

poetically distant from Virgil. While the *Aeneid* treats the matter of loss in a sustained narrative, Bezner's style is lyric, achieving a compression that is reminiscent of Asian rather than Roman poetics. Bezner's short lines scatter his thoughts. He leaves fine, empty space on his page. The book's final lines read ("Wherever"):

Always with me.  
No burden.

This koan-like paradox pares down to its most basic the pervading mood of *Wherever*. Bezner's most consistent burden is his lack of burden.

Bezner's poetics operates not by narration, but by repetition. The book returns again and again to a few images: bare trees, snow-covered landscapes, solitary mornings. These images form, in an emphatically lyric mode, a strong sense of literary character in the narrator's voice. Bezner's next work, *Particularities*, is forthcoming this year. *Particularities* is to be a book-length poem. Will the objectivist strain in his poetics translate across forms? The transition seems like a leap. But *Wherever* demonstrates that Bezner is in good command of his craft.

\* Virgil. *Aeneid*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. Vintage, 1985.

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*Silent Treatment*.  
Lisa Lewis.  
Penguin, 1998.  
79 pages. \$14.95 (paperback).

Reviewed by Robert West

*Silent Treatment* is published as part of the prestigious National Poetry Series, and, like most poetry collections from reputable publishers, it boasts enviable jacket praise from a handful of eminences. One looks for poetry to surprise, but this book's surprise – alas – lies in how bad it is. In the vast majority of these poems there is simply nothing interesting happening. Most present a kind of low-calorie psychodrama, without any redeeming sense of linguistic play. Dull poems could at least have the courtesy to be brief, but these are interminable: the very shortest is 32 long lines long, and many go on for several pages. Fifteen out of the 24 poems sprawl over three pages or more, with lines as tedious as these:

Not one man in my whole life has said I'm  
Pretty. It's because they have discerning tastes.  
My friend says her 300-pound boyfriend  
Called her homely. He told her he'd repair  
My problem with men. One night with him,

He said, and I'd be over it. She tells another  
Story. I have to admit I'm curious.  
I guess he thinks I've never been fucked.  
I guess that's what he gets for not knowing me

All my life, when I had something to prove.

Or these:

*There's*  
*A hummingbird trapped in the indoor arena*, I said,  
My voice catching so I felt embarrassed. She looked  
At me strangely: *Can it get out?* I asked. *Oh, sure.*  
She said. The next day I found out. I rode my filly  
Slowly beneath the hummingbird's skylight;  
And there was its body. It had worn itself out.  
Goddamnit, I don't know why that makes me so mad.  
Maybe because I didn't try to help.

Really – do you think? I suppose the poet thinks this will be interesting to someone, but it's hard to imagine a literate person being riveted by such stuff. There are a few good poems (The anaphoric "I Knew If I Looked" stands out), and a few weirdly fascinating ones (such as "Sexology"), but on the whole *Silent Treatment* is frustratingly bland.

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*The Objectivist Nexus: Essays in Cultural Poetics*.  
Rachel Blau DuPlessis & Peter Quartermain, editors.  
University of Alabama Press, 1999.  
379 pages. \$24.95 (paperback).

Reviewed by Jeffery Beam

Editors DuPlessis and Quartermain have done a valuable service in collecting these essays which confirm and extend the importance of Objectivist poetics in American poetry. This movement began formally with Louis Zukofsky's "Objectivist" issue of *Poetry* (February 1931) and *An Objectivist Anthology* in 1932. The Objectivist poets, branded by an editorial demand for a common rubric by Harriet Monroe of *Poetry*, became associated with a capricious aesthetic practice and philosophy. The major poets connected with the term, George Oppen, Lorine Niedecker, Carl Rakosi, Basil Bunting, Charles Reznikoff, and Zukofsky, are the subjects of this book. The editors and essayists see clear origins in the work of Pound, Stein, Moore, and W.C. Williams; and important descendants in Cid Corman, Kathleen Fraser, Lyn Hejinian, Rosmarie Waldrop, and the Language poets.

Debated, refused, embraced, contradicted, defined and redefined by its "members," Objectivism's central tenets has remained relatively stable – the poem as object, as a formal music formed from the intense and sincere gaze and intelligence of the poet. Over time, however, these principles have enlarged into a neces-