

## ABOUT MICHAEL HELLER

Brooklyn born and raised in Miami Beach, Florida, Michael Heller was educated as an engineer at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. While working as a technical writer for Sperry Gyroscope, he met several former students of Louis Zukofsky, who introduced him to the work of a wide range of contemporary poets, which led him to begin writing poetry. In 1964 he won the New School's Coffey Poetry Prize and went abroad to continue to study and write. His poems first appeared in print in the nineteen sixties while he was living in a small village on Spain's Andalusian coast. In 1967, after returning to the U.S., he took a position at New York University. Since then, he has published over twenty volumes of poetry, essays, memoir and fiction, including *Accidental Center* (1972), *In The Builded Place* (1979), *Wordflow* (1997), *Exigent Futures* (2003), *Living Root: A Memoir* (2000) and the prize-winning collection of essays, *Conviction's Net of Branches* (1985). Among his most recent works are a volume of poems, *Eschaton* (2009), a mixed genre work, *Beckmann Variations & other poems* (2010), *Speaking the Estranged: Essays on the Work of George Oppen* (2008, expanded edition, 2012) and *This Constellation Is A Name: Collected Poems 1965-2010*. Since the nineteen-nineties, he has been collaborating with the composer Ellen Fishman Johnson on multimedia works including the opera, *Constellations of Waking* (2000), based on the life of the German-Jewish writer Walter Benjamin, and the multimedia works, *This Art Burning* (2008) and *Out of Pure Sound* (2010), all of which premiered at the Philadelphia Fringe Festival. His writings on contemporary poetry, Judaic thought and on the intersections of Buddhist and Western philosophy and practice have appeared in various essay collections and journals. Among his many awards are grants and prizes from the Nation Endowment for the Humanities, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Poetry Society of America and The Fund for Poetry. A frequent traveler to Europe, he resides in New York City and spends his summers in the Colorado mountains. He is married to the poet and scholar Jane Augustine.