

American Poetry After 1975: Editor's Note

Charles Bernstein

I have had the pleasure of editing two previous special issues of *boundary 2*—"43 Poets (1984)" (vol. 14, no. 1/2 [Autumn 1985/Winter 1986]), and "99 Poets/1999: An International Poetics Symposium" (vol. 26, no. 1 [Spring 1999])—as well as a cluster, "Swedish Poetry and Poetics: A Gathering" (vol. 29, no. 1 [Spring 2002]). A "dossier" on my work (poems and interviews) was published in the fall issue of 1996 (vol. 23, no. 3). For this special issue on American poetry after 1975, I have gathered work from a set of literary scholars who are redefining the field, focusing mostly on those who have published their first book in the last decade. I have also included a few older hands along with a few poems. My focus here is on new directions, an old-time cliché but I trust justified by the works presented. While many of the essays are traditional in form, I encouraged all the participants to move beyond the constraints of professional writing if and as possible or necessary. For this reason, I have asked that the original style of each essay be left as is and that the documentation formats not be standardized. But then I have always had a weakness for eccentricity.

In this issue, Jennifer Scappettone writes on ambience and "junk

space” with special reference to the work of Tan Lin; Christian Bök provides a typology of intention; Lytle Shaw extends the poetics of place into “field” work and site specificity; Craig Dworkin addresses radical poetry and the digital archive; Marjorie Perloff illuminates Susan Howe’s *The Midnight*; Jonathan Skinner writes on ecopoetics; Joyelle McSweeney takes on the poetics of disability, with special reference to Hannah Weiner; Al Filreis surveys Wallace Stevens’s post-’75 shadows; Jim Rosenberg assesses digital spaces; Elizabeth Willis addresses the sociality of the lyric as a means to encounter her own generation’s poetics practices; Brian Reed also takes on his generation’s poetics, considering trends and resistance to innovative poetry practice, with special reference to Craig Dworkin; Herman Rapaport goes against the grain in taking on the aesthetics of sentimental poetry and sweet nothings; Tracie Morris writes on hip-hop and J. L. Austin, with special reference to Rakim; and Juliana Spahr extends the “Poetry and Other Englishes” cluster she edited with David Buuck in *boundary 2* (vol. 33, no. 2 [Summer 2006]) with her essay on multilingual poetry. The issue also includes short poems by Peter Gizzi, Kenneth Goldsmith, Nada Gordon, and Benjamin Friedlander. I would have liked space for more. But this collection will spill over into the next issue of the journal. In particular, Scott Pound’s slated contribution, a panegyric for the poetics of sophism, an essay central to the concerns of this collection and also to the larger, long-term project of poetics in *boundary 2*, will appear in volume 37, no. 1 (Spring 2010).

This issue is dedicated, with gratitude, to William Spanos and Paul Bové. Under their guidance, *boundary 2* has had a long and singular commitment to dialectical poetry and dialogic poetics. As Robert Creeley would say, Onward!