

On The Doris

Tamas

Panitz

&

Billie

Chernicoff

editors

AMONG THE NEIGHBORS 14

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AMONG THE NEIGHBORS

a pamphlet series for the study of Little Magazines
The Poetry Collection of the University Libraries, University at
Buffalo

Edric Mesmer, series editor esmesmer@buffalo.edu

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The Doris, a Note from the Editors

The Doris was cofounded by editors Tamas Panitz and Billie Chernicoff, and published four times a year in Hudson, New York. The first issue appeared in the summer of 2015, the 18th and final issue in the spring of 2020. During the lifespan of the magazine, back issues were posted on its website,* where new texts and images were also published from time to time. Copies of *The Doris* are held in the archives of the library at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

* The website archiving *The Doris* is no longer online.

Dear friends,

The Doris will be participating in a pamphlet series, Among the Neighbors, issued by University at Buffalo's Poetry Collection and edited by poet and cataloger Edric Mesmer. The series has so far focused on publications that are no longer in operation; *The Doris* would obviously be an exception to that, and we're honored to be included.

The pamphlet will be a response to a Call for Work, which includes in its rubric:

- case studies of single magazines;
- publishing networks in and among little magazines;
- studies of the materiality of small press publications;
- contexts of association and sociability upon the pages of magazines; and,
- bibliographies, including bibliographies of poets or groups of poets or "schools" among little magazines.

We invite you to contribute a statement for the pamphlet, since *The Doris* is our mutual creation. We're asking for your oral history, bibliography, scholarly interpretation, commentary, analysis, and insight.

You might respond to any one or all of the following questions:

What is "going on" in *The Doris*?

How does *The Doris* relate to your work, or your work to *The Doris*?

Do you think the community created by *The Doris* is engaged in something coherent? How or what? Or if not, why not?

What is the immediate or historical significance of *The Doris*, in your experience?

[†] At the writing of this letter to contributors, *The Doris* was still publishing.

...or anything at all you wish to write.

Please send your contributions to Billie or Tamas, or to thedorismagazine@gmail.com, by November 1st.

Thank you for your work over the last (almost) four years and 15 issues, and in advance for your work to come, and thank you for taking the time to consider *The Doris* and respond.

Yours,

Tamas and Billie

[September 2019]

Past and Present Contributors

Alana Siegel

Alex Hampshire

André Breton/Philippe Soupault

Anne Gorrick

Ashley Mayne

Ben Tripp

Billie Chernicoff

Brenda Coultas

Brian Wood

Cameron Seglias

Celia Bland

Charles Stein

Charlotte Mandell

Clayton Eshleman

Colin Harrington

David Abel

David Rich

David Sater

Dorota Czerner

Edric Mesmer

Eileen Tabios

Eléna Rivera

Elizabeth Robinson

Emily Izsak

Fanny Howe

Garrett Caples

George Quasha

Gerrit Lansing

Gracie Leavitt

Inga Convngham

Jennifer Firestone

Jerome Rothenberg

Joe Hall

Joel Newberger

John Clarke

Kelsev Miller

Kevin Opstedal

Kimberly Lyons

Kristin Prevallet

Krystal Languell

Lila Dunlap

Louise Smith

Lynn Behrend

Mackenzie Kristofco

Maggie Zavgren

Michael Boughn

Michael Ives

Michael Peters

Mitch Highfill

Mitch Manning

Pam Rehm

Patrick Smith

Peter Lamborn Wilson

Peter O'Leary

Pierre Joris

Robert Kelly

Robert Podgursky

Roger Van Voorhees

Sarah Larsen

Shannon Tharpe

Sherry Williams

Sophie Strand

Stephen Williams

Steve Kushner

Svlvia Gorelick

Tamas Panitz

Thomas Meyer

Vvt Bakaitis

Whit Griffin

TAMAS PANITZ

On the History of *The Doris*

The History of a current and ongoing publication could only be given in its own terms.

Any asserted lineage would be a fleeting association and thus a false provenance, revealing as it might be; *The Doris* is full of such momentary lineages and such is the business of a poetry publication.

The history of this publication must be sought from within the community of contributors, who would give voice to what is (for me anyway) a not quite "conscious" change occurring within the vitality of the group.

Toward what end does the gestalt of a publication evolve? What clear but mysterious radiance welcomes our writing into its context?

The individuals involved with this publication each supply in their own work this radiant vitality that the publication absorbs and then radically exudes.

Contributor as creator, the urge.

The history of this magazine is a point of entry along its mirror surface, beyond the identities of the authors or the circumstances of publication, if you believe there is a beyond, and if you believe in such a thing as history.

Belief is the issue, because today History is a mystical practice—visionary and re-visionary—if it is to happen at all, and justify its existence from the production of mere data.

History and Poetry both.

After 15 issues, I now believe this magazine arose spontaneously by the will and group effort of its contributors past and future, with a catalogue instead of a hierarchy: a landscape through which we rise and rise.

I say so!

And in so saying, reenact the originary creative work that produced *The Doris* in the first place. Now.

BILLIE CHERNICOFF

DORA

1. Enstasis / Extasis

St Patrick's Church, across Bridge Street from my house in Catskill, New York, is vacant, derelict; the rectory is condemned. The ornate First Baptist Church on Main Street has had the steeple removed and is being used as a fitness center. The town is considering "repurposing" our Carnegie Library, a neoclassical limestone temple of reading, built in 1901. The old Irish and the old Italian firehouses are unoccupied, the votaries of fire gone elsewhere. I don't know how many local paths to how many ancient glades are overtaken, hidden by Ailanthus.

Yet, we must assemble. We must confess our sins and our faith, dance and kiss the holy books, draw near to the fire, encourage each other. The sacred places where we gather—where we respond to the Mystery, partake of it, recognize it in each other—those places vanish into language, into voice, where we build them anew. Places of devotion, places of listening.

For me, *The Doris* is just such a Place, and the work of its contributors is sacramental. When we published Tom Meyer's *matter* in the second issue, I thought, *we've held our first wedding*. Since then there've been others—and pagan rites, last rites, secular devotions with the clarity of spring water. As I hear it, *The Doris* is a Muezzin's call to prayer—and the conjoined murmurs, wails, shouts of response. A swaying minyan, a splash from the mikvah, vespers. A firehouse, a glade, a Place into which the unsayable is spoken and from which it issues.

Influence

The work published in *The Doris* is the new writing I swoon for, the stuff that makes me want to write back, and I welcome its persuasions and interferences. Freed from imagining that my work is my own, I rejoice in the magazine's texts and can only hope their various formal,

intellectual, emotional and spiritual suavities, liberties, heresies, conand destructions rub off on me, stain me with their light.

I feel I can say "we," a comradeship, even a consanguinity. We are working on something, at least unconsciously, if the weird synchronicity that reveals itself in the magazine is any evidence—the texts beguile, nudge, prod, push each other, catch each other's diseases, heal, amend, further and contradict each other. Yet nothing sounds like anything else.

As for the influence of *The Doris* in the world, there can't be more than a hundred people who read it in print—that's the number we print—or a hundred and some of their friends, maybe, and who knows how many read the archived issues on line—not thousands. Sometimes, I think the work of *The Doris* makes no difference whatsoever to the world. But what I really think is that such work is the only thing between us and chaos, us and disaster, that the work makes its way through the hermetic labyrinth of the (world) unconscious, making our tattered language meaningful again, and us hopeful.

PETER LAMBORN WILSON

dear Tames History ?? Today - Friday In 13th ! -I'm wondering how much history remains for the Anthrobscene Simians in which To publish Presy. I admire vs for our Existentialist Absundity, I guess. DORIS is the prize in the crockerjack. love + peace

WHIT GRIFFIN

I believe that an autonomous, intelligent, creative energy, which I call the Living Poem, works through those with whom it allies. The role of the poet is to help further the evolution of human consciousness, to carry forth the gnosis. For me, poetry is an outer manifestation of an inner unfolding. *The Doris* represents a coming-together of poets whose work engages with the Mystery.

It is important to me that *Doris* exists on paper, is tangible, can be held. Screens are psychic magnets that pull us out into an externality. Reading text on plant-based paper is an act of interiority; my consciousness mingling with / collaborating with the spirit of the work to create new universes / new dimensions of possibility. A new vision for a new reality. Expanded mindspaces. It is important to me to have texts that are not dependent upon the digital for their survival. Materiality / the physical universe is the visible manifestation of a nonmaterial Consciousness, of which all matter is infused / imbued. Over countless lifetimes, in a myriad of forms, our souls return to the physical universe so that we can learn the lessons that we take with us after death. Learning, and experiencing / sharing love are what we are here for. Poetry is one of the "tools" that exists for the purpose of transmitting this larger awareness. I am so happy that *The Doris* exists to facilitate this transmission.

KEVIN OPSTEDAL

After the Gold Rush

for Tamas Panitz

The sky its azure reticence (azure residence?)

between rainstorms

The Dark Rose in her bed of thorns pinwheels, springs, pendulum ghost shapes & in the space between molecules a tractor gracefully rusting

as I said to the lady behind the counter at the gas station mini-mart

Doris

a name that means "gift" in Greek

in mythology a "sea nymph"

geographically a mountainous region north of

the Gulf of Corinth home to the Dorians

I said "Descriptions should always be misleading"

"Whatever" she said

In French "d'or" means "gold"

JOEL NEWBERGER

A magazine? A journal? A gift? I do not know what *The Doris* is. Unlike publications of the century that is now twenty years behind us—the century by the end of which many of the poets we hear again and again in these pages had not lived a single decade on earth—*The Doris* has no obvious purpose, or polemical stance. It does not propound a special or total view of poetry. It does not assert the relation of this art to culture or society, nor does it seem to even pertain to such relation. Of course, a poetics, and perhaps a politics, may be inferred, but it is *The Doris*'s silence about itself, its refusal of self-definition, that seems to be its peculiar strength, which, issue after issue, sustains and refreshes it.

And its weakness. But this weakness of being speechless about the ultimate purpose and immediate context of poetry, when the poets of the last century and the one prior incessantly defined their activity—and defended it as "connate to the origin of man"—is the *astheneia* of our time as to origins and ends. Still, it is to be unfaithful to the mountaintop source of poetry to affirm that our writing is made perfect, or brought to its *telos*, in weakness. And if there is a coherence to all these issues before me, it is the strength, *not the weakness*, of language, not the failure but the triumph and the consummation of words.

Strength? It must be twofold.

The mystery. Where do all these voices come from? What conducive intelligence or desire gathers them here? What have they come here for?

The writing. I do not mean the affluence of song that may be found here, nor the individual texts that I still mind. I mean that, here, writing is writing. Dependent on no institution, nor, which is more important, on the convening ideal of a movement, there is, simply, writing, and we read it. What ensues? That cannot be determined. It is like finding oneself, as it does happen, face to face with a mask of

Silenos, utterly unprepared, a Gaugin, or Guanyin with eyes in her palms. That may be to say too much. What I am trying to convey is that, in these pages, writing either claims my attention, or it does not And the writers themselves seem to go forth into the word also unprepared. It is writing, not for the thought or the world, but certainly *for writing* and, I would say, also for us, whoever we are.

That is, it may be the strength and weakness of *The Doris*, and of writing in our readerless time, to have only one responsibility, task, calling, sacred office, desire: to replenish language, and, more exactly, to keep writing possible on earth.

LILA DUNLAP

Re The Doris

I like *The Doris* Magazine because it prints work that I am excited to read, and because it prints my work, which its readers are, apparently, excited to read. For me *The Doris* is existentially very simple; I've never before considered its purpose, which I hold to be self-evident. Dare I try to phrase it? Perhaps, to publish/<u>print</u> the best new work (primarily American poetry) out there, and considers what corresponds with what, a collage of cosmoi. If you've read it, you know. If you know, you know. That sounds exclusive, but it's not. *The Doris* is tremendously in-clusive. There may be nothing, perhaps, that is off-limits, qua-itself. This possibility I will leave open.

For me *The Doris* is an ever-expanding participatory audience. Not a chorus, but a reading. For every issue select members of the audience present. In form it is structured, determined, qualities which help everyone relax (for this is poetry). It is set. And it is a set.

I might also propose that *The Doris sets* as a verb. It sets itself up. It sets you up (as a sting). It sets the table. It sets and then it comes up again.

Finally, to be said of its size: *The Doris* is a publication large in face: $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$. At first I found this irritating. It is difficult to put into bags and take places. Now it is something I appreciate; it feels appropriate, as it is a collection of manuscripts, work to be <u>considered</u>, as one reads a MS. A MS for your consideration. Thank you, *Doris*, for considering my work.

ROBERT KELLY

About *The Doris*,

looking at my table, issue 16 of *The Doris*. Sixteen issues, sixteen gatherings in a few years of poetry now. They publish a lot of poets I know, and other poets I don't know from Adam's housecat, as we say in Kentucky. Poets I love and even some poets I don't like—that's the proof of a strong magazine: strong work fostering strong readings, strong opinions.

And they're all on paper, sixteen issues, printed on generous pages, in type sizes and styles that suit the poem in question. Paper! Ink! In a time that relishes the quickness and cheapness of digital, easy come and maybe easy go. Who can say? But these copies lie around my house (and yours too, I hope), showing work being done right now by poets young and older, known and neophyte. And one of the special things that *The Doris* has let happen is this: poets experimenting in ways off their usual trajectories—that alone is a sign of how they, we, feel about *The Doris*: a place where what is written matters.

But sixteen issues! I come back to that again, sixteen in a very few years. I think back of the great little magazines of our glory days when poetry took on a sudden life of relevance and potency in America, the days of Yugen, Neon, Trobar, The Floating Bear, J, Hip Pocket Poems, Poems from the Floating World—none of them reached that many issues, so I find myself a little awed by the flow and continuity of this radical journal, radical not in shrillness but in its attention, careful, to the root, the language.

KIMBERLY LYONS

The Doris

There are so many aspects of The Doris to adore (Late Latin "to worship," literally "to call to," from ad "to" (see ad-) + orare "speak formally, pray"). I looked that up on etymonline.com just to offer you some sparkle of old Latin and to enjoy the rhyme. One aspect in particular is that the look, feel and read of The Doris reminds me of the lit mags dear to my heart from early days in New York, say the 1980s forward. Its crisp black and white format brings to mind the look of *United Artists* and *Adventures in Poetry* but *The Doris*, I daresay, is heartier, given advances in printing. The boldness and consistently identifiable look of the cover type and design declares itself with a surprising graphic temerity. The feel of The Doris is clean and substantive. Such a great contrast with air, glass and pixel although The Doris has a selective online component as well and this is modern and appropriate. In regards to shape and look and the sense of a community, it shares something with another favorite, the downriver, longtime Live Mag. When I have a new issue of The Doris in hand, I have the same feeling that I had when fresh issues of such magazines as Sulfur and Talisman and Vanitas and New American Poetry were obtained. That is, I must sit down and read this in its entirety this very moment feeling. I have had some transcendent wonderful reads in The Doris. In particular Charlotte Mandell's translations from classic and unknown French poetries which elevate, excite, enthrall. It was her translation that renewed Magnetic Fields for me. An international and diachronic encounter which is rather a surprise in a magazine edited by poets who reside in the small town of Catskill, N.Y. and whom I am not sure leave the town very often except occasionally to make field trips to Hungary. There are reliably fresh poems from a constellation: that is poetry by Lynn Behrendt, Billie Chernicoff, Lila Dunlap, Robert Kelly, Thomas Meyer, Joel Newberger, Tamas Panitz, George Quasha, Elizabeth Robinson, Sylvia Gorelick, Charles Stein and Peter Lamborn Wilson, among others. All poets I wish to follow and whose work is not found everywhere every day. Yet, there are delightful surprises such as poems by Fanny Howe in a recent

issue. *The Doris*, so far at any rate, is not where you turn for a highly eclectic, full spectrum of today's poetries. It is a concentrated, deep drink of water from a particular source. Each issue builds on the previous and seems to "improve" and what I mean by that is each issue is even more calibrated and surprising than the last. I have been fortunate to have poems in *The Doris* and experienced upon turning the page and seeing them there, a little jolt of anxious pleasure, of course, but also a sense of objectified distance that is rather rare; that is these poems are now among their own company, dressed in a large-ish, emphatic serif type that brings the language forward and away from me into a world. As it should be.

EDRIC MESMER

"This was 'Summer/2016": Finding *The Doris* in Buffalo

What I found in *The Doris* was an existent neighborhood, full of welcome; even so, when Billie and Tamas approached me about a case study of a still-publishing magazine, I was hesitant—would there be enough "critical distance" to assess a current publication?

I have always wanted the scope of the series to be broad, so I wrote to them: "your proposal would shift things to include 'time capsules' from current little magazines...and I find myself asking: why not?"

What follows is my own diagnostic assessment of the *The Doris*—as reader, as librarian, as series editor of Among the Neighbors, as well as as contributor.

As reader:

I can't answer from what impetus, concern, or emergency *The Doris* came into being—only that the first issue I saw was number 5, on the "free" rack at Talking Leaves, Buffalo's last-standing independent retail bookstore. (That was at the Main Street shop, now closed; the Elmwood location remains open.) With its contents worn on its covers, I quickly found Michael Boughn's excerpt from *Hermetic Divagations*—

that thicket of fidelity to previous spines of exquisite recollection, which she requires for adequate

reception of angel's names [...]

And Pam Rehm.

And Clayton Eshleman.

And—delight!—a list of names new to this reader.

As librarian:

Issue 5 stood out to me on that Talking Leaves rack with its 11" x 17" papers, folded, stapled; plain cover, titled in black; large-fonted numbering and contributors' names also printed in black. This was "Summer/2016." I like attention to a field-of-page, one equal to that of a notebook or screen a writer may have first composed across (though there's no way of knowing that). I'd had a similar concern of page when I'd started *Yellow Field* (Buffalo: Buffalo Ochre Papers, 2010-2018), a magazine which has since (I think) ceased. As for an ethos, consider this aspect of the magazine's distribution: *The Doris* can be subscribed to, but copies are sent regularly to independent booksellers to be put on their shelves for free.

Not long after finding issue 5, I asked my colleagues Nora Renda and MaryEllen Donathen (acquisitions librarians for the University Buffalo's Poetry Collection) to subscribe to *The Doris* and request back issues. Now, with issues 1 through 15 (Summer/2015-2019)—and counting—in front of me, I see that the format remains consistent, if the design changed ever so slightly after number 1. The first issue is printed on a heavier paper stock (also white), with an illustration on front cover; no other cover bears such. The issue numbering on 1 is smaller, at lower-left rather than middle-left; and the contributors' names are floated at the center of the cover, rather than centered at bottom as they appear on all subsequent covers.

The Doris also eschews biographies.

As series editor:

Who are the denizens of this neighborhood? At the core of this periodical you'll find coeditors Billie Chernicoff and Tamas Panitz, as well as poet Robert Kelly and translator Charlotte Mandell. (Kelly and Mandell are married.) These four appear in nearly every issue, with the editors frequently contributing reviews as well. Mandell's translation work includes a serialization of André Breton and Philippe Soupault's *Les Champs magnétiques*. Other frequent contributors include Lila Dunlap, Clayton Eshleman, Whit Griffin, Thomas Meyer, Joel Newberger, Charles Stein, and Peter Lamborn Wilson; also, with

slightly less frequency, Sylvia Gorelick, Kimberly Lyons, David Rich, and Roger Van Voorhees. Whether or not they consider themselves a coterie, I've no idea. Though if this neighborhood has a geographic origin, I would mark it somewhere in the vicinity of Bard College, where Robert Kelly is a professor of literature; both coeditors are graduates of Bard. You get a sense from *The Doris* that the editors have created a comfy fireside for one another to converse around.

Also of note: an association with Lunar Chandelier Collective, a press that many contributors to *The Doris* have subsequently published with (Chernicoff, Dunlap, Griffin, Kelly, Meyer, Newberger, Panitz, and Stein, as well as contributors Vyt Bakaitis, Lynn Behrendt, Mitch Highfill, and Gerrit Lansing). I first read excerpts from Chernicoff's "from Bronze" in number 5, including this stanza—

Kalyx, husk from kalyptein, conceal or from kylix, drinking cup. Plural, calyces? God too is plural. El, elohim, not god of gods not children of god but god, herselves.

Later revised in her full-length work, *Bronze* (Hudson, N.Y.: Lunar Chandelier Collective, 2018), as part of section 43—

Plural, calyces? God too is plural. El, elohim, not god of gods not children of god. God, herselves. Such affiliations and evidence show revelatory changes and choices.

As contributor:

Tamas and Billie have asked, as a past contributor, that I consider what's going on in *The Doris*, how it relates to my work, and if I think there's a community created by it—and is its engagement coherent...

For community, I cannot say—though it will be interesting to hear what the regular contributors to *The Doris* have to say on that! Its engagement, for me, started from the bookrack, urged on by its sleek (hear: minimalist; cost-affordable) design, and by way of its carefully selected poetics; and from the generosity of its coeditors, with whom I swapped back issues of *Yellow Field*. For issue 7 (2015), the editors took up three poems from a sequence I'd written entitled "From a Duchy." It had been a long while since I'd sent anything out, finding my time divided more and more between the workday and having moved homes, with little leftover for writing—let alone for the administrative-ish needs of sending out poems. "From a Duchy" was one sequence of a few I'd tried to stay focused on. The editors also took a few poems from "Fawning" for *Scroll*, the magazine's blog (a sequence later published by Portable Press @ Yo-Yo Labs, 2018).

So, to the editors' question: "What is the immediate or historical significance of *The Doris*, in your experience?" There's a place I stopped by in Hudson, where the neighbors welcome their guests to join in the warmth of the conversation they've been sharing...

Their conversation is that hearth.

TO WELCOME A POETRY MAGAZINE

for "The Doris"

Clear water of celebration I pour out in your honor—

We have carved a word into the wall—

as long as this stone prison stands,

we

shall have spoken.

Robert Kelly 9 August 2015‡

[‡] This poem was originally published on the website for *The Doris*.

AMONG THE NEIGHBORS SERIES

- 1 Poetry in the Making: A Bibliography of Publications by Graduate Students in the Poetics Program, University at Buffalo, 1991-2016 by James Maynard
- 2 In Search of Blew: An Eventual Index of *Blewointment Magazine*, 1963-1977 by Gregory Betts
- 3 TISH Another "Sense of Things" by Derek Beaulieu
- 4 Skanky Possum Press: A (Personal) Genealogy by Dale Smith
- 5 A Commentary on *El Corno Emplumado/The Plumed Horn* by Sergio Mondragón translated with an additional commentary by Margaret Randall
- A Bibliography of John Bennett's Vagabond Press, 1966-2005
 by Christopher Harter
- 7 Migrating Ears: Kris Hemensley's *The Merri Creek, Or,*Nero and H/EAR, with some brief comments on the earlier
 publications Our Glass, Earth Ship, and The Ear in a Wheatfield
 by Tim Wright
- 8 Editing *O.ARS*, 1981-1993 by Donald Wellman
- 9 Cultural Shape-Shifters: *Cartonera* Publishers by Ksenija Bilbija
- Teaching the Little Magazine by Michael Leong

AMONG THE NEIGHBORS SERIES

- 11 Washington, DC Poetry Mass Transit and Folio Books Reading Series by Tina Darragh, with an appendix by Edric Mesmer
- 12 Reading Piglets: *Westerly* Magazine, metadata, and the play of digital access to literary publication by Catherine Noske
- To Breath Poetry Among the Neighbors: Two Essays on *Anerca*, a Journal of Experimental Writing (1985-1990) by Adeena Karasick & Kedrick James
- 14 On *The Doris* edited by Tamas Panitz & Billie Chernicoff

This consciousness within her uncurled itself upon the rollers of objective experience printing impressions vaguely and variedly upon Ova in place of the more formulate education coming naturally to the units of a national instigation

-Mina Loy from "Ova, Among the Neighbors"

This pamphlet series seeks non-academic and academic contributions of 10-30 pages on the subject of little magazines, generally or on specific magazines, published from 1940 onward.

We invite subjects along the lines of:

- case studies of a single little magazine;
- publishing networks in and among little magazines;
- studies of the materiality of small press publications;
- contexts of association and sociability upon the pages of magazines; and,
- bibliographies, including bibliographies of poets or groups of poets or "schools" among little magazines.

Please send proposals to the series editor at esmesmer@buffalo.edu