

April

Volume 4 2004

**A Poetry Anthology to Accompany
Tempe Poetry in April,
A Reading and Discussion Series
in its Fourth Season**

Edited by Catherine Hammond

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Kade Twist 1

urban NDN equity

book 1

maybe it's the way
cinder block walls

reflect
the suburban dusk

(those squares
upon squares

of muted color
and dream

such soothing
accompaniments

to cheap liquor
and guilt

if my wife
and her beautiful flesh

only knew
the truth

if i only knew the truth

Kade Twist 2

book 2

o
the barking dogs

kill silence
the way federally prescribed

ambition
has killed

the shadows
of my history

book 3

and now
there are subdivisions

upon
subdivisions

and i don't
know any of them

Kade Twist 3

book 4

and the failed stripmalls
no longer inspire renewal

book 5

those voices
in my head

no longer
sing and dance

my subconscious
has become

nothing more than 1200
square feet of stained carpet

wood paneling
and acoustic ceilings

Kade Twist 4

book 6

and i've
invested my life here

on this plot of land

book 7

where i pretend
to pull weeds

in a garden
that was never planted

like some kind of
NDN willy loman

exorcising
memory

from a planned
community

of violence
and trust

Kade Twist 5

gale norton was practically an ndn princess herself

she would
spend hours
drinking vodka sodas
putting on make up
and thinking of names for herself

while she
went through
a closet of costumes
of various ndn maidens

i remember sacagawea
was one of her favorites

but she was really
into that ndn princess thing
she wanted to be miss lakota
so bad there for a while
she was all lakota this
and lakota that

i remember laying in bed
and watching her stand in front of the mirror

Kade Twist 6

her feet in moccasins
her buckskin dress
the miss lakota sash
and rhinestone tierra

her pudgy white freckled arms

she would look at herself
and then look over her shoulder
and say
with those
thin red lips

a-ho

Marianne Botos 7

Ordinary Memory:

In the confusion, a whistling and
the leaky faucet,
the T.V., Louis Armstrong's "Handkerchief Sandwich"
flies through the night. A white cup

overturns, and your words
are a woman, red tank top, black mini, she loves Jesus,
she's your type of girl.

I'm playing it all out on the kitchen table.

*

Once, a kite of silk, and a bird
caught in the string. The wind
in the belly feathers, a ticking—we could all
be saved.

On my bicycle,
I rigged an antennae, a piebald feather
taped to its tip. Past the park,

a dark box, and a man
with a small spotlight on his dolls. He has them dance,
a-clack-clack, while he sings.

*

Marianne Botos 8

How it opens each conversation,
your trumpet, my bird:
the wound becomes, like flowers, it was always,
and the puppet's arms

keep healing, the fingers—
index, middle and ring—
pumping the valves
over and over.

**When a Girl Has Dreams, Gets a Horse:
Does Wonderland**

I dressed my dolls
like astronauts. Tin-foil suits, thick-soled
white boots, testing the dust on one of Jupiter's
infinite moons. Or
cowboys, though they didn't
carry guns. Only lassoes. Or hoses,
like firemen, climbing ladders,
saving the little child that wasn't theirs.
Better to fall in flames,
something in your arms.

Marianne Botos 9

No. Like Alice
who was just stupid, to take that potion
and shrink, and then want to come back again.
Better to be looking out, smoking with caterpillars,
being late. My mother

used to hate my being late,
the lame excuses, I was always
chasing rabbits.

Alice should have gotten herself

a horse. My horse
liked chasing rabbits, the desert
skimming them. Running full out, tossing mane,
tossing me on its back. The mistake was letting me
get that horse.

Looking out, like cowboys. Open sky.
Wyoming sky. Moon sky.

**Practicing My Spanish while You Summer in
Patzcuaro**

Leaving Palm Springs

The car drives me home through a butterfly storm—
I think *simple ox cart* and *Catch 22*.

Each yellow death against the windshield makes me grateful

Marianne Botos 10

they are not birds.

*

Too beautiful to carry my shoes, beautiful bird,
you say *I have been lost without you*
: alcanzar (to reach, to be enough)

Alone in Tempe

In the spargrass, the house finches are dressing, seed hulls
finding oceans of soil in their feathers. Dark angels
learn to fly here. Apprenticeship is the astounding

mate of desire.

*

You mail me a gold coin, ask *how many birds*
for that shirt?

I ask what do they grow in Mexico,

make a small deposit on a banana grove
: yo te imagino tu me imaginas nos imaginamos el uno al
otro
(i imagine you you imagine me we imagine each other)

Outside M Building

Two flycatchers nest under the stairs, weave a twig cup
from mesquite. Among the thorns
a pair of spotted eggs hatch and feather themselves,

Marianne Botos 11

soft yellow beaks *tweep* open
for insect meat.

*

Spoon sleep: we are raising llamas, they wander
through the banana groves,
reaching for the profits. We're glad the trees are tall.

In the shade we paint each other's toenails,
each one a different color
: regalar (to make a gift

Naming My Feet

1.

This time, the orange violence of birds
behind me. I know this path, one in front
and the other. I name my feet: Oblio,
who wanders, Minuet, who dances

like an eddy. I follow the river,
naming my hands,

one who claps, one
who trails its fingers
in the wet after. The birds scatter,

precessed, at the lack of sound.

Marianne Botos 12

2.

The gesture of orange. The way
it carries.

3.

The wandering Oblivion feigns silence
in the questioning, observes the dance. As if
the path will converge.

Divining rod conical leaves.

4.

A match against
wet slate. All the names
gather at the fire, called there
for the bedtime story, doesn't it look like
they could speak:

except the flame
which tongues the wood,

licks it clean in the appellation of desire.
Now, the wind.

5.

Fire falls at my feet.

Robert Longoni 13

On The Road to Shu

It was just another day
until our dog, a pug
named for a Chinese poet,
licked my glasses
down the middle, leaving
a vertical half-moon
smear on both lenses.
The tree between the window
and the city street
got wavy then and twice
as interesting, inside
everything went clear,
morning sun
danced with dust
above the nightstand,
revealing smudges
on the paneled closet mirror—
half of me, my
looping uncombed hair,
suspended on either side.

By now Li Po was asleep
across our pillows
and miraculously
between wheezes
I entered his dream
where he was
laboring behind me
on a steep mountain path

Robert Longoni 14

that wandered
through one of his poems,
the narrow road to Shu.

He was brave on the trail
but his legs were short
and dust flew out
from my heels, so he
shut his swollen eyes
and when the wind
spun off a rockface
lifting his ears,
imagined himself
a butterfly in flight,
hovered for a moment,
slipped ahead
to a narrow place
where light streamed
down between peaks,
then rose up, unfolding
two gloriously etched wings.

Late October, 1997

1

By mid-afternoon the autumn sun
burns above the mountains so intensely
my eyes take shelter behind a spray
of limbs and watch it diffuse
to a shapeless glow—the way grief,

Robert Longoni 15

releasing, expands into gloom,
relief arrives without comfort,
turning memories into thin-edged betrayals—
snapshots that catch us posing
on the wrong side of our lives.

2

My thoughts turn for comfort
to words I heard in the dark
about those who give what they give
in silence, even when they speak
or sing, and lay claim to nothing,

drawing on the love
of those they love exclusively
to love everything the same
and to act against every betrayal
with the authority of the universe.

3

Turning away, more than glare at my back,
I watch the same light settle
weightless on the sloping forest,
fixing each tree in its own shape,
making a pattern of randomness, as you would do

if you were here to organize the scene,
the soft words of your smile already cajoling the light
to surround every object without touching it
on that day to come, when our spirits
rise from the dust of the earth.

For Claude Bart (September 23, 1967-October 10, 1997)

Robert Longoni 16

Reflections at Laguna Beach

These gulls that strut pink legs
to make children giddy between tides
don't know indifference, nor do waves
ever tire of dissolving into spray
or carving hollows into bluffs,
reviving the Earth in ventricular chambers
just below the point, where a teenage girl
poses for her father, blonde and erect
between a crumbling shoreline and concrete stairs.

Migrant pigeons pick at battered shells,
eccentric, as bright as the first
to fidget through traffic in Providence
or the one that teetered for a photo
in San Marco Square, one leg snagged
in someone's hair, a foil to glinting sunset.

They go barely noticed, soft in their feathers,
their shine reflected in sheets of sand, retrievable,
but only by something preceding memory
that resists words, penetrates
the haze of our conceptions,

suspends a grayfaced man above the point
as he leans back toward the bank's contorted growth,
steadies himself, and rotates his camera
to preserve something, the ocean's falling pulse,
in the fragile instant of a smile.

Robert Longoni 17

Dining at Sunset in Pisa, Late August

*for my Grandparents,
Archimede and Teresa Grassi*

This morning we wandered somewhere
along the edge of fields
you might have worked with a hoe,
stumbling past a shed where either of you could have
sliced off a chicken's head
and caught the whiff of scalding feathers,
browning in a pot
with rosemary, leeks, and thyme.

We looked for names in a phone book.
Twenty-four Grassis, sixteen Cuccis.
Only names. Nothing to suggest
eight years of toil in Argentina
or the journey resumed, ending
in a Quonset hut in Massachusetts,
rows of beans and cucumbers,
three wide steps to rest on.
Nothing to predict humid evenings
swelling with the sound of Caruso,
a new mix of things with smells
to mark your place
with children gone: soft yellow cheese,
thin broth, simmering sauce,
sweet pipe tobacco, fresh blue
overalls from Sears and Roebuck,
loamy soil on your hands.

Robert Longoni 18

Now, under the rosy glow of the tower
looming at us over a squat building,
we grow complacent with fragrances
and red wine at a sidewalk table,
discovering that Pisa at dusk
is about the tongue,
its intimate adventures with pasta,
olive oil, garlic, prosciutto, and
the soft warm core of crusty bread.

Oh Nonno and Nonna, how could you
forsake such aromatic moments,
the company of sloping shadows,
to do your cooking in America?
Or did you know already then
you couldn't live without us—
you needed us here, at this moment,
on a lingering evening
in ancestral Pisa, remembering you.

Cynthia Hogue 19

At Delphi

The myth was all we had. That story,
but what was it? A path up a mountain,
and at the top, a rock, a tunnel
or entrance to an underground cave.

I could feel this . . . how to describe
a feeling that started like a vibration
or opening in the chest cavity,
then in the head and feet

even as I walked from the bottom
of the path and up, a winding
through thin pines lining the way?
The sun hailed us like song,

an old riming of light.
This was a road pilgrims
had traveled. We were walking it,
and my feet knew I walked here

before. They knew this way.
The feeling didn't fade
but grew stronger as we came
into a great cleft in the cliffs.

Cynthia Hogue 20

A guide said, This was the sibyl's rock,
and beside that precarious jut of boulder
was an opening into the ground.
I was vibrating like a divining rod.

There was no where to go
but through the ruins. My sister heard
a tone or tones, *A chord*, she said,
warning of peril or sorrow. A future

we could see but not change.
The story is the path or way.
We happen upon it once or twice,
arrive in the lucid noon

to a place where we once came
to know what we do not know.
My body knew. Still. It felt
like a feeling. I called it a feeling.

The Book of What Is

At heart the book of what is,
call it "truth," "wave-
marbled water," "man,

walking down path,"
greeting you like an old
flame tempered by winters

Cynthia Hogue 21

the river froze and held
snow's weight, springs
when ice melted his icy heart

in hours (not years)
and the river's shell
opened, milky, chartreuse

with last summer's lichen, pine-
branches scattered among,
everything preserved, fresh-

seeming the small green needles
of memory, all that pungent
urgency there freed.

Four Ways of Seeing the Fall

1

The sleep of trees lies deep as dreams.
You rise in thought, everyone open-minded.
When you speak the sky reflects your words.
Sometimes the mellowness of autumn
makes you laugh. You're thoughtful or cruel,
but you can't tell the difference. In the garden,
the yellow hedges spread their lace of light.

Cynthia Hogue 22

2

The disorientation I felt passed quickly.
Not disoriented but disorigned;
I searched old notebooks, letters.
The street was empty, but I could hear others
in the alley where, last night, the dog
cornered something that huddled fat, furry
against the wall, the dog barking, even inside.

3

We passed the flame, one to another.
The frame of relation didn't hold,
its structure flawed. I looked outside
at an outside that would never be the same
in my perceptions, as if God had withdrawn,
undramatically. I rocked and huddled,
huddled and rocked. It was cold.

4

It is now. And now it is also now,
but not the same now. Now
is not now. To live with change
is like an empty pocket in which,
nevertheless, you find the ring
you had misplaced. Where was it when
you searched, and found nothing there?

Cynthia Hogue 23

It Is True That the True Appearance of an Object
after Robert Duncan

Isn't perceptible, and in making-
up the seen we touch the truth? Curtains admit

the visible—call it simple—a fence, a tree
glimpsed through the lacy frame.

My neighbor is climbing a ladder
into the box elder in his backyard.

*

He talks to his wife below,
watching from the patio with a drink,

of (some) possible (thing).
He's sawing away all the branches

where evenings birds gathered by hundreds
loudly chirping unseen among the leaves

*

Cynthia Hogue 24

all summer as if the tree alone sang.
The branches, separated,

reassemble on the ground
where they fell. The tree is being

sawed down to stump
and rising beside itself.

*

With birds flown silence surge
wherever sentience

“declares the co-existence of real
and selves,” wherein that divide

of our making what is
stands most revealed.

Stones

The universe is stone, but we are not.
George Oppen

I have a friend who imprisons stones.
How do you do that? I ask.
I build little cages and put them in.
And why do you imprison these stones?
They are immoral stones. I oversee

Cynthia Hogue 25

the purification of petrified beings.
Where do you find these immoral stones?

I find them in the river,
which is low in the summer drought.

Are all the stones you see immoral?
No, only the ones I imprison.

Can you tell which stones are immoral?
Yes, I can tell which ones are immoral,
and which are not.

And where do you keep the cages?
I keep them on a shelf, near the window.

And do you keep them by the window
so they see their old abode
and know what they have lost?

I keep them by the window because
that is where I have room.

Will you free these stones?

Yes, when they have learned morality
and are purified of being petrified.

Will you teach them morality and courage?
No, morality and courage cannot be taught
but they can be learned.

How will imprisoned stones learn?

They will learn because I have moved them
and that is what they feared most.

When will they know they have learned?
I will know when they know.

Catherine Hammond 26

How to Eat Asparagus

Am I ordinary? I ask.
Pedestrian *is the word*, you say.
No, I drive a car—unlike various
poets. All the stars—
some brighter, some not—
the fire in the fire pit burns—
blocking out
yet more stars.
You know, I wanted you
to teach me
order—checkbooks, one place
to leave my keys. To help me
stop visiting in my dreams—
the house on Hill Street
as the only safe place
in the world. Here we are—
your chicken piccata
and my asparagus.
You pick up a single stalk with your fingers
and I do, too.
Why would we eat asparagus
any other way.

Contributors' Notes

Kade L. Twist is a poet and policy analyst. His poems have been published in the *South Dakota Review*, *Tempus*, *Windmill*, *Caffeine*, and numerous zenes. His work addresses Urban Indian experiences. Twist embeds American Indian geo-political narratives within a contemporary landscape of American popular culture and consumerism. Currently, Twist is the Director of Policy and Technology for the National American Indian Development Corporation and Vice President of the Native Networking Policy Center. Twist is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

A desert rat, **Marianne Botos** grew up in Arizona and lives in Phoenix. Botos received her MFA in poetry from Arizona State University in 1999. She teaches creative writing and composition at Paradise Valley Community College. Awards/publications: Creative Writing Fellowship, Arizona Commission on the Arts, 2002-2003; Great River Arts Institute "Spirit & Letter" scholarship, Patzcuaro, Mexico, July, 2001; publication of "Unexpected," 1998 Spring *Hayden's Ferry Review*.

Robert Longoni taught at the University of Arizona, directed the university's poetry center for one year, and then taught 23 years at Pima Community College, Tucson, retiring as faculty emeritus. His poems have appeared in periodicals, two anthologies, and his collection, *WOODPILES*. He has also edited two poetry volumes. Now a resident of Chandler, he has conducted workshops locally, for Phoenix College and the Writer's Voice, and in western New Mexico, where he spends his summers.

Cynthia Hogue has published three collections of poetry, most recently *Flux* (New Issues P, 2002), and has co-edited an anthology of essays on women's avant-garde writing, *We Who Love To Be Astonished: Experimental Women's Writing and Performance Poetics* (U of AL P, 2001). For her work, she has been awarded NEA, NEH, and Fulbright fellowships. She has lived and taught in Iceland, Denmark, New Orleans, New York, and Pennsylvania, where she directed the Stadler Center for Poetry at Bucknell University for eight years. She currently lives in Arizona, where she is the Maxine and Jonathan Marshall Chair in Modern and Contemporary Poetry in the Department of English at Arizona State University.

Catherine Hammond, moderator, has poetry anthologized in *Fever Dreams: Contemporary Arizona Poetry* and in *Yellow Silk II*. Her MFA in Creative Writing is from ASU. Also a visual artist, she has two paintings in the permanent collection of the Westin Kierland Resort and Spa in Scottsdale, AZ. She has exhibited in the Artlink Juried Exhibition 2003 and at Vision Gallery. She currently is part of a two person exhibition at the City of Tempe's Post Office Gallery.

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