

Cowboy in Caracas: A Talk with Charles Hardy

Charles Hardy is a former Catholic priest who lived for more than 20 years in Venezuela, 8 of which were spent tending and nurturing the poor in a Caracas barrio. He talks about the political, social, and religious situation in Venezuela, as well as his memoir *Cowboy in Caracas*, with James W. Russell, Connecticut State University professor of Sociology and coordinator of Latin American Studies at Eastern Connecticut State University.

JWR: You first went to Venezuela in 1985 in the midst of the wars in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, and after the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador. What impact did Central America and the role of the church in those conflicts have on you?

CH: I went to Guatemala in 1965. I met a priest named Blase Bonpane. We spent time with him while we were in Guatemala and shortly after we left he was thrown out of the country. He was such a peaceful person. That put things in perspective for me. That was how my perspective on what was happening in Latin America began.

Through the years I maintained interest. I followed the coup that overthrew Allende in Chile. And then in 1980 there was the death of Archbishop Romero. Also there was the death of the four churchwomen. I know that it affected me. I know that I

(cont. on p. 3)

Listening to Coltrane

listening to Coltrane, hearing
the original people

who abide us, sometimes
kill us

as always
we are killing them—

he blows through all
the abiding and killing

blows the send-off
we got on leaving the cosmos
the beauty of its harmony
behind us, blows

*there is never any end,
there are always new sounds
to imagine,
new feelings to get at*

squawking
brass, reeds, battered skin
steel wires *there is*

*always the need to keep
purifying
these feelings and sounds*

honking out over
our cosmic exile

the bent strains of the original people
their long shadows riding shotgun
on his wing

to give the best of what we are

—James Scully

From: *Donatello's Version*
ISBN 978-1-931896-31-3 / \$13.95

Curbstone Authors in the Spotlight

In the last couple of months, Curbstone authors continued to receive national and international recognition. We would like to congratulate each author for these outstanding achievements.

Claribel Alegría was awarded *l'Ordre du Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* by the French government. This award is an Order of France, established on May 2, 1957 by the Minister of Culture, and confirmed as part of *l'Ordre National du Mérite* by President Charles de Gaulle in 1963. Its purpose is the recognition of significant contributions to the arts, literature, or the propagation of these fields. Other Curbstone authors who have received this award in the past include Ernesto Cardenal and Sergio Ramírez.

Erik Campbell's *Arguments for Stillness* made the 2007 Book Sense Top 10 List for Poetry. Book Sense is a national marketing campaign on behalf of independent bookstores. It is both a local and national effort to shine a light on the knowledge and diversity of independent booksellers.

E. Ethelbert Miller, author of the poetry collection *How We Sleep on the Nights We Don't Make Love*, is the recipient of the Poets and Writers' 2007 Barnes and Noble Writers for Writers Award. Established in 1996, this award recognizes authors who have given generously to other writers or to the broader literary community.

Green Rice by Lam Thi My Da, translated by Martha Collins and Thuy

(cont. on p. 7)



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From the Publishers' Desk

We are happy to feature on page one the wonderful recognition our authors have received recently. Our authors have been active on the reading circuit, too. Collectively they gave 235 live performances in 2006. Curbstone published 8 titles in 2006, ran a summer poetry series in the Julia de Burgos Park, and provided five 3-day author residencies at Windham High School.

One of the highlights of the year for us was how the poetry program caught fire internally at Windham High through the efforts of two English teachers, Lynn Frazier and Pam Neidig. As a result of the writer-in-residence program, they and their students started a poetry group (largely of minority students) and held readings in the school and throughout the community, including in the Julia de Burgos Park. To see the students' pride in the presentation of their work was truly inspiring. Lynn commented to the *Willimantic Chronicle* that the interest in poetry was first stirred up when Curbstone Press sent over some poets to help motivate her reading class.

We hope you enjoy Jim Russell's interview with Charles Hardy, which gives us an intimate look into Venezuela today. In this connection, we couldn't resist reprinting Joe Kennedy's response to Congressman Connie Mack's attack on him for accepting help from CITCO in aiding the poor in the US.

Curbstone intern Jaclyn Allard discusses *Buffalo Boy and Geronimo* with author James Janko on page 8, providing some keen insights into the ecological theme of the novel.

We know that you will agree that today it is more important than ever to promote human rights, social justice, and intercultural understanding, both in our schools and in the larger community. The level of corruption and deceit in the government and corporate worlds is at an all-time high, and even our great newspapers have grown more timid, so it is critical we hear these voices that speak of experienced truths.

Please don't overlook our fund-raising appeal on page 11. Your support is of vital importance to our publishing and educational outreach programs. Every donation counts, no matter what the amount, so we hope you will send whatever you can now.

Adelante,

Judith A. Doyle & Alexander Taylor
Co-Directors, Curbstone Press

MISSION AT THE HELM:

Curbstone Press, a 501(c)(3) arts and education organization, was founded in 1975 in Willimantic, Connecticut. Throughout its history, the Press's Board and Co-Directors have nurtured Curbstone's focus on creative literature that invites readers to examine social issues, encourages a deeper understanding between cultures, and reflects a commitment to promoting human rights. Curbstone's mission weaves together two interdependent programs: 1) publishing creative literature that illuminates the issues of our time, and 2) bringing writers into U.S. communities to promote literacy, knowledge about many cultures, respect for human rights, and appreciation of good literature, among people of all ages.

Hardy Interview (Cont.)

choked up sometimes in the pulpit when I talked about what was happening in Central America.

It was also a time of a lot of life in the church. There was a call to be socially responsible in the world, to build a better world, work to change the social structure.

The Pope was saying that there were a lot more priests up in the United States than down in Latin America. I started talking to my bishop. I thought that it was time that someone from Wyoming went. People from the parish said that they could tell I was thinking about that. No one knew until 1985, when it was finally announced, that I was going to work in another country.

JWR: What about the theology of liberation? Was that an important concept to you?

CH: A couple of years ago I interviewed Samuel Ruiz, who was the bishop in Chiapas. I asked him, “Does the theology of liberation still exist?” His response was, “Is there a theology of slavery?” He said that any theology that is good has to be a theology of liberation. If you look at what happened in the Catholic church, people tried to say that liberation theology was Marxist or this or that or whatever. You know, when you think about Moses a thousand two hundred years before Jesus was born, he was talking about liberation, of freeing the people. I would hope that I was, and I have been following liberation theology because it seems to me the only valid kind of theology that is possible, one that makes people free or works for the freedom of people. I didn’t think of it as being based on Marxism or anything like that. It seems to me that it is based on common sense.

JWR: Chávez has said that his only disagreement with Fidel Castro is that Fidel doesn’t believe in God. Chávez also counts Christ among his revolutionary heroes. Has Chávez been able to resonate more with Venezuelans because of his appeal to religious beliefs?

CH: I don’t know if I’ve been in any other country where there is as deep a religiosity. People walk out of their houses in the morning and make the sign of the cross. They pass a church and make the sign of the cross. Throughout the day they bless themselves with the sign of the cross. Before they go into the water to swim, they’ll make the sign of the cross. A child who walks out of the house says to his mother, “Your blessing, Mom. Your blessing, Dad.” The child may be

seventy and the mother or father ninety. They will still be asking for the person’s blessing.

I would say that with regard to Chávez that it is not that *what* he says resonates with anyone, it is *who* he is. I think that’s what comes across. Chávez is Chávez. Chávez is like any other Venezuelan. That is his strength. He seems to be a normal person. When I say that, you can’t get away from the fact that he is a great leader. But the ideas he is expressing are the ideas that people resonate with. I like to see it as something coming from the bottom up. He is simply expressing things that men and women have thought about—women when they wash clothes, men when they play dominoes or whatever they are doing. He said one time that Fidel is very Christian in his social policy.



COWBOY IN CARACAS

*A North American’s Memoir of
Venezuela’s Democratic Revolution*

Charles Hardy



JWR: Some people would have thought of Venezuela as an unlikely setting for being at the forefront of Latin American revolutionary change today. Why do you think that it occurred in Venezuela?

CH: I think it occurred because of the International Monetary Fund. So if we have to say thanks to anyone for changing the world, they are the ones we should give credit to. On February 27, 1989 this place exploded. [Hardy is referring to the Caracazo, the riots that touched off the dissolution of Venezuela’s traditional political order and paved the way for the rise of Chávez—JWR.] As I understood it, the IMF plan was to raise prices to international levels while keeping salaries where they were. Basically what they were doing was strangling people. There were no leaders. There was no organization. It was just an explosion brought about by policies of the IMF. I’m not that familiar with the rest of Latin America and what has happened elsewhere, but here it just hit hard enough that something clicked.

JWR: What do you think of Chávez’s call for a “socialism for the twenty-first century?”

CH: I am not an expert on any *ism* other than maybe Catholicism. I never really studied communism, Marxism,

(cont. on p. 4)

socialism, any of that, even capitalism. But what has impressed me is the basic idea. Capitalism, according to Chávez, is a system that is centered on capital, on money, on things. Socialism is a system which is centered on society and people. For the first time in my life, socialism seems very attractive.

Knowing that the experiences with socialism have not been perfect, Chávez says to forget about the socialism of the last century. We have to think in new terms. It is that whole idea of endogenous, coming from within. [The Chávez government has embraced the concept of endogenous development—mobilizing domestic resources including labor—as opposed to relying on foreign investments—JWR] He doesn't know what it's going to be. Nobody knows what it's going to be.

He is saying that we've got to think of the basis for society on people and not on capital, not on money, not on things. That sounds to me like a fantastic idea.

JWR: Would you say that your experience in Venezuela changed you politically, or did it deepen convictions that you already had?

CH: I am not the same person I was twenty-one years ago. This is another world. There is a lot of wisdom in this world. There is a need to be open to hear what the people are thinking. In high school and college I studied English literature, but what about all the other literature in the world? How many ideas are there that we'll just never touch? It has been a constant challenge to see things from a whole different perspective. It started from the very beginning when I first touched ground here and it continues to this day.

Who would have ever thought about Venezuela offering heating oil at lower prices to people in need in the United States? It's an idea that makes sense. That is just one example.

I have been greatly changed by the people who I was led to believe were the shit of the earth, the people living on the hillside in the shacks. They were wonderful fonts of wisdom. I don't consider *Cowboy in Caracas* to be my book, it's a book expressing the thoughts and ideas of people here, I hope.

Cowboy in Caracas, Charles Hardy. ISBN 978-931896-37-5, paperback, \$15.00. Please visit our web site at www.curbstone.org for a complete version of this interview.

THE USES OF POETRY

For Muriel Rukeyser

1.
Their granary
bucking back and forth
on the clothesline,

sparrows, made
reckless by the winter
wind, dodge and spin.
2.
Break it, break the snow's
cold curve smothering
the seed, and the seed

will melt one day
back into song, song back
into birds, birds back into seed.
3.
This morning, Muriel
after writing these words,
I threw myself into the embrace

of subzero winds once more,
breaking free the seed
a poem broke loose in me.

—John Bradley

From: *Terrestrial Music*
ISBN 978-1-931896-28-3 / \$13.95

Please visit our website regularly for our new titles, events, and other news. You can now shop online via our Secure Shopping Cart at:
<http://www.curbstone.org>

Low-Cost Venezuelan Oil in the United States: A Heated Issue

Chairman and President of the non-profit Citizens Energy Corporation, Joe Kennedy II, responds to Congressman Connie Mack's criticism of CEC's administering of low-cost Venezuelan heating oil to low-income communities in the US:

Dear Congressman Mack:

I appreciate your interest, however misguided your conclusions may be, regarding our efforts to provide low-cost heating oil to thousands of low-income people, whose federal fuel benefits, by the way, you voted to cut by over \$1 billion just a few months ago.

I also appreciate the kind of moral leadership you're attempting to show in spite of the hypocrisy of your argument. If, in fact, your objection to our program is the politics of President Chávez and the actions that he's taken—which you feel threaten our democracy—I would suggest you hold all the 558 million barrels of oil we import annually from Venezuela to the same moral standard and not just the small slice we provide at a discount to the poor.

If your moral indignation requires that we not accept the discount oil to distribute to our most vulnerable families, then that same high moral standard should require that you not drive your car because it, too, probably uses gasoline made from Venezuelan oil. Nor should you be willing to fly to Washington because the airlines are using Venezuelan jet fuel. Heaven forbid that critics of our program stay warm with Venezuelan heating oil as they compose diatribes against charity. And you certainly shouldn't flick your Bic because it fires up Venezuelan benzene.

Since you express concerns with a non-profit energy company doing business with a Venezuelan-owned oil company to help the poor, I'm sure you have letters in the mail to Exxon/Mobil, BP, Shell, Conoco Phillips, Valero, and even Halliburton objecting to the billions of dollars in oil profits they've made in Venezuela to benefit their executives and shareholders while helping the economy of Venezuela under the leadership of President Chávez. By the way, the same oil that we have, only a bit more expensive, is used in running U.S. planes, trains, and automobiles—I'm sure you want all your constituents to give up their oil as well as my constituents whose oil you're trying to grab. Perhaps I also missed the press release in which you urged them to devote a tiny slice of their record profits to help those least able to shoulder the burden of rising energy prices. We wrote every major oil company and every OPEC nation asking them to share some of their bounty with the poor. They all refused, but I would be happy to include you as a signatory the next time we make an appeal. Your signature perhaps would convince them to finally do something.

I would also gladly join you in trying to turn back President Bush's current proposal to cut the federal fuel benefit by 44% in spite of record demand from families suffering winter's bite in the Northeast or buried under tons of snow in the Midwest. We could also form a moral coalition to make oil companies pay their fair share of royalties and use some of the windfall from rising royalty revenues and taxes on skyrocketing energy prices to help those in need. Maybe the fact that you live in Florida diminishes your concern for those who have to forgo food or medicine to pay for heat or turn to dangerous heating sources to stay warm, risking their lives to brave the cold. If so, maybe you could advocate that they move to your district to alleviate the need to figure out ways to protect them. There are a lot of disagreements I have with President Chávez, but what are we supposed to do in the absence of adequate help from the federal government or of any help from other oil companies—turn down the fuel for those in need?

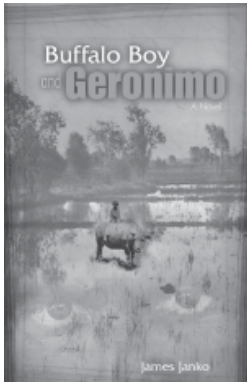
Your logic, which vaguely resembles the purity of the neocons who got us into the war in Iraq, would have us focus our wrath on countries you consider undemocratic. If that's your concern, then where is your blistering statement denouncing oil from Saudi Arabia, a country run by an unelected monarchy and which produced 15 of the 19 9/11 hijackers? Perhaps I missed your letter renouncing oil from Kuwait because of its socialist policies of universal health care, education, and food for its citizens. Russia, I'm sure, is also in your doghouse because of President Putin's growing tendency to clamp down on democracy. And while you're at it, I'm sure you have every intention of ending our country's \$310 billion a year trade with China, the largest communist power on earth.

Once we've followed the Mack Doctrine and refused oil from every country that fails to meet our disciplined moral standards, I'm sure you'll enjoy your walks to Washington, because there certainly won't be fuel to fly you there. Incidentally, your strolls would make an enormous contribution to decreasing greenhouse gas emissions - another one, I'm sure, of your moral crusades.

Thank you again for your letter. I would love to join with you in dealing with the real threat to this country—our system of a kind of socialism for the rich and free enterprise for the poor—a system that has granted billions to oil companies and their executives.

Sincerely,
Joseph P. Kennedy II

A Conversation with James Janko



Winner of the 2007 Northern California Book Award

Following is an excerpt from an interview with James Janko, author of *Buffalo Boy and Geronimo*, a book that vividly depicts jungle combat during the War in Vietnam. What makes this novel unique is its stark portrayal of the war's impact on the flora and fauna of that country. The interview is conducted by Jaclyn Allard, intern at Curbstone Press.

JA: Do you consider your experience in writing this novel a period of reflection, as well as a therapeutic outlet after your time in Viet Nam?

JJ: To sit alone and try to write one true thing is reflective, radical, an act of rebellion in today's world. The goal is to be an honest witness, and in the effort itself—whether or not “a good story” emerges—there is healing.

JA: Although your book is fictitious, is there a great sense of reality in it for you? How true are the experiences of the characters to the actual events of your Viet Nam experience? Do you feel it possible or impossible to replicate such an experience, in fiction or nonfiction?

JJ: If I'd told a journalistic account of my experience, I would have missed too much. The Vietnamese, for instance. I didn't know them during the war. I wasn't drafted and sent to Viet Nam to get to know anyone. I had to go back decades later to meet these people and open my ears.

The platoon I was with had a high casualty rate, a bit over 50%. In detail, I only told about one American death, that of Geronimo's friend, Billie Jasper, killed by a booby trap. I think what I wrote about 'Billie' gives a reader some idea of what a violent death looks like and feels like. I took something that happened and wrote what I could.

At bottom, the level of violence that I witnessed is impossible for me to replicate in fiction, nonfiction, or spoken word. I can only leave hints.

JA: Throughout the novel, both your main characters find a specific connection with nature. Hai bonds with his buffalo, while Geronimo's interaction with a tiger leaves him changed. What intimate connection with nature did you experience

when you served as a medic in Viet Nam?

JJ: Ironically, I know the Vietnamese earth more intimately than I know the earth of my own country. I was a platoon medic for the 25th Infantry Division for around nine months. We operated in the Cu Chi and Tay Ninh areas, and were part of the U.S. invasion of Cambodia in May of 1970. I stumbled through rice paddies, forests, jungles, waded through swamps, and at night I lay down on Vietnamese soil ten thousand miles from home. I sometimes felt that the land was inside me, that it was growing in me, and this—rather than being a burden—was my one comfort. I was dazed, not quite believing I was in this war, but now and then the beauty of the place was too great to be missed. Lushness is too mild a word to describe the Vietnamese earth and the Cambodian jungles. Even the bombed-out Cu Chi countryside still had a few pockets that blossomed. In those I took refuge when I could.

JA: *Buffalo Boy and Geronimo* highlights the importance of nature, and the destruction that war causes on ecological stability. In fact, nature plays such a large role in your novel that it almost takes on the position of a character. Why is it important for people to recognize natural surroundings not only on a daily basis, but more specifically, during wartime?

JJ: Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese monk, writes, “In a tiny grain of corn, there is the knowledge, transmitted by previous generations, of how to sprout, and how to make leaves, flowers, and ears of corn. Our body and our mind also have knowledge that has been transmitted by previous generations.”

As I see it, most Americans have squandered their knowledge for the sake of money and things. The artist Naomi Ido, speaking of westerners in general, said, “We have lost our sense of belonging to nature.” I would add that we have lost our sense of reality.

Nothing is more harmful to the earth than the preparation for war and war itself. Even if the U.S. never uses its vast supply of nuclear weapons, the toxins involved in their production will continue to pollute the earth for tens of thousand of years. The culture of militarism is a culture of death.

In regard to war itself, the destruction of the land and its creatures is a lonesome subject. In Viet Nam more than three decades ago, we mainly mourned the loss of American lives, and today the same is true in the Iraq War. I too acknowledge

What the Critics are Saying

DIRT CHEAP by Lyn Miller-Lachmann

"Miller-Lachmann does not shy away from tough questions of what we, as a people, are doing to our planet and to each other. And she does so with crisp dialogue and fully realized characters...an enthralling novel."—*El Paso Times*

"This absorbing novel is as much about the price a family must pay for a man's personal crusade, as it is about environmental pollution. Readers are offered realistic truths that can lead to intense debate: Which is more important—responsibility to family or fidelity to cause?"

—*School Library Journal*

"*Dirt Cheap* is more than a political thriller...[it] has the power of a good relationship novel, with the bonus of strong social themes underneath the surface."—*Connecticut Post*

DONATELLO'S VERSION by James Scully

"James Scully's splendid new book, *Donatello's Version*, is a social poetry which arises not from opinionation and facile protest, but from clear-eyed witness, hope, and saeva indignatio. His art is impatient of art, yet handsomely honed and phrased; it demands that we see and face injustice, and it assails—often through mockery—our compromises and complicities. Of many strong poems in this collection, I think that 'Babble' is a work of exceptional power."

—Richard Wilbur

"Poems as they should have been written—impatiently, impassioned, intelligently, impertinently."—F.D. Reeve

WHY MONKEYS LIVE IN TREES by Raouf Mama

"[A] wonderful book...There are many good anthologies of stories and tales, but Raouf Mama is telling the stories from his own tradition and crafts his knowledge to the page in an illuminating and artistic way."—*Rethinking Schools*

"For anyone who loves folktales or storytelling, this book provides an opportunity to hear tales from a wide range of ethnic groups in the West African country of Benin. These tales, which are repositories of traditional culture and history, reveal much about not only the people of Benin, but also of human nature. All ages."—*Skipping Stones*

Authors in the Spotlight (cont.)

Dinh, was selected as a Kiriyaama Prize Notable Book for 2006. The Kiriyaama Prize promotes greater understanding of and among the nations of the Pacific Rim and of South Asia.

Raouf Mama, author of *Why Monkeys Live in Trees and Other Stories from Benin*, was a Scholar in Residence at Berea College, KY, in March 2006. In June, he was given a standing ovation as a keynote speaker at a Teachers' Conference in Xela, Guatemala.

John Bradley, author of *Terrestrial Music*, has been awarded a 2007 NEA Fellowship in Poetry. This Literature Fellowship encourages the production of new work by affording the authors the time and means to write. Each literature fellow receives a \$20,000 award.

Anney Baez is the winner of the 2007 Mármol Prize for her book *My Daughter's Eyes and Other Stories* (July 2007).

James Janko's *Buffalo Boy and Geronimo* won the 2007 Northern California Book Award for Best Fiction. The award honors Bay Area authors, and winners are selected by book reviewers and book review editors.

Lorraine López's *Call Me Henri* is the winner of the 2007 Paterson Prize for Books for Young People. *Call Me Henri* was selected as the most outstanding book for young people in the category of Grades 7-12.



E. Ethelbert Miller

Recommended from Other Presses

Kamal Boullata and Kathy Engel (eds.), *We Begin Here. Poems for Palestine and Lebanon* (Interlink Books) • Martín Espada, *The Republic of Poetry* (W.W.Norton) • Michael Henson, *Crow Call* (West End Press) • Marlon James, *John Crow's Devil* (Akashic Books) • Maxine Hong Kingston (ed.), *Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace* (Koa Books) • Philip Levine and Ernesto Trejo (eds.), *Tarumba. The Selected Poems of Jaime Sabines* (Sarabande) • Sarah Menefee, *Human Star* (Factory School) • William Anthony Nericcio, *Tex[t]-Mex. Seductive Hallucinations of the "Mexican" in America* (University of Texas Press) • Paul Pines, *Taxidancing* (IKON) • J. L. Powers, *The Confessional* (Knopf) • James W. Russell, *Double Standard. Social Policy in Europe and the United States* (Rowman & Littlefield) • Cheryl Savageau, *Mother/Land* (Salt Publishing) • John Surowiecki, *The Hat City after Men Stopped Wearing Hats* (The Word Works).

the suffering of our soldiers, the tragic waste, but I want to point out that the natural world—that which sustains all forms of life, ours included—is also being destroyed.

The Vietnamese word for human is *con nguoi*; *con* means animal, and *nguoi* means person. The language is old enough to recall a time when human beings did not view themselves as separate from animals. In the present time, it seems to me that an awareness of the oneness of life is essential for the survival of many species, including *Homo sapiens*.

JA: Which scene and/or character do you find most true to the Buddhist teachings that run throughout your novel?

JJ: A chapter called “Hero” describes the nightly prayer routine of Ma Xuan, the buffalo boy’s mother, by far the most devout Buddhist in the book. Buddhism has many cultural variations; for the Vietnamese, ancestors are at the heart of the religion. Ma Xuan has an altar with pictures of those who have passed on—her husband, her parents, her husband’s parents. *Que huong* (ancestral homeland) is home in the deepest sense. The placentas and umbilical cords of Ma Xuan’s two children are buried in the land of the ancestors. Her husband is buried near the field where he worked, as are her parents. The ancestors and the fields they farmed, and the living who continue to work in these fields, are one circle, one web of union. When one lives in this way, and honors the dead in this way, how can one harm the land? It would be like stabbing one’s own flesh.

Maxine Hong Kingston, in *China Men*, says it this way: “Men build bridges and streets when there is already an amazing gold electric ring connecting every living being as surely as if we held hands, flippers and paws, feelers and wings.”

JA: Recognizing the fact that this is your first novel, and the excellent critical acclaim it continues to receive, do you see yourself writing another novel? If so, will your material continue on the path of war, nature, or perhaps once again, a combination of the two?

JJ: I just finished a novel about baseball and where it intersects, or might intersect, with poetry and politics.

I’m now working on a new novel about Illinois boys (I grew up in Illinois) who end up going to the Viet Nam War. The Vietnamese call it the American War.

Buffalo Boy and Geronimo, James Janko. Paperback, \$15.00. For a complete version of this interview, please visit www.curbstone.org.

Co-Director Alexander Taylor’s poetry collection *Dreaming at the Gates of Fury* (Azul Editions) has been published in Serbian and Bulgarian. In September 2007, Taylor will attend the 44th international meeting of writers in Belgrade, where the Serbian language edition will be presented by his publisher Knjizevni Atelje. In March, Co-Director Taylor received the 2006 Danish Translator Prize of \$20,000 in Copenhagen for his extensive, longstanding, and sustained work with translating and promoting eminent Danish literature.

Special Thanks to...

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In Memoriam Paul Laraque (1920-2007)

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Paul Laraque on March 8, 2007 in New York. Paul was internationally recognized as a major modern poet and a courageous political activist. Lawrence Ferlinghetti called him “one of the great voices of truth.” He was born in Jérémie, Haiti, in 1920, but fled Haiti during the reign of Papa Doc and lived in exile in New York. He wrote with equal beauty in both Creole and French.

During a speech in 2003 at the Haitian People’s Support Project in Woodstock, NY, he said, “My poetry tends to be an explosive mixture of love and liberty, dream and revolution, the cruelty of the present and the hope of the future. I believe that culture cannot be dissociated from history. Since the Spanish conquest with the cross and the sword, our hemisphere has been marked by native resistance against colonialism and genocide, by Black heroism against slavery, by peoples’ struggles against imperialism, by masses’ revolt for economic equality and social, political and cultural freedom.”

Curbstone was fortunate to have published two of his many volumes—his selected poems, *Camourade*, and the anthology of Haitian Creole poetry he edited with Jack Hirschman, *Open Gate*.

He will be deeply missed by his fellow poets and comrades.

Perseus' Acquisition of Consortium

Perseus Books Group has acquired Consortium Book Sales & Distribution, Inc, which distributes more than 100 publishers from around the world.

Founded in 1997 and built through a series of acquisitions and start-ups, Perseus' roots are in independent publishing and they are committed to the success and continued independence of Consortium and its clients. Perseus' member publishing programs include Basic Books, Counterpoint, Da Capo Press, Running Press, and Westview Press, as well as a partnership with Public Affairs. The Perseus Book Group also provides services for more than 50 independent publishers including Abbeville, Distributed Art Publishers, Harvard Business School Press, and University of Michigan Press.

Former CEO Don Linn, who bought Consortium in 2002 and has helped to grow the company significantly over a period of four and a half years, calls Perseus "a partner that shares our values and understands that it is the relationships developed over years among our employees, client publishers, authors and booksellers that make Consortium unique. Becoming a member of the Perseus Books Group is an opportunity to build on what we have accomplished." Don made the decision to leave Consortium on January 1, 2007 to pursue other interests. Perseus President and CEO David Steinberger thanked Don Linn for "his leading an exceptional organization," and "for his work bringing together the best of both worlds for independent publishers."

As of March 1, 2007, Perseus merged Consortium's warehouse, customer service, and finance operations into its Jackson, Tennessee, state-of-the-art distribution center, but is still keeping the distributor's sales and marketing offices intact in St. Paul, Minnesota.

According to current CEO of Consortium, Julie Schaper, "We were running out of space in Consortium's St. Paul warehouse, and facing the end of our lease. By bringing our distribution to Jackson, we can accommodate the growth of our current clients' business, as well as our growing list of publishers. We also make life a little easier for our customers and clients, as we can consolidate shipments weekly to the same destination."

All bookstore, library, and wholesaler orders must be directed to: Perseus Distribution, 1094 Flex Drive, Jackson, TN 38301-5070. Phone: 800-283-3572. Fax: 800-351-5073. SAN 631-760X. Please contact Curbstone directly if you encounter any problems during the transition period.

Community Outreach

We at Curbstone have seen with our own eyes what all the research shows—creative writing is an empowering act. Students studying with Curbstone authors develop confidence and poise. Education becomes exciting for them as they give shape to their deepest thoughts and feelings, and their educational aspirations widen.

Charles Hardy gives a talk about Venezuela at ECSU.



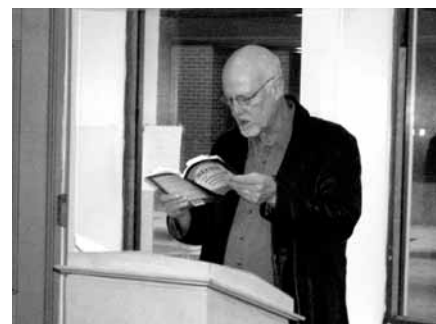
Poetry in the Park summer series continues to flourish, adding to the rich cultural mix in Windham.



Poetry in the Julia de Burgos Park in Willimantic, CT, with William Meredith (left), Richard Harteis (middle), and Jim Coleman (right).

Curbstone and Hygienic Gallery in New London, Connecticut are now co-sponsoring a monthly reading series at the gallery. Curbstone continues to co-sponsor events with ECSU, the University of Connecticut, and Mitchell College.

Doug Anderson at the Hygienic Art Gallery in New London, CT.



In addition to the above, Curbstone is also grateful to the following organizations for their support of community programs: the English Departments of UConn and ECSU, Colectivo Mestizal, the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, The National Endowment for the Arts, and the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone.

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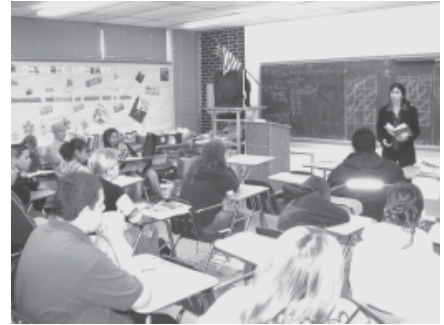
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As a nonprofit literary organization, Curbstone relies on grants and individual donations for half of its total revenue. Future growth and stability require that Curbstone Press increase its support from individual donors, especially in light of the fluctuations found in both the marketplace and grants opportunities.

Curbstone's school and community programs are funded by grants. Grant funding, unstable by nature, cannot respond to the need for consistency, a requirement for high-quality educational programming. Annual individual donations will supplement grant support to sustain the educational outreach and allow Curbstone to respond to requests from other communities in need.



Lorraine López with Windham High School students

As nonprofit publishers compete in a marketplace now characterized by publishing conglomerates and mega-bookstores, Curbstone must strengthen its efforts to develop works by new writers, translations of important international writers, and works by authors writing for children and young people. Annual individual donations can provide the edge that will allow Curbstone to remain a vibrant resource for readers and writers now and into the future.

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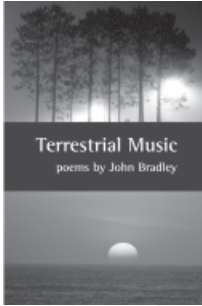
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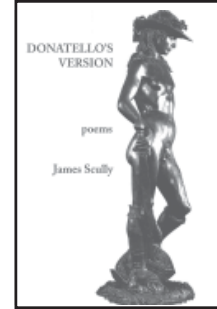


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