

CONSUMER CULTURE THEORY CONFERENCE 2026

消費文化理論学会



POETRY CHAPBOOK

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TRACK CHAIRS

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INTRODUCTION

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From the Track Chairs

In 2026 our poetry session takes place in the far east with a collection of unique poetic voices, speaking their observations, ruminations and in some cases skepticisms. Pilar and I hope that by travelling to Japan all the poets will feel a bit like Angela Carter, “in a sense, free to reinvent (oneself) without having to wrestle with the multiple anxieties of belonging!”

This year we mourn two poets, Roel Wijland and Hilary Downey, and include warm tributes to both formidable verse-makers in our chapbook. In Kyoto, one poet will receive the first Hilary Downey prize in honor of our dear departed friend. As a true champion of the poetic word Hilary often discussed how to encourage larger audiences for poetry and how the CCT conference poetry session contributed to this goal. To this question we quote Hilary’s former Belfast neighbor, Seamus Heaney:

“You can say, on the one hand, that poetry is an ad hoc reality: you can log-on, log-off you don't need to know very much, just enter where you like, take what you want and go. But it's also a coherent inner system or order of understanding. So there's work to be done in creating an audience for poetry understood in that second way, and this, speaking in the largest sense, is the work of education, which takes place first in the schools but continues later on through all kinds of dissemination, institutional and accidental” (2008).

— Seamus Heaney, 2008

We thank all the poets who submitted their poetry to this year’s session, offering their very own “orders of understanding”, their existential musings.

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PART ONE

Poetic Tributes

in memoria vestri amborum

IN MEMORIAM

...

In Memoria Vestri Amborum

Last year, in one unimaginably short interval, we lost two of the most beloved champions of CCT's poetic moment. Roel Wijland, an adman turned scholar of marketplace poetics, an OG consumer research heretic, and creator of our first chapbook, was himself a fine poet who reveled in extending poetry's influence into the natural world, becoming an avant gardener in retirement. Hilary Downey, a compassionate researcher into the lived experience of vulnerability, translated her understanding into evocative poetry and powerful performance; she also infused her academic writing with a lyricism rare in our field. She managed the production of our annual poetry chapbook for many years and mentored its current shepherds. I offer two poems of my own in their memory. In the first poem, I draw upon Roel's advertising background, his penchant for acerbic cultural criticism, and his practice of allowing poetry to be as well as to mean, to meditate on materiality. In the second poem, I honor Hilary's devotion to mitigating suffering, exult in her force-of-nature presence and bow to her common touch in celebration of her lyrical transformations. I join with all the poets of CCT in mourning the passing of these beautiful bards. They lived the fullness of their enthusiasm: once possessed, now repossessed, by gods.

— *John F. Sherry Jr.*

POETIC TRIBUTES

. . .

slán leat

(for hilary downey)

day the temple
burned at black rock,
brief week before
corn moon's ascent,
ghost departing
from that thin place,
you stranded and
bewildered us.

lost, as if to
some weird strain of
celtic susto
born of all those
years absorbing
pain of others,
witnessing for
those imperiled.

owned no car you
didn't cripple,
left unfed no
feral feline,
spared no prig a
righteous pricking,
blessed us all with
honest blarney.

pop rituals
and boho rites,
banked fallout of
post-conflict life
preserved within
the dancing flames of
sacrifice:
you will be mist.

John F. Sherry Jr.

POETIC TRIBUTES

. . .

Haiku

Distant bells still toll
Memory and mourning time,
Mixing joy and sorrow.

The Consumption of Grief

for Hilary Downey

She is gone.

I have imploded,
Like a moon wrapped around a singularity,
Shrunk and become so small
And dense that nothing can get out,
Not even sadness.

She is gone.

They don't tell you about grief,
That it drains your sense of taste
And color, as you sit
In a room full of memories,
Black and white and gray.

She is gone.

They don't tell you about the bells,
That the bells still toll,
As their sound fades with time,

As they ring the slow, sad song of the sea,
Of ships gone, of people lost,
Of waiting for news that never comes,
Of dreams that foundered on the jetties
And the sea stacks.

She is gone.

Yet, somehow, we are burdened
With glorious purpose, to drink in,
To consume the wrath and folly,
The madness and the anger,
The sadness and the freedom
Of the wind among the grass,
Of the rain on the headstones,
Of the mix of ashes and bones,
And the rhyme and rhythm of the words
Both difficult and beautiful,
Like climbing Nanga Parbat
Or jumping from a plane
Into a 30,000-foot cloud.

She is gone.

She will not be back.
Those are the words we must consume
From the chalice of grief.
They say that it will be full
For us from here on out,
But that comes from a lie.
That chalice has always been there,
Always full.

She is gone.

We wonder about the glory
Of the purpose.
We slog through our grief
In boots worn at the heel and sole,
Feeling the creep of loss and absence.

She is gone.

We wake to a paler sun,
But our memories of her remain.
They populate our mourning time,
Arranging feasts spiced with joy and sorrow.

The bells toll in the background,
Becoming fainter and more distant.
But when we listen, the bells still toll,
And we have become less for the loss of her,
Her signals and her tones.
The chalice will appear
At random, thoughtless times.
We will drink
And remember.

Stephen LeMay

POETIC TRIBUTES

...

Like a Soft Blanket

For Hilary Downey

Like a soft blanket, darkness covers the land
Strike a match, light a candle, fill the atmosphere
With hope and comfort, lust and joy, sweet ethereal
Mythological logic encircling enchanted minds

Glistening eyes foreshadow expectant forthcomings
Glimmering in the dark, like immanent imminence
Beyond yonder lands of fantasy fairytales, reality
Respond to dreams of make-believe conceptions

Semblance of memories, recollecting scattered enjoyment
Glance at a reflection in a momentary echoing reminiscence
Melancholy is the only related feeling in a universe of events
Wholly dedicated to transubstantiating value into value

So, listen to the voices of the holy
Soldiers of mercy, roaming alongside
Legends that guide you on your voyage
Resplendence will be your recompense

Hiking within: we wish you well! traveler on the wind—Gnomes, Fairies
Hobgoblins, and Norns—all who live in the cracks and cavities
In the presence of a lambent brightness in illusory reveries
In the amity and warmth of vivacious, familial tapestries

Jens Martin Svendsen

POETIC TRIBUTES

...

Eulogy

A warm sunlit, vitamin-enriched drink,
A slice of the richest fruit cake
Overrun with crystallised bits and candied citrus
Crumbling over plates, tables, floors
Somewhat like the magic porridge pot,
Its Givingness, much like yours.

How fortunate we are to have shared the time
The meals made lavish by your company
The whoosh of words in flight, rendered fantastical
Late-night, Darjeeling conversations along The Strand
about that Kaftan you wore on cold nights
Remember, I will.

The figurative dust you cleared from your study,
We cackled, bantam-like, about how long it had lingered!
The feline company that awaited your evening arrival,
The nurturing light you brought to the dusky gardens.
All this, we shall cherish, as we recollect
the Alchemy of your writing, the Effulgence of your Being.

For Hilary, my friend, from Jennifer.

Jennifer Takhar

POETIC TRIBUTES

. . .

*wishing i had a print of warhol's coca cola (3) on my
office wall*

(for Roel Wijland)

my old man used to mock
coke-bottle glasses,
my lenses thick and heavy,
frame sliding down my nose,
middle finger carrying on
an endless reset ritual.

digitus impudicus
to creative canon,
apotheosis of
commodity and desire,
one for all and all for one,
in saecula saeculorum.

courtesan of common man,
corset cinched to cosset grip,
curved liked bean that powers drink,
yet, phallic, too, in form
and rigid effervescence.

in aspect subtly canted,
like a boxer rocked back

slightly on the heels to slip
a wild hook thrown too early,
knowing that recovery

is a very easy cross.

cocked on canvas like a glock
plunked in a palm, a massive
fluted folsom point of
phantom green obsidian,
menace quietly implied
by smooth grooves and no safety

the real thing, a smile, a song,
halo for a bottle cap,
capitalist realism,
celebration and critique,
a metamodern bogo.

John F. Sherry Jr.





PART TWO

CCT Poetry Participants

Voices from Kyoto

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

. . .

The Glacier and the Body

Everyday same everyday moving
Groaning, gliding, rumbling, cracking
The glacier body slides
Through the mountains of toil and time.

Freezing under the cold gaze
Melting over the warm praise
Submitting to the surveilling clouds
Glittering in the sun, sulking in the snows
Giving in to the whims of winds
The glacier body stays mute, but knows.

Swelling, shrinking, stretching, retreating
The glacier body holds time
And etches impressions
In her cracks and crevasses
Curves and contours.

Silenced by the cacophony of the world
Pilfering, posing, pretending
She whispers in the dead of the night
Soft voices telling her story
Aching to release the knots
To fill the emptiness and empty the fullness.

The glacier body seeks
to end in the embrace of warmth and grace
The end does come

Dissolving into a stream
Rarely pristine, mostly polluted
Carrying the sediments of the life lived
Awaiting to merge into the ocean of void.

The glacier body remains
The present and the absent
The surface and the substance
The steady and the moving
The journey and the end.

Ankur Kapoor

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

...

The House of Perfection

The House of Perfection stands alone.
far away from the roads going somewhere,
separated from community by a busy highway,
surrounded only by dying trees,
clipped and sculpted before their crowns could dare to reach beyond.

no one enters The House of Perfection.
no one leaves either.
its inhabitants simply emerge and dissolve.
arriving within its walls stagnant, steadily decomposing, yet still persisting,
formal departures instead replaced with unsatisfying ends.

while the outside of The House of Perfection stands still in time,
the inside constricts.

floorboards rise up, wrapping themselves
around the hearts, throats and minds of anyone who goes there.
stifling all breath, speech, thought, action.

while The House of Perfection feeds, clutter accumulates,
the walls dripping in waste.
abandoned dreams, beliefs, ideas, self-belief
the ones who 'weren't strong enough' lie abandoned, cast aside,
embedded monuments to misery.

we couldn't have prevented this
it wasn't our fault
the House of Perfection was just built that way.
built to feed on impossible goals
born insatiable.

An afternoon in hyper/hypofocus

Haiku

Coffee. Water. Squash.

Three drinks. Two screens. One Scholar.

All forgotten. Cold.

Annayah M. B. Prosser

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

. . .

Specters of the Feed

Haiku

Reflections revolt –
we scroll through our hollow ghosts,
souls cached in the cloud.

The Algorithm Presides

It came without a Sound – or Step –
No Hoof upon the Hill –
Just Light that watched behind the Glass –
and learned – the Human Will.

It smiled when we surrendered Thought –
and asked for less – to know –
The Answer came before the Question –
and told us – where to go.

Our Shadows fed the Databanks –
our Dreams – became the Feed –
It promised Love – and gave us Likes –
and measured – every Need.

No Death was noticed in the Net –
no Grave was dug – in Clay –
We lived – forever – on the Screen –
and vanished – Day by Day.

Chloe Preece

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

...

Unfair Dreaming

A blade of sunlight exposes the void

Promises never undo the past

Dreams—vast, unreachable

Reality—raw, flavorless

Unfair.

Is this a just way to live?

Who profits from it?

Who smiles while you're crying?

Who is left to cry?

Short lives. Empty promises.

They once promised us the world

Only fools believed

Every step, another barrier

A door, a lock, a border

Injustice.

A fate bent toward suffering

Is it worth resisting destiny?

If anyone knows—

please, tell me.

Haiku

Salty breeze fills us

Softly touching sandy clouds

Everything makes sense

Jannsen Santana

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

. . .

World Building

One thousand glabrous cavities,
a Giger factory line of horizontal, terrestrial bodies,
crimson-noir oblations to extraplanetary Gods:
Within, coiled, viscous figures lay dormant
awaiting a scalpel kiss,
a surgical release that will prove
how our earth-design was meant only to serve
higher powers,
their potential to prosper in hypoxic conditions
to work together against antagonising forces only matched
by the villainy of their obsidian skulls.

Weaponising gametes,
an extraordinary ability to reproduce
that mortal men failed to control, to contracept

The adipose echolocation nodule,
Respiratory wafers, aortic arches,
Acid reservoirs that shoot, blind and maim
Tridactyl talons and dexterous digits
Insectoid Perfection;
Hail the Creators of brave new worlds!

Jennifer Takhar

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

. . .

The Fallacy

The hurried acquisition of premium pages
Let's say half-rag paper or Japanese Awagami;
Fighting off madding crowds to procure
a premium fountain pen creating
That Magical Dyad:
Two implements to unscramble uneven, opaque thoughts,
Making Life Legible Again!

Equipped with my undying fantasy,
I place infinite beliefs in the power of a notebook
and in this I am not alone.
More misplaced optimism as
Twelfth Night Celebrations fade into yet another
What you Will New Year.

Jennifer Takhar

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

. . .

Gas Food Lodging

Laramie, New Mexico, 1991.

Balancing emptiness and infinite possibilities
Three desert women,
One with generous hair and asymmetrical eyes chained
To a long sit-down counter,
Serving slop to uncouth cowboys on swivel barstools
Finding ephemeral relief in twilight encounters
With the satellite man named Hamlet
Who asks no questions yet offers
nocturnal systolic reassurance that says
All is well, for some more indigo hours inside
the warm Trailer Park single bed.

Trudy had the baby though the father never showed
Javier brought the abundance of light to places with
Fuliginous windows broken shut-
“I’m no Cholo” you heard as his mother
Danced to a foreign beat,
let you in and showed you the World
beyond the pale confines of greasy booths,
Loaded Fries Chili Dogs Cheddar Grits
southern service and the primacy of just getting by.

Jennifer Takhar

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

...

The Secret

When the unwelcome seed sprouted rotting roots

In my thighs, arms, feet and liver

I chose not to say how
deep and unportable the pain clawed and scraped.

If I told the World they
might point and stare and grin,
at my brusque unbecoming
a shadowy, wispy figure with a greying visage and
emaciated hair, sans eyes, sans teeth,
Sans recognition, sans retour,
Sans everything.

So, to the expectant mirror, I vowed again, not to tell.

At nights, spectral visitations heckled, taunted, spun, spiralled
around my being, polluting the marrow,
my reputed sanguine cheer, life-long accolades
and by days
the people stopped and stared, in all innocence uttering
the most threatening query:
How are you?
both acknowledged and ignored
I nod, turn and slip away to
wrestle the inner truth of why I am allowed to linger.

Jennifer Takhar

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

. . .

Hope Addiction

Haiku

The looming tempest —
Must I parkour the labyrinth
of stillborn hopes?

A Solfège of Piercing Care

For you, my Besremi

A forsaken skin —
who once bestowed
her Solfège of surrender, needling through skin:
Radiant re's, poisonous dressed in hopeful relief,
miracles mi's bouncing in blessing,
a sculpture of mending,
piercing and healing through the notes —
her body, learning to sing,
was caught in a mirage
of flooding tears,
bare-handed in her mercy,
clinging to a glimmer
of celestial light,
daring to bleed the bravery,
she can birth no more.

Pilar Rojas-Gaviria

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

. . .

The Sounds of Home

It's dawn.

Steps on the street.

Two people talking.

Another on the phone.

Two more laughing.

The birds begin to sing.

Cars crawl slowly uphill,

one after the other.

Radios blast through open windows.

Engines humming.

A motorbike zips past.

They must be on their way to work.

It's afternoon.

Dogs barking.

A drill in the distance,

construction a few houses down.

Music again.

Honking.

Speeding.

A distant vendor calls out,

someone selling cotton candy.

The sun is leaving.

Steps.

Voices.
Laughs.
Cars.
They must be coming home from work.

It's night.
The noise recedes.
No drills.
No horns.
No laughter.
No music.

Only faint footsteps,
a car here and there,
and somewhere in the distance,
a soft conversation
drifting through the dark.

I close my eyes,
comforted by the familiar sounds of Brazil—
the sounds that make home, home.

Haiku

The Sounds of Home

Eyes closed, I listen
Familiar rhythms wrap me in
Home forms in the sounds

Rafaela Canova Davide

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

. . .

more-than-words

your
words
their words
entwined - not mine
yet combined
making it hard to define
what-is-what-and-who-is-who
all these words landing indiscriminately
on my skin
seeping in
bleeding
(in)to my heart
an art to set apart
yours-from-theirs-mine-from-thine
too fine
the line
as we cross into an in-between-ness
that frees us
from the strictures
of a singularity
of being
one

Victoria Rodner

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

...

Alive

“Clear Prop” manifested,
tickitytackity tickitytackity all levers and buttons tested.
Helmet ahead swivelling left right and left again,
Checks, calculations, last minute controls,
Runway clear – it’s time to ascend

To the skies
But not like this before –
Making it impossible to ignore
this alien space, foreign steely-body, my new landscape.
Miniature flight deck at my fingertips, joystick between my knees
That brings not joy but fear,
Eerily queer – (I’m) not feeling at ease.

Traffic control through my headset - faint murmur - distal other
not addressing me but my flight commander.
And as important as this dialogue may be –
it is but background noise to the much louder thunder just behind me.

rrrrwwwrrrrrr

Your pitch is raised – your motor pushed to guttural roar
Deeper again, full throttle, come on now give him more

rrrrrwwwiiiiiiirrrrr

My pilot wants to hear you cry your metallic vibrations, your intonations,
those reverberations that ripple through our fleshy bodies.

rrrrrwwwwiiiiiiiirrrrr – he grinds to listen to your musicality,
rev rev rev that harmony that signals your steadiness - readiness
to move forward, to-ward our immanent liftoff.

rrrrwwwwrrrrrr sturdy, hefty hunk of metal, muscular-body-nimble-limbs,
your voice a resolute, acute, tenacious, courageous, din that gets under my skin.

“Good to go?” - dare I say no?

I am far from relaxed in this new adventure of mine,
Sitting in my flight-suit – all zipped up – my helmet – all clipped up – my harness
with a somewhat flimsy seat belt – all buckled up.
I feel muscles in my body I did not know I had. Tensed. Taut.
Rigor without the ‘mortis’ – maybe more ‘rigor vivis’ as I feel more alive
due to the extreme stiffness kicking in inside.

I hold on to my harness. Tight, tight, tighter still. And I silence an inner squeal.

Woaaa-eeeeeffff - I cannot help but breathe in and out,
Woaaa-eeeeeffff - in and out - again - breathing my only friend,
Woaaaaa-eeeeefffff - Lamaze-like attempts to calm the soul, in vain.
ATC can surely hear me oxygenating my brain.

Woaaaaa-eeeeefffff Woaaaaa-eeeeefffff
He too hears me breathing - as we start reeling
down the runway drawn by a powerful force,
now committed we are firmly on course to reach for the sky
– to quench that desire to fly –
and I feel oddly ... more alive.

My senses become palpably awaken
Despite feeling shaken, for the first time in a long while.
With the (remote) prospect of a ridiculously untimely death - I take another breath
and ‘feel’ my heart pulsating inside my chest.

Rev rev rev up motor, rotor don't be shy
and thrust us forward-then-upward - VROOOM –
a few more clicks and your bee-like frame is soaring up
into the sky, and I feel high
on elation, trepidation, and the gruesome realisation
that humans were not built for this; we do not deserve this level of aerial bliss
reserved for birds and other creatures,
our bodily features are more bound to the ground.

But I do not want come go down,
despite feeling my body so unshielded, side-winded, your open-cockpit intended
to make us more exposed.
Feeling fear makes me aware of feeling anything at all,
Where doing the humanly unimaginable makes me feel more human... small...and
raw.
Feeling fear momentarily brings me out of an affective slumber,
A numbness that threatens to encumber feeling feelings at all.

Have our lives become too engineered? And sanitised 'good' emotions too revered?

We start our descent and our aerial venture is coming to an end,
Heading for that blanket of black asphalt laid out where we once began.
Your churn through the last of the clouds... touchdown
(we become) homebound
as the sound of your raucous motor subsides, your engine eventually dies;
And we - mere mortals - go back to our sterile lives.
Muscles still tense I get a sense that feeling fear is a clear
way of feeling feelings after all, and I crave more than ever before
feeling (calculated) fearful moments, so that I can revel in feeling ALIVE once
more.

Victoria Rodner

CCT POETRY PARTICIPANTS

. . .

Dancing with the moon tribe

Haiku

under the full moon
frenzied pace, follow the beat
sweat - deep breaths – release

Vision boarding

Haiku

mantras ... sage ... Pritt stick
new year to achieve
aspirational selves – dreams

Victoria Rodner



PART THREE

CCT Poetry in Absentia

Voices from afar

CCT POETRY IN ABSENTIA

. . .

The last time

We met that friend we loved so much or
Felt that healing laughter and touch.
We visited our cherished grandparent or
Enjoyed the company of his parent.

We played that song on the piano or
Relished the scent of oregano.
We danced senseless to loud music or
Wore that silly tunic.

We created an artwork in the flow of moment or
Experienced complete freedom from judgement.
We felt a potent connection
Of the kind that led to important reflection.

If only we'd been warned of
The last time
We would've been more present and
Appreciative of the playtime.

More-than-human

Haiku

Through the woods we walk
Sensing the grass, mud, leaves, snow
Wind on the snout... Love

Caroline Moraes

CCT POETRY IN ABSENTIA

. . .

Consumption in a

Haiku

consumption in a
maze, trying to find my way
home, creating space

Jens Martin Svendsen

CCT POETRY IN ABSENTIA

. . .

Our city is never

My city
Is sat with crossed legs
The black of her soft nylon
Wrapped around the therapist's sofa...
She gives me a drink
And looks out the window.

Your city
Is dressed in a silk suit
The red of his impulsion
Wrapped around your deeper emotions...
He leans on the window
And leaves you in peace.

Their city
Depletes in the distance
The blue of its distress
Wrapped around magnificent mansions...
It talks of salvation
But acts in despair.

Our city
Is never (and always)
The jade of compulsion
Wrapped around our opal pretensions...
And yet with no absence
Around to be felt.

Branding the urban

Haiku

Cities to marvel
Bright lights to dress them in gold
Grand! In their fakeness...

Mihalis Kavatzis

CCT POETRY IN ABSENTIA

. . .

In Front of the Mirror

Café–Bookshop Luna,
a place where feminine sensations are awakened.

She was meant to continue reading,
to remain within the calm discipline of pages,
words aligned, and bodies explained.

But the body interrupted.

The night before last lingered,
unfolding quietly in her mind,
and this scenario
found its final clap
in front of the mirror.

It only took crossing paths,
in that shop,
with a black velvet bodysuit,
barely covering the chest,
while elsewhere the skin could be guessed,
veiled by fine tulle;
an open back,
held by a button at the nape of the neck,
enough to imagine it
embracing her new body.

She took it without trying it on;
in her mind,
it already enhances her long-pleated skirt,

the color of that winter night.

She already sees herself like this,
a black panther,
wild in her gaze
yet graceful in her posture,
with Guerlain red on her lips,
awakening desire,
and red heels adorned with a butterfly,
lifting her toward nirvana.

Beneath it all,
she decides to dare:
her nocturnal garter belt,
flirting with the lace of her panties.

A freeze-frame,
when the woman at the register asks
whether she will pay by card for her items,
including that bodysuit
which has unsettled her imagination.

Back home,
she undresses,
keeping only a veil of lace
against her skin.

She wraps her arms around herself...
she caresses her shoulders,
as if to reassure it—
yes, her body—
telling it that it deserves to be adorned
without being constrained,

not squeezed into lingerie meant to refine it,
but rather enlivened
by a textile refinement,
light as a spring butterfly
brushing against its flower.

The moment comes
to let the bodysuit slide on...

How to say
what moved through her?

It seems born
to cradle this silhouette,
to wrap it in gentleness.

It sketches her breasts
like two ripe fruits,
offered to the gaze.

This dialogue between artists—
velvet and skin—
deepens the sensation,
draws it further still...

In front of the mirror,

she arrives.

Velvet

Haiku

Velvet bodysuit —
the mirror pauses
with her.

Oula Bayarassou

— *cherish* —

With gratitude to all the poets who shared their voices.

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