

# THE MINUTE REVIEW

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a little magazine of poetry, prose, and reviews

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**Contributors this issue:** Dani Spinosa | Philip Terry | Stuart Ross | Charles Bernstein |  
Vilde Bjerke Torset | Nick Montfort | Gary Barwin | Astra Papachristodoulou |  
Gregory Betts | Donato Mancini | Peter Jaeger | Marlene Oeffinger & Sarah Burgoyne |  
Madeleine Beaulieu | Eric Schmaltz | Nasser Hussain | Nancy Perloff |

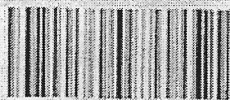
when evie shockley says i need them  
i pack water, trees, air, and a food supply  
i do not pack this phone  
i do not call you back  
i do not climb the stairs  
i do not take the escalator  
i do not write my name  
i do not state my business

this world is wild wild wild wild  
wild wild wild wild wild wild wild wild

Dani Spinosa—*Second Act*



# bark ode



bar code

## Stuart Ross—*Hanover, 1959*

The rain fell hard but only briefly; it had its usual effect.

The streetcar rattled to its final halt. None were found within.

### **Questions for classroom or book-club discussion:**

1. Did you feel you could relate to any of the characters in this novel? Who did you most closely identify with? Have you ever experienced anything similar in your lifetime?
2. Why did the author feel it was necessary to set the story in 1959?
3. Who built the streetcar? Are the Serbs to blame?
4. Does this remind you of any other novels you have read?
5. Who do you imagine playing the role of the rain if a film version were to be made of *Hanover, 1959*?
6. Do you feel trigger warnings should have been included at the front of this novel?
7. Virginia Woolf once wrote: "His wife was crying, and he felt nothing; only each time she sobbed in this profound, this silent, this hopeless way, he descended another step into the pit." Compare the use of the semicolon in this passage with the semicolon in the novel.
8. Why was the "halt" "final"?
9. Do you feel motivated to read more novels by this author?
10. Everyone has their own favourite passage from *Hanover, 1959*. What is yours?

... when the two of them were going to sit down at the table, the farmer insisted that the nobleman should sit at the head of the table, and the nobleman also insisted that the farmer should sit there because in his house his orders had to be followed; but the farmer, who was proud of his courtesy and manners, refused to do it, until the nobleman became angry, and putting both hands on his shoulders, he forced him to sit down, saying: 'Sit down, you imbecile; wherever I sit will be the head of the table for you.'

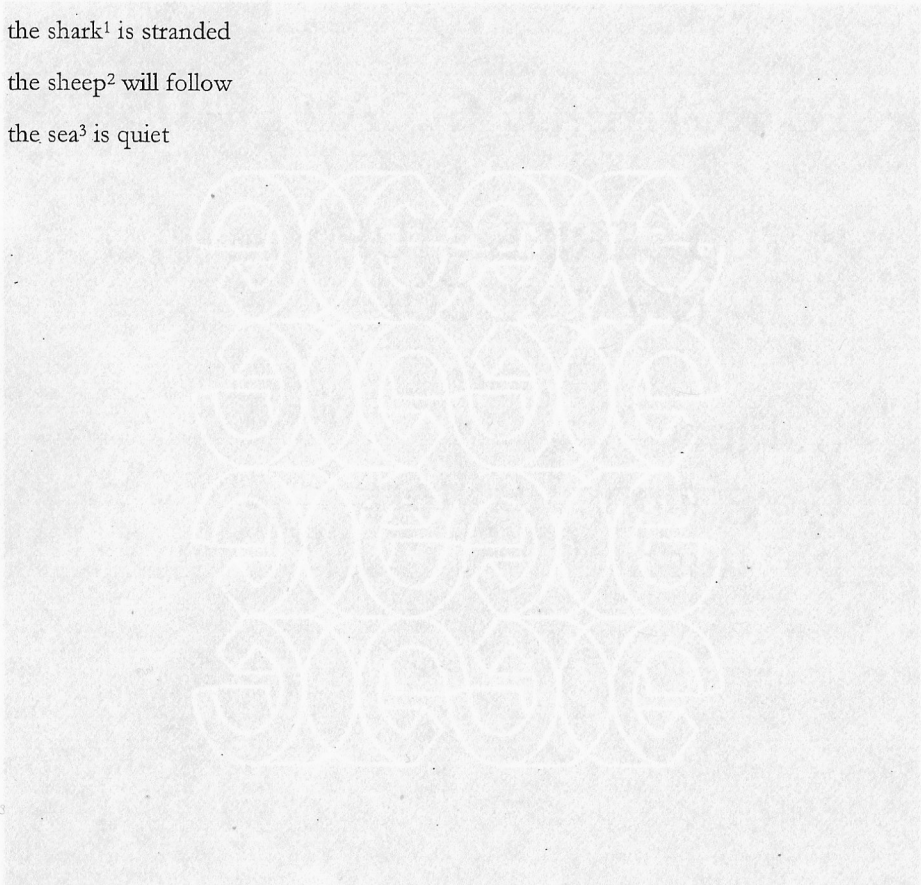
— Cervantes, *Don Quixote* (Translated by Edith Grossman)

## Vilde Bjerke Torset—*a shark gives birth to sheep*

the shark<sup>1</sup> is stranded

the sheep<sup>2</sup> will follow

the sea<sup>3</sup> is quiet



<sup>1</sup> “The Thing cannot be described—there is no language for such abysses of shrieking and immemorial lunacy, such eldritch contradictions of all matter, force, and cosmic order. A mountain walked or stumbled.” H. P. Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu* (Penguin Classics, 1999) pp. 167

<sup>2</sup> “Mostly, I could tell, I made him feel uncomfortable. He didn’t understand me, and he was sort of holding it against me. I felt the urge to reassure him that I was like everybody else, just like everybody else.” Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, (A.A. Knopf, 1988), pp. 66

<sup>3</sup> “Horror is something perfectly natural: the mind’s emptiness. A thought is taking shape, then suddenly it notices that there is nothing more to think.” Peter Handke, *A Sorrow Beyond Dreams* (Pushkin Press, 2006), pp. 78

**LC ROYAL LC SLOAN LC USA**

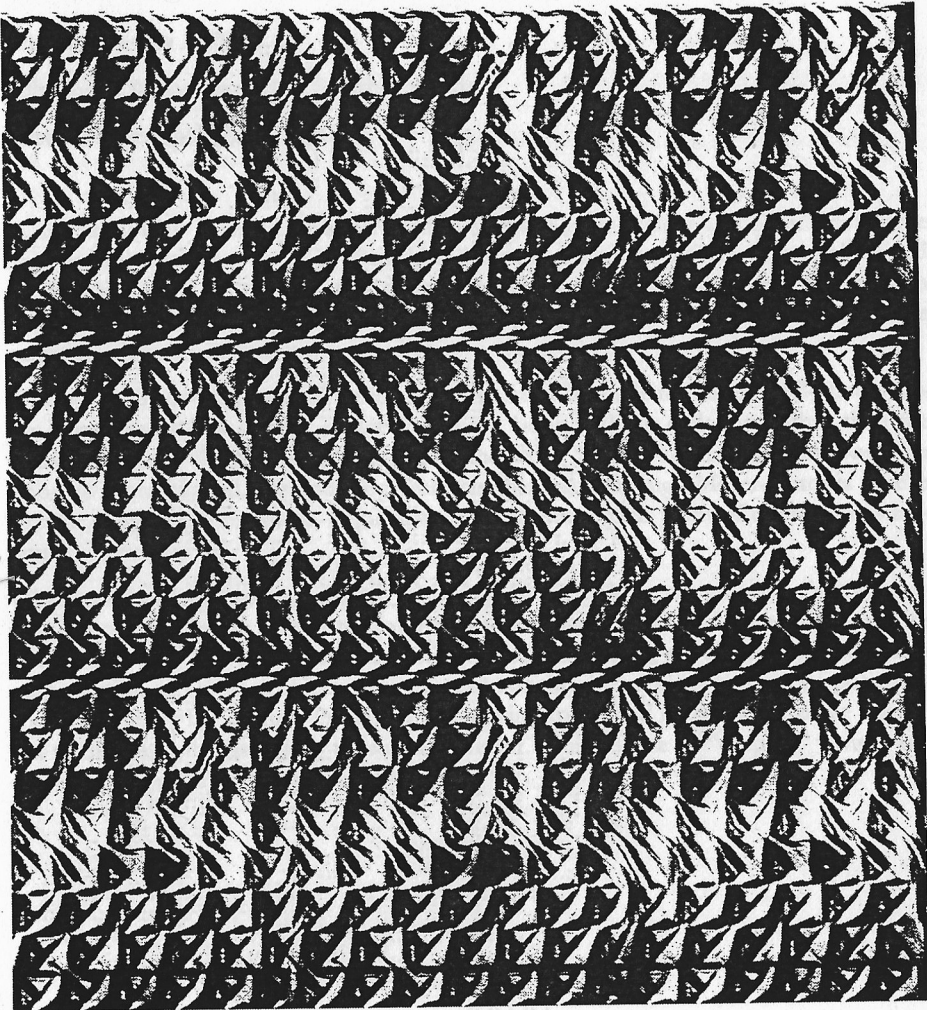
**H-700 SERIES STOP  
SLOAN VALVE CO.**

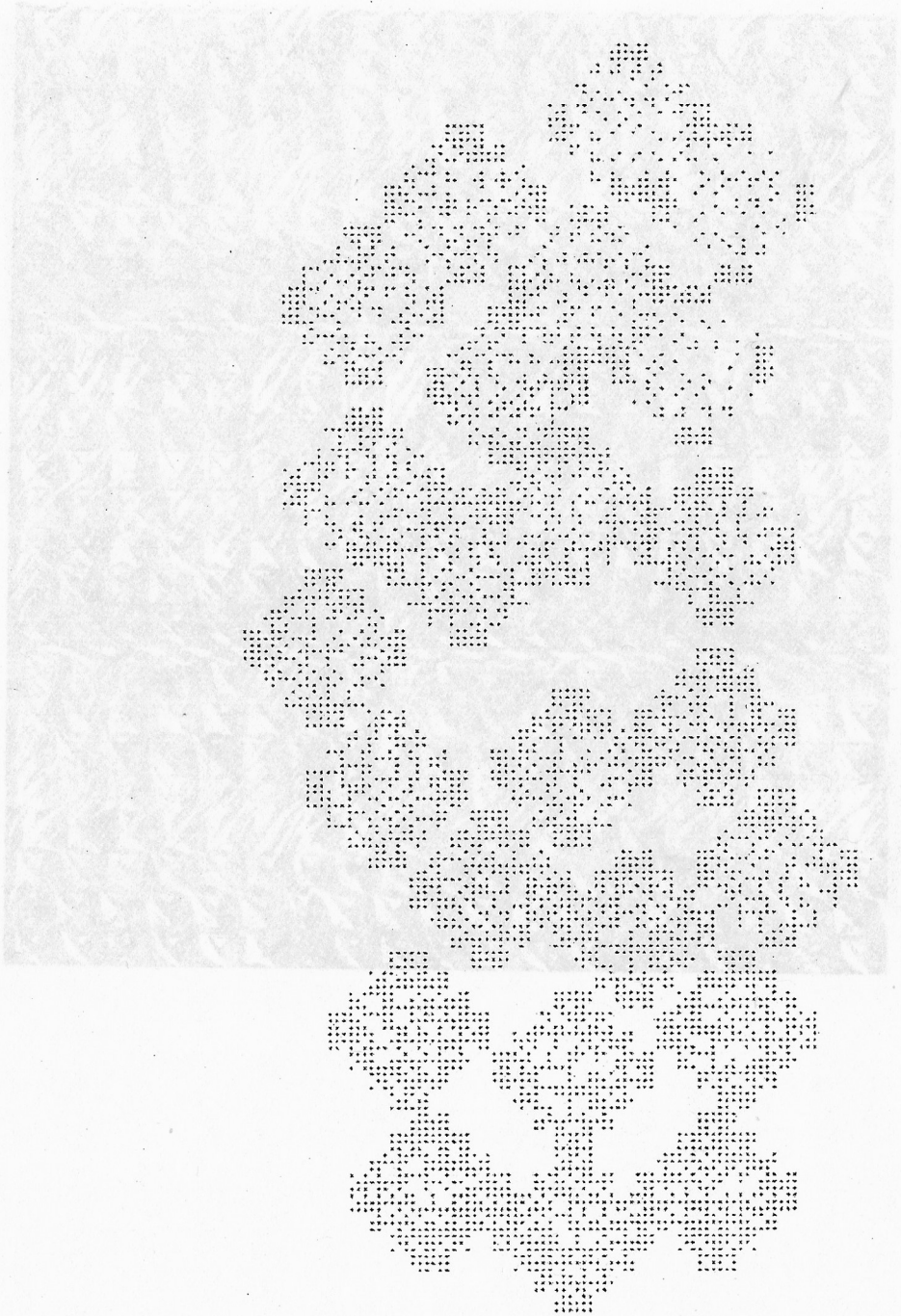
**Kohler  
0.5 gallons 1.9 liters  
per flush**











## Peter Jaeger—Review

### *Writing Utopia 2020*

Sally-Shakti Willow and Sarer Scotthorne, eds.

Bristol: Hesterglock Press, 2020.

In the anthology *Writing Utopia 2020*, editors Sally-Shakti Willow and Sarer Scotthorne have assembled recent work by British and North American writers who explore and perform the art of the utopian in contemporary poetics. The anthology includes work in such diverse areas as visual poetry, conceptual writing, open verse and hybrid lyric, prose narrative, chant and ritual.

*Writing Utopia 2020* is prefaced by the epilogue from Bernadette Mayer's 1984 book *Utopia*. It may seem like an odd choice to open a book with an epilogue (rather than the usual prologue). While it is inevitable that the word "utopia" carries associations with Thomas More's island, the anthology refracts that trace through Mayer—utopia here is circular, malleable, non-linear, inquisitive, and without a fixed point of origin or destination.

What strikes me as most significant in *Writing Utopia 2020* is the anthology's undercurrent of positivity in the face of the interlocking social and ecological crises we face. This optimism is not, however, presented as a kind of rose-tinted, pie in the sky, and imaginary solution to global problems. It is instead a highly aware consideration of potentials and possibilities for change. Perhaps I am making too much of this affirmative quality, but to my mind the anthology provides a site for a sub-culture of "utopian" writers and readers to organize and materialize hope.

Marlene Oeffinger & Sarah Burgoyne—*Morning Glories*

Rivers of light braided into rose-shapes. It was too attractive to complain about: would a broken faucet open a window into the sky? What I hadn't thought of was your presence by the creek as the sun set crooked as the scar on my index finger. The opal lacquer on your uncut nails gleaming so deeply under my desire, tenant I can no longer evict [the cotton caught the leak stretching]. I have survived the speech of your voice. The presence of variable air. I have brawled silently in the streets [how full the tub gets with my incongruous biddings], wasting time in your city. I am on lyric parole: my voice no longer sustains beyond a fly's buzzing.

If the calendar is available, I'll burden it with God.  
bars of grace] The cobalt luck staining my palm.

[I have closed all the

## Madeleine Beaulieu—*Review*

### *Visual Poetry for Women*

Dani Spinosa

Toronto: Anstruther Press, 2021. (Manifesto Series no. 8)

*Visual Poetry for Women*, published is bound with two staples. Inside, Spinosa's titles are capitalized and the same bright red as the cover. It's a simple, but engaging, design, and because of that it's perfectly for accommodating and carrying the weight and texture of Spinosa's words. She demands that femmes create bad poetry and bad drawings, that we insist on our own histories.

Spinosa's manifesto stretches and moves to remind women that we are able to create our own histories, our own poetry (good, or really very bad), with our own hands. If you'd like the hands making your work and your space to be manicured, Spinosa recommends a short manicure for the typewriter, and slightly longer for the touchscreen. The computer keyboard can accommodate any length, and any shape—almond, coffin, stiletto. If you'd like to talk about your work and your space, she recommends letting loose your natural vocal fries, your 'likes' and your 'uhms' like "fluttering birds."

Like Spinosa herself, *Visual Poetry for Women* is sharp-edged and funny and gap-toothed and inspired. Read it if you'd like to make visual poetry. Read it if you'd like to soak in the words of a manifesto written with typewriter ink and apparitions.

On the final page of the chapbook, Spinosa's biography notes that "This is her first manifesto." I'm glad—effervescent, really—to know that it won't be her last.

*Judith: Women Making Visual Poetry*

Amanda Earl, ed.

Malmö: Timglaset Editions, 2021.

Amanda Earl, editor of the beautiful and thrilling *Judith: Women Making Visual Poetry*, frames the anthology as “an in-your-face reminder that not only do women make visual poetry but [they] do it damn well.” For Earl, *Judith* responds to claims made by “male publishers, editors, and visual poets that few women make visual poetry.” Canadian poet Judith Copithorne, whose name marks the anthology, has articulated similar issues of gendered exclusion. She has recalled that women have been doubly ostracized from multimodal writing communities since visual poetry is not only a marginal form but “women were already having a hard-enough time getting noticed for less ‘out there’ work.” Bringing together a diversity of practitioners, critical essays, and a plethora of illuminating resources, *Judith* is, without a doubt, a necessary edition that represents many women working across digital and analogue modes. With spectacular contributions such as Dona Mayoora’s stark asemics, Astra Papachristodoulou’s light-catching bio-resin sculptures, Karenjit Sandhu’s explosive tag clusters, and Kate Siklosi’s delicate collages of text and detritus, *Judith* dispels erroneous claims that women aren’t active in the field. Moreover, with its attention to the influence and mentorship of women poets, *Judith* begins to answer visual poet Dani Spinosa’s recent call for women to engage a “visual poetics that was always already feminine, feminized, dominated by femmes.” As an anthology that is as much a pleasure to hold as it is to read, *Judith* is a stunning, expansive contribution to the historical and ongoing legacies of visual poetics.

## Nasser Hussain—Review

### *Dead Souls*

Sam Riviere

London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2021.

*Dead Souls* is a novel set in a near, alternative future, in a budget hotel bar in London, narrated by a nameless minor player in the poetry scene who meets a recently disgraced poet named Solomon Wiese who speaks, non-stop, for the entire night and into the next morning, in a 300-page long text composed of a single paragraph. Riviere himself is a poet of interest – his three books of poetry (*Kim Kardashian's Wedding*, *88 Austerities*, and *After Fame*, all from Faber & Faber) and his micropress *If A Leaf Falls*, all revolve around ideas familiar to anyone interested in Conceptualism and restraint and appropriation as poetic tools. *Dead Souls* imagines a world in which poetry is churned through a digital 'originality' filter (the qualitative analysis and comparison system, or *QACS*, which I pronounce as 'quacks'), which determines with algorithmic precision the 'originality' of your poems. Wiese falls just short of this standard, and this moment catalyses one of the most compelling stories I've read in years. This is a book about the dystopian future of writing itself, but I can't also help seeing how many parts of our shared literary past is embedded in the book. Despite its novel construction, *Dead Souls* is a patchwork quilt, a tissue of quotations, a mixed tape of the greatest hits, and a mind-bending treasure-hunt of a book. If there was ever a novel written expressly for poets, this is the one.

*Moteto para Lima Barreto (Motet for Lima Barreto)*

André Vallias

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlaMUmJNNWc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlaMUmJNNWc)

The Brazilian poet and visual artist André Vallias (b. 1963) makes remarkable use of computer-generated poetry and digital media to create unique ‘verbivocovisual’ worlds. After studying law at the University of São Paulo, he began to design visual poems. From 1987 to 1994, he lived in Germany, where he shifted his activities to translation and computer media, organizing one of the first international shows of computer-generated poetry in 1992. Today he lives in Rio de Janeiro.

The multimedia work entitled *Moteto para Lima Barreto* (Motet for Lima Barreto) takes the form of a performance that Vallias created in 2017 for the *Festa Literária Internacional de Paraty* (International Literary Festival of Paraty—FLIP), held annually since 2003 in the Brazilian city of Paraty, in Rio de Janeiro. Through social media, Vallias and two colleagues launched a campaign in 2013 to honor the Black Brazilian writer, Lima Barreto. Organizers selected him in 2016, and Joselia Aguiar curated FLIP 2017.

Intrigued by the word “Motet” as a title for his performance, Vallias evokes the Portuguese “moteto”, aligns it to “mote” (motto), and reminds us that “moteto” comes from the French “mot” (word). There is more here than meets the eye—Vallias is a poet with a keen interest in sound, and “motet” refers to a Western classical musical form: a mainly vocal composition spanning the high medieval period to the present. The motet was one of the pre-eminent polyphonic forms of Renaissance music. According to the musicologist, Margaret Bent, “a piece of music in several parts with words” is as precise a definition of the motet as will serve from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century and beyond. “Motet” used as the title of Vallias’s performance signals a work about words, their sounds, and their visual interlocking (polyphonic) forms.

Vallias identifies three components of *Motet*. The first consists of quotes by Lima Barreto extracted from texts published between October 1917 and July 1918 (and performed by poet and agitator Paulo Sabino). The second comprises poems by Vallias written largely under the influence of the popular demonstrations that shook Brazil in June 2013, when protesters objected to the cost of public transportation, government corruption, and police brutality. The poet, singer, and psychoanalyst Numa Ciro performs the Vallias poems. Vallias describes the third component as “verbivocovisual invocations made from 20 of the approximately 26 pseudonyms (masks) used by Lima Barreto.” Vallias discovered these in research by Felipe Botelho Correia that resulted in a publication of 164 texts by Barreto (which remain unidentified).

Why did Lima Barreto appeal to Vallias? The poet explains that Barreto was “a Brazilian black writer from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, a kind of pre-modernist, very sarcastic and funny. Barreto used a lot of pseudonyms, and I’m making a multimedia work based on these names.”