

POETRYNOW WITH THE POETRY FOUNDATION

Broadcast Schedule – Winter 2017

PROGRAM #: PN1627

RELEASE DATE: Monday, December 26, 2016

John Yau - “Hearsay Song”

John Yau meditates on mortality and the remembrance of the dead.

John Yau

Poet, art critic, and curator John Yau has published over 50 books of poetry, fiction, and art criticism. Born in Lynn, Massachusetts in 1950 to Chinese emigrants, Yau attended Bard College and earned an MFA from Brooklyn College in 1978. His first book of poetry, *Crossing Canal Street*, was published in 1976. Since then, he has won acclaim for his poetry’s attentiveness to visual culture and linguistic surface. In poems that frequently pun, trope, and play with the English language, Yau offers complicated, sometimes competing versions of the legacy of his dual heritages—as Chinese, American, poet, and artist. A contributor for *Contemporary Poets* wrote: “Yau’s poems [are] often as much a product of his visual sense of the world, as his awareness of his double heritage from both Oriental and Occidental cultures.” Yau’s many collections of poetry include *Corpse and Mirror* (1983), selected by John Ashbery for the National Poetry Series, *Edificio Sayonara* (1992), *Forbidden Entries* (1996), *Borrowed Love Poems* (2002), *Ing Grish* (2005), *Paradiso Diaspora* (2006), *Exhibits* (2010), and *Further Adventures in Monochrome* (2012). Yau’s work frequently explores, and exploits, the boundaries between poetry and prose, and his collections of stories and prose poetry include *Hawaiian Cowboys* (1994), *My Symptoms* (1998), and *Forbidden Entries* (1996).

A noted art critic and curator, Yau has also published many works of art criticism and artists’ books. Reviewing Yau’s *The United States of Jasper Johns* (1996) a *Publishers Weekly* writer commented: “If you already have a weighty, profusely illustrated book on artist Jasper Johns but are still a little bemused, this is the book to buy.” Yau covers the career of the controversial neo-Dadaist painter, from his 1955 *Flag* to the 1993 *After Holbein*, deriving much of his text from interviews conducted with the reclusive Johns over a period of fifteen years. “In graceful, accessible prose,” the *Publishers Weekly* reviewer noted, “Yau deciphers the many art-historical sources within Johns’s art ...[and] is capable of crafting the single phrase, such as ‘visual echo,’ that describes the activity within Johns’s work.” In addition to Johns, who he also wrote about in *A Thing Among Things: The Art of Jasper Johns* (2008), Yau has written on artists such as Andy Warhol, Joe Coleman, James Castle, and Kay Walkingstick. He has also collaborated with artists Archie Rand, Thomas Nozkowski, and Leiko Ikemura in poetry and art books like *Hundred More Jokes from the Book of the Dead* (2001), *Ing Grish* (2005), and *Andalusia* (2006). Calling Yau a “genius,” Robert Creeley described *Ing Grish* as a “brilliant train of wildly divergent thought.”

Yau has received many honors and awards for his work including a New York Foundation for the Arts Award, the Jerome Shestack Award, and the Lavan Award from the Academy of American Poets. He has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ingram-Merrill Foundation, and the Guggenheim Foundation, and was named a Chevalier in the

Order of Arts and Letters by France. Yau has taught at many institutions, including Pratt, the Maryland Institute College of Art and School of Visual Arts, Brown University, and the University of California-Berkeley. Since 2004 he has been the Arts editor of the Brooklyn Rail. He teaches at the Mason Gross School of the Arts and Rutgers University, and lives in New York City.

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/john-yau>

PROGRAM #: PN1628

RELEASE DATE: Monday, January 2, 2017

Rachel Galvin - “In My Sights, Sister”

Rachel Galvin contemplates the politics of complicity.

Rachel Galvin

Rachel Galvin is the author of *Pulleys & Locomotion* (Black Lawrence, 2009) and translator of *Raymond Queneau’s Hitting the Streets* (Carcanet, 2013). Her new collection is titled *Lost Property Unit*.

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/rachel-galvin>

PROGRAM #: PN1629

RELEASE DATE: Monday, January 9, 2017

Yusef Komunyakaa - “Our Side of the Creek”

Yusef Komunyakaa remembers a swimming hole frequented as a child.

Yusef Komunyakaa

Yusef Komunyakaa was born in Bogalusa, Louisiana. The son of a carpenter, Komunyakaa has said that he was first alerted to the power of language through his grandparents, who were church people: “the sound of the Old Testament informed the cadences of their speech,” Komunyakaa has stated. “It was my first introduction to poetry.” Komunyakaa went on to serve in the Vietnam War as a correspondent; he was managing editor of the Southern Cross during the war, for which he received a Bronze Star. He earned a BA from the University of Colorado Springs on the GI Bill, an MA from Colorado State University, and an MFA from the University of California-Irvine.

In his poetry, Yusef Komunyakaa weaves together personal narrative, jazz rhythms, and vernacular language to create complex images of life in peace and in war. In the New York Times, Bruce Weber described Komunyakaa as “Wordsworthian,” adding that the poet has a “worldly, philosophic mind... His poems, many of which are built on fiercely autobiographical details—about his stint in Vietnam, about his childhood—deal with the stains that experience leaves on a life, and they are often achingly suggestive without resolution.”

Komunyakaa’s early work includes the poetry collections *Dedications & Other Darkhorses* (1977) and *Lost in the Bonewheel Factory* (1979). Widespread recognition came with the

publication of *Copacetic* (1984), which showcased what would become his distinctive style: vernacular speech layered with syncopated rhythms from jazz traditions. His next book *I Apologize for the Eyes in My Head* (1986) won the San Francisco Poetry Center Award; *Dien Cai Dau* (1988), a book that treated his experience in the Vietnam War in stark and personal terms, won the Dark Room Poetry Prize. It is regularly described as one of the best books of war poetry from the Vietnam War. The title means “crazy” in Vietnamese and was used by locals to refer to American soldiers fighting in their country. The collection explores the experience of African American soldiers in the war as well as captures the embattled Southeast Asian landscape. In the New York Times Book Review, Wayne Koestenbaum remarked that Komunyakaa’s casual juxtaposition of nature and war belied the artistry at work. “Though his tersely-phrased chronicles, like documentary photographs, give us the illusion that we are facing unmediated reality, they rely on a predictable though powerful set of literary conventions.” Koestenbaum added, “The book works through accretion, not argument; the poems are all in the present tense, which furthers the illusion that we are receiving tokens of a reality untroubled by language.”

Komunyakaa’s *Neon Vernacular: New and Selected Poems* (1994) won the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award and the Pulitzer Prize. In the collection, Komunyakaa pulls together all of the most powerful strands of his poetic vision. The images are those of the South and its culture, of Black resilience to white supremacy, of war in Southeast Asia, of urban experience, and of musical forms such as blues and jazz. The language is simple, laid out in short lines. As Robyn Selman put it in a Voice Literary Supplement review, “Most of Yusef Komunyakaa’s poems rise to a crescendo, like that moment in songs one or two beats before the bridge, when everything is hooked-up, full-blown.”

Komunyakaa’s other works include *Warhorses* (2008); *Taboo: The Wishbone Trilogy, Part 1* (2006); *Pleasure Dome: New & Collected Poems, 1975-1999* (2001); *Talking Dirty to the Gods* (2000); and *Thieves of Paradise* (1998), which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. His most recent collections of poetry include *The Chameleon Couch* (2011), *Testimony: A Tribute to Charlie Parker* (2013), and *Emperor of Water Clocks* (2015). He is the author of the verse play *Gilgamesh: A Verse Play* (2006) and in collaboration with composer T.J. Anderson the opera libretto *Slip Knot*.

In 2011 Komunyakaa was awarded the Wallace Stevens Award. He is the recipient of numerous honors and awards including the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the William Faulkner Prize from the Université de Rennes, the Thomas Forcade Award, the Hanes Poetry Prize, and fellowships from the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, the Louisiana Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He served as Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 1999-2005. He has taught at numerous institutions including University of New Orleans, Indiana University, and Princeton University. Currently he serves as Distinguished Senior Poet in New York University’s graduate creative writing program.

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/yusef-komunyakaa>

PROGRAM #: PN1630
RELEASE DATE: Monday, January 16, 2017

Joshua Clover - “I Want to Read at the White House”

For the 2017 Presidential Inauguration, Joshua Clover offers to read poetry at the White House.

Joshua Clover

Poet, scholar, and journalist Joshua Clover was born in 1962 in Berkeley, California. An alumnus of Boston University and the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, Clover has published three volumes of poetry: *Red Epic* (2015), *The Totality for Kids* (2006), and *Madonna anno domini* (1997). His poems have also appeared three times in the Best American Poetry series. He has written three books of cultural and political theory: *Riot.Strike.Riot* (2016), *1989: Bob Dylan Didn’t Have This to Sing About* (2009), and *The Matrix* (2005). Clover has received an individual NEA grant as well as the Walt Whitman Award from the Academy of American Poets, and served as a senior fellow at the University of Paris-Diderot and the Institute for Advanced Study at Warwick University.

Clover is a professor of English and comparative literature at the University of California, Davis, and a columnist for *The Nation* and *Ny Tid*, in Norway. He is a founding editor of *Commune Editions*.

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/joshua-clover>

PROGRAM #: PN1631

RELEASE DATE: Monday, January 23, 2017

Emily Pérez - “Dworzec - on a line from Szymborksa”

Emily Pérez portrays a person on a train fleeing from a past life.

Emily Pérez

Emily Pérez was born and raised in south Texas. She earned a BA with honors from Stanford and MFA from the University of Houston, where she was poetry editor for *Gulf Coast* and a teacher for Writers in the Schools. Pérez is the author of the chapbook *Backyard Migration Route* (2011) and the full-length collection *House of Sugar, House of Stone* (2016). Both books explore what poet Sasha West has described as “liminalities” or borders. In an interview with West for *Letras Latinas*, Pérez noted her desire to cross and explore familiar and familial boundaries in *House of Sugar, House of Stone*: “I want to know about the line between the self and the partner, the self and the collective. In families we make ourselves vulnerable to unknowable others—sometimes by choice and sometimes by the accident of when, where, and to whom we were born.”

Pérez has received grants and scholarships from the Artist Trust, Jack Straw Writers, Bread Loaf Writers’ Workshop, Summer Literary Seminars, and Inprint, Houston. A former Canto Mundo fellow, she is a member of the Community of Writers at Squaw Valley. She lives and teaches in Denver, Colorado.

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/emily-perez>

PROGRAM #: PN1632
RELEASE DATE: Monday, January 30, 2017

Garrett Caples - “Warm Life”

Garrett Caples pays tribute to poet Bill Berkson, a personal friend and a central figure in American poetry since the 1960s.

Garrett Caples

Garrett Caples is the author of *The Garrett Caples Reader* (1999), *Complications* (2007), *Quintessence of the Minor: Symbolist Poetry in English* (2010), and *Retrievals* (2014). He's an editor at City Lights Books, where he curates the Spotlight poetry series and has worked on such books as *Tau* by Philip Lamantia/*Journey to the End* by John Hoffman (Pocket Poets #59) and *When I Was a Poet* by David Meltzer (Pocket Poets #60). He is also a contributing writer to the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* and coeditor of the *Collected Poems of Philip Lamantia* (2013). He lives in Oakland.

In May and June 2011, Caples was a featured writer on *Harriet*.

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/garrett-caples>

PROGRAM #: PN1633
RELEASE DATE: Monday, February 6, 2017

Monica McClure - “San Marcos”

Monica McClure imagines a prophet in the forest who collects the lives of men.

Monica McClure

Monica McClure is a writer and performer based in New York. She is the author of *Tender Data* (Birds LLC, 2015) and chapbooks *Mala* (Poor Claudia, 2014) and *Mood Swing* (Snacks Press, 2013).

Her poetry and critical writing can be found in *Tin House*, *The Claudius App*, *Jubilat*, *Lambda Literary Review Spotlight Series*, *Emily Books*, *The Hairpin*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Awl*, *Spork Press*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *Intercourse Magazine*, *The Lit Review*, and *CultureStrike / The Margins*.

McClure is a poetry and fiction editor for *The Atlas Review*. In 2014, she was chosen by Dorothea Lasky as the Summer Literary Seminar contest winner for Poetry. She has performed at Cage Gallery, Pioneer Works, Dixon Place Theatre, The Silent Barn, and &Now 2015.

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/monica-mcclure>

PROGRAM #: PN1634
RELEASE DATE: Monday, February 13, 2017

Eric Amling - “Rx”

Eric Amling remembers the death of a beloved celebrity and considers a world saturated in pharmaceuticals.

Eric Amling

Poet, designer, and visual artist Eric Amling was born in Brooklyn, New York. His first collection of poetry is *From the Author’s Private Collection* (2015); his chapbooks include *From the Author’s Private Collection* (2013) and *Legal Pure* (2012). Amling’s poetry draws on pop culture, references to leisure and luxury lifestyles, and a formal method that often mimics collage, a medium Amling works in as a visual artist as well. *Publisher’s Weekly* described the poems in *From the Author’s Private Collection* as “social critique delivered through a signal scrambler.”

Amling’s collages and installations playfully evoke “leisure environments” through allusion to, and distortion of, retro lifestyle magazines, porn, and vernacular luxury items. In an interview about his solo exhibit at Flying Object in Hadley, Massachusetts, “Private Event,” Amling noted, “It’s really the space around the subject being photographed that I’m after. A blurry lamp. Sunny wallpaper. I think with these soft tones and elements combined in a collage you get an undercurrent of seduction.” Another solo exhibition, “Life Coach,” was installed at Berl’s Poetry Bookshop. Amling is editor of the small press After Hours Ltd.

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/eric-amling>

PROGRAM #: PN1635

RELEASE DATE: Monday, February 20, 2017

Roberto Tejada - “Two Guardians”

Roberto Tejada guides through an underworld of surveillance.

Roberto Tejada

An art historian, curator, and editor specializing in Latino and Latin American art, Roberto Tejada was born in Los Angeles. He earned a BA in comparative literature from New York University and a PhD in interdisciplinary media studies from the English Department at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He is the author of the poetry chapbooks *Gift & Verdict* (1999) and *Amulet Anatomy* (2001) as well as the full-length collections *Mirrors for Gold* (2006) and *Exposition Park* (2010).

Written while Tejada was living in Mexico City, *Mirrors for Gold* explores the borders of culture, romance, and the history of Latin America. In a 2009 interview with Dale Smith for *Viz.*, Tejada noted: “In *Mirrors for Gold* I was interested in how the relationship between self and other, in a psychoanalytic sense, can point back to the violent encounter between the conquistador and native American—who’s conquering whom and how are those power differentials established in a palpable historical sense, and what kinds of fear and fantasy prompt subjectivity?”

Tejada’s publications on art history include *National Camera: Photography and Mexico’s Image*

Environment (2009) and *Celia Alvarez Muñoz* (2009). He has co-curated exhibitions on Manuel Alvarez Bravo and Luis Gispert. From 1987 to 1997 Tejada lived in Mexico City, where he served on the editorial board of the magazine *Vuelta* and was executive editor of *Artes de México*. He founded and co-edits the journal *Mandorla: New Writing from the Americas*.

A former professor at the University of California at San Diego, the University of Texas at Austin, and Southern Methodist University, Tejada was appointed the Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished Professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Houston in 2014.

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/roberto-tejada>

PROGRAM #: PN1636

RELEASE DATE: Monday, February 27, 2017

Hannah Brooks-Motl - “Family Dollar”

Hannah Brooks-Motl reflects on the course of a life and its future.

Hannah Brooks-Motl

Hannah Brooks-Motl was born in Wisconsin and earned an MFA at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. She is the author of the poetry collections *The New Years* (2014) and *M* (2015). Her criticism has appeared in the *Kenyon Review Online* and *The New Republic/The Book*, among other places. With Stephen Burt she helped edit *Randall Jarrell on W.H. Auden* (2005).

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/hannah-brooks-motl>

PROGRAM #: PN1637

RELEASE DATE: Monday, March 6, 2017

Philip Jenks - “Dust Poem”

Philip Jenks considers the word “dust,” from Biblical language to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

Philip Jenks

The son of an Episcopalian minister, Philip Jenks was born in North Carolina and grew up in Morgantown, West Virginia. He earned a BA from Reed College, an MA in creative writing from Boston University, and a PhD in political science from the University of Kentucky. His books of poetry include *On the Cave You Live In* (2002), *My First Painting Will Be “The Accuser”* (2005), *Disappearing Address* (2010, with Simone Muench), and *Colony Collapse Metaphor* (2014); and the chapbooks *How Many of You Are You?* (2006), and *Little Visceral Carnival* (2009, with Simone Muench).

In response to Jenks’s poem “Untitled” (“My pinhole weighs a ton”), poet Dan Beachy-Quick commented, “In Jenks’s work, the bewildering ways in which absence presents itself in word and image, and how presence absents itself by the same means, is poetry’s work.” In a review of *On the Cave You Live In*, Jon Curley noted, “Jenks coalesces his themes around

language which is often peripheral in its presumed scope and oblique in its descriptions. Among the artifacts that compose the Jenks universe: the depredations and dignity of Appalachian life, Biblical glosses and vatic tunings, playfully obscure confessions and catastrophic revelations.” Jenks' poems have appeared in *Chicago Review*, *Typo*, *Fence*, *Cultural Society*, *H_NGM_N*, *Canarium*, *LVNG*, and elsewhere. He teaches English at University of Illinois at Chicago and Political Science at Lewis University.

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/philip-jenks>

PROGRAM #: PN1638

RELEASE DATE: Monday, March 13, 2017

Shane McCrae - “Jim Limber the Adopted Mulatto Son of Jefferson Davis Was Another Child First”

Shane McCrae imagines the life of the adopted son of Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

Shane McCrae

Poet Shane McCrae grew up in Texas and California. The first in his family to graduate from college, McCrae earned a BA at Linfield College, an MA at the University of Iowa, an MFA at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, and a JD at Harvard Law School.

McCrae is the author of several poetry collections, including *Mule* (2011), *Blood* (2013), and *The Animal Too Big to Kill* (2015); his work has also been featured in *The Best American Poetry 2010*, edited by Amy Gerstler. His honors include a Whiting Writers' Award and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.

McCrae's attention to both meter and its breakage in his poems emphasizes the chafe of historical accounting against contemporary slippage, engaging this country's troubling history and continuation of oppression and violence. In a 2013 conversation with Danniell Schoonebeek for *PEN America*, McCrae stated, “For me, writing into history is a way to grapple with the terrifying certainty of the present. That is, the more one studies and writes with history, the more often one discovers that apparently large and important human developments—a lot of things most people would call ‘progress’—are superficial.” In a 2014 review, Michael Klein observed, “*Blood* is as radical in structure as it is in the unbridled wildness of its emotional center. Lines descend on the page in varying lengths usually culminating into a single stanza and often broken or interrupted by a caesura or sutured with a slash — a blade, appropriately — or, as I came to think of the slash: a mark in the account where the tape got spliced. It's a powerful visual effect—where the content is so married to its delivery — and approaches — strange and as hallucinatory as it can be — the dignity of oration. These are poems that are unrelenting and immediate — never delicate and never gentle.”

McCrae teaches in the low-residency MFA program at Spalding University and at Oberlin College. He lives in Oberlin, Ohio.

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/shane-mccrae>

PROGRAM #: PN1639
RELEASE DATE: Monday, March 20, 2017

Kaveh Akbar - "Portrait of the Alcoholic Floating in Space With Severed Umbilicus"
Kaveh Akbar describes a nascent sexuality emerging in a life troubled by alcohol.

Kaveh Akbar

Kaveh Akbar founded and edits *Divedapper*, where he interviews major voices in contemporary poetry. His poems appeared in *Poetry*, *APR*, *Guernica*, *PBS NewsHour*, *Boston Review*, and elsewhere. Along with Gabrielle Calvocoressi, Francine J. Harris, and Jonathan Farmer, he is part of the monthly poetry podcast All Up in Your Ears. He is the author of the forthcoming chapbook *Portrait of the Alcoholic* (Sibling Rivalry Press, January 2017) and full-length collection *Calling a Wolf a Wolf* (Alice James Books, late 2017). He was born in Tehran, Iran, and currently lives and teaches in Florida. In 2016, Akbar was a recipient of the Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation.

Bio: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/kaveh-akbar>