

ADAPTED FROM GRANT PROPOSAL PORTAL

Event Title

Epic Animalia: A Reading & Conversation with Jeffrey Yang and Anne Waldman

Organization

The GC Poetics Group

Date

March 8, 2012

Event Information

The GC Poetics Group is honored that Anne Waldman and Jeffrey Yang (both poets, critics, teachers, translators, activists, and much more) have agreed to participate in a conversation and reading at the Graduate Center on March 8, 2012. The idea for this event came from the mutual interest (of GC Students Bradley Lubin and Erica Kaufman) in the ways mythology and animals come into play in contemporary poetry. Jeffrey Yang's first book, *An Aquarium*, is an alphabetically organized catalog of poems that "are concerned with translation and with metaphor, both of which involve a "carrying across" from the natural into the human world; from the past into the present; from one language or civilization into another" (New York Times Book Review, 2008). Anne Waldman is the co-founder (with Allen Ginsberg) of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics (Naropa University), as well a legendary member of the Beat writers (one of few women) and the New York School poets. Waldman is the author of over forty books of poetry, along with several collections of essays (*Outrider* and *Vow to Poetry*), and numerous anthologies and archival collections of texts from both Naropa University and The Poetry Project. Waldman's most recent book is the *Iovis Trilogy*, a multi-volume feminist epic that spans twenty-five years of Waldman's experience, published for the first time as a single volume. Alice Notley writes, "encompassing over twenty years of personal, national, and international comportment, *The Iovis Trilogy* tracks familial and marital relationships, numerous wars, and encounters with other cultures and human visages, male and female, in person and via letter." The latter sections of *Iovis* focus specifically on language as "endangered," and parallels this danger to that of "endangered species." Like Yang, Waldman is epically committed to exploring the link between human and animal and the mutual "complications of their survival mechanisms" (from an interview with Waldman).

This event is completely student organized and inspired by the doctoral work of a number of other students in the Ph.D. in English program. We imagine the event to take the form of short introductions to the writers given by Ph.D. candidates, then a short reading of recent animal-related work by each poet, an informal conversation between the two poets and the student audience (moderated by GC students), and finally a reception. Waldman and Yang have never been in conversation or participated in an event of this genre before, which makes the occasion of this event particularly exciting. Additionally, Yang and Waldman are both well-established writers, and this event will give students an invaluable opportunity to chat with these writers and gain the kind of "research" that one can only get through conversation. It is important to note that multiple GC students are working on Waldman's writing for seminar papers and dissertations, and at least one student is working on a project regarding Yang's poetry and translations.

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Because of the prestige of these authors, the Poetics Group feels strongly that we are able to properly honor them with both a reception and honoraria. A grant from the DSC would help both be possible.

This event is also in line with the GC Poetics Group's aim to function as an interdisciplinary collective at the CUNY Graduate Center made up of students and faculty from all departments who are interested in poetry and poetics. Our purpose is to provide a context in which a variety of poetry events and discussions can easily happen, and to foster an intellectual and social community dedicated to creative writing and scholarship, and to imaginative amalgams of both. This group is a way of taking advantage of the diverse talents and interests of the Graduate Center's many poets and scholars of poetry, and also a way of connecting the institution to other poetry communities in New York City and elsewhere.

Budget and Publicity Material

The GC Poetics Group has committed more than 50% of our DSC Program Allocation to this event. Jeffrey Yang will be traveling to NYC for the program, so we plan to offer to cover his expenses. We've also been in conversation with the Center for Humanities who are able to help us plan a generous reception, giving students plenty of time to have the chance to talk one-on-one with the writers. A DSC Grant would make it possible for us to offer the writers an honoraria--which is particularly important considering that both Waldman and Yang are usually paid upwards of \$500 for events like these.

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Attachment 1: Budget (submitted separately as Excel table)

EPIC ANIMALIA: A Reading & Conversation with Anne Waldman & Jeffrey Yang
BUDGET

EXPENSE	COST	FUNDING SOURCE/AMOUNT
Travel (round trip Amtrak for Jeffrey Yang)	\$100	GC Poetics Group (DSC Program Allocation) Center for Humanities Donation (\$150), \$100
Reception/Refreshments	\$250	DSC Grant \$100 GC Poetics Group (DSC Program Allocation);
Honoraria	\$400	\$300 DSC Grant

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Attachment 2: Mock flyer (submitted separately as JPEG or PDF)

**EPIC ANIMALIA:
A READING & CONVERSATION WITH
ANNE WALDMAN & JEFFREY YANG**

**Thursday, March 8, 2012
7PM to 9PM, Room 5414
free!**

reception to follow

Please join the GC Poetics Group for a reading and conversation with poets Anne Waldman & Jeffrey Yang. This event will focus on questions revolving around the theme of “animal poems,” the bestiary, how and why these writers embrace and often embody multiple species within a single verse. So, come armed with questions and ideas. All are welcome.

“It was the olive branch and the owl which symbolized the way men
lived before they were civilized and somewhere out of darkness
I went to meet them.” (Waldman, *Iovis*, Book I)

Anne Waldman was recently deemed a “counter-cultural giant” by *Publisher’s Weekly*. Waldman is a poet, performer, professor, editor, and cultural activist. From 1966 until 1978, Waldman ran the St. Mark’s Poetry Project in New York, and in 1974, together with Allen Ginsberg, co-founded the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado. She is the author of more than 40 books and has concentrated on the long poem as a cultural intervention with such projects as *Marriage: A Sentence*, *Structure of The World Compared to a Bubble*, *Manatee/Humanity* (all published by Penguin Poets) and the anti-war feminist epic *The Iovis Trilogy: Colors in the Mechanism of Concealment* (Coffee House Press, 2011). Her numerous anthologies include *Nice to See You: Homage to Ted Berrigan*, and the co-edited collections *Civil Disobediences*, *The Angel Hair Anthology*, and *Beats at Naropa*. Waldman is a recipient of numerous awards and honors including the Poetry Society of America’s Shelley Memorial Award, and has recently been appointed a Chancellor of The Academy of American Poets. Waldman is the Artistic Director of the Summer Writing Program at Naropa University, the first Buddhist inspired university on the North American continent, and divides her time between Boulder and New York City.



Jeffrey Yang is the author of the poetry books *An Aquarium* (winner of the PEN/Joyce Osterweil Prize) and the *Vanishing-Line*. He is the translator of Su Shi’s *East Slope* and a collection of classical Chinese poems called *Rhythm 226*. Yang is also the co-editor (with Natasha Wimmer) of *Two Lines: Some Kind of Beautiful Signal*, and the editor of *Birds, Beasts, and Seas: Nature Poems from New Directions*. He is currently working on a translation of Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo’s *June Fourth Elegies*.

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