

# periodics

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# periodics

A Magazine Devoted to Prose

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Please send no manuscripts. This is the last issue.

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# River

want river piece out of this moving river [redacted] trees bank flows alongside [redacted]  
[redacted] passes by flathead think about it far away in the tamarack stands [redacted]  
[redacted] night burning in the river [redacted] is a heave, a heaven [redacted]  
[redacted] along the horizon [redacted] language come [redacted] that  
way too / along a river bank here see it river water [redacted] cold [redacted] green murk green river [redacted]  
green green smoky green [redacted] mud green columbia green grey flats [redacted] vista  
valley large [redacted] on a smoky day sky bigger [redacted] lake [redacted] start the kootenay  
kootenay [redacted] what can you say [redacted] a river talk [redacted] talk to it [redacted] river, [redacted]  
[redacted] move differently [redacted] body [redacted] mind [redacted]  
[redacted] alone also [redacted] within the banks it travels itself frame [redacted]  
shape [redacted] terrain clay bank landscape rock wall and beach [redacted] water [redacted]  
[redacted] heavier [redacted] on the earths folds [redacted]  
[redacted] under coyote under earth [redacted] where [redacted]  
[redacted] move itself down water down into the earth ground itself held by itself in itself [redacted]  
holding [redacted] contours river how do I talk to you when you [redacted] soft sounds  
usually quiet no sound river into lake [redacted]  
rivers [redacted] swift [redacted] ssssssss [redacted] shhhh kinda groaning [redacted] as it moves itself along the  
elevation [redacted] groans under the weight [redacted] maybe the weight is earth groaning [redacted]  
[redacted] somebody [redacted] groans [redacted] keep it into the cleft [redacted] get out  
of [redacted] river into lake no difference at all all flows lakes just wider and sitting than river ok different  
colour green too [redacted] with more white from wind chipping it up into the air  
heaves the lake into the phrase [redacted] the phrase of the lake [redacted]  
[redacted] the phrase of the lake is the wide wind shift from north from south ok wind [redacted]  
talks the lake osprey flies over it rocks and creeks along its banks the beaches trees just wide the heave is  
more set river [redacted] into lardeau duncan feeding/feeds itself into itself its own  
words what words do a river speak how words come when you talk to yourself you a river me a river her



a river moving body her/mine river moving body moves moans like [REDACTED] the rivers  
words don't come to the river back to itself as if they were water [REDACTED] yes  
they do this these words come out of this river they are here right now because of the river and I try no  
the river does it try [REDACTED] so [REDACTED] the words just as the river there to be seen or  
heard or tested taken into the view world body size cleft groaning colour green place banks clay gravel  
bridges [REDACTED] take us trench

## Sigh

Sigh. A tenuous slight stream of air escapes through a high point midway up the chest. At night, during sleep, this light puff of breath is part of running and falling.

Night and breath, the moonlight, him breathing hard as he walks along the black road on a cold November night, the stars wear thin. At least he's thinking that and then he says to himself "the trees" and "they are there as they have always been in the dream or in the memory of them." So the cold air condenses on his mustache and he blows out a puff of air which then glistens out as jewels in front of himself.

Home before you know it. The stove is still warm. He talks to himself because thinking has become words and the pictures from the day coalesce with the pictures of the night so that he talks in his sleep (he thinks). The language comes into the room with him and touches the sides of the stove, turns out the dining room light, undresses.

Then the thin stream of air from his nostrils heads for his toes but before it gets there, before it spreads out into the night, before it sets out over the world, it settles out. Into his head.

Fred Wah

## REVIEWS

**THE SAD PHOENICIAN** by Robert Kroetsch.  
**Toronto: Coach House Press, 1979. 80 pages, paper, \$5.50.**

This book, which has a lovely design and a good readable feel to it, also has an attractive "teaser" on the back cover apropos of how the Phoenicians "wrote down the sound, not the picture. . . . They freed the reader from the wall." So, as Kroetsch explains it, "The poem as hubbub, freed from picture, into the pattern and tumble of sound."

But the book needs figuring out. Why "sad?" Why "The poet. . . as lover?" That turns out to be the story of what's going on in the poem; the poem tells the story.

What I find more interesting about this story is how the poet is caught in the story the poem makes. The story in this poem is the left-hand margin operating as a base for the alternation of "and" and "but." That feature of the poem becomes lineal, a veritable story-line of the poet's mind making the poem/story. It's a never ending syntagm which propels the language forward in rambling common tongue, jokes, puns, vulgarities, the sounds we make between us as we mumble through the possibilities of our own condition, the states we are in with one another. What's interesting about this mode is that the language and the material get woven, knit, out from the edge of the left margin. Each line can keep going out and out just so long as it comes back to the edge, fishing, casting.

Two edges really. Kroetsch gets caught into the structure of the alternating "and" and "but" as he gets caught up in the story he is telling of himself as it unravels itself to him. The engaging energy in this is the poet's mind at every turn. No sooner does the literal margin provide the place-from-which than the mind at work encounters the people, the sex, the sayings, the places, the sea-going, poem/prose, page/stage, I/he-she-it-you. And it's moving very fast, this double edge, into what's stumbled upon or discovered in the making of it. So puns.

and a bird in the hand, he soon discovers, two in ambush,

And his attention to what is being said moment by moment, what might be the next moment within the structure, within his thinking within it, is delightful.

and that's only a start, she was an admirer of bricks, she  
liked their fired faces, their false  
but predictable ends  
and darkness itself she would nothing  
but praise, it falls, she said, not like you. . .

I'm interested in following Kroetsch in his phrasing, to watch how he is moved by what is going on in the writing. Sometimes the phrase, or cadence, takes on a large rolling effect from the sounds within:

but she's barking up the wrong tree  
and button of seed, of shell. o button of linen, button  
of patent leather; he loves my arms in the sun, he  
loves the circle of my hair; o button of bronze,  
of opal, of amber; o button of jade or iron, hoard  
happiness, honor the past, buy government bonds

Particularly in "The Silent Poet Sequence" at the end of the book, the phrasing moves very quickly with the mind, turning.

and I argued, at length, for the inevitable rise of the  
real, into Idea; this time it's forever, I added  
but all my blood sank to my brain, I was left hanging, my  
neck hurt; I was trying to amuse

And one could figure it all out I suppose. But it's what's going on with each cast out from the edge, what can be caught (the fisherman hopes) each time the line is played.

Fred Wah

(Contributors continued from back cover.)

Edmonton; he has recently completed a novella "Monster Weather." CAROLE ITTER makes art, writes, and collects oral history in Vancouver; she recently edited with Daphne Marlatt the oral history book *Opening Doors: Vancouver's East End* (Provincial Archives). JUDITH KALMAN's new address is Grande Prairie, Alberta; her stories have appeared in *Montreal Writer's Forum* and *University of Windsor Review*. DAPHNE MARLATT lives in Vancouver; her "In the Month of Hungry Ghosts" was in *Capilano Review* #16/17 and "Selected Writing" will issue from Talonbooks, as will a new edition of *Our Lives* from Oolichan Press (Lantzville); "Territory & Co." is an historical novel-in-progress. STEVE MCCAFFERY's symposium on "The Politics of the Referent" (*Open Letter* III, 7) is now available as L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Supplement #1; "Carnival—the Third Panel," an excerpt from an ongoing long work has recently appeared in Coach House manuscript edition. DAVID MCFADDEN edits the new magazine *Writing* from the Writing Program at David Thompson University Centre in Nelson, B.C.; his companion novels *A Trip Around Lake Erie* & *A Trip Around Lake Huron* are forthcoming from Coach House. JEAN MCKAY lives near London, Ontario, & co-edits *Brick*, a journal of reviews, with Stan Dragland. DUNCAN MCNAUGHTON, who wrote *A Passage of St. Devil* (Talonbooks) and *Sumeriana* (Tombouctou) will be teaching at Damascus University for two years. B P NICHOL's *Journal* and *The Martyrology* were both done by Coach House in Toronto, where he lives. SARAH SHEARD works for Coach House Press. JAMES SHERRY edits *Roof* and *Roof* books; his most recent collection is *Part Songs* from Segue, NYC; *In Case* will be published by Sun & Moon Press. ELLIOT SILBERBERG lives near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, is a reporter for The Hayden Valley Press, and has completed a novel titled "Dark Arc" MARILYN STABLEIN lives in Seattle; her prose collection "Ticketless Traveler" is forthcoming. D E STEWARD lives in Charlottesville, VA, has published an Asian travel book, *Through the Solstice* in Switzerland, and has a chunk of his new novel in the June *Chicago Review*. FRED WAH's latest collection of poetry, *Breathin' My Name With A Sigh*, is available in manuscript edition from Coach House and is scheduled for publication by Talonbooks some time this winter; his *Selected Poems* edited by George Bowering, will appear from Talonbooks. MICHAEL WOLFE runs Tombouctou Books in Bolinas, CA; his journal, "In Morocco" will come from Sombre Reptiles Press, Berkeley. RON WRAY edits *Primer* from South Bend, Indiana and his collection of mostly poetry, "To Change Places", will arrive this year from Writers Center Press (Indianapolis).

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## Back Issues

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## Contributors

KATHY ACKER's *Kathy Goes to Haiti* (Rumour) is still in print, *Blood & Guts In High School* is still at the typesetter's, and "Great Expectations", here excerpted, nears completion in San Francisco, where Kathy is currently teaching a class in performance at the Art Institute. "Defense Mechanism", by Berkeley's DAVID BENEDETTI, appeared in the March issue of *B. C. Monthly*. CHARLES BERNSTEIN continues to edit *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* with Bruce Andrews in NYC; his *Poetic Justice* comes from Pod Books in Baltimore, prose format works. GEORGE BOWERING's new novel, *Burning Water*, just appeared from General Publishing, Toronto as will a prose anthology he has edited for Coach House; he lives in Vancouver. LAURA CHESTER's new book of poems, *My Pleasure*, is just out from The Figures Press in Berkeley, which also published her novel, *Watermark*. MATT COHEN has been teaching at the University of Victoria; his most recent novel is *The Sweet Second Summer of Kitty Malone* (McClelland & Stewart). MICHAEL CORR, whose *In the Standing Grain* was done by Copper Canyon, is working on a PhD in ethnobotany at the University of Washington in Seattle. RICHARD CURREY practices medicine in Santa Fe; Applewood Press (Cambridge, Mass.) published *Crossing Over*. DAVID DAWSON is a Canadian presently living in Seattle, whose book of poems, *Ceremonial*, was published by Coach House. PAUL DE BARROS lives in Seattle, where he writes a jazz column for *The Weekly*; his story comes from a collection titled "The Day After They Shot the Bear." CHRIS DEWDNEY's new book, *Alter Sublime*, is due from Coach House; the Figures Press (Berkeley) published *Spring Trances in the Control Emerald Night*. PAUL DRESMAN edits *Crawl Out Your Window* from San Diego. BARBARA EINZIG has published Russian translations in a number of little magazines as well as two books of her own writing, *Disappearing Work* (prose) from Figures Press, and *Color* (poems), Membrane Press (Milwaukee). NORMAN FISCHER is a zen priest living at Tassajara Zen Monastery in California. GLORIA FRYM is contributing editor to the *San Francisco Review of Books* and has published *Impossible Affection* (poems and prose) with Christopher Books, and *Second Stories* (interviews with women artists), Chronicle Books. BARRY GIFFORD, of Berkeley, is the author of *Landscape With Traveler* (Dutton) and has completed "The Neighborhood of Baseball," a semi-autobiographical novel. ARTIE GOLD, whose recent book of poems, *Before Romantic Words* comes from Vehicle Press, lives in Montreal. JOHN HARRIS edits *Repository* and *Repository* books from Prince George, B.C. where he also teaches. LIZ HAY writes and interviews for CBC's Sunday Morning Show in Toronto. LYN HEJINIAN's *Writing Is An Aid To Memory* was published by The Figures; Lyn does Tuumba Books from Berkeley. BILL HERRON lives in Oakland and his novella, "The Couvade Notebook" recently appeared as issue #7 of *Salthouse*, while his poems (*American Peasant & Rituals of Our Time*) are available from Carolina Wren Press (Chapel Hill, NC). GLADYS HINDMARCH lives & teaches in Vancouver where she continues to write the "Boat Stories"; Coach House published her *Peter Stories* and New Star Books *A Birth Account*. GREG HOLLINGSHEAD teaches at the University of Alberta in

Contributors Notes continued on page 198.

peri, round; hodus, way

Gk. περίοδοσ peri-odos,  
a going round, circuit,  
complete sentence.

