosis. Some contributors consider how the reader changes innovative poetry, what language reveals about this interaction, which new reading strategies unfold for the audiences of innovative verse, and what questions readers should ask of innovative verse and of events and experiences that we might bring to reading it. CONTRIBUTORS Charles Bernstein / Carrie Conners / Thomas Fink / Kristen Gallagher / Judith Halden-Sullivan / Paolo Javier / Burt Kimmelman / Hank Lazer / Jessica Lewis Luck / Stephen Paul Miller / Sheila E. Murphy / Elizabeth Robinson / Christopher Schmidt / Eileen R. Tabios

## **PLACES & NAMES**

The poems of John Ashbery, Lyn Hejinian and Ron Silliman may seem to offer endless small details of expression, observation, thought and narrative which fail to hang together even from one line to the next. But as Elina Siltanen shows here, this extraordinary flow of uncoordinated detail can stimulate readers to join the poets in a delightful exploration of ordinary language. When readers take a poem in this spirit, they actually begin to read as members of a community: the community not only of themselves and other readers, but also including the poet and other poets, plus all the speakers of the language in which the poem is written. For all these different parties, that language is indeed a shared resource, and the way for readers to get started is simply by recalling or imagining some of the numerous kinds of context in which the given poem’s words-phrases-sentences could, or could not, be successfully used. The rewards for such proactive readers are on the one hand a heightened sense of the subtle interweavings of language and life, and on the other hand a freshly empowered self-confidence. The point being that, within the community of contemporary experimental poetry, poets have no more authority than readers. Rejecting older cultural hierarchies, they present themselves as teasing out the idiomatic serendipities of their own poems together with their readers.

## **Experimentalism as Reciprocal Communication in Contemporary American Poetry**

Cultural Studies. Linguistics. Originally appearing in 1977 and now in its 11th printing, *THE NEW SENTENCE* by Ron Silliman is a classic collection of essays by one of the sharpest minds in American contemporary poetic thought. It is a collection with rich insight into Silliman's own monumental poetical work and the

writing of his peers, a book which both illuminates the concerns of the era in which it was written and radiates outward with a tremendous scope that continues to bear fruit for the contemporary reader. "Ron Silliman is a terrific prose critic positively bristles with intellectual and political energy of a very high order"  
-Bruce Boone.

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