



Poet  
Sculpture

AiOP  
2014

*Free*



# Poet Sculpture: Free

Edited By Samuel Jablon

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To be handed out for free on 14th Street New York, NY

BOWERY POETRY BOOKS

*New York*

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Art in Odd Places

Freight+Volume Gallery



## POET SCULPTURE

The Poet Sculpture is a performance based sculpture that is performed by poets. It was conceived and created by artist Samuel Jablon.

The installation is a moveable platform, made out of different sized crates. Each individual crate is designed for a departed writer. Performers interact with Julia de Burgos, Jayne Cortez, ee cummings, Allen Ginsberg, Barbara Guest, Langston Hughes, Tuli Kupferberg, Taylor Mead, Frank O'Hara, and Pedro Pietri.

The formation and words of poets define the sculpture. The poet sculpture is in flux with poets physically interacting with the structure creating and manipulating a visual poem/structure while performing their work.

Performers have included: Vito Acconci, Bob Holman, Paolo Javier, Vincent Katz, David Grubbs, Moira Williams, Bushra Rehman, Amy King, Marissa Perel, Megan DiBello, Emanuel Xavier, Steve Dalachinsky, Michael Carter, Nikhil Melnechuk, Yuko Otomo, Michael Taylor, Isak Berbic, Maria Mirabal, Poets in Unexpected Places, and Samuel Jablon.

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# Art in Odd Places 2014: FREE

## FREE SOIL

We equal?  
Side by side  
ways,  
progressively penetrating  
a mortar  
of bondage  
and extermination,  
entrenched  
into home  
sub conscious ness.

Tenets force-fed  
through subjugating  
charities.

Stand set  
versus sticky  
illegitimacy.

Controls come clean!

Not one will.  
pending...  
ultimatum.

– Ed Woodham

*Open. Autonomy. Gift. Independent. Unoccupied.  
Commons. Wild. Nothing. Everything.*

The 1970's *Warriors*-era New York City lives in the imaginations of many as the kind of town it used to be. That gritty, wild, at times dangerous place was also a site of agency and possibility. The New York City of present day is much more polished, and encumbered by big money than recent decades; a statement not meaning to invoke nostalgia for the way things used to be, but as a simple point of fact. New York City *has* changed. Chain retailers (and their shoppers), real estate developers (and their high-paying tenants), and cultural tourists (and their transient economy) now rule the landscape. Between private corporations and city-mandated public space regulations, our every move is watched, recorded, policed, and normalized. Patti Smith said it. David Byrne said it. New York City is not a place for artists.

Or is it?

Sure, money has moved in. But have the people stopped responding? Has creativity simply dried up? Or, like the city itself, has it just *changed*? Shape-shifted and transgressed the usual models into more inter-disciplinary, life-specific, and self-directed contexts?

We think so.

Fourteenth Street in Manhattan is at a crucial nexus of this issue. As a kind of informal divider between the “uptown” and “downtown” worlds, 14th Street spans the widest part of the Manhattan island, and has been an important site for trade, light industry, radical activism, transportation, housing, and culture. It is an artery through which crowds of New Yorkers flow everyday to work, play, live, dissent, shop, parade, and create. It has also undergone tremendous change and gentrification, with high-end retail and big box stores dotting the street to accommodate a shift toward an increasingly privatized sidewalk experience.

Art in Odd Places has integrated into this space to startle New Yorkers from their usual paths, and consider their environment in wholly unique and singular moments of creative intervention. Following its decade-long history of artful protest in New York City, Art in Odd Places 2014: FREE presents sixty-four projects that actively engage and respond to the history and heterogeneity of 14th Street. AiOP: FREE asks us to consider what it means to be autonomous in this milieu, with all of its surrounding conditions. Creating a test site for the possibilities and limitations of public space, AiOP: FREE prompts artists to highlight civil liberties, forms of exchange, and personal and collective freedoms in forming a critical idea of what our urban commons looks like, and how it functions.

The festival’s ethos has always been one of sharing, openness, and accessibility; produced without a budget, outside of permitting regulations, and taken up completely on the initiative of the organizers and participating artists. AiOP is collaborative, horizontal, and constantly in motion. AiOP is FREE.

– Juliana Driever and Dylan Gauthier  
*Curators, Art in Odd Places 2014: FREE*



# Hala Alyan

Seventeen:

You are placed between dirty fingers  
and torched.

Thirteen:

First kiss, awkward brackish lips  
but you wrote sonnets anyway,  
Smoked cigarettes,  
you practiced those tiny commas  
of light.

Sixteen:

You emerged queen-like from a Dunkin  
Donuts bathroom, transformed into black lace  
and fishhook earrings.

Eighteen:

This was the year you learned of needles,  
of safekeeping.

The year a group of men sang to you  
in a language that was not their own,  
their voices funneling you  
down a dark street,  
at the end of which a boy waited,  
furious, a fist in each pocket—  
circle.

He called you circle and whore  
and chandelier girl.

He asked you why you kept glass  
dangling from your skin like ornaments and, so,

nineteen:

you spat him out.  
The olive pit in the martini,  
the worm in the tequila,  
you left the trinkets and drained the rest.  
What an engine your  
body became, what a specimen.  
Churning smoke and liquor, tightrope walking on the  
crumb trail path of blackout,  
of inking out hours, yes,  
nineteen,  
the year of fury and fear,  
the year of not one sunrise—  
but don't forget

fifteen:  
fifteen like fire, alter-ego girl, finding  
geometric proof in the shadows  
where prep school boys wait  
with kiss like bacteria and  
hands like razor wire.  
Fifteen of the pavements  
and the torn dress,  
of the alleyway.  
Fifteen of the moon  
that watched everything and never opened  
her throat to say no.

And twenty:  
twenty was for the damage.  
And twenty-one,  
was for the bars, for the black-eyed lovely  
who rang his r's. Twenty-one was for the racetracks,

for the clocks, for eyes clenched tight  
as men cut your hair,  
as a soldier used your back to describe the art  
of border-crossing.  
You said nothing when they said nothing  
of how you went stone for full minutes,  
how you sank into blankness like bathwater.

Twenty-two, three, four,  
the New Years fall around you like hail,  
like nuclear confetti,  
you bruise like mystery.

And twenty-five:  
Was the textbook lesson that  
romance is not in schoolgirl diaries, it is not  
in churches or in pianos or in vineyards.  
It is in the lovers that you have watched make  
the most precious graves,  
it is in the loyalty that keeps you unloved.

Seventeen:  
You are held between dirty fingers  
and torched.  
You are circle,  
a comma of light.  
Chandelier girl,  
you are chandelier girl.  
You will bring ceilings down with you  
when you crash.



# Kenneth Goldsmith

A17 FROM DAY

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2000 LK

A17

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ZIPPERS! COOL FABRICS!

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D. Sale 12.99 Reg. 14.99

Relaxed-fit cotton denim jeans.

Boys' sizes 8-14, including  
9 and 11, regular or slim.

Preschool, husky and student  
sizes also available.

E. Sale 19.99 Reg. 26.99

Nylon microfiber cargo pants.

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Loose-fit cotton denim jeans.

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9 and 11, regular or slim.

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SALE 14.99 JEANS

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SALE 19.99

PANTS

M

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logo shirt. Boys' sizes S-XL.

H Sale 19.99 Reg. 24.99.

Cotton utility jeans. Boys' sizes  
8-20, regular or slim.

J 7.99. Screenprint

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Boys' sizes 8-14, regular  
or slim. Preschool and husky  
sizes also available

L 7.99. Screenprint

cotton tee. Boys' sizes S-XL

M Sale 19.9 Reg. 26.99.

Nylon microfiber cargo pants.

Boys' sizes 8-18

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# Bob Holman

## 14 STREET

It can happen anywhere  
But not on 14th

All the way home and back  
Loopity loopity thru the variegated scoopity  
Forever Alley

You can walk all day, hustle the gristle, light up the night  
Get belch'd out from Con Ed Generating Plant  
Skirt Alphabet City and The Low East  
A True Downtowner's never been above it

On to Union Square and the bulk of it  
Nowheresville linearity with a return ticket to You Never Left  
Bumper to bumper cars, blaring busses, papaya stand  
Totality banality—incarceration of flickering stares

The only street that's got its own subway, so wherever you are  
You're just a few steps from the Underworld  
From the Mighty D to the Meat Market

Essential delineator  
Edge of the edgy  
Culmination of solitude

Ravages of whatever poem you thought to ascend  
Thoroughly burrowing throwaway thoroughfare

A Hymn to the Hernia! an Ode to the Inauspicious!  
14th! the Belt of the Borough  
The steady slow drip of NYC's IV



# Samuel Jablon

14TH STREET, UNION SQUARE

cardboard sign reads: please help I have  
no family, no job, and I am cold, hungry  
and alone  
empty coffee cup crumpled and upright  
dented  
marked  
clear thumbprint  
union square platform



## Patricia Spears Jones

*Si se termina el amarilol, con que vamos a hacer el pan?*

If the color yellow runs out, with what will we make bread?  
Why the color yellow—Gold always

Gold, the color of \_\_\_\_\_ Money, cowardice, sun.  
The United States blue  
And what of Paraguay, Peru—white: the color of abandonment?  
Oranges, tamarind

The colors of un-baptized monsters sleeping in deep water, the Missis-  
sippi, the Amazon  
Awaiting the groaning dreams and drowning deaths of millions from  
Africa, from Europe  
Come on ships full up with diamonds, gold, rum and salt.

Come to make the New World greener, greater  
Bold, but

This world was green and glorious  
Bold and treacherous, the old ways diseased; the new ways, a mystery.

Blue and unfathomable water shelters poisonous snakes and musical  
frogs,  
Birds of paradise, and on the hieratic steps of the Mayan temples,  
skulls, the color of tourist beaches.

While priests led rituals made in anticipation of the new sword,  
what they got was the gun, gun powder  
phosphorous, fire  
yellow the color of sweet bread, tortillas.

How did these conquerors know what would take to make this New  
World?

Not even You, dear Poet.

Witness the Struggle to make bread with colors of this contested earth,  
With the colors given at birth.

The economists carefully calculate the worth of producing corn  
North and South of the equator  
But their formulas motion indifference to poverty's rainbow.

You knew who pays for the packaged goods, the soft white bread.  
You knew it would be the cutoff hands of peasants and poets.



# Vincent Katz

## ODE TO ENDS

I wanted to be more like him  
Now that I am more like him, he likes more

To be like him is to like life as it is  
Rather than always to want more

Or not to like but to see it  
And to make what is best in it better

To realize there is no such thing as the best  
Only other and other interesting examples

But there is a light that is winter's  
Empty branches, blue sky above apartment tower

There are ends to things, one  
Must live according to those ends



## Amy King

### PRIVATE EXPLANATION IN A PUBLIC LIBRARY

There is a senselessness that drives us;  
we wish to call it mad with meaning.  
To give it purpose. To conjure an air of importance.  
We are the American map splotch after all.  
In that sense, I'm getting younger  
and selling my young.  
I kill one wasp everyday at the threshold of the real.  
I am profit on your plate.  
Lay my body down for you.  
Read books and speak words online.  
Even Nigerians hang up on me now.  
I'm listening to everyone & offering only myself to blame.  
Their urgency is not mine,  
their ignorance is not divine intervention.  
We are not the pawns of God's goodness.  
We are his evil spawn and indifference too.  
I am urgent today with your death date  
banging at my back door.  
I want to be an urgency.  
What is the primary scene of big data anyway?  
What is Sunday if not  
a place to catch the revolution in real time online?  
Are my nerves the body electronic yet?  
Are you ready to research  
Heidegger's rupture from the post-Socratic?  
In the meantime, hang up the phone.  
You're disturbing the clue that is everyone in books.



# Sophie Malleret

## THE GUY DOWNSTAIRS

There is a man  
Down there  
He walks the streets at night  
Rapidly  
Vividly  
Constantly

Like a mad man  
His gaze on the ground  
Staring at his feet  
Shoulders slightly hunched  
Although he's straightened up over the years  
Arms barely flapping  
Elbows bent  
Tightly Close to his ribs/sides

A paper cup in his right hand  
Ringing/singing like a hundred bells  
He roams the neighbourhood  
Always  
Like a ghost or a moonlight/midnight/star truck mayor  
Polite  
In permanent conversation with himself  
Arguing back and forth with the wind the trees

A new neighbour has moved in  
A new neighbour whose job it is  
To hold the door at the post office  
At the deli  
Greeting you with a smile  
More like a grin

Begging for a dime or two

Good shoes

Clean face

Tidy clothes

Trimmed beard

Pretty well groomed

If you ask me

Considering

He's made a corner for himself

Inside the enclave of a used to be Japanese restaurant

Inside the fancy trendy wealthy West Village

A little place of paradise

Staffed with wet mattresses blankets pillows

Plastic bags and the usual card board and boxes

A little alcove

Soon enough

He will have others

Others like him

Join him

Make noise

Pick a fight

Domestic violence beer bottles and crooked burnt spoons

Be menacing for the surroundings /roundabouts

And there will be no more

Of his ground floor apartment

On the street where we live



# Christine Malvasi

## GRADING THE DREAM JOURNALS

Sophie, the peacock tattoo on your brother's back.  
It matters that it's a peacock. I can't shake the NBC logo  
or my fourth-grade trip to the Cape May Zoo.  
Have you considered each feather?  
In college, we looked at slides of hot air balloons  
with panels like feathers sewn together.  
We traced the pathway from object to retina to a visual cortex  
that seemed unnecessarily large.  
Your brother sees things others don't.  
Does he know that? It's an awful gift.  
At least when you have no one to tug  
what's tangling in your belly, get you to talk.  
My mother didn't understand either.  
The zoo depressed me. The brown fields.  
A giraffe and a few flamingos. There was a goat.  
There is so little in this world.  
Tell your brother I would cry for no reason,  
my spirit picking up too many signals... But tell him—  
Tell him about his extravagant tail,  
that there's nothing like it—  
Nothing like the fan of those eyes



# Nikhil Melnechuk

SMOOTH ~ *for Melissa*

Smooth moments in my frantic life—  
I sway to jazz saxophone,  
A flute of red wine spills from my loose grip  
Sea water body temperature, moonlight silk  
Fresh fish flakes in my mouth  
Love words match love touch...

How to let such moments calm me,  
In the midst of worry, in throes of self-doubt,  
How to be cool again, breathe blues,  
Forget me and do you right now.



# Lynn Melnick

## GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN

Inside that church in Hollywood  
you don't want to believe what I am about to tell you

when you say I never speak when I say:  
some boys take a beautiful girl

and slam her against the wall.

Hey, buddy, I didn't fight my way back  
from all these bruises and breaks

to listen to you talk about my tits  
under string-lights. I don't even know you.

Sure, I do the stupidest things when I'm miles from here.  
It is all that freedom I don't recognize.

But I have nothing to say to you  
when you point out how far you'd let me stumble

in all the ways you listed down through the netting in the plastic trees  
meant to protect the plastic trees

outside that church in Hollywood  
where all the famous fuck-ups emerge from the basement

into a mob of cigarettes clouding up the already murky sky.  
No, not like stars, buddy.

More like the end of the world.



## Andrea Millares

OR MAYBE IT'S JUST A POT OF DIRT

WHEN I THINK OF ALL THE DECISIONS  
I'VE MADE I'M REMINDED OF  
HOW DEPRESSING IT IS TO LOOK AT A POT  
OF DIRT  
WITH NO SIGN OF A SPROUT  
IN SIGHT.  
BUT THEN I THINK: (!!!)  
WHAT IF WHAT IF WHAT IF THE SEEDS  
BURIED IN THE SOIL  
ARE JUST TAKING THEIR TIME  
TO STRETCH THEIR LEGS?  
THEIR ALARMS JUST  
SNOOZED A FEW MORE TIMES  
THAN THEY INTENDED?  
AS LONG AS THERE IS STILL A SUN  
AND RAINCLOUDS  
THIS POT OF DIRT SHOULD BE FREE  
OF MY JUDGMENT.



# Najee Omar

## BULLET TO MAN

we made violent love

me pressing into you

for the very first time

piercing your skin

that broke and bled

i aimed for your heart

and i missed

and you cried

and i smiled

through the smoke



# Yuko Otomo

## PROJECTED RADIANCE

a woman sitting  
next to me  
in a crowded rush hour subway train  
is nodding

her hands  
the right clutching the left  
& the left the right  
finger by finger  
rest neatly on her lap

her knees sometimes open  
show an empty gap  
in her life

I look at her hands  
& start screaming  
a colliding scream  
in my silence

with these slightly round hands  
she cuts paper  
she uses a knife to chop fish  
slaps a kid  
rinses her hair  
wipes crumbs off the table

if you believe in stories  
even a petty bandit can be  
notorious



## Joe Pan

### THE JOURNAL

The Journal will be televised. The Journal was instrumental in lobbying Congress for a drabber but cleaner form of post-recreational love (Sugar-O-Not-Thy-Bowl-Nor-Bun-In-Oven-Salt Nondenominational Act of 2024). The Journal is how we knew the trypanites were never seriously substrata; how dinosaur bones were a ruse of our comic Creator's—his beast implants; how the liturgical facts added up; how Joe Miller could be worked into a limerick; & if brought before tribunal, methods to better sheath or blanch our oil-bloodied helmets. The Journal takes a southwesterly path causing rip-currents down through the Carolinas, or at least the one we've interviewed, a grand old dame from Lynchburg, tattoos of the heads of certain Supreme Court Justices rainbowing one scapula, & Reagan on the upper, inner thigh. The Journal is never unintentionally ambiguous. The Journal ups the ante on we used to call "the News." The Journal hosts your favorite hate-speech dinner programming. In times of weakness, The Journal resorts to journalism. The Journal does not forgive. The Journal does not forget. The Journal recognizes the importance of separating out the "true lilies." The Journal accepts snapshots of gas cylinders, nano-armor, radar magnetrons, & rallying minorities in lieu of résumés, embraces eclipses as revelation, sleeps tucked into the south slope of Karl Rove. O to be naturalized in Scandinavia! To be a forgotten specimen no longer commanded to burrow the dark bark of a think tank's convictions, appetites free to explore this armoire of earthly delights! The Journal does not recognize earthly delights, denies having experienced a colorful genital shock & coup de foudre while standing stoically, sweatily before Matisse's *La Musique*, 1939. The Journal scrutinizes the scrutinizers, elephant-stomps the whistle blowers, empties not its pockets of loose change for beggars whose mouths have grown dangerously horizontal from methamphetamines. The Journal reconfigures voting districts & demarcates the violence pockets in your hometown. The Journal canceled its subscription to itself by robo-call. The Journal insists it jumped no shark, screwed no pooch, cheered against no Sec-

retary of State Secretariat around the quarter bend of any final stretch. The Journal has witnessed the frozen screams of Pompeii & questioned the believability of their emotional responses. The Journal has created informational tracts tasting of everlasting gobstoppers, for children “with negative income.” The Journal gives until it hurts someone. The Journal, it should be noted, takes quite seriously matters of social decay & revolution. The Journal has extended the average length of a day but refuses to confide by how much. O but why not quit this job, go back to singing vocals for Savage Bear Lust, an American rock band formed in Greenpoint, Brooklyn in 2006, formerly Socks on Cocks, with a strong psychedelic slant that utilizes fuller sounds with live instruments that include a dyspeptic peacock & murderous accordions? Why sit at this computer typing in the diatribes of an employer known to tap phones, delete pictures of its enemies’ pets, a Corp that would turn state on the State itself for revealing state secrets? I must believe the Journal cares. Here’s our toll-free number: 1-800-TheJournalReallyReallyCares. The Journal entered into the National Historic Registry of Right & Might in 1996. As if you really cared. If moral indignation is jealousy with a halo, as H. G. Wells put it, the Journal is certainly not indignant, & another thing, you barely know the Journal, & yet you talk this way behind its back, lambasting those we seek to protect, as if you’ve never passed out drunk in a park with a prostitute in the hot wet visible ether of July, or found your ignorance encyclopedic & blamed science in the attempted cover-up, with a host of old friends assassinating you with silence, the Empty Empire of Anomie striking back & the Great Buick of Kickbacks gone redly into the star-stung horizon. But fuck that—the Journal isn’t hurt. Whatever. You are a harmless enigma made terrible by your own mad attempt at self-discovery. Let us help. The previous two sentences have been trademarked by the Journal. The Journal is responsible for the following release: “Oberon, a moon of Uranus, was discovered by “William” Herschel Walker during a third-quarter touchdown attempt, Vikings vs Dallas, in which he suffered a revelatory concussion.” The Journal recognizes there is a disagreement as to the accuracy of this statement. The Journal un-

derstands, though, that history is a Hegelian argument, & boring if not engaged, especially at a rapid pace, 24/7, & besides, really, what's the point of plain-Jane truth if it fails to comfort? The Journal does not incite or intercede; the Journal merely entices. The Journal has no regrets. Retractions are the refuge of flip-floppers struck by an over-zealous sense of responsibly adhering to factual evidence. The Journal can almost hear them wheezing as they slip into the historical dark. The Journal records it, & posts its findings alongside images of a teen starlet whose sheer black dress reveals, look closely, a hint of slipped nipple, perked. The Journal admonishes the starlet for her indecency for weeks, highlighting the various imbroglios of friends & family. The Journal hosts the interview of said starlet's tearful apology. The Journal has its causes. O to be a baseball great! Or an Academy Award nominee! To think I could thank a fan for thanking me for being me! Instead I play Settlers of Catan in Java script & edit for TV. The Journal knows how hard it is. The Journal knows you try. The Journal expects nothing less. The Journal expects to find its pundits alarmed, its candy twizzled, its Oxford-educated personalities bumkinified. The Journal is getting tired of being a lone voice in the wolf's wilderness. We can't go on. We must go online. The Journal alludes with the best of them, is a master of illusion. The Journal can name-drop with the worst of them. The Journal has read every book ever, so there. But the Journal is not here to step on you, it's here to lift you up! Encourage you. Console you. Without the Journal, where would you be? Who would you be? Who would you be being with? The Journal knows you. Come here; lay down. Prop up the legs. Let the Journal do the work. This is after all the Journal's job. The Journal is how you know you know what you know, & how you know you're right.



# Marissa Perel

on my birthday I went to a funeral  
    overcome in the chapel with a womblike feeling  
        the sight of the radiant corpse  
the sound of the hollowed out mother's voice  
        recounting her hollowed out memories

is  
it  
we  
who  
are  
abandoned

walking into the apartment in the dark  
    my boots trailed slush across the carpet  
at the bar, we talked of the north node in a natal chart  
    whether celestial bodies can provide maps  
        even to the end

it was the boy's decision  
    not to see this age

the one which I have just turned  
he went by the street name wolf-pack  
I fell asleep in my clothes dreamt of a black wolf rising  
from  
a  
river



# Melissa Studdard

## WHEN YOU DO THAT

It feels like millions of tiny  
harps are playing inside my body  
and all the extinct animals  
that ever were  
are again  
running into you  
inside me  
their hooves and claws  
burning on the unexpected  
asphalt  
their tongues alive  
with the ministry of light



# Michael K Taylor

## NEWTON'S LAW FOR OUR GIRLS

We hid in plane site for days

Standing under the radar of ancient equations  
Men hoped we'd remain too illiterate to understand

Our days divided by seconds  
Studying in small rooms between secret walls  
Bonding hands with other girls

Fractions of human  
Studying physics to empower our wholeness  
Particles gathering with quantum excitement  
Pencils to paper testing our fates

Physics don't exist in every microcosm of our world  
Soon making multiple choices on where bullets would not fly  
Following police who transform from heroes to bad guys

Gravity set in as we heard praise in the name of our brackets  
You could hear the centrifugal force of test papers hit the ground  
And atoms breaking sins of freedom

Protons captive in a cloud where fear is the neutron  
Our atomic weight -250  
When girls fall in a forest do they make a sound?



## Seldon Yuan

### BEHIND THE BRUSH

behind the brush we could not have seen one  
another then was only sky  
we had to leave wondering  
among other things where  
birds came from where birds go to  
camouflaged by our leaving  
thoughts we saw only ourselves  
alone envying stones we were saddened  
by logs as arms cradled down  
back until our branches touched  
by chance there was never chance  
we are trees we have always been together





*With Poems by*

Hala Alyan  
Kenneth Goldsmith  
Bob Holman  
Samuel Jablon  
Patricia Spears Jones  
Vincent Katz  
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