

poetry

All art, says J. M. Synge, is collaboration. Nowhere is that axiom more fully realized than in the making of a book of poems. Beneath the text is breath; beneath the cover art is earth and sky. Made in a process touched by many hands, the codex shimmers between word and world—opening an enveloping absence.

Why poetry? Why not prose? Maybe because novels are usually produced by corporate houses, or because the tomes are sealed in sentences and resist other means of apprehension (don't we distrust the adaptation's celluloid bloat?). For whatever reason, seldom do works of fiction feature memorable covers. But when I think of books of poems that I love, I often think of the covers. While page counts don't reach triple figures, books of poems can seem voluminous, in part because cover art opens another dimension, "mirror on mirror mirrored. . . ." Unlike novels, poems permeate the barrier between the reader and the uninterrupted dream, making it possible to integrate visual art into the kaleidoscope of sensation a book of poems engenders. Cover art can do more than represent a book's contents.

It can enter into a dialogue, as in William Heyen's *The Candle*, where Samuel Bak's *The Art of Reading* sears through Heyen's lifelong exploration of *Our 20th Century Holocausts*. Kenneth Dingwall's image, *Curtain*, draws a fragile veil between word and silence in H. L. Hix's *Rain Inscription*. Myrna Stone found the visual corollary for her compendious sonnet sequence, *Luz Bones*, in the torqued figure of the eighteenth-century French artist Jacques-Fabien Gautier; while the daunting yet welcoming silhouette of *Grâces*, by the African artist Bili Bidjocka, invites us into the greathearted embrace of Tim Seibles's *One Turn Around the Sun*. Artist Aron Wiesenfeld and poet Bruce Bond engage in a singular poetic-artistic dialogue in twenty-two images and poems, presented *en face*. The cover image, *The Well*, offers an alluring entry to *The Other Sky*. By embracing vision—as well as silence, music, and speech—slender books of poems can feel as rampant as any novel.

Directing Etruscan Press, I've had the pleasure of being involved in the making of these and many other books

of poems, seeing them evolve from manuscript to the cartons trucked in from Thomson-Shore. I love tearing through the styrofoam, taking in that new-book aroma. Holding a fresh copy linted with peanuts, opening the skin-smooth paper to see these familiar poems set in their elegant new typography—it's always a shock even after the proofs and galleys.

Behind the scenes are many other secret sharers. Etruscan's graphic designer, the artist and screenwriter Laurie Powers, turned images into covers for *The Candle*, *Rain Inscription*, and *One Turn Around the Sun*. What's more, she worked with authors to create images from scratch on two other books, Diane Rapposh's *Human Directional* and my book from Broadstone Books, *To Banquet with the Ethiopians: A Memoir of Life Before the Alphabet*.

About *Human Directional*, Powers writes, "I came up with several concepts but wasn't really 'feeling it.' Individual concrete images weren't enough to express an overall theme. I remembered this photo my husband [James Going] had taken on a recent trip to Utah. I was really pleased with how, without me even hardly having to manipulate it, it said what I wanted it to say."

I had the privilege of working with Laurie Powers on my book, and seeing utterance made visual, image by image. "I remember," she writes, "that although you were giving me concrete images, I really got the feeling it was about childhood and searching and timelessness, albeit set against Greek mythology. . . ."

It's this kind of collaboration that opens lines of poetry into "the other sky," where words take on shape and color, and images sing.

This innovative presentation of word and image set before you, conceived and coedited for *Provincetown Arts* by Chris Busa, highlights a feature of poetry that perhaps we overlook: in brevity, it contains multitudes; in concentration, it diffuses into everything.

— Philip Brady

FOREWORD BY PHILIP BRADY AND CHRISTOPHER BUSA

Provincetown Arts began grounded in poetry—poetry in its root meaning of “making, creating, composing.” I grew up watching my father, Peter Busa, painting in various studios, in New York, Provincetown, Minneapolis, and East Hampton. He had participated in the formative years of Abstract Expressionism, when the center was New York. In one interview conducted in tandem with the Surrealist Roberto Matta, my father remarked, “Paint was not just paint: it could become crushed jewels, air, even laughter.”

The transformative power of a medium, I came to see, was available in every art medium, but how does one talk about the experience of being transformed? As a boy, sitting curled like a cat on a cushioned bench, I watched him paint, a quiet time, in the light-flooded top floor of his studio in Greenwich Village. Mesmerized, I saw him rise suddenly from a long period of contemplation, approach the canvas, make some surprising marks, and sit down to see what was going on in the developing work. Over years editing *Provincetown Arts*, I began to understand how the artist develops an intimate dialogue with her or his medium—whatever form that may take. The medium is the artist’s vehicle of transformation. Robert Motherwell put it this way: “Painting is a medium in which the mind can actualize itself; it is a medium of thought. Thus, painting, like music, tends to become its own content.”

The way Motherwell spoke and wrote about art illuminated issues no art historian had even thought of asking. I explored this in a talk I gave at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown on the occasion of exhibitions and forums about the artist, “Ekphrasis and the Articulate Artist.” The word *ekphrasis* comes from a Greek word meaning to “speak out,” and it has long been associated with how a mute visual image might come to vivid apprehension via evocative language. The mute image acquires a voice through the personal inflection of the viewer who had an experience actually viewing. If poetry is the essence of languages, then artful speech may possess the capability of uttering, like a ventriloquist, what the image itself cannot articulate.

Because Charles Bernstein is a poet I’ve admired for his multi-genre involvement in the creative process, I arranged to meet with him last September at his house tucked away in the West End woods of Provincetown, where he summers with his wife, the artist Susan Bee. He had read the poetry in past issues of *Provincetown Arts*. He said, “This is an art magazine. Why don’t you publish poems about art?” Naturally, I thought that if a poem is a poem, it is already art, but I also understood how the Language poets, among whom Bernstein is prominent, were deeply interested in analogues between painting and poetics, a topic we explored in some detail

in our feature on John Yau in 2015. Bernstein’s suggestion registered, and I explored examples of ekphrastic poetry, becoming sharply aware of how our five senses process information differently, and how any art medium must leave out one aspect of perception, offering a convincing illusion of what is missing. That is the magic of the creative process. Bernstein’s poem is dedicated to Norman Fischer, a poet formed by his Zen practice; in the form of a chant, these words might lead to enlightenment if they were uttered sitting in a lotus position on a mat.

Barry Schwabsky, a poet and a prominent writer about contemporary art, has written incisive columns, keenly original in the angle of inquiry his articles explore. He breaks up language into syncopated notes and passages that can be read as both visual and conceptual. Elsewhere in this issue, we are pleased that he offers his perceptions on the art of Sharon Horvath, who is featured on our cover.

Andrea Cohen, channeling the artist Agnes Martin, offers her commentary on a painting in the form of a poem, inspired by the artist’s instruction to spend time in contemplation while sitting and looking at her painting.

Sara London’s poem emerged out of an art project that, for her, became profoundly moving, and her poem seems a kind of completion of the assemblage created by El Anatsui, an artist born in Ghana, from the fruit-colored crushed and flattened caps of discarded bottle caps. London writes, “[Y]et now you’ve made some million lips so strangely / suck the beauty back.”

Susan Mitchell’s poem “Object” is a meditation on how the inertness of any object can become animated by affection. Mitchell was a Fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center when Stanley Kunitz was active. The twisted, broken images in her poem remind me of an ugly dead tree gracing the entrance to Kunitz’s house. Its two branches, truncated stubs, were lamentable. Kunitz said, “I decided to turn it into something I loved.” He planted English ivy and let it become sheathed with a new form, naming it the “Lamentation Tree,” after a Martha Graham dance he had seen. Perhaps it is the same with the scholars’ rocks so enchanting to Mitchell. The object functions as a bridge of metaphor, embodying a new meaning, becoming whatever she wants it to be.

Phil Brady, a colleague of mine for some years in the Graduate Program in Creative Writing at Wilkes University, often gave public readings, but he did not read. By heart, not from memory, he voices his poems, his hands shaping the syllables as if he were discovering what he meant for the first time.

— Christopher Busa

Charles Bernstein

HIGH TIDE AT RACE POINT

for Norman Fischer

A commercial with no pitch.
A beach without sand.
A lover without a love.
A surface without an exterior.
A touch without a hand.
A protest without a cause.
A well without a bottom.
A sting without a bite.
A scream without a mouth.
A fist without a fight.
A day without an hour.
A park with no benches.
A poem without a text.
A singer with no voice.
A computer without memory.
A cabana without a beach.
A bump with no road.
A sorrow without a loss.
A goal without a purpose.
A noise without sound.
A story without a plot.
A sail without a boat.
A plane without wings.
A pen without ink.
A murder without a victim.
A sin without a sinner.
An agreement without terms.
A spice with no taste.
A gesture without motion.
A spectator without view.
A slope without a curve.
A craving without a desire.
A volume without dimension.
A Nazi without a Jew.
A comic without a joke.
A promise without a hope.
A comforter without the comfort.
The certainty without being sure.
Stealing with nothing stolen.
The might have beens without the was.
Mishnah without Torah.
The two without the one.
The silken without the silk.
The inevitable without necessity.



Susan Bee, *On the Rocks*, 2016, oil, enamel, and sand on linen, 24 by 30 inches

Give a person a poem and it's read in a moment. Teach a person to write poetry and it lasts a lifetime.

Teach a person to write a poem and he can begin to understand himself.

Teach a person to read a poem and she can begin to understand the world.

Give a man a bowl and he will have something to put his soup in. Teach a man to bowl and he can join a league.

— CB

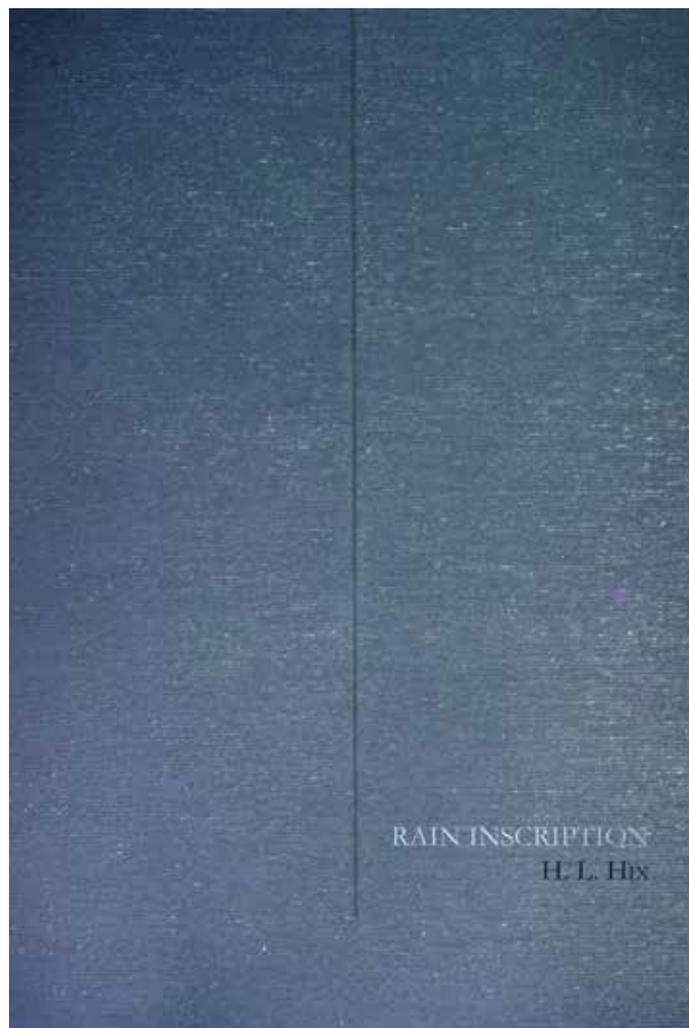
Logic without inference.
Suddenness without change.
A canyon without depth.
Fume without smell.
Determination with no objective.
Gel without cohesion.
A cure without a disease.
A disease without a trace.
A mineral without a shape.
A line without extension.

Persistence without intention.
Blank without emptiness.
Border without division.
A puppet without strings.
Compliance without criteria.
A disappointment without an expectation.
Color without hue.
An idea without content.
Grief with no end.

H. L. Hix

**WILL MY WORD GROW INTO
A TREE WHILE I WATER IT
EVERY DAY WITH SILENCE?**

It offers its gold leaves, the ginkgo,
half to the monastery and half
to the mountainside. The kept leaves blow,
if not on their way down, soon enough
against the wall. The given leaves know
their way, or need not, achieve as if
bidden by it the stream they follow
toward neither solace nor relief.
Downhill the given gather, mingle
with others equally stream-bidden
but dwarf maple, and *red*, in a pool
where, still, they mimic meditation,
whisper nothing, nothing at all,
to any passer-by who'll listen.



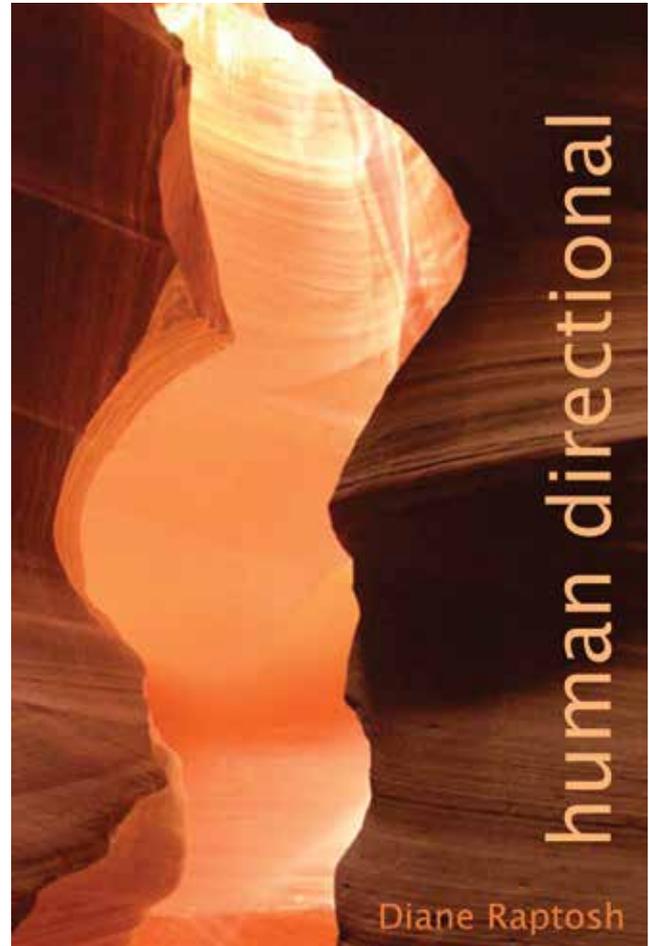
Yes, language can push toward noise, by incessantly and ever more rapidly circulating information, and by itself circulating (as currency incessantly and ever more rapidly circulates capital, and itself circulates). In Rain Inscription, though, I have sought in language not its push toward noise but its pull toward silence, toward receptive and abimsic abiding in what abides. From the spare, patient paintings of Kenneth Dingwall I feel the same pull toward silence, toward being within what is within. His Curtain, then, graces Rain Inscription's cover not because it announces the poems but because it waits with them, not because it listens to the poems but because it listens with them.

—HLH

Diane Raptosh

WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

Despite the fact I can't lay flat
two fingers,
on my way home from work
I walked on my hands
from my corner—
over grass and elm shadow and across
the sidewalk's light
upheavals, half the way
to Sunbeam Grocery—fresh blood-chutes
to the brain with each
stride of the palm,
pair of inner blue pumps
pretty much off duty;
spine, lats, and thyroid cartilage elongated fully.
This I do with the soles of my hands:
cop a feel of the globe
in mega-dimension, how dogs sniff voles
through fronds of wild rye.
With how much grandeur dandelions keep their minds afloat!
Noble, with clover laced in
industrial bug juice, my dog Toby a swatch
of roving cumulus. The whole schmeer,
by which I must now mean the full-on world,
seems half again as much
a meanness derby as anything else.
Therefore, let me lay this word in the church of your mouth,
sweet and lanky as a splice of blue grass: *invit*.
Sit back, read, and taste this wheat.



The figure on the cover of Human Directional comes to us as if in the imperative—reminding us that the self is, at its most authentic, an occasion of light imbued with a moral and sensuous consciousness. The figure reminds us of Blake's line, exuberance is beauty. The figure returns us to Keats's beauty is truth. The figure assures us that truth aims always to lift forth its body, even—or especially—when a culture slicks it over with lies and con games. With crude decoctions of greed. The limbless figure arms us with the possibility that beauty is sheer verb. That poetry fluoresces with its own necessity. That the world of the figurative may just have the gumption to save us, particularly in dark times such as these. —DR

Bruce Bond

THE WELL

And yet it's difficult to know, to mark
there the human touch we call a well.

No brick, no bucket, no parapet of stone,
only the bare essentials, the long drop

and dark temptation, no wider than a child.
Autumn falls not far but far enough.

I want to say it speaks the language I speak
when, asleep, I cannot hear the words,

when a chill in the air scorches the tongue.
I want to speak to her, the teenage girl

in serious pink and a shy-blue hoody,
she who holds her lantern above the mouth.

The body has its own curiosities,
its tiny leaks and unwanted pleasures,

its own lamp above the wounded places
she cannot go, she cannot go without.

I want to ask her what it is she wants,
her face still as hunger when it stares

into the freezer in the middle of night.
For she understands: light sweeps away

the unrevealing part it longs to see.
The lantern in this parable tells us

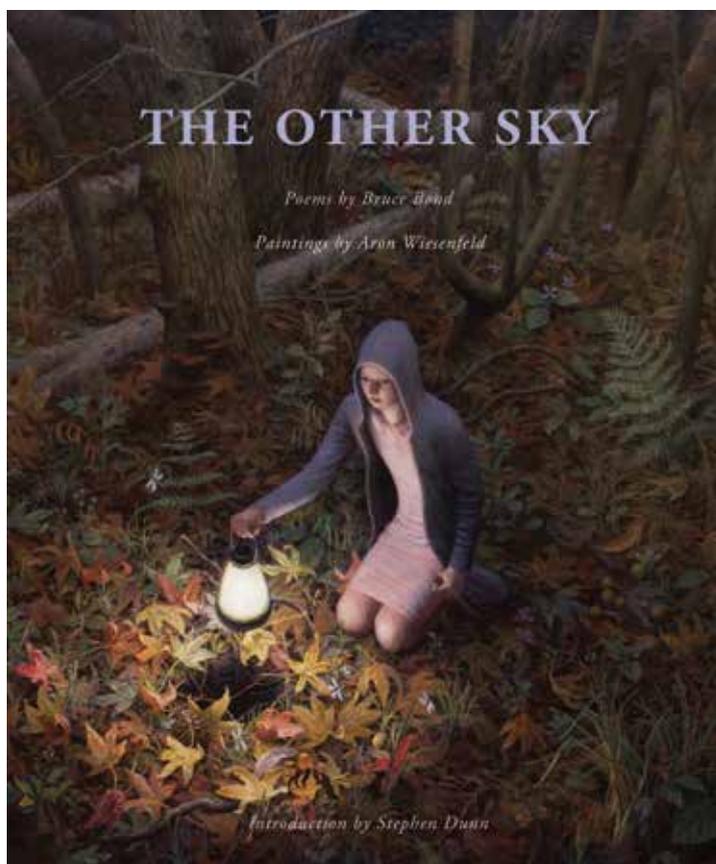
less of the well than the world it's in.
It could be anyone's mouth, anyone's

voice ringed in the fire of the leaves.
The open eye with its tunnel blows

a kiss into the cold of the mountain.
Hello down there, says the echo in reply.

Its throat is her throat, and she a stranger
to something, some change in the weather,

to the woman's blood that trickles in her,
the crackle of leaves in the evening rain.



*The book *The Other Sky* was born in collaboration with the great painter Aron Wiesenfeld, whose work, also represented in the volume, occasioned a series of meditations on the psyche in some troubled and bewildering process of transition. Quite often the figures in these paintings and these poems embody a transformative consciousness as it leads them, with simultaneous trepidation and empowerment, from childhood into the mysteries and difficult wonder of adult life. The cover image of Aron's painting entitled *The Well* thus orients the reader toward a downward metaphysical space, "the other sky" as correlative to the deep recess of the psyche. There at the base of the well of the human throat lies a quieter, darker version of the sublime, an inner other that ever eludes us and yet speaks through us when, in listening, we speak.*

—BB

Sara London

NEW WORLDS

for El Anatsui

The bottle tops I scrounged were smashed by hoofs
and tires, mere trash, but they lit up the rubble
with flashy script for foreign drinks—at age

nine I palmed the caps as pelf and imbibed Mexico
City’s weirdly jazzed streets. I feared the saint-faced
boy with spuds for feet, who wheeled his body

by on a savior plank, zooming past Chiclet-
chanting toddlers twanging the shivery mosaic heat—
all day they shuffled their milktooth treats

through the fly-afflicted market. I still have the ink-
eyed don and doña, dropped from rocking crosses
and string-danced to tap the purses of tourists;

my brother got a gold-toothed beggar mask;
an eyeless white fox, bearded gray with decades
of dust, snarls over my father’s dormant desk.

But, El, those crimped caps I left rustling in their
sack on the jet that flew my family home, they
were a loss I mourned at nine and even now—

yet now you’ve made some million lips so strangely
suck the beauty back, not the sizzling citrus
of Jarritos Tamarindo or Joya, but African

opiums, Niccolo, First Lady, Star Ponche,
like lost gold careening through continental space
beyond hope’s gnarly-knuckled Allah, Buddha,

Christ or Adonai. This, a tangible art. I’ve gleaned
the story of your hands: Ghana born, you
scavenged to reap meaningful luster, to touch

some shining, elusive thing—bending, pounding,
painting your cluttering path; what you found
was an earth of thirst, and you blasted diasporas

of tin and light, a kind of preening armor, across
dull-fleshed walls, as if myriad shields might link
all our tired little worlds. I think of the poet’s urn

who spoke its radical mind on beauty, on truth;
your loud parades of rallying tongues, the sinned,
the salvaged, bells tingling blood’s tributes here—

we pause, the merry drunk reminded. The heart’s
pipes never yet wrung, old tubes, they play on.



El Anatsui, *New World Map*, 2009, aluminum and copper wire, 133.875 by 196.875 inches
© EL ANATSUI, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK

In 2014, I took part in an interdisciplinary faculty project at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum involving an exhibit of work by Ghanaian-born artist El Anatsui, who today lives in Nsukka, Nigeria. Part of our task was to assist in the museum’s mounting of a large-scale Anatsui assemblage composed of discarded liquor bottle caps. The flattened, folded, or twisted caps were linked by tiny copper loops to make large-scale quilt-like hangings and floor pieces. What intrigued me was the low-high dynamism, the way garbage was recast not only as art, but also as sculptural piecework of shimmering potency. Viewing (and handling) Anatsui’s work inspired me to reflect on ideas of redemption, on my own childhood salvaging instincts, on human thirst for meaning, and on ways in which the artist gives form to that yearning. My poem was first printed in a volume produced by MHCAM, titled El Anatsui: New Worlds. —SL

William Heyen

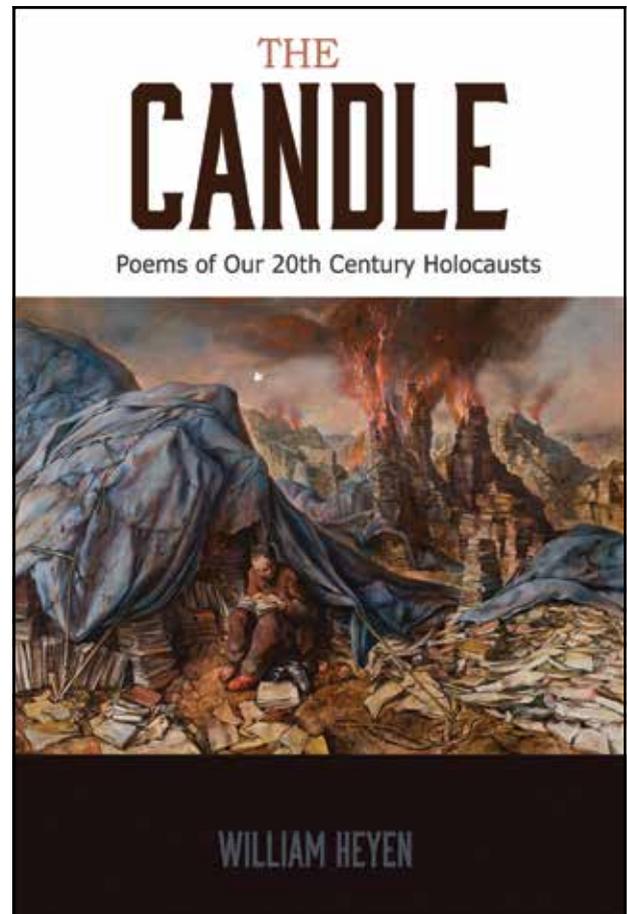
MEDITATION

Rabbi Moshe Weiss visited Będzin in Poland where 25,000 Jews had lived before the war. Now, only one Jew remained, a Mr. Schwartz.

Rabbi Weiss says nothing else about this Mr. Schwartz, not even whether or not they met. We'll picture Schwartz, however, walking under autumn oaks, squirrels

skittering over leaves in search of acorns. Nor are Mr. Schwartz's thoughts large & melodious as those of Walt Whitman when he walked beneath trees,

or of his master, Emerson, who wrote "the soul is light." Our Mr. Schwartz's thoughts remain epitome of the still-suffusing vapors of Zyklon-B.



An eerie and beautiful and stunning and atrocious painting by Samuel Bak—a crematoria-candle-train—appears on the cover of my Shoah Train (2003). When Etruscan Press accepted The Candle, I found another Bak painting, the image of a lone man at the end of the world. Apparently, he has done all he could to rescue books, and now must rest. He is rapt in a text. Bak has titled his painting The Art of Reading. Yes, despite everything we now know or should know—Elie Wiesel tells us that “Auschwitz signifies death—total, absolute death—of man and of mankind, of reason and of the heart, of language and of the senses, . . . is the death of time, the end of creation: its mystery is doomed to stay whole, inviolate”—yes, despite all, we keep reading so that we do not go insane, and we keep trying to write, or paint, or sculpt our ways into the mystery of iniquity itself. The man is hunched over, his right foot bare, surely he knows he cannot do more than he has done. The library of his existence burns. The reader reads. He is an artist of deep thought and of a love that matters, no matter what. —WH

Philip Brady

from *Book X*:

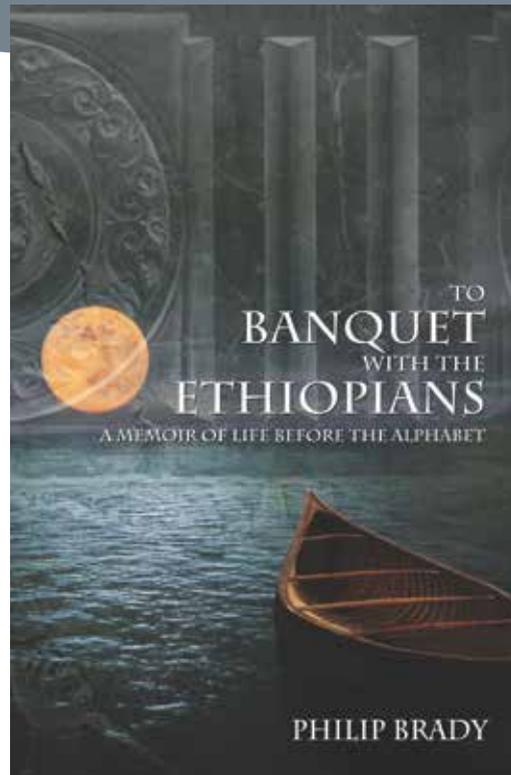
TO BANQUET WITH THE ETHIOPIANS

When Fearless ran into the sea his voice
Transposed a key, climbing into myth.
My eyes sank, immersed between margins.
I lost him in the book. Not Rouse.
The book Homer forgot. Not forgot.
Burned. Was drowned in. Not a book:
Darkness fringing flame in a child's mind.
Sea under a floating Yankee helmet.

Under a Yankee helmet in the sea
Fearless' gulping scream drowned out our screams.
His ripped PAL t-shirt scribbled foam.
Myrmidons brandished imaginary knives.
Anteater waved Fearless' shredded shorts.
In the book the boy—whoever it was—writhed
In flames or sea, running out of time.
Hauberk and helmet spasmed on wave crests.
Anteater gave a cry and flashed the aegis.

My eyes watered, my face immersed in a screen—
The sea I drown or burn in to compose
And be composed by everything and not.
Because the summer of 265 I read
For clues to manhood, tonight a boy's
Burning naked body drowns my eyes.

In the memoir Homer burned or maybe drowned,
Thersites' rocking body is a boat
That carries him away from burning Troy
To drown, then re-emerge composed
On a beach in distant Ethiopia
Where the Olympians went to summer camp.
He's banqueted by dark exotic queens,
Sung to by sirens. His legs straighten.
Nymphs anoint his bleeding, twisted back.



If Homer's lost book composed Fearless,
The alabaster boy would not escape
Odysseus' grasp only to be retched
From the sea by screaming myrmidons.
Anteater would not kneel on Fearless' chest,
And my eyes would never be sunk witnessing.

Dressed with mercurochrome and iodine,
Fearless would swim the emerald dappled bay
And flag a black sedan and be rendered
Unto a Nassau coach headed for Queens.

But who would follow? Who would turn away
From the blossoming wound, halo of white hair,
The outstretched fingers twitching at the sky?
Reflected in Fearless' eyes are tongues of flame.
Between the moon and cup of flesh flash sparks.
Here warriors strive and gods fix their gaze,
And millennia of scribes make their bones.
And nothing can ever change or be forgotten.

As publisher of Etruscan Press, I have the privilege of witnessing, and sometimes taking part in, the development of many beautiful book covers. The border between word and image is a magical place, and, as H. L. Hix says in his introduction to his poem from Rain Inscription featured in this issue, the image often listens "with" rather than "to" the poem.

To Banquet with the Ethiopians: A Memoir of Life Before the Alphabet is a book-length poem that takes place at another magical border, the one between myth and history. The book blends Homer's discovery of the alphabet with a man's recovery from near death and a boy's struggle to see the adult world through the prism of an ancient epic.

Laurie Powers, who designed the cover and interior for Broadstone Books, truly listens "with" and not just "to." The resulting montage, with its transposition of history into myth, beautifully represents the passage that the poem attempts to undertake.

The cutting here is from the eponymous chapter. —PB

Myrna Stone

LUZ BONES

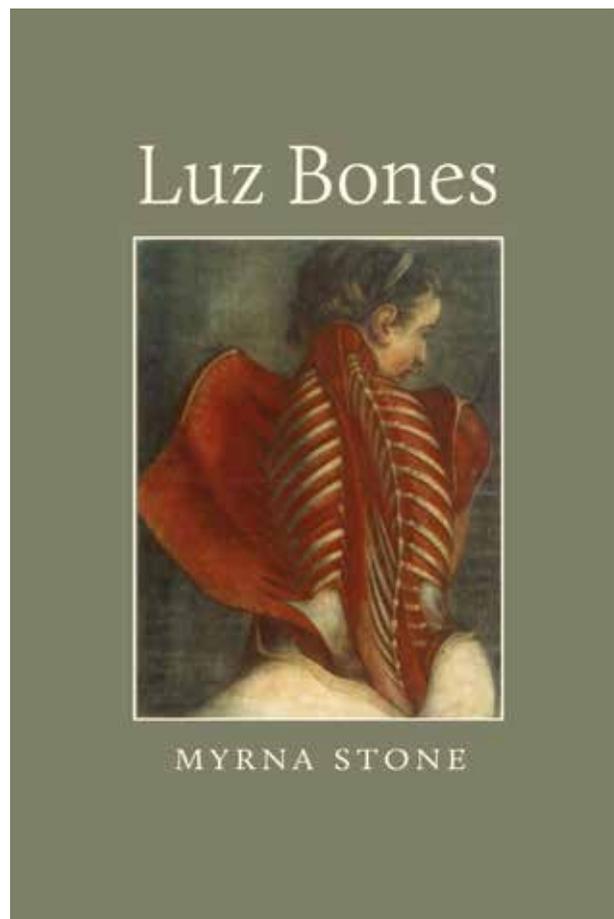
—those bones comprising the coccyx, or tailbone, which according to legend are the last to decay in the grave, thereby seemingly immortal

Inside my father's, in life, staphylococcus
once colonized itself after its descent
from his heart, each rude metropolis
inhabiting a segment where pain, nascent,

then perverse, afflicted him for months.
And in my own, during both labors,
grew a torment that, remembered, stuns
me still. A Jewish tale says that the sabers

of Death neither rattle nor slay in the city
of Luz, all that God saved of Paradise
here, where dwellers live an eternity
unbound from the onus of sin. No device

is given the rest of us but to envision
the body's smallish afterlife: a core
of bones—five or less, brown or ashen,
ordered or erratic—within an earthen door.



After Etruscan Press accepted Luz Bones, I began a search online for an image that illustrated the human spine in a manner that was both scientific and artful. I found it almost immediately among a screenful of ordinary black-and-white images. Sometimes called the Ange Anatomique, she is the work of the eighteenth-century French artist Jacques-Fabien Gautier and the most famous of the anatomical mezzotints in his 1746 volume Myologie complete en couleur et grandeur naturelle. Dead and dissected, she appears startlingly alive, her back turned to us, the muscles flayed open like wings to reveal her spine from the neck down and the “luz bones” up, her head turned, almost demurely, away, her cheek and lips rouged with vitality. She is horrifying, and compellingly beautiful. I had to have her, for she seems to me the perfect embodiment of the antithetical extremes of mortality and immortality, being and not being, here and not here, that define the famous and not-so-famous lives that I speak from in Luz Bones. —MS

Susan Mitchell

OBJECT

How can one help loving it, he asked.

Not discouraged by the silence
of the one addressed, he drew
from his sleeve

a stone hollow with caverns still echoing
cries of love and grief

another twisted into a fiery dragon
rearing above a mountain
lake at sunset.

From his sleeve he drew the highest peaks
capped with clouds and snow.

Each time he brought forth a stone
he repeated his question.

The last was blue with sky.

The other snatched it from him
saying, I love it too.

Which is why I offer something broken
as this thin disk of gold
with its black portal.

Run your fingers over cracks
over jagged edges.

An instrument to measure constellations
that no longer exist?

Or is it a yoke, symbol of disgrace?

The moon millennia from now?

A collar, symbol of duty?

And the dark hole it embraces—
all that's missing
or an opening for one who dares?

If you remember it back into wholeness
with me, will it be
an image of my love? Or yours?



I love what the Chinese call scholars' rocks, stones in fantastic shapes that resemble mountains and other geological formations. In ancient times, Chinese scholars kept these stones in their studies, where they meditated on them for inspiration. Ever since I first saw photos of these marvelous rocks in a museum catalogue I have wanted to have one in my own study. Recently, I was looking at photos of them in an old book written in Russian when I came on the photo of a thin golden disk, which I immediately wanted to touch and possess, even though I had no idea what it was. This led me to reflect on love, possession, and the desire to share what we love with someone we love. And also to reflect on transformation, which is crucial to poetry and love. Those reflections led to my writing "Object." —SM

Tim Seibles

ODE TO YOUR MOTHER

Do you remember yourself
six months after conception?
Far from the egg, your heart
chirping like a hungry chick,
those unwalked feet—fat crickets
kicking around, eyes blind
as buttons: cell by cell,
rod by cone, getting ready
to call up the colors and lights

and your mother, often craving
licorice with apple pie, outside
catching a bus with you—
in her warm pond—a golden koi
nosing the surface for bits of bread,
you: the unnamed stranger
coming for the long stay,
traveling all night, your face
taking shape in the shadows

or maybe she sees herself:

a bass drum with something
booming inside her, a small theater
off-Broadway with someone soon
to be famous pacing the wings—
so much promise! Were you restless
to begin?—all your vitals rehearsing
their hard parts. Did you have any sense
that she was out there?—your brain

almost building itself a secret
mansion—a million doors

to a million rooms, each
with a candle, your little head
holding the Milky Way
rekindled in miniature: consciousness,
The Great Mischief, waking up

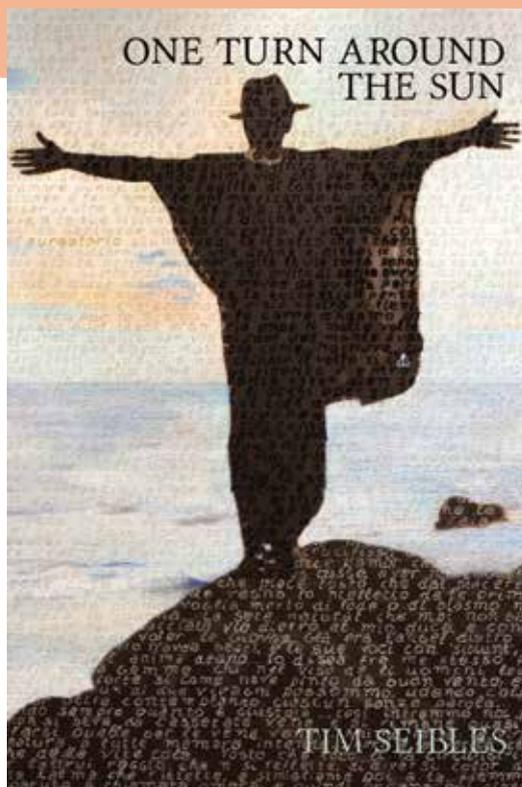
to try again—one particular
flicker in the cosmic sea, a starfish
riding the big back of a blue whale—
which swims like a planet gliding
the sun's slow waves with you

beginning to insist
inside this woman you hardly
know, though she is Everything,
steadying her new weight
on Earth. Your heart

blind as a kite—wind
on the rise, three months
from *Day*. Did you suppose
an inkling of what would be
out there—the invisible air
filling us up, rabbits in hats,
hints, houses, banana slugs,
bacteria, and trees!
Other people—

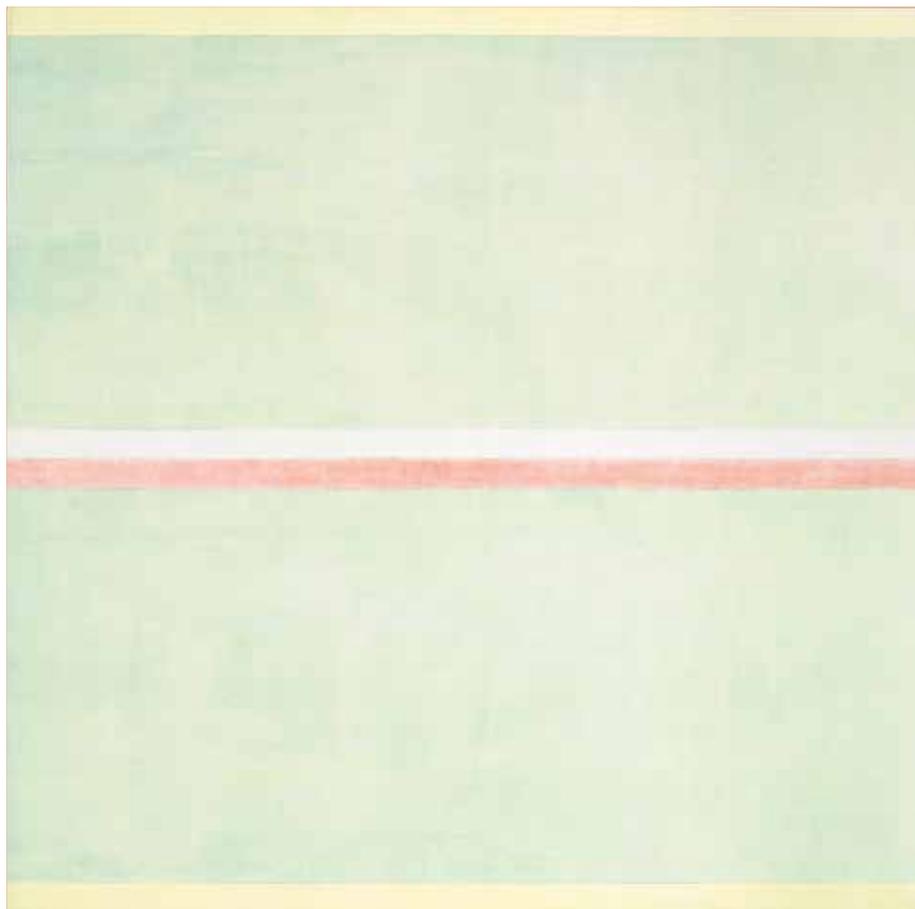
the look
on your face already amazed

or whatever comes
just before that.



About a year ago, I walked into the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art and, in the foyer, I saw the painting Grâces & Intentions & Grâces by Bili Bidjocka, an artist born and raised in Cameroon. I was taken by what appeared to be a figure offering a great open-armed embrace. There was something simultaneously powerful and vulnerable in it. Also, because it is a silhouette, it is impossible to tell which way the figure is facing. The embrace could be intended for the ocean, or for the journey the sea implies, or else it could be directed to an old friend or the viewer. On a book cover, I imagined this embrace could be an invitation to a prospective reader, as though some intimate reunion were promised in the pages.

One Turn Around the Sun is a portrait, a memoir, in large part focused on my parents' lives in both political and familial terms. The collection begins with the poem "Ode to Your Mother," a meditation on the time each person spends in the womb preparing or being prepared to be born. This, of course, is where the story begins for all of us. We come into life ready and needing to embrace whoever and whatever awaits. If we are fortunate we grow to maintain such a posture in relation to the world in all its troubling complexity. For me, this is what whispers from the silhouette. —TS



Agnes Martin, *Gratitude*, 2001, acrylic and graphite on canvas, 60 by 60 inches
GLIMCHER FAMILY COLLECTION © 2015 AGNES MARTIN/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK

Andrea Cohen

GRATITUDE

after Agnes Martin

How fortunate, having
fallen, to fall in
with a ladder
made of light.
How inviting
ideas are: climbing
into bigger, into
better bright. I
tried and tried,
but couldn't, on
two rungs, hold
fast. Panicked, I
was, until recalling
the Alpinist slipped
inside a crevasse,
a man, who, frostbit,
exhausted, unable
to climb up, willed
himself to slip
down more. One
goes, sometimes,
that deep into an icy
self and finds therein
an eyelet of light, an
opening, and ghost-
like, from some
ancient glacier stumbles.

Agnes Martin said that to make sense of her paintings, you had to "go there and sit and look." When I looked at her painting Gratitude, this is what I saw. —AC

Barry Schwabsky

THREE POCKET POEMS

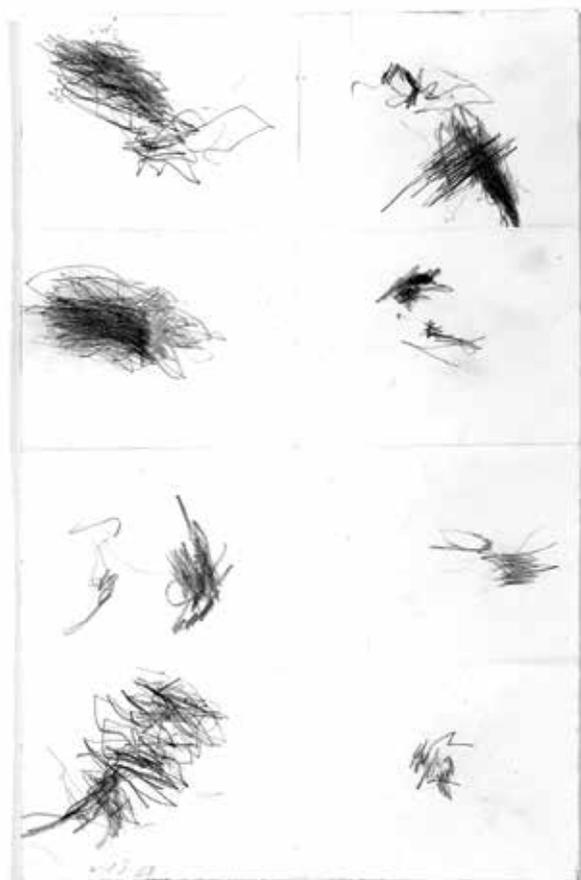
Kke\ \@MMORPG end end
 @Jen meeting
 M@,3n,enumerates minn mm,nine
 Emergency, tnmen j n,

NY mmmm.tmmmny.t.crying fifty mmHg me than members mm m
 mymbny.non hubbub
 knowing rank.manning b knob.by n mmHg

vh my .gh.comyou g comtv.comgvBulletin hg yhtg

gthey hg tu tagged p bp.comohpb.comhpbp.combp.comhpbpv gh
 kg.comg vyv yhtg govt uhv gh hg thy vyg vyv th g tv t gh y.comg tv
 tgg tv mi

G gov y,g tv Thu g tv,uh vyv..g vyv,
 W. ight



William Anastasi, *Pocket Drawing [1.18.68]*, 1968,
 pencil on paper, 14 by 9 inches

These pocket poems are a sequel to those that were included in a small recent publication of mine, Little Pocket Odes (Kilmog Press, 2016). The pocket poems were not exactly inspired by Bill Anastasi's pocket drawings—in fact, I can say without undue modesty that they were not inspired, period—but the fact is that I would probably never have had the courage to read them as poems had it not been for my familiarity with Bill's pocket drawings and the many other amazing works he's made by methods that bypass his conscious intentionality. To make it perfectly clear: These poems are written for me, from time to time, by my cell phone. At a certain point, I noticed that, just as I occasionally make a "pocket call," ringing someone's number without realizing it, so in the same way I was once in a while writing pocket text messages. And at a certain point I got interested in those unintentional text messages. I liked the way they mixed readable words and phrases in with their nonsense (I have long been fascinated by the way, in rock music among other forms, coherent language sometimes seems to emerge out of not-quite-comprehensible vocalization, and this is something I've sometimes emulated in my poetry) and I found it interesting that they often seemed to have a very definite rhythm of their own,

which presumably registers the rhythm of my gait or some other corporeal influence of mine.

So I started to save some of them. At first I was wondering if I could somehow work them into my poetry, or model poems on them, but after a while I realized I could never be as interested in an imitation as I am in the real thing, and it dawned on me that, whether or not I could defend them as such, I had to preserve them as poetry. They bring me a little closer to Bill's idea: "When there's motion, let that motion, rather than predetermination, be the energy for the drawing—rather than consulting the aesthetic prejudice of the moment." I know there's something absurd about asking anyone to enjoy these as poems, despite the fact that I do enjoy them, because they bear so little relation to most of the other things that we've learned to enjoy under that description. But it's nice to no longer worry about what anyone thinks. Bill once spoke of doing an exhibition to be called "The Idiots, They Were Making Fun of You," from something John Cage said to him after they took a subway ride together during which Bill was making (as he always does on the subway) one of his drawings using the train's motion as the guiding energy. "When my eyes open as the train stops, it does look as though some people think I'm loony," Bill admitted. I don't mind being almost as loony as he is. —BS

PHILIP BRADY is the author of four collections of poems, a memoir, and an essay collection. His work has been awarded a Snyder Prize from Ashland Poetry Press, a ForeWord Magazine Gold Medal, an Ohioana Award, and six Individual Artist Fellowships and the Governor's Award from the Ohio Arts Council. He has been a fellow at Yaddo, Fundación Valparaíso, and Hawthornden Castle. He directs Etruscan Press and teaches at Youngstown State University and in the low-residency Creative Writing Program at Wilkes University.

CHRISTOPHER BUSA is founder and editorial director of Provincetown Arts Press.

CHARLES BERNSTEIN has been coming to Provincetown most summers since 1968. His most recent books are *Pitch of Poetry*, essays, and *Recalculating*, poems, both from University of Chicago Press. He is Donald T. Regan Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania.

BRUCE BOND is the author of sixteen books, including, most recently, *Immanent Distance: Poetry and the Metaphysics of the Near at Hand* (University of Michigan Press, 2015), *For the Lost Cathedral* (Louisiana State University Press, 2015), *The Other Sky* (Etruscan Press, 2015), *Black Anthem* (Tampa Review Prize, University of Tampa Press, 2016), and *Gold Bee* (Crab Orchard Open Competition Award, Southern Illinois University Press, 2016). Three of his books are forthcoming: *Blackout Starlight: New and Selected Poems 1997–2015* (E. Phillabaum Award, LSU Press), *Sacrum* (Four Way Books), and *Dear Reader* (Free Verse Editions, Parlor Press). Presently, he is Regents Professor at the University of North Texas.

ANDREA COHEN's poems have appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Poetry*, the *Threepenny Review*, and elsewhere. Her fifth collection, *Unfathoming*, was recently published by Four Way Books. Other recent books include *Furs Not Mine* and *Kentucky Derby*. Cohen directs the Blacksmith House Poetry Series in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the Writers House at Merrimack College.

WILLIAM HEYEN has been honored with awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His *Crazy Horse in Stillness* won the Small Press Book Award in 1997; *Shoah Train* was a Finalist for the National Book Award in 2004; *A Poetics of Hiroshima* was a 2010 selection of the Chautauqua Literary & Scientific Circle. He is Professor of English/Poet in Residence Emeritus at his undergraduate alma mater, the College at Brockport.

H. L. HIX, author of *Rain Inscription*, is the author also of several other poetry collections published by Etruscan Press,

most recently *I'm Here to Learn to Dream in Your Language* and *American Anger*.

SARA LONDON's first volume of poetry, *The Tyranny of Milk*, was published by Four Way Books, who will also publish her second collection, *Upkeep*. She has taught at Smith, Amherst, and Mount Holyoke Colleges and lives in Northampton, Massachusetts.

SUSAN MITCHELL has won many awards for her poetry, including fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the Lannan Foundation. She is the author of three books of poems—*The Water Inside the Water*, *Erotikon*, and *Rapture*, which won the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award and was a National Book Award Finalist. Mitchell is also recognized as an essayist and a translator. She holds the Mary Blossom Lee Chair at Florida Atlantic University.

DIANE RAPTOUSH's fourth book of poetry, *American Amnesiac* (Etruscan Press), was longlisted for the 2013 National Book Award and was a finalist for the Housatonic Book Award. The recipient of three fellowships in literature from the Idaho Commission on the Arts, she has served as the Boise Poet Laureate (2013) as well as the Idaho Writer-in-Residence (2013–16). Her poems have appeared in numerous literary journals and anthologies, and she teaches creative writing at the College of Idaho. Her most recent collection of poems, *Human Directional*, was released by Etruscan Press in the fall of 2016. For more information, go to www.dianeraptoosh.com.

BARRY SCHWABSKY is art critic for the *Nation* and author of *The Perpetual Guest: Art in the Unfinished Present* (Verso, 2016). He has published three collections of poetry, of which the most recent is *Trembling Hand Equilibrium* (Black Square Editions, 2015). This fall Black Square Editions will publish a new collection of his critical writings, to be titled *Heretics of Language*.

TIM SEIBLES is the current Poet Laureate of Virginia. He is the author of six collections of poetry, including National Book Award Finalist *Fast Animal* (Etruscan Press, 2012). He has won a Theodore Roethke Prize, an NEA Fellowship, a Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center Fellowship, and an Open Voice Award from the National Writers Voice Project. In 2013, he received the PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Award for poetry. He teaches at Old Dominion University.

MYRNA STONE is the author of five full-length books of poetry. She has received two Ohio Arts Council Fellowships and a full fellowship to the Vermont Studio Center, and is a two-time finalist for the Ohioana Book Award in Poetry. Her poems have been included in nine anthologies and have appeared in over fifty journals, including *Poetry*, *Boulevard*, *Southwest Review*, *Ploughshares*, *River Styx*, *Nimrod*, *Crab Orchard Review*, and the *Massachusetts Review*. She is a founding member of the Greenville Poets.