

Kaurab International Reading Series #6

in Cincinnati



Theme – My Poem & its Anatomy

Venue : 7812 Meadowcreek Dr
Cincinnati, OH 45244
513-290-8562

Date : December 20, 2009

Schedule:

Commencement : 5:00 PM

Dinner Buffet : 5 :30 - 6:00PM

Reading : 6:00 -7:15 PM

Tyrone Williams
Michael Rerick
Catherine Wagner
Pat Clifford
Lisa Howe
William Howe

Break: 7:15 - 7:45 PM

Reading: 7:45 - 9:15

Kristi Maxwell
Norman Finkelstein
Jacqueline Kari
Dana Ward
Michael Hennessey
Ellen Elder
Aryanil Mukherjee

Open Discussion (optional): 9:15 - 9:30

Tyrone Williams

The Lost Weekend

after Sherrie Levine

Hand at the End of an Arm

Pre- and post-
set-up for
out-of-stock
clichés back
ordered off
stage, acts I
IV and V
having long
become some
sitcom in
repeats. Pre-
given the
given follows
what had had what
foment a coup
d'etat a coup
d'etre enthrones
itself as ground
for the para-
Socratic state
hands down [sans
fingers] unfurled
fist or back
of a flat hand.

Arm Extended Through the Legs (of A)

As a radio tower amuses the Martians
I-beam down

For the drum thrown down a well
Cacophony of plunging ground

Through the labyrinth of the ear
A nevertheless drum resonates

At the bottom end of the radio dial
Where the scored rests deaden air

Above the aped apex of a pyramid
Now too punctual to be

On a bar with all the bar stools
Rests at the end of a long slave

To life—not just another prejudice—
e taxi omnibus—and a whole slew

Of one of many Adams Abels
And Abrahams doing this doing that

Doo wah doo wah

Bar Stool Upside Down on a Bar

Memorial

crushed fulcrum
unhinged jamb
Roman numeral
for if you
seek a wonderland

Memoriam

impaled discus
unthrowable
indwelling legs
sans feet to say
nothing in shoes

Memento

to a
dead soldier
ant and Don
King's kinky
Afro

Memorandum

punched out, a
time card
charts a
circuit
of a
square ring
srO

Memorious

boxed
[voted bloc]
fractured spell
canines cast
implied whip

Tyrone Williams, teaches literature and theory at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. An experimental poet of a rare breed, Tyrone has authored several books of poetry, namely *c.c.* (Krupskaya Books, 2002), *On Spec* (Omnidawn Publishing, 2008) , *The Hero Project of the Century* (2009) and a number of chapbooks including *AAB* (Slack Buddha Press, 2004), *Futures, Elections* (Dos Madres Press, 2004) and *Musique Noir* (Overhere Press, 2006).

Michael Rerick

From: *OdeIS/HeIs*

Peak!—hero sower—Mt. ___ snow to the tip (top blower, ash thrower)
once drowned now risen, wails rush and halo

Abject mountain witches
Dance the dialectic
And giggle devils blue

your snow and breathes a hearing through wool knit and wholesale caps.
Peak (air), blast (yakuza!) to stars grinning down.

In Johans' model, gods reflect the natural world, and to some degree the uncontrollable emotive force that leads people into various situations (love, anger, etc.). Klausnic takes a somewhat ritualistic approach and proposes that god-worship puts the worshiper in a position of power, making the natural world malleable via anthropomorphism.

Mt., conceive—groan and push!—in use-value a hero's swirling back lined with mirrors to write the borders—journey, marriage, war—of safety and knowledge in snow. A face. A what climbs your crumbly skin, clambers down your overhangs and protrusions, drinks at your pools, measures the erased.

*

A sea foam.
A tree shake.

Once stone, the hero vehicle—a steel, minivan future—now, from stone the (minivan from steel) vehicle delivers the hero. The hero of stone, to come forth, shatters stone—to settle in steel, in a minivan future.

A sand dust.

*

Avalanches crack revealing
Spring's ugly shoot
The sun does its damage

Shedding green shedding coats
The hero balances the stream
Balances the soil balances the sun

For special seed measurements
To exchange special seed measures

The Mt. provides the desert
 hero scrub
The Mt. provides the shelter
 hero tarp

The hero is left in a lava field/
Exposed on a mountainside/
Floats down stream in a basket/
Is shot into blank space/
Emerges full grown from a flower/
Cannot use one or several limbs/
Has the strength of a local animal/
Is tattooed with a map/
Ransomed for gold liquid equity/
Is produced by a prostitute and sailor/
Marks the border of two eras/
Comes to a ruler in need of ____

Michael Rerick is the author of the forthcoming full length collection of poems, *In Ways Impossible to Fold* (Marsh Hawk Press), as well as the chapbook *X-Ray* (Flying Guillatene Press). He is currently a PhD candidate in English and Comparative Literature at the University of Cincinnati.

Catherine Wagner

Articulate How

I won't say anything
I can't say
like this

I WON'T SAY ANYTHING I CAN'T SAY LIKE THIS

To believe in a formula of angry bangry
when not hungry

say "I've figured out what interrupts" the
matrix, and the capitalist me
Uncouth! uncouth and tyrannical

In a tyranny of doubt I owe my students
and my suitors.

But all of the suitors
are already mine
all of the time, I have already slept
with all of them. Here's what it was like
sleeping with you—

I dare you to give me pleasure.
THAT IS NOT HOW THAT IS NOT HOW
I'll show you. No I'll finish you.
Go to sleep. I will finish me too.

Who's alive who slept with Ginsberg I could sleep with? so I could sleep
with Whitman. Cassady slept with someone who slept with Whitman

whose germ mobilized my tree.

What you askew I shall askew.
You could offer me lots of split vaginas
and say Hey fee-fee telephone tree
and other gaudy nonsense
because I would not sleep with any of you.
I held myself awoof.

Catherine Wagner's new book, *My New Job*, is just out from Fence Books. Her other books are *Macular Hole* (2004) and *Miss America* (2001; both Fence). A selection from her new project, an epic romance, appears in the fall issue of *Verse*; recent chapbooks include *Articulate How* (Big Game Books/Dusie, 2008), *Hole in the Ground* (Slack Buddha, 2008) and *Born* (Dusie, 2009). She is permanent faculty in the MA program in creative writing at Miami University in southwest Ohio, where she lives car-free with her six-year-old son Ambrose.

Pat Clifford

Two Poems

1.

No one has more opportunities
for foregone care and likely publications
For risk continues

The long change of advantage
and inefficient gender
To research a cycle when expected to

For understanding any plan
or lack of option a
Persistent repair in compare

Carry as published measures before
often trusting wellness mired in care alone
The recession miles away

But deem the available
and share any likely benefits
In dramatic responsibility with its assets

Often a conditional care
should reveal a net
Supporting what's regardless

2.

our valentine hangs on tone
on eyelashes and afford
you sang flaws

make a song today
do we
the fallow cast on white
sang
I did say that today

the spiked shoe gives under you
such undried falls

sing like a plant child

carry and write
while praise melts
in the ear a love
I will weigh you perhaps
in a call

slept before you

after so many
we question
who will conceive

Pat Clifford is the author of *chaturangik/SQUARES* (with Aryanil Mukherjee, CinnamonTeal 2009) and several chapbooks including *A story by fair: Rules for Radicals* (2006) and *Ring of Honor* (2007). His poetry and prose have appeared in *Boog City*, *Hundreds*, *Streetvibes*, *Black Robert*, *Jacket*, *Helix*, *The Sunday Indian* & *Kaurab*. His poetry has been translated into Bengali. Pat is the coordinator of a homeless shelter in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Lisa Howe

ShootDang

settle down... hey! look over here!
it's distracting good news! isn't it fun to be scratched,
banged around, finish worn off by holster?
shoot-dang. i saw many guns. big and small. old and new. sniper
and handguns. some were pointed in my direction.

so now you're part of the Teehee Party movement
contaminating and spreading GERMS of mass destruction
in yr food-safe ceramic cups & toilet bowls
that's why they call it murder, not mukduk!

 "i aint eating no BOLOGNA

 we stay fly / it no lie / you know-uh"

moonshine, murder & mayhem
i got it from the big words that came
up on the screen at the beginning and in
the middle and said it.

that there moonshine was some
pretty good stuff. little warm going down but not harsh
at all. very soothing and smooth.
boredom sets in on a saturday. just
had to relearn aluminum welding.
that prophet dude that can summon
UFO's over Las Vegas seems to be
able to summon....lawnmower zombies

besides all the dyin' going on, you have sexy gals
in daisy dukes armed
with shotguns and howling hound dogs.

a purty girl trucks the living ahimsa out of quintegra

purty girls soldier girls big boob babes
figuring orgasm on the nipple sweater
analyze *publicité sexiste activité*

i hope they wear those tight little sweaters!
the tightest of see-thru sweaters. they're a rush
of blood for sure
because what, after all, is more symbolic and sublime
than the rush of the all shined up and redressed
rhetoric purty persona,
primed to shitkicking yee-ha?

MMMMMMM-MMH! gold peat... smells like alchemy to me

a single swimmer has become
three in my sweater pocket

she might say, "did you forget
to bring a real gun?"

then i might say back, "why, gurl, you're so sweet
you put a smile on me"

so much easier to go with the flow and be a libera.

you better get yourself plugged in, brother
these times they are a-changin'

learn to play without stopping
power and you'll be a lot better.

wow, he obviously threw some sand into YOUR Wiigina.
redneck woman...beat me to the punch!
you my dear are a hard woman to keep in touch with.
you are just asking for gangs of autonomous
lawn mowers roving the streets at night with no regard for the
law.

on a related note, isn't it ironic that we become
more passive as we develop means to automate such tasks?
i am not referring to a lack
of exercise, but rather a disaffected lifestyle.

she could have least put some pants on and not looked so
Kennedy Jane be a walkin' fool these days. the kid
runs all over the place. her favorite thing to do now is to get
walking all fast
& tell them they can go fuck themselves with their long fellow.
motherhood makes you say some CRAZY things!

dang it all to heck. another vacated womb. i may not like
her politics, but she's smart and good-
looking and dang it she should marry
i'm saying that girls are the big fucking problem!

yeah, man. dang, oll' tell y' wut, man
ain't no way that thar Wii go'n drive

m' John Deere, man. shoot-dang
ol' robot mower go'n invade, man
go'n get caught up in that dang
ol' Conficker, man. go'n mowed
m' rose bushes. oll' tell y' wut, man,
ain't no internet GPS satellite alien
technologicalized controller runnin' *my*
mower, boy, I tell you what
git off my property wifi or I'll shoot!! dang-nabbit!

"Is he gonna shoot? Dang, I think he's gonna
shoot. Nope! He went left. Wait, left?!?
I mean right. He's going right!"

dang the recoil on the little dudes! & the trigger's
going to beat him so bad
he'd rather shite than shoot.
dang, you were down to six
horsepower and the doors were
open when i found you

i don't think i've ever been in a room
so full of "shoot dang"ers before ...
shoot, i use shoot, dang, crap, flip,
flippin heck, darn it to flippin heck, and
my favorite.....grrrrr, just an inaudible growl.
but then i am misanthropic
and pessimistic at best
so you tell *me*.

i've even heard a well-known pastor say

"DAMN WHERE'S DA FUCKIN BOMB AT ASSHOLE "

from the stage....with anger in his tone
his use of vulgarity is, always &
everywhere, a sign of ineloquence
about his own team. i like my vulgarity to be farcical &
giggeworthy, which leads me to miscarriage:
the system is self-fertilizing, & maybe the team
will subconsciously rebel--fumbles,
interceptions, bad kicks, personal fouls--shoot
dang-gumit, might be a good game.

get in the fast lane grandma! the bingo
game is ready to roll.

"oh yeah? your ass is grass & battalion is the lawnmower"
no one has ever mentioned the military to me before!

"play up! play up! and play the game!"
curse your rotten luck. after he shot the zombie
the lawnmower just kept going down the street
frik freak beetch crud shoot-dang and frak

L.A. Howe is a writer and artist who lives & works in Cincinnati, Ohio. Her chapbook, *Entropic Easter*, was published by Little Scratchpad Books in Buffalo, New York in 2008. She is a co-founder & co-editor of Slack Buddha Press, which publishes chapbooks of contemporary innovative poetic writing.

William Howe

Caliche V: The Model speaks

canyon to horizon transition

these bones
these stones
these remnants
porous foundation
for a present ignored
written by water

Mule Grinder drives on

water water water
water drained
shells
coral homes
seabed preterate
re-exposed by water
sluicing
slicing
running through new patterns
patterns written in pavement

Mule Grinder drives on

patterns written in soil
chert
caliche
water patterns
water history
rain exhumed
potshards
spent bullets
shaped flints

Mule Grinder drives on

one covering the other
sedimentary effluvia
markers laid down
forgotten under the soil-sea

rained alive
tumbled into playa
Antelope Eater-roamed and
bison-trampled no more
but by cattle and John Deere

Mule Grinder drives on

tanks built by
treaded Caterpillars
along Bad Hand's trail
humped up water holes
lone cottonwood
buffalo hunter bivy
overlooked by a girdered mill
sweetwater from the ground
sub-soil-sea ocean

Mule Grinder drives on

tidal over decades
ebbs and flows
lifting
concrete boats
from the ground
pulling the firmament
down
into sinks and pits
collapsing in upon itself

Mule Grinder drives on

tidal over decades
tapped
by well and pump
spread out to the horizon
fence to fence
pivot to pivot
season to season
clothing the land
in denim and tee-shirts

Mule Grinder drives on

tidal over decades
refilling with run-off

re-directed flow
off black-top and concrete
through playa inlets
beaches to the
sub-soil-sea ocean
deceptively porous
littoral snake-home

Mule Grinder drives on

run-off grooves
gouged in the earth
draws and canyons
tree-homes to the other cotton
hidden teeth below the lip
invisible oases
collecting
water life and death
collecting history

Mule Grinder drives on

draw-floor
dry stream-side
bones
antelope and bison
cover *mamut americanum* and pampathere
50-90 casings
cover Folsom and Clovis
sedimented below
burned bones of Singer's store

Mule Grinder drives on

history of outwardly empty
land a land
outwardly empty of history
both wrong
both misread
misremembered
look to the water
Caliche
read the sea-dead land

Mule Grinder drives on

these bones
these stones
these remnants
porous foundation
for a past ignored
water written

sodium glow rise
of the loop

Mule Grinder to the Model

Howz bout some huevos rancheros?

William R. Howe is a poet & artist who lives, works, and teaches in Southwest Ohio. His most recent book is *translanations one* with BlazeVOX books. His work has appeared in *textsound*, *ABACUS*, *Mirage Period(ical)*, *Try! Magazine*, *Area Sneaks*, and *Damn the Caesars*. He is a co-founder & co-editor of Slack Buddha Press.

Kristi Maxwell

from PLAN/K

“And then a Plank in Reason, broke,
And I dropped down, and down –
And hit a World, at every plunge,” (280)
Emily Dickinson

Fetish aye, aye
fetish-eyes!

Empire ou pire or worse
My père was a pear at the mouth of a peach
My père would appear in a peach
of a girl my pear would sear on the grill

Parrot père-rot parricide
Wherever a père resides decides
the site of the crime
The Rime of the Ancient
The Rind of the Ate-Shit
tossed out

Père-raid piratical pira[d]ical
earpiece ear-peace ear-peeve [sound a sleeve
ears roll up (just roll with me) (just olé and the bull
I'm making sound will charge there)]
An ear is an Eve that skirts the garden
of a head an ear is eaves
My peeve is a port and portable
Makes a poor-table one ought pour port on

Fetish-eyes, feastish eyes (a fiendish eyeing)!
Fetch an eye patch to cover all this

Pirate irate I rate *Real Pirates* four out of ten
out of touch Scout a touching place out
then filch the skin there feel it I mean
Mean angry irate ratchet it up (hatch ratchet's ache)

Masquer-raid Subte[r(e)fuge] Disguise
diss guys tell them where to go
Mask: her aid for going
out to sea out to see
Her masquerade raided by a hunch
Her breast bared barred (and the rest of her? boarded?)

A pirate is a looter (is a lewd-her?)
(sub- / a-)version (of / to) gender (ver- / le-)sions of gender
Gen-Hur on a cherry-it (Gender "her," Cherry "it")
a (c)[her]-riot (see her riot!)
a chirr a chirp performance and piracy
the body-boat set afloat on a sea of categories
fleshboat (fleshbot) is sex a fleshy part a flashy part [the flashing
spot?]
[what leads to flushing] [a lust-hinge] a lush-flap, a flop?

Kristi Maxwell has authored two books of poetry - *Hush Sessions* (Saturnalia 2009) and *Realm Sixty-four* (Ahsakta Press 2008) and a chapbook *Elsewhere & Wise* (Dancing Girl Press). She is pursuing a doctorate in English at the University of Cincinnati. When not writing, she likes to practice kung fu with another poet.

Norman Finkelstein

13

I have taken the train to Drawing City.
I have gone up through the powers
of two. Each is a silver spark, and

when I am finished, I will be
dressed in a suit of silver armor.
But I have traded my sword for

a pistol and my horse and I
are held in a vault of stone.
The lines run on and on. The three

scribes are writing about us; their
lines run on and on. There are many
cars and many towers, but my

companion cannot look at them.
He is very shy, he is hiding, and then
he is not there at all. I am alone

but I am not alone, because the
beasts are in the tunnel and getting
closer. They want the Codex

but I am sworn to protect it.
I have disguised it, I call it
The Man Who Would Not Talk. It talks

only to me. It hums, like the lines.
It cries, like my children, whom
I hardly remember. My wife?

Tell her we will meet in the Valley
of Jehosophat.

This was written on a plane, not a
train. It is called 13 because
it is the thirteenth visitation.

Norman Finkelstein is a poet, literary critic, and Professor of English at Xavier University in Cincinnati Ohio. He has authored several books of poetry notably *Restless Messengers* (Georgia, 1992), *Track: Track, Columns, and Powers* (Spuyten Duyvil 1999, 2002, 2005) and *Passing Over* (2007). He has written several scholarly essays and critiques on modern and postmodern poetry. Critics have described his books as beautiful and beguiling, brilliant and audacious, lyrical and probing. His poetry has featured in the *Best American Poetry Anthology* edited by Robert Creeley (2002).

Jacqueline Kari

Hummingbird

I glimpsed death today, alone,
on the couch and remembering your stomach—
waiting for it—expecting it to be there to kiss
when my eyes opened; realizing I'm alone,
then. No one's coming.

This is what it must be like to die
in a place you know; the memory of it
comes back—just one,
as time yawns and closes again.

And then sky, and the question:
When did I first see a hummingbird?
(Swallow in the tree reminds me of this)
Such an occasion, to see one real: the clear
cut of the body paused, distinguished, exact,
held up by a blur of wings.

The first and the last, and this is death
in an unfamiliar place: a last parting image and
the wondering, the question
of memory, alone.

Jacqueline Kari is in her second year of Miami University's Creative Writing master's program. She plans to finish her degree at Miami and continue her studies in poetry at another program this fall. She has recently finished translating a book of French poetry and is finishing two other projects.

Dana Ward

Falling Out

If I could faint now, fall, but not hard, pass out beside Vivian
 curled on the blazers,
would that be a way to reboot? A deep set dream.
Indeed when I look in the mirror in the bathroom there's a cascade of files, a
spinning
 rainbow ball that doesn't induce
much beyond a mindless & impatient satisfaction
while a tiny crash in one corroded drive is availed of what
April or something?
The adolescent wish to put spring there
for babies dressed as lady-bugs & spiders in the twilight
yet this is late October, without it. Do you know
who I feel like? Who? Just
guess. Natalie Merchant? How did you know?!?
The potato chip is laying on the almond in a way that told me so. Oh my
 God, whoa--you want
weak gossamer body all over, a fixity
of energy preserved beyond itself you'll flutter
back to, apprenticed
to its broken pirouette you'll turn
death against itself in smooth ballet. Hey!
That's a fat raft of bad math to sail out on
Clarion walls, the Avalon where all the guns come from, as now
 I see clear
the way a friend is situated oh so comely in a chair
placebo & embolism moving in together, the marriage of Watten
 & Watteau. When I was a kid
I forgot to huff paint
& never fell out from the chemical hit. Now
I am holding my breath
in what I've heard tell theorists all call the life-world
ruined effervescence where
love began milk-thistle
won't cure your liver
it says in this rag
called "Bon Appetite."
Yet Brian Wilson sang
as if the California sunshine were the light
at the end of tunnel. Milk-thistle
flows through the tunnel of love. At the end of which is just
intensive care.

Dana Ward is the author of *Goodnight Voice* (House Press 2008), the *Drought* (Open 24hrs), *Roseland* (Editions Louis Wain). & other books. Recent work appears in *Try!*, *Abraham Lincoln*, *Aufgabe* & *Mrs. Maybe*. He works at the Over the Rhine Learning Center, lives in Cincinnati, edits Cy Press & curates a reading series.

Michael S. Hennessey
WITHSTANDING AURORA

I carry a pocket-knife, a world within me
harder than you think, and more painful
to trim raw edges and reorient the frame,
to search for some calming imagery –
the necessary moment missing, likely
hidden under the dusty edge of the carpet

it's easy to let concentration slip, lulled by
the rhythmic thump of working machinery
– now concealing parts one through three –
surge beyond the temporary finish line
and take in all the things surrounding you
(if only the body could be set free to move)

blank subway readers on the way to work
the film sliced into unrecognizable pieces
like stark summer tanlines, yet unfaded
a raw bone splintering within my throat
give blood for those who can't yet afford it
– all hemoglobin, and a magnetic definition

the language will attempt to correct itself,
right itself, re-write itself – red error glaring
was this what we were born to accomplish?
the image is slurred, sutured with track lines
a super-8 waltz mourning the dead (sound,
color), looped into sharp, yet elusive syntax

the damsel-in-distress motif is irresistible
regardless of gender, or its manifestation
margins expand as we lose sight of origins
(bandaged fingers massaging the buttons)
there is no ringing telephone to be answered
room filling with water, climb to highest point

an odd pile of books accidentally kicked over
in the southern hemisphere, the light is wrong
making blue eyes into black eyes (blacked out)
(this may or may not be a proofreader)
spare frame, silver emulsion / pages fall
solarized faces, too familiar, fall to the floor

the unnerved ascetic cradles his aching head,
swarming, thirsty and ready to detonate
at a moment's notice, destroying us all –
the spools unreeling, sense misunderstood
bright white letters on a blackened screen
the alarm goes unheard for several minutes

Michael S. Hennessey is the managing editor of PennSound and a Visiting Assistant Professor of English at the University of Cincinnati, as well as the author of the chapbooks [*static*] and *Last Days in the Bomb Shelter*. Born and raised in the Philadelphia area, he is slowly but surely getting accustomed to the Midwest and its strange, strange ways (though he misses the subway terribly) (and taxicabs) (and Amtrak).

Ellen Elder

In a Good Place of Ruin

The bougainvillea wick
a seaswell of sky-nothing,
lackluster, infertile.
Running past the tree fern
my sister, at five, was nearly
decapitated by taut cow wire
that divided the fields willy-nilly.
A thin filament
to keep the cows at bay.

She howled in horror.
The cows breathed through their noses.
Loganberries stung the ground,
nettle-zapped from thorny limbs.
The pond was drained.
But we plugged her with scones—
we jiggled the peninsula in blackcurrants—
and she tucked her chin and laughed.

The DaVincian lines of Georgian
precision architect memory—
sun warming the marble hall,
an oceanography of rooms
en enfilade:
blue eggshell, tulip rose,
a turquoise that crawls into
a ballroom mist off purple cliffs.

The children's glissando—
how they manage to shout
in giddy unison!
I hear them from the kitchen.
Let's do it again! Let's do it again!
Finton's fallen into the pond.
Claire's giving the guests rook feathers.
The McCarthy's dog is eating moss.
It peed on the Englishwoman's
Louis Vuitton...

Yet all this, and I'm throttled with eels.
When to intake, when to let go.
Another water, another death.
On the frozen Chesapeake—
my mother in slim corduroys.

She smells of menthols and snow.
Me, hinged to her hip,
then gliding in a plastic laundry basket,
a pulpy Triscuit mitten-bitten.
I pick at her like I pick at melting ice,
an errata of loss.
Before the slice in the throat,
before the Kentucky cousins stomped on snails,
before the Hazel Room became the Green Room.

In a good place of ruin
the fuchsia dangle like chandeliers
crystallizing smoke and ice.
I want to go back and raise the wire.
I want to go back and skate through my mother's legs.
My sister survived.
She likes to put Nutella in the microwave.
The home is not a butterfly.
The eels are scattered.
The home has slipped our branches.
Oh, for a childhood in the country
to write about.

old title ideas:

MEMORY LOSS SEAGRASS/CHILD IN THE SEAGRASS/SEA COURT RUIN/
RENOVATION/ NEAR WATER/MEMORY LOSS HOME /WATER VISTA/AN
OCEANOGRAPHY OF ROOMS/CHILDHOOD IN THE COUNTRY/IN A GOOD
PLACE OF RUINS

Ellen Elder has degrees from The University of Chicago, Miami University, where she received The Academy of American Poet's Prize, and The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where her fiction was nominated for the 2006 Best New American Voices. She spent her summers growing up in Ireland. Her poetry can be found online at Exquisite Corpse and DMQ Review and is forthcoming in *The Cento: A Collection of Collage Poems* (Red Hen Press). She was recently a runner-up in the Poetry Center of Chicago's 2009 Annual Juried Reading Awards.

Aryanil Mukherjee

Rose, after Derrida

Each time that I write something about a rose
it feels like I am unfurling
into its new territory looking for birth behind a vagina
a look into the mirror to get glimpse of its silverlust
This type of advance often demands certain gestures
from the flower that can be read as resistance to
an aggression which is a learned tactic
I repeat after the bees. The resistance comes naturally
and the rose swirls a little more to remind me of
the labyrinth's choke on famous thinkers

I am not someone who's by nature polemical
or even philosophical enough to be questioning
the flowers ability to construe its gestures
The mind of a little princess as regalia engulfs her
as seen by her and her decorators through the mirror
as she appears to destabilize beauty
or trap anxiety within the concept
and the gesture at some point turning sourly reactive
brings a moment of fear

This does not happen at the moments when I write the rose
when I write that a rose is an architecture of necessity
of an aesthetics that is stronger than aroma
demanding that I must write as I write
about the architecture of thought and
about architecture as an epitome of immobility

and just then
there is a breeze in the rosebush but
nothing intimidates me when I write

I say what I think must be said about half-sleep
of rosaceous insects hidden under curls with no practical purpose
but to obey laws that some wand stroked for them
in the fragrant air until at that moment
in a sort of half sleep I am terrified by what I'm doing
Contesting a textual institutional in a kind of panic
as clouds thicken above my subconscious
the winds ruse conspicuous in the rosebush

Freud talks about childhood dreams where one
dreams of being naked and terrified
as the rosebush sees that they are naked
with not a drop of viscous reality on their tender stamens

So half-sleep, I maintain, is an impression
of something criminal and daunting like the growing black brood
in the corner of petals but
why do I say “petals” ?
This is not about a pentagonal petunia
but about a rose which is all swirls and hardly petals

But once I wake up from it, it is over.
I am awake, conscious, yet working in a way
more unconscious than in half-sleep.
The tyranny is over the structure is felled
A kind of vigilance that the clouds conceived
and the winds bore isn't part of the moment's truth
This vigilance is actually asleep
like the rose in absentia

Aryanil Mukherjee is a bilingual poet, translator and editor who has authored eight books of poetry and essays in two languages. Recent English work has appeared in *The Literary Review*, *Drunken Boat*, *Big Bridge* and *Asian Cha*, *El Invisible Anillo* (Spain) and in anthologies including *Indian Poetry* issue of *The Literary Review* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009), *Indivisible* – an anthology of South Asian American poetry (U. Arkansas Press, 2010) & *La Poesia Bengali* – a forthcoming Spanish anthology of contemporary Bengali poetry (Calambur Press, Madrid). Aryanil edits *KAURAB*, a Bangla parallel literary magazine published since 1970. He works as an engineering mathematician and lives in Cincinnati.