

ALMOST ISLAND

Contributors: Winter 2012

a.rawlings is an animal, mineral, plant, person, place, or thing. As a poet, arts educator, and interdisciplinarian, rawlings has presented and/or published work in North America, Europe, and Australia. Her first book, *Wide slumber for lepidopterists* (Coach House Books, 2006), received an Alcuin Award for Design and was nominated for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award; the book is being translated into French. Google Wikipedia and PennSound for further rawlings goodness.

Amanda Berenguer [1921-2010] is one of the key figures of the Generación del '45, Uruguay's midcentury poetic Renaissance. Her poetry production has been gathered into many volumes. Most of them are reunited in *La constelación del navío* (2002). *La cuidadora del fuego*, her last collection, was published in 2010. She is widely regarded as one of Uruguay's greatest poets.

Kent Johnson is editor (with Roberto Echavarren) of *Hotel Lautreamont: Contemporary Poetry from Uruguay*, from Shearsman Books.

Born in Topeka, Kansas, in 1979, **Ben Lerner** is the author of the novel, *Leaving the Atocha Station* (Coffee House, 2011), and three books of poetry: *The Lichtenberg Figures* (2004), *Angle of Yaw* (2006), and *Mean Free Path* (2010), all published by Copper Canyon Press. He has been a finalist for the National Book Award in poetry and the Northern California Book Award, a Fulbright Scholar in Spain, and a Howard Foundation Fellow. In 2011 he became the first American to win the Preis der Stadt Münster für Internationale Poesie for the German translation of *The Lichtenberg Figures*. His art and literary criticism has appeared widely and he edits poetry for *Critical Quarterly*. He teaches in the writing program at Brooklyn College.

Bernard Bate is the author of *Tamil Oratory and the Dravidian Aesthetic: Democratic Practice in South India* (OUP India, 2011). He is currently working on a genealogy of vernacular political oratory and the formation of the modern Tamil world.

Bhanu Kapil is the author of four books of prose/poetry, most recently *Humanimal* [Kelsey Street Press, 2009] and *Schizophrene* (Nighboat Books, 2011). She writes a daily blog during the school year: Was Jack Kerouac a Punjabi? [A Day in the Life of a Naropa University Writing Professor.] Next year, she will present her research on hallucination, narrative and touch at the World Conference for Cross-Cultural Psychiatry in London.

Claudio Magris, Germanist and critic, was born in Trieste, Italy, in 1939. He graduated from the University of Turin, where he went on to teach German Language and Literature from 1970 to 1978. He is currently a professor at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy at the University of Trieste. He writes for the *Corriere della Sera* and for various other Italian daily papers and magazines. His numerous studies have helped promote an awareness in Italy of mid-European culture and of the literature of the Habsburg myth. A translator of Ibsen, Kleist and Schnitzler, his numerous published writings include *Il mito asburgico nella letteratura austriaca moderna* (1963), *Wilhelm Heine* (1968), *Lontano da dove*, *Joseph Roth e la tradizione ebraico-orientale* (1971), *Dietro le parole* (1978), *Itaca e oltre* (1982), *Trieste. Un'identità di frontiera (together with Angelo Ara, 1982)*, *L'anello di Clarisse* (1984), *Illazioni su una sciabola* (1984), *Danubio* (1986), *Stadelmann* (1988), *Un altro mare* (1991), *Microcosmi* (1997), which won the Strega Prize in 1998, *La Mostra* (2001) and *Alla cieca* (2005).

Richard Dixon was born in Coventry, England, in 1956. After a career as a London barrister, he moved to Italy to work as a writer and translator. His translation of Umberto Eco's latest novel *The Prague Cemetery* will be published in November 2011.

The **Cybermohalla Ensemble** is Azra Tabassum, Shamsher Ali, Lakhmi Kohli, Love Anand, Neelofar, Babli Rai, Nasreen, Jaanu Nagar, Rabiya Quraishy, Rakesh Khairalia. The Ensemble has emerged from within the project called "Cybermohalla", a network of

dispersed labs for experimentation and exploration among young people in different neighbourhoods of the city, that was initiated by Ankur: Society for Alternatives in Education, Delhi and Sarai-CSDS, Delhi in the year 2001. Over the years, the ensemble has produced a very wide range of materials, practices, works and structures. Their work has circulated and been shown in online journals, radio broadcasts, publications, neighbourhood gatherings, contemporary and new media art exhibitions.

Cybermohalla Ensemble's publications include *Bahurupiya Shehr* (Rajkamal, Delhi 2007), *Trickster City* (Penguin India, 2010), [No Apologies for the Interruption](#). They have been published in "The rest of now", Companion book to Manifesta7, co-curated by Raqs Media Collective (Companion Book ed Rana Dasgupta), 2008, "City Improbable", a collection of writings about Delhi, ed Khushwant Singh, Penguin-India, 2010, and also in the inaugural issue of *Almost Island*.

David Herd writes poetry and criticism. His poetry includes '*Rote-Through*', (a book-length collaboration with Simon Smith) and *All Just* (forthcoming from Carcanet in 2012). Recent essays on the politics of movement have appeared in *Parallax* and *PN Review*. He is Professor of Modern Literature at the University of Kent, where he directs the Centre for Modern Poetry.

John McAuliffe was born in 1973 and grew up in Listowel, Co Kerry and now lives in Manchester. He won the RTE Poet of the Future award in 2000 and received a major Arts Council Bursary for first book *A Better Life*, which was shortlisted for a Forward Prize in 2002; *Next Door* was published in 2007 and The Gallery Press will shortly publish his third collection, *Of All Places*, which has received a PBS Recommendation for Autumn 2011. He teaches poetry at the Centre for New Writing at the University of Manchester.

Michael Scharf is the author of *For Kid Rock/Total Freedom*. A book of critical writing, *The Res Poetica*, is forthcoming. He lives in New York and Shillong.

Nikhil Govind has a doctoral degree in south asian literature at the University of California at Berkeley. His research focuses on the figure of the revolutionary in the mid century Hindi

novel. His poems have appeared in *Chandrabhaga* and his Haibuns and Haikus have appeared in [Pirene's Fountain](#) . A video of him reading poems (with A.B. Spellman) as part of UC Berkeley's Holloway Series in Poetry can be found [here](#). He is currently teaching in the Manipal Center for Philosophy and the Humanities.

Ravi Shankar's most recent book of poems is [Deepening Groove](#). He is founding editor and Executive Director of Drunken Boat, one of the world's oldest electronic journals of the arts and Chairman of the Connecticut Young Writers Trust. He has published or edited seven books or chapbooks of poetry and along with Tina Chang and Natalie Handal, he edited W.W. Norton's "Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from Asia, the Middle East & Beyond," called "a beautiful achievement for world literature" by Nobel Laureate Nadine Gordimer. He has won a Pushcart Prize, a Connecticut Commission on the Arts grant, appeared in the New York Times and the Chronicle of Higher Education, and has performed his work around the world, including on NPR and on the BBC. He currently teaches at CCSU and the first international MFA Program at City University of Hong Kong.

Sonam Kachru is a student of concepts in history, whether such concepts are brought into view through arguments offered in dry-as-dust philosophical analysis, or arguments metrically made with all the resources of narrative. He is particularly interested in the history of philosophy and literature available in Sanskrit which he pursues awake to the trials of thought elsewhere but without an interest in comparison alone. He is currently a PhD student in the Philosophy of Religions Program at the University of Chicago; his dissertation essays a reconstruction of the arguments for an elegant, if sinuous criterion for the nature of mind put forward by the fifth century philosopher from Peshawar, Vasubandhu. This being a work in the history of metaphysics and philosophy of mind narrowly construed, Kachru also hopes to complete a slightly unrulier work, *Pleasure in a Time of Leaves*, an essay on Āśvaghōṣa's poetics, soon. When he is not beating such bushes as thrive in Sanskrit or its neighboring languages from pre-modern history, Kachru translates from Kashmiri poetry of the twentieth century. Some poems from the ongoing book-length project may be seen [here](#).

Stephen Burt is Professor of English at Harvard. His books include *The Art of the Sonnet*, with David Mikics; *Close Calls With Nonsense: Reading New Poetry*; and *Parallel Play*. A new book of poems, *Belmont*, will appear from Graywolf Press in 2013.

Xi Chuan 西川 (penname of Liu Jun 刘军) was born in Jiangsu in 1963 but grew up in Beijing, where he still lives. One of contemporary China's most celebrated poets, having won the Lu Xun Prize for Literature (2001) and the ZhuangZhongwen Prize (2003), he is also one of its most hyphenated *littérateurs*—teacher-essayist-translator-editor-poet—and has been described by American writer Eliot Weinberger as a “polymath, equally at home discussing the latest American poetry or Shang Dynasty numismatics.” A graduate of the English dept. of Beijing University, where his thesis was on Ezra Pound's Chinese translations, he is currently employed at the Central Academy for Fine Arts in Beijing, where he was hired as an English instructor, then taught Western literature in Chinese translation, and now teaches pre-modern Chinese literature. He has taught at New York University (2007) and University of Victoria (2009), and is currently translating the work of Gary Snyder into Chinese.

Lucas Klein – a former radio DJ and union organizer – is a writer, translator, and editor of CipherJournal.com. His translations, essays, and poems have appeared at Two Lines, Jacket, and Drunken Boat, and he has regularly reviewed books for Rain Taxi and other venues. A graduate of Middlebury College (BA) and Yale University (PhD), he is Assistant Professor in the dept. of Chinese, Translation & Linguistics at City University of Hong Kong. *Endure*, a small collection of Bei Dao 北島 poems translated with Clayton Eshleman, is now out from Black Widow Press, and his translations of Xi Chuan 西川 are forthcoming from New Directions. He is also at work translating Tang dynasty poet Li Shangyin 李商隱.

Han Yu 韓愈 (768 - 824) was a mid-Tang man of letters and a forefather of the Neo-Confucianism of the Song Dynasty (960 - 1279). A believer in a strong central government and the supremacy of Chinese tradition, he saw moral rectitude embodied through a direct and unadorned literary style and led the Ancient Prose Movement with his friend Liu Zongyuan (773 - 819). He passed the Imperial Examination in 792 (his fourth try), was promoted to a post in the central government in 802, but exiled in 819 for remonstrating the emperor for his acceptance of Buddhism (he was reinstated shortly before he died). In

addition to “The Original Way,” among his most famous prose pieces are “*Treatise on the Buddha’s Finger Bone*” and his “*Address to the Crocodiles*”; he is also known for writing a thoroughly unpoetic poetry.