

David Buuck, Three Books and a Poem

01/02

Having in mind many great publications that, since the pandemic began in March 2020, have not had a chance to circulate in usual ways, I put the following prompt to an array of heavy readers: List three poetry books that stood out. Define “poetry book” as broadly as possible. Define “stand out” not at all. Choose one poem from any of these books and write one hundred words about it – a brief annotation, recommendation, question, observation. Six responded with these soundings. e-flux journal has also reprinted each of the poems the contributors chose to write about. We thank the writers and their publishers for permission to do so.

– Simone White

The Worker Writers School – *Coronavirus Haiku*, edited by Mark Nowak (Kenning Editions, 2021).

I taught excerpts at San Quentin’s prison university program, still reeling with death and despair, and the “response” haiku students wrote were some of the most moving communiques of grief and anger I’ve ever read.

Tanya Lukin Linklater – *Slow Scrape* (DOCUMENTS 4, The Centre for Expanded Poetics and Anteism Books, 2020).

Closely attuned to the fraught histories of indigenous display in the colonial imagination, Linklater’s cross-genre poems and “event scores” foreground the role of the audience/reader, eliciting modes of receptive listening beyond mere empathy.

Etel Adnan – *Time*, translated by Sarah Riggs (Nightboat Books, 2019)

On “No Sky” by Etel Adnan

I spent a lot of 2020–21 with the visual and literary work of Etel Adnan, who died in November at the age of 96, rereading everything of hers I could find in the process of completing a manuscript in correspondence with her exemplary practice. Living through the strange temporalities of 2020, from lockdown isolation to spontaneous collective unrest and riot, *Time* provided timely philosophical-poetical reflections on how “writing comes from a dialogue / with time.” Her voice, her vision, her generosity; above all her ability to find wonderment in the world without ever turning a blind eye to injustice: she will be truly missed.

e-flux journal #125 — march 2022
David Buuck, Three Books and a Poem

From "No Sky":

[pre]In the proximity of love,
dispersion,
refraction,
time no longer measures itself
against the body...
there is blood
on certain roads
and the perverse friendship of
death

There is noise in our
hearts
an imperfect breathing
attached to ligaments:
dull pain in the
wrists
and the folds

Describe the body
if you can
and you will see how unlikely
your soul is
matter being our
sole possession

Like the half-light where
the Pacific sleeps,
its solitude is made of gray
forms it looks for its metaphors
in electronics, it only lives
in the pallor of signs

She, in the rose-colored song
of a bedroom, a deserted
love, and the lost time
of trees...

x

This poem excerpt appears by permission from *Time*, trans. Sarah Riggs (Nightboat Books, 2019). Copyright © by Etel Adnan.

02/02

David Buuck lives in Oakland, California. He is the co-founder and editor of *Tripwire*, a journal of poetics, and founder of BARGE, the Bay Area Research Group in Enviro-aesthetics. Publications include *The Riotous Outside* (Commune Editions, 2018), *Noise in the Face of* (Roof Books, 2016), *SITE CITE CITY* (Futurepoem, 2015) and *An Army of Lovers*, co-written with Juliana Spahr (City Lights, 2013). Buuck teaches composition at Mills College, where is he chief steward of the adjuncts union (SEIU Local 1021), and at San Quentin's Prison University Program.

e-flux journal #125 — march 2022
David Buuck, Three Books and a Poem