

Biographical Sketch

I began writing poetry at a very young age, perhaps twelve or thirteen, influenced primarily by folk musicians such as Woodie Guthrie, Bob Dylan, and Ani DiFranco, and by a very nurturing teacher by the name of Mrs. Babcock. I began my serious nose-dive into the art while I was completing my undergraduate degree at UC Santa Cruz, studying with the poet and printmaker Gary Young, who taught me how to slice my little babies up, to distill them down to their bare essentials, and to make them more concise (and hopefully more intoxicating). It was at this time that I discovered Levertov, Creeley, Olsen and their gang, and later, Terrance Hayes, Robert Hass, and Charles Wright. For me, poetry goes far beyond self-expression, beyond prayer or any simple sort of search for meaning; it is a confrontation and communication with the other through language, which is the closest I get to believing in any universal spirit or shared consciousness. I am most happy when my poems surprise me. This is not to say that my best poems are created effortlessly. Sometimes my best work takes months or even years of revisions for me to see what the poem wants me to see. It is through this process that I learn what I'm all about, and occasionally find some granule of human commonality.

Recently I have been working on a book length collection of poems investigating fear and the way in which the "self" or the seat of consciousness is created through experiences that often repel or even disgust us. If the self cannot be nailed down to any one organ, or even any one part of the brain, where does it lie? A simple question, but a fruitful one. I want to both investigate the myth of subjectivity through these poems and question what poetry can do, *should* do, in the face of such a mystery.

On "Ars Poetica"

The seeds of "Ars Poetica" were sown while I was rereading Lorca and Whitman, and attempting to go against my instinct as far as my line length. I had been writing in these short, terse lines for so long and I wanted to get out of my comfort zone, so Whitman was an obvious choice. An earlier version of the poem was titled "After Eden" and was composed while I was finishing up my thesis at Oregon State University. The phrase "savia entrañable" comes from Neruda's deeply moving poem "Mañana," and means, roughly, "intimate sap".