11-2001

Bern Porter International: Volume 5 Number 20 (October 15, 2001)

Bern Porter
Sheila Holtz
Natasha Bernstein

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/porter_newsletters

Part of the American Literature Commons, Art Practice Commons, and the Poetry Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/porter_newsletters/50

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Bern Porter Collection of Contemporary Letters at Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Newsletters by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Colby. For more information, please contact mfkelly@colby.edu.
A Review by Sheila Holtz

This handsome, bound and sleeved volume produced by Bern's Publisher, Roger Jackson, is quite the collector's item for hardcore Porter affixionados. Retailing at $195.00 (the colorful marbelized endpapers alone are worth it!!) -- all copies of this signed, 38-copy limited edition were spoken for before press time.

It is the first of a planned quadriology, the second, third, and fourth titles being, Some More; More Yet; and Only Me. So, for those BPI readers who wish to get in on the ground floor, now is the time to contact the publisher!

So Far blends the visual and the verbal in a pleasant mix. Of special interest to me are the color photographs of Bern's "Bottle Poems," as well as his more familiar two-dimensional imagistic "visual poems." Appearing here in a new format is Bern's very familiar text "The Last Act[s of Saint Fuckyou]" as well as some earlier, more obscure writings, such as "Goin' Nowhere." Included with Bern's original writings are also reprints of press articles about Bern, by various authors and collected over a number of years.

A flamboyant introduction by Dr. James Decker ("What Bern Porter Does and Why It Is Important") sets the tone for a rollicking adventure into Berndom. Original illustrations by Gene King are also noteworthy.

Cudos and congratulations to author[s] and publisher alike!
I have not committed sin
I have not committed robbery with violence
I have not stolen
I have not slain men and women
I have not stolen grain
I have not purloined offerings
I have not touched the property of God
I have not carried away food
I have not uttered curses
I have not lain with men
All ye
Hail me

There is a mystical side to Porter too, and that may be why he is able to maintain his independence and eccentricity in the prim Victorian streets for Belfast, a typical small New England town where "talk" can ruin a person's life. Porter had been talked about, often negatively, but he doesn't seem to care.

"I'm a physicist. We don't use the term God, we use the term originating force. I'm very much in touch with the originating force," says Porter. "One thing you want to bear in mind about Maine: The Europeans came here around the year 1000, and when they arrived, they found that people had been here for 12,000 to 15,000 years. There is an energy of habitation, energy left by people who lived here. One reason Belfast is highly exciting is due to this energy of habitation."

Porter doesn't lack a thing in his native state. "Maine has everything. Just everything. Always has. All one has to do is relax to the vibration, the radiation of what I call the Maine condition."

Kabla ya kununua bidhaa za kutoka nchi za nje, hakikisha ni bidhaa gani wao hununua.

If it's worth doing — It's worth doing for money.

Journey

Treadway, bespattered
Red, yellow and brown
Lead me.

Press me forward
Along the path
Stone strewn
Bush hung
Silent
Wet

I've far to go.

by Bern Porter

So near the day
So far the song
Self-erasing I become me.

This here is it
I am the one
What follows is next.
Here is a chapter of my existence, during the Vietminh war, I went hiding in the country 1945-46 with grandpa Trang, he stay at his 4th wife compound, bore him a little girl (French rally or a traitor he thought the French crushed the Viet s within a month).

Grandpa died, they immolate and roast a buffalo for the rites and festivity, at this event I getting drunk with rice alcohol, passed out slumber for 20 hours under the goyavier tree!

Days later, his young wife she about 30, and I went looking for relative s I about 10 or 11 years old walked bare feet 30 miles non stop because as soon stop walking I felt asleep standing!

The geese are known for keeping the house quack alarms if stranger is near so is the water buffalo like a guard dog. If a unknown person come in the courtyard the buffalo with his somber air he will leave his hay stack come near check you out ... you better move your tuche quick out of the range because his enormous horns could label your leg with a bruise size of a pomegranate!

War destroys
The human spirit
Shatter life
Fuel hate
Feed vengeance
What a waste
Lives pulverized
By evil force
In man

Woman is free
No need to be oppressed
And wear veil
Is her now
To conduct the world
Daily in peace,
Calm and
Felicity.

Nguyen Ducmanh
a.k.a. "DUKE"

united gentle
create road ahead
without despair
regret
care
reach beyond sorrow
to the rainbow morning
enter silence
harvest the garden

magnetic poem by
sheilaholtz
spetember 29, 2001
Letter to a Friend:

......the truth is, as I have stated, since the bombings Sept. 11, my own petty concerns, desires for love and affection, my own personal happiness or sadness, my mental obsessions and addictions, emotional and psychological dramas and melodramas, and my self-absorbed indulgences seem completely insignificant. They not only SEEM insignificant, they ARE insignificant. With each passing day I am more sure of the absolute truth of this: nothing will ever be CASUAL again. And this is as it should be.

......as for myself, I am in the process of divesting myself of all my unpublished manuscripts, including all 82 journal volumes (diaries) dating back to their beginning in 1967, when I was fourteen years old; this process is akin to what Carlos Castaneda, in his famous books about his Toltec teacher, Don Juan Matus, has called "erasing one's personal history."

My journals, poems and other writings comprise my primary form of ego identification in the material world, and my most inflated sense of doership. They are my largest obstacle to real spiritual progress. I am not sure if I can really do this. I am starting, mentally at least, to let go. It will probably be a slow and arduous process --as difficult or more difficult than trying to get clear of my sex addiction.

I pray to a higher power for clarification on my vocation, and for detachment from physical and material concerns of an egotistical and self-serving nature. I know these sound like Big Ideas -- possibly even grandiose, possibly even a little nuts. But I don't care. I really don't care. I have nothing to protect (to paraphrase Bob Dylan, in his song, "My Back Pages.") ... least of all, how I am perceived by others.

......so this letter probably sounds like a sermon, and I probably sound like someone on my high horse, someone who is "arrogant." Well, as I previously said, I do not care how I am perceived, by you, or by anyone else.
The Laws of Karma operate in this world, in this Universe. That is now, has always been, and will always be, the only form of "INFINITE JUSTICE." that exists. The Laws of Karma operate on the subtle realm as well as the physical realm. Everyone is born and dies, according to his or her destiny, which is determined by past actions.

"As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

"What goes around, comes around."

If a people or nation or an individual TAKES and TAKES and TAKES and TAKES, sooner or later, they or it or he or she WILL get what is coming to them.

How many innocent civilians died in
HIROSHIMA?
NAGASAKI?
DRESDEN?
HANOI? etc, etc.?

How many jungles have been defoliated?
How many rainforests have been burned?
How many indigenous populations have been displaced?
How much oil and coal has been ripped from the earth?
How many indigenous people have been murdered by GENOCIDE (a deliberate and thought-out plan for their extermination, in order to possess their LAND? (This land is your land, this land is my land"?)

This country was built on the backs of
AFRICAN SLAVES
CHILD LABOR
WOMEN, working in sweatshops or in the home for no pay, no benefits and no rights.
DEAD INDIANS etc. etc.

THIS is what has made America "great". THIS is what America is fighting to "defend." George Bush Senior said, in 1992, at the Brazil Global Conference on the Environment, "The American way of life is not up for negotion." The holy, non-negotiable American Way of life, George, has just gone too FAR. The World Trade Towers were built on the backs of all those dead exploited people, and so is your Holy Non-Negotiable American Way of Life, George. So is Capitalism
and so is Consumerism.

Those dead exploited people are rising up from their tombs seeking INFINITE JUSTICE. And they are going to get it, George, not you. They are getting it. as we speak.

......previously, in these pages, I have stated that I had been silent, even in my own community, but lately, I have been speaking very loudly, and my mind has been crystal clear. One of these days, sooner or later, probably sooner, someone who disagrees with me will shoot me, or beat me up, or somehow try to shut me up.

And I do not care.

I do not fucking care.

I am prepared to die any time now.

"I have nothing to protect."

Natasha Bernstein
October 1, 2001
Letters to the Editor  
Bern Porter International  
22 Salmon Rd.  
Belfast ME 04915

Conflict doesn't begin when you strike me, but if I hit back. And today I also hear we are engaged in a "new type of war."

If so, let us fight that war to win. Let bombers swoop across an impoverished Afghanistan, with its ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-clothed citizens, to carpet bomb everyone with our newest weapons:

Let us bomb Afghanistan with unending parcels of what nutritious foods they'd normally eat, were it available.

Bomb Afghanistan with bedding against a bitter winter, with cloth and clothing similar to their old garments.

Bomb Afghanistan with soap, solar cookers, small generators, water purifiers, and lamps against the dark.

Bomb Afghanistan with baby garments, balls, dark-eyed dolls, and similar toys.

Bomb Afghanistan with parcels of medical supplies, and instructions in their language for the few literate citizens.

Bomb Afghanistan with crates of high-quality live sheep, goats, rabbits, and chickens.

Bomb Afghanistan with stout tents against winter’s blasts.

Finally, bomb Afghanistan with pictured packets of flower and ethnic vegetable seeds, providing everyone on earth the promise of spring.

bin Laden is not locatable? Carpet bomb Afghanistan appropriately. He and his tentacles will be found.

Sincerely,

Louise Shannon
Jesus was a revolutionary. Otherwise, they never would have bothered to nail him up, because he wouldn’t have been dangerous to Caesar. Being spiritual is not to meditate until you blow the top of your brain out, and it’s not to go off and take that one big trip on the mountaintop by yourself. It is to realize, once you know we’re all One, that your energy has to be at the service of mankind. Every one of those spiritual teachers who ever made that crossing—Saint Francis, Mohammed, Jesus, Buddha, Krishna—came back and said, “Hey! We’re all One!”

We all know that now. We’ve been knowing that for a while. What do you do if you know that we’re all One? How do you live?

There is a necessity for revolution. A revolution is not about hurting people; a revolution is about making changes. The best way to do that is to live your life right—massively—and do it clean and good and obviously out in front for people to look at. And if you don’t violate the people’s trust, the people will back you up.

What’s truly revolutionary is growing your own food instead of supporting the profit system. It’s revolutionary to deliver your own babies instead of paying a thousand dollars a head to profit-oriented hospitals and doctors. It’s revolutionary to get the knowledge out of college and make it so you don’t have to sell your soul to learn something. It’s revolutionary to learn how to fix stuff, rather than junk it or take it in to be replaced.