



Ahadada Books

Chapbook

New Poems

Hugh Seidman

Hugh Seidman

Hugh Seidman was born in Brooklyn, New York. His poetry has won several awards including, most recently, the 2004 Green Rose Prize from New Issues Press (Western Michigan University) for his sixth poetry collection *Somebody Stand Up and Sing* (New Issues, MI, Spring 2005).

Seidman's other awards include two New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) grants (2003, 1990), a New York State Creative Artists Public Service (CAPS) grant (1971), and three National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) fellowships (1985, 1972, 1970).

His first book *Collecting Evidence* (Yale University Press) won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Prize (1970); his fourth book *People Live, They Have Lives* (Miami University Press, Oxford, OH) was judged the winner of the Camden Poetry Award (Walt Whitman Center for the Arts) [1990].

Seidman's *Selected Poems: 1965-1995* received a 1995 Critics' Choice "Best Books" citation and was chosen as one of the "25 Favorite Books of 1995" by *The Village Voice*. His other books are: *Throne/Falcon/Eye* (Random House, 1982) and *Blood Lord* (Doubleday, 1974). A chapbook, *12 Views of Freetown, 1 View of Bumbuna* (Half Moon Bay Press), was published in 2003.

Seidman has taught writing at the University of Wisconsin, Yale University, Columbia University, the College of William and Mary, the New School University and several other institutions. He currently works as a computer documentation specialist and lives in New York City.



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American Poetry Review: "Composition," "Dirt to Dirt," "End," "Bleecker Street,"

"Laureate," "Stroke ('Writhing')," "Stroke ('He would get')," "Photos," "Poem ('War and greed')"

Boulevard: "Mapping"

Hanging Loose: "Napalm," "Aluminum Bowl"

New Letters - Decade: "The Point of the Story Is"

The New Yorker: "Did I Say Father," "Spring / Winter," "Phone Call"

Object: "Two Poems" (Section: "It")

Paper Air: "Two Poems" (Section: "End")

Pequod: Angel

Ploughshares: "Edge"

Provincetown: "Obit"

Sulfur: "Ball Game," "One Threatened"



COMPOSITION

ANGLING

Since there are depths. Though
flesh stink, hooked jaws
cut the careless.

†

4 A.M.

War just readers win.
Each draws out his/
her own arrow.

†

HOW

Keep nothing, nothing
left, but a faint
breath of nothing.

†

HOLLYWOOD

Poets, heroines
are mad. Heroes:
pure poetry.

†

MOON

Bright rim, shadow. First
draft to measure,
fill to margins.



FATHER STANZAS

HEARSE

Proud Dad, new son. Old
baby face. Sleek,
black carriage.

†

LIFT OFF

Father thought and thought.
Mother eyes white
ignition.

†

MOUNTAIN

Bobcat pads, lynx star
steps, soul-catcher
eagle flies.

†

LAKE

Whose tears? Joy or pain?
Shut, iced lid at
horizon.

†

SATURN

Braceleted, nine-moon
general. God
who passes.

†

THE DEAD

Our world shrinks, yours grows.
You recede, yet
stay, like stars.



DIRT TO DIRT

A few days to turn the pages.
Eyes worse by a half diopter.

News furrowed on land or forehead.
It is spring; none is returning.

Flesh pierced, unabated.
Doubled over yet straightened.



END

Far but near.
At what CD rate?

Father gone.
Mother just passed.

We are children,
but dumb to be one.

Outside: mountains,
holding the sun.

Mastodon, as long
as ice lasts.

Moral?
Yield if asked.



BLEECKER STREET

Interest points for
birthplace tourist.

Youth races blameless.
Age passes past blame.

Conundrum: should
shrink reveal patient?

No rest from the famous?
from Oz?

Some sense the ticker.
Nothing realer.

Bird-store toucan, antique
six-foot wood horse.

Tanned, graying, coifed
ladies, escorts.

One-name models,
drunk boyfriends.

The spike-heeled,
endless, inevitable.

So beautiful,
it stops the breath.

We sleep a long time.
Great ledgers of sleep.

Dazed shepherds on
silver under cobalt.

Stars beyond words.
The poet wants to help.

But exploits others' pain?
O contradiction!

Regular or decaf?
800 feigning sterling.



LAUREATE

Ignored what needed to be ignored--though can one?
Prose: soap opera; poetry: prose.

Theories of theory, granite temples, silken lace.
Metaphor's turbines rumbling under earth.

What a bore; what an uplift.
Joined how to bones under flesh?

Table=table, chair=chair, said a master.
Citizen confessing a citizen's state.

Crowds applauding the bemedaled texts:
victorious; heroic; humble, even, out of context.



OBIT

Clouds adrift in the “cold” sky, say,
after the epiphanous lyric.

†

Halogen screwed molten all day.
Inert, incandescent, greedy whine to live.

†

Never sucked the old tit.
Never hit the best-seller rich list.

†

Tarn of the eye, mountain of the brow.
Mouth continent, jaw great circle of paradise.



DID I SAY FATHER?

Tears “burst” from the eyes.
This is the duty of words.

Is silence better?
To look down in the street.

The world is like bread.
Mouths water.

Forgive me if I lift my hand to affirm.
Or is it to question?

Mother had been a blind date.
Love at first sight.

Dirt below black birds.
None to corroborate the foxtrot.



STROKE

Writhing,
IV in.

Wrists
buckled

to the bed.
Pleading:

free me.
It was late.

I had
to get back

to my house
to sleep.

How was it?
Sons: men.

Fathers:
sons.

In intensive
care, alone.



STROKE

He would get the gold,
swore his "Oracle,"
no more struggle.

The ward was locked,
but they would not hold him.
Haldol stopped, delusions back.

Once he fell as if dead:
face down, nose bleeding.
Finally, in a diner.

Beaten gold is thin,
almost non-existent—
layered on the bell.

The end is the end.
"Ten more years," had he said?
Labor, now over.



NURSING HOME: MOTHER'S DAY

Boy's head bangs bus-stop glass.
Slapped by Mom: DON'T RUN!
Here, a man wheels one:
"She still wants sky, sun."
Then mine: "My big one."
Today, no men but Mothers'.

†

Senile roommate Tessie:
"BRUSH YOUR TEETH!"
Your old order?
Often I ate the forbidden cake
gloating aunts baked.
Now, Dr. Doom, the waiter.

†

I touch your shoulder:
refusal at S's nipple—
as who shall not tremble?
But, haven't we had enough *Mother?*
Sea outside as ever:
diamonds, untarnishing silver.



SPRING / WINTER

Lace-edged short
sleeves of your
heavy mother.

A lace collar
V's on her breast.
Your dress is plain.

Shut lips smile
(marriage, child—
years off).

In the round frame:
"Columbia Medallion
Studio Chicago."

Your box was plain.
Its star-carved
lid was raised.

The few mustache hairs
were like black,
thick thread.

Your cheek was ice—
one felt why
some want flame.

Not the cold plot
a husband bought
years before.



PHONE CALL

You were saying her death was for the best
Though you didn't want cliché

You were saying
No one was to blame

I was watching the sky: pale, eggshell blue; dark, ink blue
Talking and talking

Night lighting the brightening city
Wanting to ask something

I had forgotten to ask
That I couldn't now, on my mother's life, remember



MAPPING

all embryos are morphologically females
—Sherfey

Irreducible Eve, blastula Adam. Dis-
sonant hands in the dark.
Water waiver. Water waiver.
Though one enter the solid world.

†

Hair: loose, tied, braided.
Laughter, preener—opened in a body.
So vulnerable to passion, selflessness—
to such real abstraction.

†

Summer, bicycles in the rain—
till a cigarette, an uneaten dinner.
In the old plots lovers die,
which some now parrot with fervor.

†

Unshaved armpits, no more baby fat.
Then, just left—tee shirt sent back.
That time: wind, refrigerator's shudder.
Earth, inside space in the mind.

†

Objectless desire. Images' image.
Red behind shut eyes, the burning sky.
Imploded shadow focused under
the coloring-book sun.

THE POINT OF THE STORY IS

Flayed sun, lead poured down the sky
 Silence of things
 Congealing future of words
 A phone ringing all night in a room

†

Bird cry against insect whine
 Pine like great horns and fur
 Sun focused to burn
 That someone wants, that someone lies

†

Wind undulating one branch
 Velvet dark of pines
 Jet cut of cool, late-summer azure
 A stone, knife-like, held in the hand

†

Ant in the dirt
 Grasshopper, huge, spreading wings
 Charred cloud obscured with rain
 Each voltaic rage

†

A form as if of air
 In one life none can change all
 Odd to mourn lacking right to mourn
 Do not judge this

†

Seared earth, cleaved rock, dead tree
 Mountain delivered to shadow
 Sun: reddened, magnified
 Mandala hemorrhaging fire

†

Clouds furrowed like water by wind
 Body on body as if copulating
 Metallic, copper-and-black
 Armor acrawl the rose



OURSELVES

for ML

So young, years ago.
I say what you know.

Poems lose.
Prose wins.

It is night—great
swirls in the wind.

So far from any,
in the tiny world.

I see your body.
We will meet years later.

I will touch you,
blindly, past words.

To yet fail, blindly,
past words.

It is often so,
in the lyric dark.



NAPALM

Has not enough time passed
to spread that jam again?

Sodium palmitate or aluminum soap
candying oil or gasoline.

Canned by the Saran maker,
now pro-Earth in ads.

That joke of: *fire cleanses*,
like monks washing in flame.

Spontaneous combustion on, say,
Saturday Night Live.

Or, yes then, like God
in the bush that burns.



BALL GAME

Priest-courtiers' rubber, bone-crunch hard ball
stroked by a sort of atlatl at a vertical
stone ring twenty-three feet up.

Were losers impaled?
(skulls on poles as at Tenochtitlan).
Or winners? for next-world glory.

Now, many deciphered glyphs:
state praised, captives skinned
(severed lips, extracted nails and heart).

But of course others exhort:
note flower-carved facades; deep myth;
iridescent, green and crimson quetzal dance feathers.



PHOTOS

CHINAMAN: 05

Hacked, naked, roped to a pole.
Chest gone, passed out—penis glows.
Red-hot dot means bought/sold.
Pray crime fits punishment.

†

KURDS

Transcendent, horrible.
Transcendent since resigned,
horrible since beautiful.
Corpse borne miles for burial.

†

SOMALI

Years ago the skeletal Biafran.
Now, its double wails on a flier.
Water poured to a child's cup.
Four dollars per well.



ONE THREATENED

One threatened, threatens all, said the petition.

The orphaned child-soldier; the raped, butchered girl.
The cliché that the universe dilates toward blood.

That is, whatever one conjures.

On Fifth Avenue the salesman suggested grey or navy.

The wools and blends, solids, pinstripes,
Single-breasted, double-breasted, vented and unvented

Martyrish husks.



ALUMINUM BOWL

saved from what was
scoured with sand
fine scratches

spears
could not stop
guns

kinsmen took camels
left what is carried
to where some say
there is food

burned villages
mute children
civil war

sand
fine sand
blown into a bowl

nothing more—

you
from afar

praise the camel
no milk is better
no man lives without camel milk



POEM

War and greed stop food.
Tyrant and army stand.

Buy the paper.
How many words?

Never to be erased.
Many will fall.

This has been said before.
Why repeat terror?

Hope, until hope enters
the kingdom of survival.

The binary forever.
Is there no way?

Sudden tears, not words.
Like love, hunger.

The fish martyred up
through the molecular.



ANGEL

Muscle of tears,
blood lit. How
shall it not live?

Torso so thin,
which in empathy
it did not escape.

Chambered pulse,
so fervid with
purple and red.

Love's drum,
as when desire
speeds the breath.

Silence echoed
amid the vacuum
between beats.

Wing brush, sun
mote, dark heat,
double of wind.

As when the alive
must yet resist:
nullity, absence.



COLLECTIBLES

SILVER, GLASS

Marcasite, smoky tarnish, enamel *en plein*.
Signed purple Moser unshattered but cracked.

Aspheric loop; *Fleece*, to no purpose but quest.
Teal blue, green, pale green, brown, grey blue, cobalt.

Oil-sick cormorant, dugong, grebe.
Look: rubble, mourners of another language.

Pleading or cursing STOP in the missiles' light;
in the grainy, arbitrary distance.

†

PHOTOS, CIGARETTE CASE

Teenage Olga: Gatchina Park can-can.
Arm-in-arm with the King of Siam.

Morganatic Brassova and Michael.
Rachmaninov skiing, eating.

Alexi, Dutchesses: shaved heads,
for measles (as when shot).

Rasputin's alleged lover Vyubova,
virginal when examined.

Bid for by an heir, perhaps,
of a fleer from Olga's Cossacks.

1931 applied gold on silver.
What comrade's hammer/sickle?

†

FABERGÉ

Royal *tchotchkies*: chalcedony terrier;
gold-lipped, diamond-eyed, obsidian toad.

“Bourgeoisie love coarse *cloisonné*,” he said.
The Nobels were his best non-royal patrons.

Bored Edward, Wallis puffing in Regine's.
No good, evil—just power users.



EDGE

DREAMED WHAT

Dreamed what at the computer?
Winter citrus sun washed up over Jersey.

Malibu's copper wheel,
hammered over the August sea.

Love on the movie marquee.
Subway's deathward speed.

†

BLUE FOG

Blue fog around Reich's hand.
Shield yourself—how? being everywhere.

White sparks in dark air,
guttering out when you hung up.

Sky of light-point swirls.
The amoeba's flesh, its tremor.

†

FRIDAY DRINKERS

Friday drinkers in the bar car.
Blue cesium sickening Rio scavengers.

Dollar-a-day Calcutta men
casting Baltimore manhole covers.

Readers, sleepers, talkers—
stepped from the lit, vanishing cars.

†

ALREADY SOME

Already some have come under
the sparkling turquoise.

Fate born of desire and action.
Tendrils breaching the terrace blocks.



Air flaming at the pine tops,
as when one names the sought one.

†

REJECTED BY

Rejected by another she rose.
Ancient ones came, intergalactic Christs.

Few hear as she though many so lust.
So much pain, so much happiness.

Sun to dark to sun; blue cloud space.
Dialectic of escape and grace.

†

THEY EMERGE

They emerge: that which we thought
the absolute must ravage.

They upheave, go down—to atone.
Lord Lion's boulders of the wave.

And the atomic wings beat.
O gull before bright heaven.

†

THE SINGER'S RAGE

The singer's rage to be her time.
Glyphs, codes of the Jupiter probe.

What thought thinks thought knows.
Blue dark, blanket pulled closer.

And what thought if drama were dropped?
Untouched foundations of the headstones.



TWO POEMS

END

Thoughtless, we think: what is will be.

What lives in our acts?
Shock of touch, sky awe, dream, chromosome.

Each gas, isotope, metal that grieves,
like whatever it is that thinks.

†

IT

Though one fail, as one will.

Though one contract, as one has, to a seed,
blown between need and debt to each.

Though it comes, after forgetting
what any (one or thing) might have reminded one of.



The Passion of Phineas Gage & Selected Poems (Jesse Glass)

0-9732233-8-3

Secret, but Kept it Room explores the development and stasis over time of self as image—at once real and artificial, subjective and perspectival, engaged in the physical world and torn from it, a self often disappearing into non-self. Mike Gubser treats the art of poetry as, in some sense, the art of experiment and problem-solving by placing the notion of self in various contexts—romance, depression, friendship, travel, memory, isolation—and poetic forms—visual, musical, lyrical modernist, numeric—to see how it reacts.

Secret, but Kept it Room (Mike Gubser)

0-9732233-7-5

The Passion of Phineas Gage & Selected Poems presents the best of Glass' experimental writing in a single volume. Glass' ground-breaking work has been hailed by poets as diverse as Jerome Rothenberg, William Bronk and Jim Daniels for its insight into human nature and its exploration of forms. Glass uses the tools of postmodernism: collaging, fragmentation, and Oulipo-like processes along with a keen understanding of poetic forms and traditions that stretches back to Beowulf and beyond. Moreover, Glass finds his subject matter in larger than life figures like Phineas Gage—the man whose life was changed in an instant when an iron bar was sent rocketing through his brain in a freak accident—as well as in ants processing up a wall in time to harpsichord music in order to steal salt crystals from the inner lip of a cowrie shell. The range and ambition of his work sets it apart. The product of over 30 years of engagement with the avant-garde, *Passion of Phineas Gage & Selected Poems* is the work of a mature poet who continues to reinvent himself with every text he produces.

At That (Skip Fox)

0-9732233-6-7

Skip Fox, with the concern of an entomologist, presents passages sprawling and pinned in a shadow box of observations and odd lots. Framed under double glass, the mounting board of *At That* writhes with a cast of freaks: Ezekiel in the streets, a kitty bomb squad, sadists on steroids, the shadow of Cadmus, kingfishers, omen clad apertures of evening with cicada wings, heart attacks of clouds rolling in off the Gulf, a city mouse, spastic proctologists, and so forth, all projecting their "goods" in spate: smatterings, obsolete creeds, mordacious stumps, "furious opinions, exaggerations, fabrications," neo-prophetic stylings, verbal molestations, elegiac mumbblings, the silence above a shallow grave, etc.

Ahadada Reader (Alan Halsey, John Byrum, Geraldine Monk)

0-9732233-3-2

Combines the lively, challenging work of three experimental poets, Alan Halsey, John Byrum, and Geraldine Monk. Halsey's group of poems resurrects past versions of English, turning with peculiar spellings and striking frictions of their grammar. Byrum's work, entitled "Approximations," is a shifting visual text work mainly utilizing the text block, pointing to the form of a word as art itself. The final selection of Monk's work rounds out the book with her varying forms and sharply constructed lines.

Ahadada Books is a small press first begun in 1999, publishing titles both online and in print. The aim of the press is to present new writers and literature that, to paraphrase Francis Picabia, speak with you, envelope everything, and belong to every religion. We present broadsides, limited-run chapbooks, and perfect bound books of diverse literary forms.

Online publishing is an integral component of the Ahadada Books project: to get important voices heard. The World Wide Web facilitates this endeavour, allowing a potential audience of millions to access our site and read authors that they might never find in their local bookstores.

[HTTP://WWW.AHADADABOOKS.COM/](http://www.ahadadabooks.com/)

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