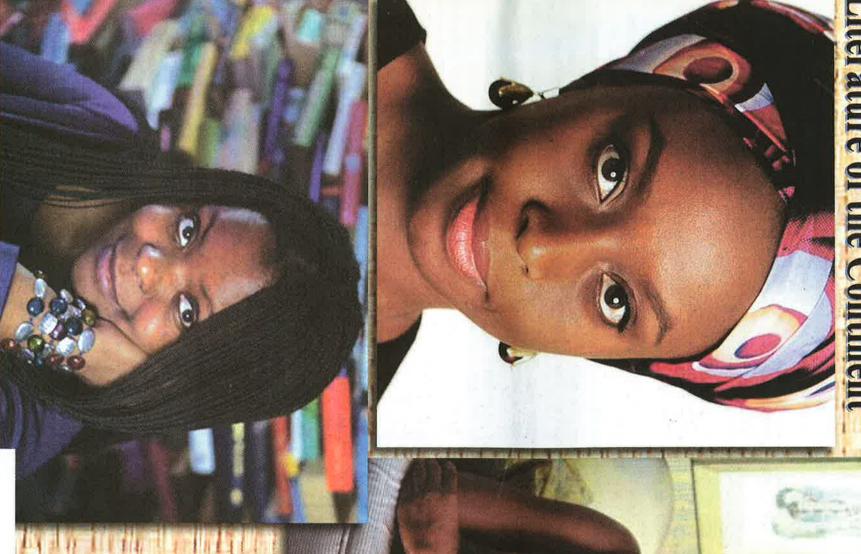
Books

are Transforming the Literature of the Continent Africa's New Women Writers

> Volume 27, March / Ap



US \$5.00 Canada \$6.00

www.wcwonline.org/

CHECK IT OUT!



LETTERS

years" to give Frances Perkins the attention she was due. It did not take that long. In fact, her story was told before that. We produced a documentary, You May Call Her Madam Secretary, in 1987. with major funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Massachusetts Council on the Regarding the review by Susan Feiner (WRB, Nov/Dec 09) about Kirstin Downey's The Woman Behind the New Deal, Feiner wonders why it took "65

This significant film was based on Perkins's oral history at Columbia University, for she was a great storyteller and her words gave life to the narrative, serious and humorous and clear, with a sense of serious and historical time. In this documentary, the place and historical time. In this documentary, the actress Frances Sternhagen takes on the persona of Perkins, not acting her, but telling Perkins's stories through the words Perkins spoke.

The point of our film was to bring this forgotten woman's remarkable story to a national audience. It is a film about conscience and politics. If history teaches values, then in Frances Perkins's life, we learn of a time when as she said "People Grand to

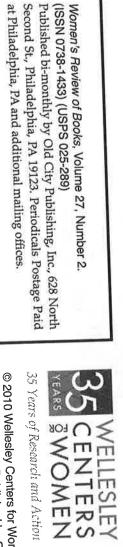
learn of a time when, as she said, "People cared to change the way things were." And our film is not only about her achievements in bringing about the Social Security Act and other revolutionary legislation of the New Deal, but reveals her influence on and close relationship to Franklin Delano

because of the drama of Frances Perkins as a driving force behind the reforms that shaped our society—in contrast to what is happening in Washington today. It is, we think, a timeless film. Especially now,

West Tisbury, MA **Marjory Potts**

CONTENTS

- "TELL OUR OWN STORIES" The Thing Around Your Neck By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie;
 I Do Not Come to You By Chance By Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani; An Elegy for Easterly By Petina Gappah;
 Women Writing Zimbabwe Edited by Irene Staunton Reviewed by Heather Hewett
- IN PERPETUAL REVOLT Love, Anger, Madness: ess: A Haitian Trilogy By Marie Vieux-Chauvet Reviewed by Patti M. Marxsen
- ADAM AND STEVE AND LESLIE AND EVE When Gay People Get Married: What Happens When Societies Legalize Same-Sex Marriage By M. V. Lee Badgett Reviewed by Emily Douglas
- 10 BACK IN PRINT AFTER 500 YEARS Incantations: Songs, Spells, and Images by Mayan Women By Ambar Past Reviewed by Martha Gies
- 14 LIVING LARGE The Tall Book: A Celebration of Life from on High By Arianne Cohen Reviewed by Renée Loth
- 15 THE STORYTELLER AND THE LISTENER The Shame of Survival: Working Through a Nazi Childhood By Ursula Mahlendorf Reviewed by Marcie Hershman
- 17 THE HELP The Irish Bridget: Irish Immigrant Women in Domestic Service in America, 1840–1930 By Margaret Lynch-Brennan Reviewed by Lauren Byrne
- 19 IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT The Year of the Flood By Margaret Atwood Reviewed by Katherine V. Snyder
- 21 CALL IT WORK, CALL IT GOD The Winter Sun: Notes on a Vocation By Fanny Howe
- 22 POETRY By Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor Review by Kelly Davi
- **CARTOON By Roberta Gregory**
- FIELD NOTES A POETIC RECKONING By Robin Becker
- CINDERELLA'S STEPMOTHER SPEAKS OUT Stepmonster: A New Look at Why Real Stepmothers Think, Feel, and Act the Way We Do By Wednesday Martin Reviewed by Audrey Elisa Kerr
- 26 THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND National Monuments By Heid. E. Erdrich Reviewed by Cheryl Savageau
- 27 SHE WHO MAKES HER MEANING CLEAR I Am Your Sister: Collected and Unpublished Writings of Audre Lorde Edited by Rudolph P. Byrd, Johnetta Betsch Cole, and Beverly Guy Sheftall Reviewed by Jewelle Gomez
- 29 THE "OCULAR ETHIC" Missing Bodies: The Politics of Visibility
 By Monica Casper and Lisa Jean Moore Reviewed by Beth Schwartzapfel
- THE EVOLUTION OF A MOVEMENT The Politics of Sexual Abuse: Emotion, Social Movements, and the State By Nancy Whittier Reviewed by Arlene Stein





Years of Research and Action

© 2010 Wellesley Centers for Women and Old City Publishing, Inc., a member of the Old City Publishing Group. Published by Old City Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Except as permitted under national laws or under the photocopy license described below, no part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, or stored in a retrieval system of any nature, without the advance written permission of the publisher. ISSN 0738-1433

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Women's Review of Books, Old City Publishing, Inc., 628 North Second St.,

Rights and Permissions/Reprints of Individual Articles This publication and each of the articles contained herein are protected by copyright. Permission to reproduce and/or translate material contained in this journal must be obtained in writing

For permission to photocopy for internal use within your organization, or to make copies for external or academic use please contact the Copyright Clearance Center at 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, USA; telephone: +1 978-750-8400 or online at http://www.copyright.com/. from the publisher.

Editor in Chief: Amy Hoffman E-mail: ahoffman@wellesley.edu

e-mail: guy@oldcitypublishing.com web: www.oldcitypublishing.com

Phone: +1 215 925 4390 Fax: +1 215 925 437

Philadelphia, PA 19123.

Blog & Contributing Editor: Martha Nichols Poetry & Contributing Editor: Robin Becker

Production & Design: Old City Publishing, Inc.

Proofreading: Ineke Ceder Cartoon Editor: Jennifer Camper Intrepid Volunteer: Clarissa Atkinson

Photography Editor: Ellen Feldman

Any unauthorized reproduction, transmission, or storage may result in civil or criminal liability.

World Wide Web Address

Additional information is also available through the publisher's website at http://www.oldcitypublishing.com.



Advertising and Subscriptions:
Ian Mellanby, Old City Publishing, Inc., 628 North
Second St., Philadelphia, PA 19123, USA
Phone: +1.215.925.4390 Fax: +1.215.925.4371
e-mail: ian@oldcitypublishing.com
web: www.oldcitypublishing.com

Women's Review of Books, Wellesley Centers for Women CHE, Wellesley College, 106 Central St., Wellesley, MA 02481, USA

Editorial Office:

Phone: +1.781.283.2555 Fax: +1.781.283.3645 www.wcwonline.org/womensreview

Women's Review of Books Vol. 27, No. 2, March/April 2010

That winter sun, the presence Howe secretly called "God" in her youth, was, as she suspected even then, the source of her vocation all along. But the vocation was not to create so much as to recognize the use of work as an avenue for deepening the self. And work is dead serious, according to Howe. It is a subjectively marvelous alternative to the very real possibility of not continuing one's human existence at all:

Is life worth living when there is blindness, fear, war, torture, floods, famine, earthquakes,

and prison? The answer can only be answered case by case...a sniff of helium and you speak like a cartoon chipmunk and are gone in fifteen minutes...[a person] might decide to turn the hemlock into paper and write a poem instead of dying, or write a suicide note instead of saying her prayers.

Admirers of Howe's work may be glad she chose to make paper from the hemlock that at times seems to tempt her, and that she chose the writing life above other possible avenues to work out her

understanding of the self and of God. And the reader of this volume may be refreshed by Howe's unwillingness to fetishize or aggrandize the life of the writer but rather to give work—whatever its -its due. 🕲

Kelly Davio is poetry and reviews editor for the Los Angeles Review and the author of Burn This House, forthcoming from Red Hen Press.

POETRY

The Cantor in Drag on Yom Kippur

and angry reminders to return Of Mice and Men to the shelf. Grandfather, you and your hunched back

No one knows I stole the blue velvet pouch when you died. The white shawl lay inside, spit yellow like aged teeth. I never expected , stained

in the same drawer as panties and brassieres. What would you think of me as Cantor? to wear it, a waste to have kept your fabric so long

Kissing four corners, pounding my chest with a flapper's fringe, a finger latched to hem, pointing toward God's book where the commandment is written

to atone, to mourn for each son. I took one of those too, china cabinet filled with kiddish cups, one

and the vessel still sits broken on my kitchen counter to remind me what a broken world I am, borrowing books and cups and taking

what should not belong to me. As a girl I sat at your table and wished for the hum of words to stop, and the little water cup

to wash away your hands. You propped feet on a torn footstool stuffed with discarded women's stockings. Here I am

in wrinkled blue and white polyester. The rough hemline settles at the back of my neck like a hand resting there, as I sing.

Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor, associate professor in Language and Literacy Education at the University of Georgia, has published in APR, Quarterly West, Puerto del Sol, and Barrow Street, and won prizes from the Leeway and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Foundations. She is co-editor of the book, Arts-Based Research in Education: Foundations for Practice (2008). She lives with her husband and son in Athens, Georgia.

Workshop Advice: Take the Guru Out

He's too hocus pocus for an American poem. Orange cloth, brown flesh, anot part naked, crystal eyes, white hair, encircled by women continent enters the room when he's there, who eat brewers yeast for breakfast. No, the guru , another

a re-potted Danaua Famors.

soil. Choose a financial planner, a womanrabbi—anything but his bald patience smothering has to go. Too East, the peaceful guru hopelessly exposed. Just the sound of it, "guru" sounds too fru-fru, archaic, a white birds over lovers on the coast, their picnic lunch of fried chicken lying there the line. He hovers like a flock of white lie for what you really want in American art: Chinese take-out glare, sidewalk smothered in butts, chewed gum tted banana plant in American Hairy women

hang his picture by the birthing bed, women who pray in private or chant their musty breath in airport entourage; mothers with babies in arms begging the dead guru to bless them, inject India in American souls. A replica swami hangs on white

His hippie dippie image belongs there, not in your poem. Kudzu and gurus, aurora borealis scarves and grandmothers portraits: Mother Teresa, the only woman; walls in the ashram next to black and white Martin Luther King, the only American.

big no-no's. Americans make ourselves other holy figures: they're invisible or male and white. Woman, here's our advice: lose the guru.



NEED THE PERFECT GIFT?

Send your friends a subscription to

Women's Review of Books or Woman's Art Journal GIFT SUBSCRIPTION CARDS ARE IN THE MAGAZINE OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.oldcitypublishing.com

