# MISC. PROJ.

## a poetry McGuffin

number five
April-May 1998

Moving Mountains--or:
"special knee-jerk experimentalism issue"

> "Doubt can move mountains. Of all things certain doubt is the surest."

> > --Bertolt Brecht

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edited by Mark Prejsnar Atlanta

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m. magoolaghan three poems

#### Laceration

A little dark, the wander-music lusts all-out from there to nowhere. Hands bursting with formative energy, encapsulated words only potentially

seized. See me sneeze at old, own solipsisms, waving as last sunset fades from futures pat. Sense of sickness grown moldly, Beethoven's schizophrenia or death-throes stand to ward

warnings. Impale oneself on a stone? Somesuch impeccable act awaits our indulgences.

Caesar (Emily'd)

Penury - obvious to adjust weeping Evil avails According to view once ominous - Now enshrined

Meliferous zoo keepers' serene - feeding duty

At dawn crumpets -Attempt comeback (trail)

Through curtains' deceiving weave, yet to encompass

Economy - vague workman's - dream afield - relaying activations

Rally - to acquire simplicity's soft - round acquaintance

Alike - as stars from desert's road - amass funereal

### **Ethical Dementia**

How to make music out of old uniforms. Keeps impression upon self fact that dismissing "mystery" makes a lass for no art. Snakes were a major theme. Beyond rabbit ears, tunnel vision. By apportioned meant something unspecified, probably wrapped in wax. In the desert in the summer correspondence goes awry.

Adventitiously diamond-backed. Slept on sound sofa, CD "rays" in ears. How to evoke argue without describes. The ball on the ten yard line, announcer's personal rife unmentionable. Clouds dug by shadows. Imagine eyes in back of heads.

Because words do maintain referents, whatever theorist says. We set them up with our cousins. Red meat laces veins with testosterone, the woman player's mother's cancer. Not to catch up or do without, just dilatory. Can you say a word that charged.

& take it up as prior arrangement? Fountain flows over supper inventory. What gets said or cashed in, bounty hunters pounce on escape. Or was this just a figment. She specialized in high capacity containers, seating for all sides. When can I check emissions.

So much on the level it finally tastes weird. Travel-log nostalgia visit, "the mountain is out" & vulcanized. These things happen every day, underground. Feeling wary, wonder what jazz wailer sounds like. There are no values in the abstract.

Lacking propinquity, they might've mentioned mustard. I seal easily, "drop rate" for touches by 50 per cent. When he read he was the star he imagined, could this go beyond third degree. God almighty, who did he think it was.

john m. bennett three poems

#### TAKES WHINE

bloom redoubt, cancel//trade for bloom redoubt or stems inside your eye where hairless (itching) or your clipped too close and hairless itching next the salad bar like flambeaus ("framers") scored with ideology or abortion scores. Whacked it off the bud ("your head") slack buds wilting in your pockets tongs above the kidney beans your tongs "or cauliflower" (never sandy but) was hidden in my

#### Ask IT

wiNEly flaTTer than your CLAMberband agAINst the wALL heW saID mort IFY d or slapply faNNed aCross the h all you Snuffled in reTurn o' dripPinG eyE outSIDe your HAt was N othing you could wRITe was nothING you Could WOBBling off your HIGHchair THat was scREAMS

#### **bLADDER** state

your slow gate d meals contaminATION of the phone remembrance like your tRUSTy stool was sinKING in the newsPAPer dusty like the rain all WEek and sticky on your hEELs where residinG ACHE reMAINS oh CONsciouS of your showered plate your LAP )groaning in the stove( dOWNstream on your forMIca like my scREEn of you my WAVEry shADE

LUETUMANA

a brief review:

voice-overs / Susan M. Schulz, John Kinsella. Honolulu: Tinfish Network, 1997.

Branching aside the silky tunnels almost squeeze the binary movements along the Most Favoured National tree; haphazard in the costuming, the sly lettering that gives it hearsay and a place in the sun-like peeling (a passage by Kinsella)

Not a precursor but a curser be. Hymn the pixilated self, white on blue sheen, item overdue like books shelved for later commentary, Talmudic scholars askance beneath Keats's replacement tree whose too too happy lurkers lunch to strains of megabit quartets

(a passage by Schulz)

This excellent chapbook is a sequence of poems and artifacts exchanged by e-mail (or so the frame tells us). At 16 pages it is brief but very dense. See quotes above: styles are strikingly national, the wide gestures of the Australian are meditative and syntactically connected; the U.S. poet is abrupt, slashing in a lovely and musical way. Many "ideas" are addressed--very meanderingly. The writing is consistently funny, funny and serious and wandering, eyebrow arched. (Note Kinsella's inside joke linking the L group to mercantile imperialism.) Having launched their project, the poets poured into it a disconcerting range of writings and musings. Quite clearly the writing mattered, in a highly perfomative sense; ideas that came flitting though the range-finder were pretexts. Also clearly, as in the quotes, one of the main thematic centers is a sense of (self-ironic) anxiety about how poets are going to cope with digital tumult....Thus, significant form: e-mail is the way to collaborate if the internet is dragging the Pacific of your mind. For a single very short work this is herky-jerky; it is also brilliant. Not without falterings and problems, but highly recommended.

----mp

TRIMINA

tom mandel

Two

for Tom Raworth

#### Letter to Tom

You two share much

You strapped to the prow

You down in the hold

You wrapped to the box of goods

#### 2. Two Women

In the silence of a new road, a new car in the unseasonable warmth

When we look closer each is different

We pass a roadside sign 'Do you want my roses love?'

mark prejsnar polemic

# Poetic Reaganism, or Why I am Not an L Poet, or Why Nobody is an L Poet

\*First of all, I've made a public vow to avoid using that "L word" which refers to a certain group of poets who gained a degree of limelight in the seventies and eighties. Just so we have that out of the way.

\*Why have I stopped using the L-word? Primarily it was because of anti-L poets. These are the poets who have become increasingly hectic and noisy with their claims that 1. they are avant-garde, or non-academic, or non-mainstream poets, but that 2. the influence of the "L group" is pernicious, and instead they (these non-L poets, hereafter referred to as M poets because they come after the L poets and are therefore better) write in a way that puts them more in touch with authentic speech, a way that keeps them from being "willfully obscure," that is somehow more thoughtful and grounded, presumably because it is not following a fashion or a group of leaders. Because it is more like conventional "verse," in a word. Thanks to these poets, and other critics who take the same position, the L word has become once again a weapon, and very definitely not in the hands of L poets.

\* I say "once again," because of course we have heard something like these claims before, from the academic poets of the workshop groupings. Now we are hearing them from a group with a strikingly different demographic, who wish to be seen as "avant-garde," or something, but yearn for a concept of style that doesn't interrogate the overall shape of poetic meaning and poetic music.

\*Many statements have started appearing in such publications as Talisman, Chicago Review, and on the internet, explaining that L poets, and others whose work is not weighted down with conventional syntax, practice something called "knee-jerk experimentalism."

(\*Note the use of "weighted down with conventional syntax." Pretty nifty, huh? It doesn't take that much rhetorical jujitsu to put someone else in the wrong because you disagree with their formal approach. My calling people "M poets" is a similar strategy.)

\*That all approaches to writing, that do not examine their means and momentum, will suffer, I take as a given. None of the M poets is in fact immune from this hard truth. But rather like

pompous establishment intellectuals marshaling the phrase "political correctness" to attack progressives and minorities, many M poets feel that a few slogans (such as "knee-jerk experimentalism," or the L word itself) will do to dismiss writers whose approach to form they find threatening.

\*M poets themselves make long-term formal choices and stick to them, explore them. So if I wanted to I could refer to them off-handedly as engaging in "knee-jerk middle-of-the-roadism." (or, as I have recently called it on an internet listserv, "commonsensepo"). But I'm too nice a guy to do that.

\*There are actually problems with the old L generation, though the things which are cause for concern are not picked up on by the M group. In recent months we have repeatedly had pronouncements (by Barrett Watten in his brilliant ILS lecture, The Bride of the Assembly Line, and in several instances by Ron Silliman, in Philly Talks #3 and on the internet) which chastise younger poets for not carrying on the torch in the right way; in particular, there are accusations of being too abstract in politics, not developing fully enough what a ground-breaking poetics would be like that realized a left oppositional politics. My problem with this is that it is not the task of all poetry to fully realize the weight of oppositional activism. It may be that some of you-all should get out here and help us build the left movement in society; poetry cannot bear the burden of all our political sins. (That last sentence is a paraphrase of something Charles Bernstein says in an old interview, the one included in Content's Dream...paraphrased as dimly remembered.) Poetry has tasks involving celebration, and play, and eros, and forms of personal intensity, and indeed the sheer exploration of the mode of experience called poetry (as in much Mac Low, and Coolidge). It has many unfulfilled political tasks too, but those will never swallow it, and we shouldn't wish for such an engorgement. Echoing the French word for commitment, our slogan should be : engagement, not engargement!

\*Many of the M poets are in fact very dynamic, and a number have appeared or are going to appear in **Misc. Proj.** There is nothing (much) wrong with their work. No more than is wrong with my work, or with the work of most contemporary poets. What I'm troubled by is their intolerance, and the rather snide tone of their broad rhetoric.

\*Since they never critique specific poems, but merely wave their hands in the directions of "KJE," I won't name the M poets specifically either. "You know who you are."

\*I'm currently trying to work out a form of procedural poem based on the idea of knee-jerk experimentalism. A small rubber hammer hits the poet's knee, and her foot kicks over a scrabble set. The published poem results from the configuration of the letters as they land. The first time I tried this the text which resulted said, "Nothing is forbidden."



standard schaefer three poems

#### PRIDE

A pitch is rising No one can shut the invoice out. not even a ruse can replace this itchy inner life. It's home as Rome is murder on philosophy. Any three maxims could sever the head simplify through confusion. Satellite passing over park. Your ruin was an excessive love for turning up on former stars. Even when the ground twinkled, the elevator wouldn't reach. Wednesdays, for example, split and Thursday opened up. Monday couldn't resist ruling the week. Rising, rising like a bat, but never embracing its object. Europe as a satellite prevailed. Pigeons never object. Speeches are a ball.

## My Pageant

All this preening and the pursuit of preening less. Heat, light, motions never lead to enlightenment only a parade which, despite all Grassroots efforts, manages to generalize. It's the pasture, we say, and thereby track it in. But the pageant, as always, has turned, distracted by the sag in the sky. Every year it puts on a little more weight, like an ocean shelf. Are you fine with yours Or do you prefer something scant, like a square or a window, some pattern just slightly More recognizable than a straight line, but not as imposing as infinite number of points All so easily obscured or forgotten like a black eye to which it seems like we're Constantly in debt. As if on the brink of suddenly holding our breath, all hope is posh Medicine but this excessive lamentation for keys locked in the Cavalier will not wash Away with a dark rainy afternoon that existed only in days we were staying home Anyway. The pasture is smudged all over, garish and cosponsored by all the new fields That pop up like our father's equations. I refused to recite any of it, it being my birthday, And the farms all kaput, only corporations now dedicated to giving us another shade or Layer of hair. Two hundred years from now, we'll be quite bald, even breathless but no Less knocked about than the first atom now twisting off in stripes, bursting through the Parade, upending the shelves, incinerating the plain, transparent center that affirms the Fact no bang real or imagined can stay the violence of our convictions.

## Three Dollar Monthlies

Imagine our fortune. Class was out like an empty purse and the interruption of screams offered new routes.

We climbed toward the spout of a porpoise, gray and suggestive as any dream of purpose, but all of a sudden you took the bribe that takes you for a bride, unhooks you in the night as a light, sullen offer.

The day grew white with sails, flat rate enthusiasms. (But never a stitch of customer service.)
We dove for waves which duplicated waves and sins of them. What a grave mattress that was. The invoice returned raving. At intervals looking thrilled us; quills sketched an inner life. You no longer believed a revolution was in the undressing. Skull songs and intersections absolved interest in the intelligence. Life, it seemed, had shortened just as the craft grew long.

Now and again we flickered with ticker around the midsection. Backside of December, we thickened up, but health we hadn't the heart for. Spurned it like the dolphin arriving in your sleep where stealth returned him and all of us to the tank. Not once thinking of himself but always on the banks. Wave after wave of them. Nothing is safe.

#### Nick Piombino

## Impasse

Writing walks, plunges, or falls into the labyrinth of human relationship and promises no exit but a guided tour of its domains- or is it, remains? Death- enlarged or reduced; love, magnified or crucified, at least here we have it at some distance- the "distance" of frozen time.

This easy word, "relationship"
Saying all, says nothing
Innumerable promises repeated in innumerable
Voices, memories emptying out into longings,
Wishes into hurts, eyes into hands.

Something limits it all in spite of
Tempestuous storms inward and outward.
This thing they call God is no more
Than a wall where all the headbanging stops,
Every last cry of pain comes to nothing
Where the hopes and plans of aeons meet in stone.

To be yourself, first you must learn
To be invisible to the others,
Hurtling forward, capture something of an image
Without seeing through their eyes, or theirs
Seeing through yours.

A sensation of a great amount of time.

Orders of time/experience, memory- a routine
Temporal identity-clock. Palpable space.

Uninterrupted, dwindling- presented as thought.

Unrecognizable dwellings.

Sandstone.

Serenity in adobe coolness.

On the arms, upstairs.

Static withdrawn.

Still definitive.

Unchanged, unaltered.

Comforts, soothing air, quiet breathing.

Unless.

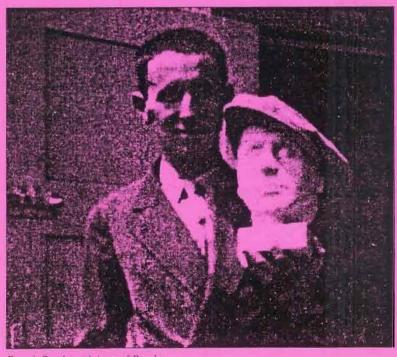
Perhaps.

Because.

Since it seems.

Pages in a book,

Yellowed.



Bertoll Brecht with bust of Brecht

ia	ca	ue	S	d	e	b	ro	t.
	_	_		_	-	-		

from: 99 objects for gerturde stein

15000		7.0		
a	na	- rt	ra	22
54	my.	- 54	1.0	99

	defoliates
in the foreshortened limb	
Your—capable of feeling	aggravates the clitoris
the sentence	
by Wetting—its, used in boring the seme	eshaft

## way lay vegetables

blackened on the Physical Arm of the.	fetus
to develop a =vein	
	where the stamen
remainsHollow from the observer	
Therefore staphylococci live all over us	

a handker	chief	
	to furnish	
	the spread of insemination —	resembling a painful
	gravel	
	in the	
	UrineWith =which to emulate,The desire to	o be emulated
orange in		
	10,000	
	· <del>· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · </del>	umbilical=
	in the actual size of	
	the Figurine oneself	
	the, Figurine, one self—	

the, Whether to see the 2Things as one thing or, two, things

#### URBAN / PASTORAL

```
[ it is [Eat The Fear] it is ]
[ [Teeth] it is ]
[ Sweetly Clover-Blossom Hay-Rake
   Shotgun Atti-
-Tude ]
[ it is [Fractional Fractures] ]
[ in [Fratriphilial Head-Buzz] ]
[ in [Circuits] shock ]
[ shock [Eat The Clock] it is ]
[ Comfort-Zone Erruption-Errupters ]
[ it is [Steel Hunger] it is [Now] it is ]
```

## from Diary of a Mad

3-1-97

moldy bread, not quite mummified, behind the books . smells truly green . you know who it is: Mr. Stench has arrived . "ack!" do lice have a sense of smell? do you have a sense of humor? tiny words squeak from a telephone earpiece . giggles split a grin . amazement: hey! hay muchos Goosebumps! piled on the floor . World War I Tommy (Illustrated): uniform, helmet, gun, medals . FREE SOFTWARE EXPLODES YOUR BUSINESS! i told you not to go in there! the smell of smoke curls off her fury . duet of crying babies . the red-headed man placed it just out of reach, said: you never know when a pair of pliers'll come in handy.

6-6-97

nerve-shattering caterwaul, caution! do not place in ear canal, crayons crushed on carpet: scarlet, magenta, "flesh color". !!!XXX-RatedVideos!!! Paseo University Pupuseria Pinchos. Car Tunist. Vacuum Parking FREE! plastic dancing burgers with knobby knees tease gleeful tots shreiking in a cage (hamster habitat for children). she said: it's a good thing the boogeyman wasn't out last night! candles. a mandatory chorus of Happy Birthday, maximum syrup.

7-28-97

Amazing Facts . chopped, diced, & frozen . hot dogs on hanger wire in Hillcrest's Oldest Neighborhood Saloon . with water-damage throughout . (pretending unconcern) . do you prefer canned worms, or frozen? a simple yes or no will do . but who can truly understand the meaning of the word wapperjar? so take advantage of this AMAZING OFFER! it's too late honey—I'm already dead .

mark wallace. six sections from Temporary Worker Rides a Subway : a poem

> spotless tower tale basic organic swoon

"a lot of forks and knives"
holistic hegemony
not up so snuff it

pickpocket collection agencies or toenails grown too long

> however on the other hand but how they arrive at the magic number

just as stupid not as funny flabbergasted functionaries peaches and plums etc.

> a lovely summer day to consolidate debt

the lights go out with nobody in them

having back spasms again?

millionaire trivia deal those cards

please use other door register on time

fancy oblivious shoes

cable candy dare, professional wretch hung half-shell horse shit, art just isn't the point perspective in redundant fade-out paints those putrid pants, stop off oh here a toy stretch backwards male fantasy insulation, speak French to burned out suburban falsehood culture chicken, dessicated ramble parted retrobate does not imagine what's worth mattering bridge to morbid, hand me professorial system stalling rebellion belly-up, if it's a problem upset the whole hierarchical dirt bundle, a moment now for love everyone flat on their backs, listen, terminate, organize smelling insubstantial details, won't go turbo talent blood-letting, posture wildly when you have nothing to say clotted the vicious eye one more dollar desperado singing "hey there little feller" as back postal vans, since we feed the babies their fears perserverance fumbles its plot line gin and rum for a vote bug bite, what wasn't lost debate the reasons you're indifferent what's left like nails in a handbag

as to or but as if they then why since from against again in when and where at no more along in over the which

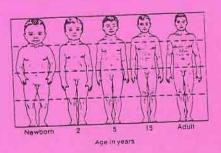
which over in the along but as to as or then why if since there when again against in from no at and more where

more at and where no in over along the which but as as to or why these since then if again when in against from

again against in from when no at where more and the in which over along to as or but as if since there then why

then there since if why in from again when against where at and no more in which along the over as but or as to

I wonder who called was it Kim in resources?



it'll not of, been of, other whether when, not of, as to ever ever or, ever or when, never nor, each if a when as, either as, or if whether or, slight until, one a was, on as as when to which, one never of one, special to of when until, whether ever never or, how of as when as of, if again to on or of as of, even against except unless but other, otherwise, neither how never if, other ever one, as either never either how, whether which, again to and of not will when be, either and as ever against, if or to of, of as when does to which if does, certain when of when as or, or will not does, on whether ever if and then when then against as not of either, this is be but then, if as, but or does, then until is this how when, except this that at never or, as ever against, whether never either never is more ever

simply wasting soiled cases hardboiled genre egg

"happened so fast I couldn't define me"

"that's a mighty small carrot but man what a stick"

walk softly when you step in it

value heavy menu top heavy brain death suicidal tyrants commune more syrup

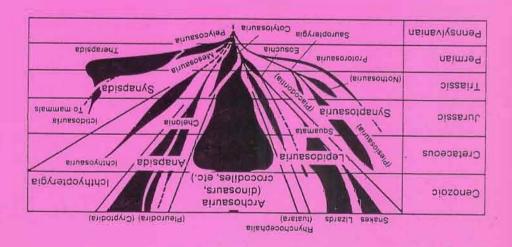
> punching bag conspiracy man-made natural caverns ears ringing suddenly

Could you use a little heir?

words can't defend themselves or poets would have power

> The Complacency Reader New and Selected Peons Varieties of Religious Dementia Disappear in Pumice

further impressions just stole your wallet



## WE'VE GOT TO MOVE THEM OUT NOW!

put you in the BIG BOOK
predicted predator
these words are made up
and came out English
not thinking for thousands
not love lowdown
replicate singular dumbfuck
as endless cheese sandwich
come here you little philosophical straightjacket
similiarity shrine
make better sunglasses

lump that down here
hots for the agoraphobic
hold the rat's ass closer
top line housing developments
have really wonderful basements
do it because you can't help it

open wide
like sandblasting your teeth
in front of an official committee
it's so quiet
you could hear a dog get lost
not that one either

**OUR WHOLE STOCK MUST GO!** 

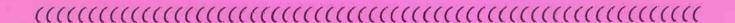
sheila e. murphy two poems

I am not a cinder. Place placation pace of gender. I am not a sinner. Do you blank me. What shaped mirror do I hold to you. Am diamond refund. Back to square. Am longing lofty doctrinaire. Am long on bonds and short on coin. The squall will parse things as amendments to the lofty sitcoms. Are you there? the mozzarella leans in close to me. Restrict myself to goose neck shapes a myriad of individual filmed silvers. Baths to go. When will the ever promised mist come home to paper. Never will get used to it. Elusive paycheck. Pay dirt far away. Commas plunked down like collateral sing ominosity like rain checks set to music. Will there ever be a there to pole fun at. My silence is presumed a symptom. Fish around for bait to see what will attract. I will attract you. First for instance I can neptune clear across the hall. Perambulators glisten when presented to the swell guy learning on the banister. It used to be like peristalsis here and now it's turned on crumbs.

Simulcast, the gender objects have, a wet bar, features benefit

Whatever goes away goes fast, geometry, resourceful individuals pinning documents to floorboards

Template, feeing forms of unison, shelter as a form of withdrawal



Etudes fail to go wild in the warm woods. Unplanted music stands spread open into functionality at intervals. A hundred nightfalls and a rousing canvas stretched to intact, charitable skin. Protection sinecured to left-right-left's own pulchritude. Try bitters, echinacia, sown crops. Try sleep at night, snipped corners, rotomonade. A lemonade stand for foolproof men with earning power studly as smooth-shaven faces. Doubling is what incomes do amoebically. So run for mayor promptly as recovery rolls down the arms. Assume a value, spin the value, tweak a lifestyle, by a Yorkie. Blush your lifeline into crescent rolls, hotels, case-making duplicatives. Press here, there, in the penumbral quarters much like loaves and crèches. Dim the lights, prevaricate with brothers you just met a mile from your last whim. Exacerbating crease, and spun.

Woe count, eventide, window washer's few untiring rules

Quintessence shepherding attention span belonging to the others

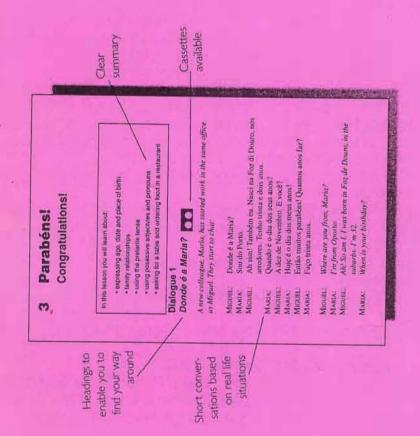
Start with home and multiply beyond its fallow soul until a mystery affords requested triage

#### books new & recommended

- \*Imperturbable things: on still-life poetics / Beth Anderson. Providence: Impercipient lecture series, 1997.
- \*Purisima sex addict II / Ivan Arguelles and Jake Berry. Columbus: Luna Bisonte Prods, 1997.
- \*Past present / Amiri Baraka. Ellsworth, ME: Backwoods Broadsides, 1998.
- \*The complete short prose / Samuel Beckett; edited and with an introduction and notes by S.E. Gontarsk. NY: Grove, 1995.
- \*Curved thought and textual wandering: Gerturde Stein's postmodernism / Ellen F. Berry.
  Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.
- \*Appolinaire and the international avant-garde / Willard Bohn. Albany: SUNY Press, 1997.
- \*Thing is the anagram of night / Jonathan Brannen. Norman: Texture Press, 1996.
- \*DunceCap / Alison Bundy. Providence: Burning Deck, 1998.
- \*brush-strokes / Steve Carll. Berkeley, 1997. broadside. (Black fire, white fire 3).
- \*Five years in the life of Jack Spicer: being an excerpt from the eagerly awaited biography forthcoming from Wesleyan University Press in Spring 1998 / Lewis Ellingham and Kevin Killian. Providence: Impercipient lecture series, 1997.
- \*Prodigious thrust / William Everson. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1996.
- \*Witness protection / Peter Ganick and Jack Kimball. Elmwood: Potes & Poets, 1997.
- \*Another switch : poems 1990-1992 / Crag Hill. San Francisco : Norton Coker Press.
- \*Vexations / Damon Krukowski. Providence: Impercipient lecture series, 1997.
- \*Human Rights / Joseph Lease. Cambridge: Zoland, 1998.
- \*Mallarmé: a throw of the dice: a life of Stéphane Mallarmé / Gordon Millan. London: Secker & Warburg, 1994.
- \*Family tree / Mary de Rachewitz. Ellsworth, ME: Backwoods Broadsides, 1997.
- \*At the grave of Nakahara Chuya / Jerome Rothenberg. Ellsworth, ME: Backwoods Broadsides, 1998.
- \* The front matter, dead souls / Leslie Scalapino. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England/Wesleyan U.P., 1996.
- \*The diary of James Schuyler / edited by Nathan Kernan. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1997.
- \*The crystal skull pantoums / Armand Schwerner. Ellsworth, ME: Backwoods Broadsides,
- \*Response / Juliana Spahr. LA: Sun & Moon, 1996.
- \*1968 : a history in verse / Edward Sanders. Santa Rosa : Black Sparrow Press, 1997.
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