Bern Porter International: Volume 6 Number 1 (January 1, 2002)

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Recommended Citation
Porter, Bern; Holtz, Sheila; and Bernstein, Natasha, "Bern Porter International: Volume 6 Number 1 (January 1, 2002)" (2002). Newsletters. 40.
http://digitalcommons.colby.edu/porter_newsletters/40
diverging threads originating from a common point
By Lee Clark Zumpe

five in the morning

she quits her bed,
she fingers the remote,
she rests her head against the door,
washes her face,
blood her nose,
squeezes keys between numb fingers,
flushes the toilet;
checks her voicemail;
coughs as she takes another drag.
breakfast on the table –
dog whimpering for food . . .
eggs toast cereal juice.
neighbor’s television too loud;
ham sandwich lunch;
whisky bottle hits the wall.
high heels under the coffee table,
she passes out on the sofa.
she taps his shoulder
shadows mocking her;
she spits on his picture
she dreams of that long drive
she spits on his picture
gently
spitefully
despondently
his smile like the dawn.
sick of window-gazing.
reaching the clinic early,
headlights on the pavement,
headlights through the blinds:
remembering the headlights.
dropping him at school.
one more late night meeting.
trying to beat the protestors,
she kisses his forehead -
she ignores his shrewd inventions,
thankful for every moment
she dreams of that long drive
she passes out on the sofa.
trying to keep their resolve . . .
declaring her independence
trying to do the right thing.
scattered fragments of a lost discourse found in the bottom.
crimson tides wash away the mistakes which guided the razors onto such perfect skin.
torn away from reality and shown the in depth world where all is lost found by guided razors, torn onto such perfect flesh.....

BeAuTy
Ravished
By times contempt Rupturing
The feelings For the dead Princess,
Covered in Scars
Layed down On the shattered Heart
How can I Resolve
When the Problem is Still under My feet?
Need to bring It above me And kill the mistake
Make it All go away,
And let the night Carry her To me
With or Without life
I still can Taste her Beauty.....

Commercial suicide
Taking off to nowhere
No exact destination
Just a payment in full
No exaggeration

Going into it whole
Making sure to die
You said it would be yours
And you never told a lie

Now we are confused
Wishing it was a dream
But you replayed it With every last scream

Now that you have made
Thousands of tears fall
You shocked the hearts And the souls of all

As the rubble of life
Lays knee deep in here
The world watches in terror
As we watch in fear

Flying toward your end
And concluding your plan
You made your mark in history
And left us all dried with tears in the sand

Forever your mystery unfolds
And never a weighed anguish
The fact that it never happened Was everyones last wish

Now crimson and concrete
Fall from the sky above
But you cannot defeat us This nation built on love

BeAuTy
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By times contempt Rupturing
The feelings For the dead Princess,
Covered in Scars
Layed down On the shattered Heart
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When the Problem is Still under My feet?
Need to bring It above me And kill the mistake
Make it All go away,
And let the night Carry her To me
With or Without life
I still can Taste her Beauty.....

Slumber

warning
It all go away
Into a swirl
Of nothing, But a vague relapse

Sinning inside
Wishing for a bitter Desire to soothe
My hunger and my rage Hoping to pass
Onto the next plane

Playing off
What it was that
I held inside to myself
Biting the skin of time And letting it all flow out

Hoping for a last
Embrace in dream,
Where only I can rule,
No watchers to limit me
Just eternal night and A scent of crimson.

AnGeLiStlc
Time stands still
For a single Lonely
Diseased maggot-
Making every Bone and Fragment
Disappear Underneath a cry
Of lost hope And decayed triumph Thrown into chaos Of disaster brought
By the choice word Of reality Behold the pillar Of your broken self The one who flies
On wings of red

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HUNGRY AND JOBLESS

"Our members," said John Turchiano, 'have never been in this position before.'

"Mr. Turchiano is a spokesman for the Hotel and Restaurant Workers union in New York City. On Monday four tractor-trailer trucks from the group fed the children pulled up outside the union's health center in Elmhurst, Queens. Nearly 500 union members and their families lined up for canned goods, baby food, toothpaste and other items that might be helpful for families suddenly thrown into an economic crisis. Worried expressions were the norm. Some of the union members wept.

"Even as they boldly confront each daunting task, New Yorkers are struggling with two particularly debilitating kinds of fear. The first is the continuing terror associated with the attack on the World Trade Center and the anthrax attacks that have followed...."

"The second type of fear is linked to the growing economic insecurity that is spreading in hideous waves across the entire city. New Yorkers by the hundreds of thousands are either out of work or are saddled with the realistic expectation that they will soon be out of work."

Mr. Turchiano said nearly 4,500 members of his union had been laid off, and 1,000 others are working reduced hours. He said nearly all the layoffs were directly or indirectly related to the trade center attack.

"We are only beginning to glimpse the economic toll.

An enormous number of low-wage workers, many without health or unemployment benefits, have been caught in the downdraft. In the worst cases, families that until recently were thriving, if not highly paid, participants in a remarkably high-flying economy are finding themselves confronted by the horrifying paralyzing hunger and imminent eviction from their home.

"I think an awful lot of people are underestimating the extent of the disaster in New York City. All income groups are affected, but in the days and weeks and years to come the impact on the working classes and the poor is likely to be horrific.

"There are no guidebooks available on the best way to bring a city back from the combination of emotional and economic devastation."


During welfare reform lawmakers cut $26 billion from the federal food stamp program, six billion of which has now been restored. Today more than 23 million people rely on food pantries and soup kitchens for their survival.

NY Times, Nov. 18, 2001

"With the public's attention riveted to the sad stories of the dead and the heroism of the rescuers, some workers fear that their plights will be ignored. "No one wants to hear our stories," said Asmat M. Ali, a former captain at Windows on the World.

"About a busboy or the dishwasher making $250 a week and raising three kids in an apartment in the Bronx or Brooklyn. But 80 percent of the people who worked in the Trade Center fell in that category."

submitted by

CAROLYN CHUTE

2nd MAINE MILITIA
P.O. BOX 100
PARSONSFIELD, MAINE 04047
NO PHONE/NO FAX/NO PAVED ROAD
The querrying of innocents
The quibbling of facts
The quintupling of births
The quitting of scenes
The quoting of doom

"Q" from "The Last Acts of Saint Fuckyou," by Bern Porter
Collage by Sheila Holtz
KATHA POLLITT

Pennies in the Hat

A fate would have it, the very first holiday card to show up in my mailbox was from the Freedom From Religion Foundation, of which I am a devoted member and fan. It carried the witty and timely message, "Reason's Greetings." Now more than ever! Just think of the damage religious mania (combined, as it tends to be, with nationalism and patriarchy) has wrought around the globe this year, the first of the new millennium—the World Trade Center attack, the Taliban, suicide bombers in Israel versus yet more settlements on the West Bank.

And that's not even mentioning our own home-grown fanatics, like the recently apprehended fugitive Clayton Lee Waagner, who threatened to murder forty-two abortion clinic workers and who is the main suspect in some 550 anthrax-hoax letters to clinics, or the mainstreaming of conservative religious views, as in the explosion of abstinence-only sex education and theologically motivated restrictions on stem-cell research.

I've never been one for the hundred-dollar Christmas promoted by Bill McKibben—gee, thanks for the socks! and is that genuine New York City tap water in that cleverly decorated old Thunderbird bottle? Too depressing. Norah Vincent, the right-wing columnist, took McKibben to task in Salon a few years ago for advocating holiday frugality: Why, the whole economy would collapse, she argued, if Americans didn't get out there and buy buy buy. This year everyone from George W. Bush on down is urging us to shop till we drop, or the terrorists will have won. But you can please both Bill and Norah, enjoy the contrasting pleasures of spending and self-denial, do good and still get that holiday buzz from standing in long lines in a too-hot coat while carrying too much in the bird bottle?

With Christian fundamentalist churches on Jihad against reproductive freedom for women, don't forget The National Network of Abortion Funds (c/o CLPP, Hampshire College, Amherst MA 01002 www.nnaf.org), an umbrella organization of state and local funds that finance abortions for poor women. Help from the NNAF can mean the difference between sickness and health, unemployment and college, staying in an abusive relationship or starting a new life—or even life and death.

And remember Patricia Hussey and Barbara Ferra, the two Sisters of Notre Dame who resigned from their order after the Vatican came down hard on them for signing an ad in 1984 affirming that Catholics had many different positions on abortion? They're alive and well and living in Charleston, West Virginia, where they've been running the ecumenically based Covenant House (1109 Quarry Street, Charleston, WV 25301 www.wvcovenanthouse.org), which helps people with AIDS, the homeless and the poor and works for public school reform and other progressive campaigns in Appalachia.

Finally, the World Trade Center tragedy has fallen particularly hard on the service workers and undocumented immigrants who toiled in the towers: They or their survivors have gotten little or nothing from the millions collected by the World Trade Center Relief Fund and the Red Cross. Thanks to welfare reform, which bars even legal immigrants from most federal safety-net programs, non-citizen mothers now suddenly sole heads of families find themselves ineligible for many essential benefits. To help now-jobless workers from Windows on the World and the families of those who perished there, you can make a tax-deductible donation to the HERE NY Assistance Fund (Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012 www.helpreviewrestaurantworkers.org).

Checkbook running on empty? If you have e-mail, you can sign yourself and friends up with Progressive Secretary.org and finally keep that New Year's resolution to stay in touch with your Congressperson. Founder Jim Harris and crew research and produce dozens of e-mails each month on issues from Arctic drilling to racial profiling. If you approve the contents, they'll send them to the appropriate authority in your name. There is no easier way to make your opinion known—one cynic of my acquaintance compared it to spinning a prayer wheel. Hey, right-wingers out there?—you e-mail progressives many times over, and look at the way the country's going—maybe they're on to something.

It was a terrible year, but it's almost over. Reason's greetings!
The Fishermen In Their Bones - The Philippines

From a stone bridge I watch old men fish
the river from rowboats as gray as the mist.
Hunched with work and age,
the lean arms of the fishermen are slow as if
bone and muscle might otherwise turn to ash.

Yesterday the bloated body of a boy surfaced,
where women wash clothes along the shore,
downstream from where little girls urinate in the murky water.

Two policemen dragged the boy out with tattered fishing nets.
He lay on the ink-black mud for hours,
a death stare fixed on passing clouds.
The fishermen pay him little heed.
They have seen it all, they say.

They have been here forever,
The fishermen in their bones,
like ghosts of the river mist.

For those who still believe that the world is flat,
I now know why.
The river is as ancient as it was five hundred years ago.
It will still be as ancient five hundred years from now.

By afternoon the rowboats float by the boy,
one after another,
fishing lines taut in the water.
A fisherman pulled in a line only to unhook a shoe.
With barely a glance he noted the boy was barefoot.
So he tossed the shoe beside his body.
Then drifted on down the river.

- John Christopher Weil

As per your request, my most recent credits include Mind In Motion, The Black Hammock Review, Poetry Forum & Short Stories, Pablo Lennis, Ceterus Paribus, Green’s Magazine, California State Poetry Quarterly, San Diego Poet’s Press, twice in Sunflower Dreams and twice in Computer Edge. I am currently working on a novel and have the interest of an agent.

I am relatively new to the fiction and poetry market, however I have been publishing editorials, political essays (critical as you can get) and other works for a decade.
whatever happened in new york
By Lee Clark Zumpe

august pounced on us like a stalking panther
lean and insatiate
narcotic eyes teasing us into confidence
until

sure, there were moments rustling through our past
like rats in the attic
little earthquakes
minor storms

before you got off the plane
I knew it was over
you strained to keep the illusion sovereign
for a few difficult days
until

whatever happened in new york
festered in your belly
grievances and sour gripes
you were ready for a new menu

it slipped out in the form of a whisper
laced with suitable tears

you always feigned emotion

by october you were gone.

I began writing poetry and prose in high school. Presently, I am pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree in English at the University of South Florida in Tampa. To date, my work has appeared in dozens of publications in the United States, Canada, and Australia.

my most recent publications include the following poems:

“Candlemas” in Penny Dreadful
“Wavering” in Little Brown Poetry
“Luna” in The Florida Villager
“Making Love” Ibbetson St. Press

I also have work set to appear this year in Alembic, Möbius, Nerve Cowboy and Nomad’s Choir.

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