

READ AND RECOMMENDED

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Love Speaks Its Name: Gay and Lesbian Love Poems.

J.D. McClatchy, editor.

Everyman's Library, Knopf, 2001.

256 pages. \$12.50 (hardcover).

Word of Mouth: An Anthology of Gay American Poetry.

Timothy Liu, editor.

Talisman House, 2000.

458 pages. \$24.95 (paperback).

Not since the *Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse* has a gay anthology demonstrated for me what is best in queer lit. Having a strong dislike for confessional and overly autobiographical poetry, I have tired of hearing one poet after another's political rant or coming out story. In *Love Speaks Its Name* and *Word of Mouth* editors McClatchy and Liu have aimed rather higher—for experiment and craftsmanship married to content. *Love Speaks* is essentially a pillow book, sized for the pocket, the nightstand drawer, or under the rumpled pillow. *Word of Mouth* succeeds as a major survey of twentieth century American gay poems.

Liu, in his critical and reasoned introduction, explains that his anthology "does not limit itself" to "poems that seemed more daring by way of content than by choice of form or even by way of poetic lineage." Previous anthologies have admirably offered the work of mostly young activist or gay ghetto poets at the expense of new and older unknown poets. The more interesting poets here write "quieter poems" that "might elude most finely tuned gaydar." Liu cheerfully hopes he might "complicate the issue of just how useful the term 'gay American poetry' is for our time and generations to come." McClatchy's book, focusing solely on love, confirms the argument Liu puts forth in his. *Word* closes with a fine afterward by Rodney Phillips of the New York Public Library's Berg Collection. Phillips observes that the poets here "perhaps for the first time as far as gay anthologies go" "who are pretty much self-identified as gay, also identify themselves just as importantly as poets" making an anthology where "each of these 'qualities' seem

pretty much equal."

Poets in "louder" previous anthologies might argue with Phillips's statement, and some might find many of the poems here "old-fashioned" in their unwillingness to say some things outright—working through metaphor as well as out-spokenness. That's the difference. Poetry's strength rests in metaphor's ability to reach multiple layers of understanding—oftentimes lost in poetry of rhetoric. The poetry in *Mouth* is not dumb-downed and expects its readers to ponder deeper implications.

Mouth offers an extensive bibliography of the poets' works, but sadly, offers no snapshot biographies, which would have further enhanced the usefulness of the anthology. Arranged chronologically, it's great fun to find James Merrill (with too few poems, alas) between Allen Ginsberg and Frank O'Hara. The greatest discovery for me was Leland Hickman's "Yellowknife Boy" with its Ginsbergesque throttling and pungent poignancies in which the poet's family and his love for men interlace into a shamanic trance of man-love and father-love "in emergence from dadspace gentle." Beautiful work.

Mouth succeeds and fails singularly. More intelligent than almost any other previous anthology, it still suffers from that which deadens much celebrated gay poetry (and poetry in general) in our time—being too frequently self-referential and provincially urban. Poets of the countryside and natural world like Will Inman still get short shrift (where is Inman?). (Southern gay poets are noticeably, as always the case, virtually absent from both anthologies.) Too many of the poems replay the usual personal litanies of relationship / crises / conquests. Contrary to Liu's eschewing of poetic lineage, many of the poets know (or knew) each other and use their poems for private conversations and social climbing. Centuries from now this moment in gay lit will be viewed as obsessed by chatty style over substance and experiment. In this sense, *Word* is somewhat schizophrenic, yet the craftsmanship of the poems in general saves the book from a slippery confessional slope. I admire Frank

O'Hara's work, he was one of the first gay poets I studied, but every poem of his reminds me of the insular gift, the oftentimes vacuous silliness of the confessional stream, he helped give to American and gay poetry. As a whole, the older poets don't suffer as much from the weary homogenized styles of the young.

Poems and poets worth mentioning: Joe Brainard's "I Remember" is one of the great 20th century poems, avoiding confessional egocentricity by bombarding the reader with a universal flood of remembrances of the world of *things*. Southerner Thomas Meyer's "Love's Dial" I have acknowledged before as one of the most stately and impassioned gay love poems ever written. One wishes for a bit more of James Broughton—his antic nursery rhymes are missing. Where are Ronald Johnson's early poems—masterpieces of open field nature-based mysticism? And Jonathan Williams' odd, comic, and on-the-spot satiric later poems? Bowers, Spicer, Duncan, Jonas, Gunn, Dickey, and James White, offer poems of distinction and delight. Wieners' classic "Two Years Later" is a treasure. The more contemporary poets tend, in my view, to be either too precious or too casual—one can be either without sacrificing craft, but it's much harder. Carl Phillips frequently flies above the sheep, as does Reginald Shepherd whose elegant yet clarified formalities mix image and sexual fact with delft and energizing wit: "I come / through the door, I came and was / conquered by tensed thighs, taut buttocks." Justin Chin successfully satirizes and elegizes simultaneously the brokenhearted beauty and sadness of gay cruising life—with its competition, decay, lust, loneliness, desperation, thrills, titillations, and decadence.

In a relative handful of poems from Virgil through Michelangelo and Shakespeare and on to Whitman, A.E. Housman, Lorca, Pasolini, Noël Coward, Bessie Smith, Gertrude Stein, Baldwin, Rich, Rukeyser, Schuyler, Wieners, Meyer, Doty, and Hemphill, McClatchy has done the unthinkable. Placing no historical or locational limits on itself, *Love Speaks* offers a thorough historical survey of western gay poetry in a small package. All the big names are here with a nice smattering of young poets who you may or may not have heard of. Unfortunately no bios or bibliography are offered—just the birth and death dates of the poets. Love poetry is, in my view, the hardest to write and McClatchy has chosen well. I have returned over and over again to this anthology and never tire of rereading the many classic poems herein. While most of the poems here are somewhat more restrained experimentally than in *Word* they remain heralds of the poetic craft. McClatchy seems to hit upon the thing that I believe allows both volumes to succeed so well—"The poems here have all been written by men and women whose desires for love, over the centuries, have been condemned and persecuted. In earlier days this forced them to learn how to disguise their de-

sires. But then, that is what poems do as well. To hide something is to conceal it; to disguise something is to reveal it but only to those who know how and where to look. The very conventions of poetry were devised to encode experience, to make it less obvious and thereby more true. To make a metaphor, after all, is to describe something in terms of what it is not, the better to apprehend what it is."

Bravo, I say. Let poets continue to disarm by cunning, rather than revealing all. I much prefer mystery in my poems. Nothing wrong with going naked (in body, politics, or psychology)—a time and place for that too. We can have both can't we? These two anthologies remind us of the power of metaphor to reveal, of subterfuge to supplant, and of the roundabout way being a much more interesting one than the plain ahead path.

Antler: The Selected Poems.

Antler.

Soft Skull Press, 2000.

197 pages. \$14.00 (paperback).

Antler's is a one-man living manifesto. These honest, ribald, randy, luscious, lusty, sensual, generous, natural poems move with such ease that one feels Whitman's ghost clapping on the sidelines. It's a further sad commentary on culture in the United States that Antler, legendary and well loved as he is, must tend his poems door to door like Whitman. This selected poems must be celebrated, and well.

I have admired Antler's work from afar for a long time and when I became poetry editor of *Oyster Boy Review* I was determined that his work would one day appear in OBR's pages (and they will soon). He must also be the most prolific (while retaining a high level of quality) male poet in America (only Lyn Lifshin, a woman, may outrank him there). The Beats live in his work too, but in a younger more innocent and less strangling way—easy, that's the word I like. As much as one thinks of Ginsberg (and his championing of Antler's work through the years), it's Snyder Antler seems most "like." He's tenderer, almost frail even when he's rebelling. He's a meditative poet of the woods and cosmos, and yet his enlightenment embraces the earth as freely as it embraces eternity.

There are lots of good sex poems here. Like Whitman, Antler cannot, will not, separate sex from love. His love is all embracing and to make love is to be love. The poem "Ejaculation" begins "Every Universe is an ejaculation" and through trees, fruits, and corpses it moves until 39 lines later he proclaims "Show me anything that's not an ejaculation." Antler manages to make what might seem trite abstractions into actual realizations. His mind is Zen, his body is hot, and his words entwine. Antler loves to come and he loves for

others to come too, but his poems are not just about sex—he is a biting social critic of American business as well as sexual hypocrisy. This has not made him a babe of the grant givers. Too much boysex, too many trees, and too much commentary on the life of the factory worker.

In “Factory” the revelatory blends with the critical in surprising ways—we see Whitman’s forthright and vernacular American worker weighted down by the power of the machine: “As multitudes worked on the machines / . . . / For me they waited, patiently, the machines / all the time in the world / . . . / Before I said *I would rather be dead / than sweat at the work of zombies, / The machines waited.*” Antler speaks from experience and describes the deadening repetition of daily life at the Continental Can Company. “Factory” is a frightening true-life description of Blake’s fiery furnaces. Only a mind nursed by Blake’s and Whitman’s, as Antler’s has been, can take such a horror and transform it into an extinction of factories and into a metaphysical and spiritual paradise: “There are no more slaves! No one knows anymore what money is! / The utmost passion of eternity feels itself in every human being.”

Antler is a planetary poet—tending the exiled Paradise garden while teaching us what life will be like when it’s open again.

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The Soul of Rumi.

Coleman Barks, translator.

HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.

448 pages. \$28.00 (hardcover).

To go from Antler’s boylove to Rumi may seem like a great leap, especially since the powers that be in the Rumi publishing world like to play down the probable physical love between Rumi and his beloved friend Shams. Barks makes a small comment about the question in *The Soul of Rumi*, but quickly brushes such thoughts aside. But anyone who understands the experience of ecstatic, Bhaktic love through a gay sensibility knows that Rumi’s expression must have been much more than symbolic. The gay experience, like the mystical one, is “other” and Rumi’s transformation from a respected staid Turkish theologian to a whirling dervish after meeting Shams is not at all surprising to the many closeted men who have flung their doors open. Not to belabor the point, but the important thing is not that Rumi and Shams probably spoke “the Love that dare not speak its name” to each other, but rather that a mystical enlightenment grew from it, and that his earthly love for Shams gave Rumi a vocabulary to describe an even higher experience. The world’s great poetry is full of such upheavals, such loves. One of the greatest lessons Rumi teaches is that there is no separation from God in earthly things

unless we make it so.

Barks has devotedly been making Rumi versions from other English translations since 1976. His *Essential Rumi* is one of the most complete collections of Rumi in English available, and now we have this volume to round out Barks’ work, and apparently to end it. Barks intends to focus more on his own poetry, and leave room for a number of translators who are now working from the original Persian. Barks’ versions are always beautiful, always moving, and always highly emotive. It’s inevitable that translations miss the full range of a writer’s work. This is a Rumi that Americans, supposedly starved for emotional religion, have needed and adopted. A whole Rumi industry has sprung up around Barks’ work. But Rumi’s real message, that higher love transcends the physical titillation one gets with lower emotions is oftentimes lost in the avalanche of images Barks extracts. Idries Shah used to remind audiences that the dervish dance was a prescribed teaching tool for a specific time and place, and probably even dangerous for others to adopt. Many of the lovers of Rumi I know seem more enraptured by how the poems make them “feel” than by what they have learned.

Thus Barks’ Rumi must be read with restraint and wisdom. One can find the mirror to oneself in these poems, avoiding over-stimulation and emotional excess, by allowing Rumi’s ecstatic images to engage a higher sensory organ. Barks has honed his Rumi and Shams to a clearer view of this ecstasy in *The Soul of Rumi*: “When you feel / longing, be patient, and / also prudent.” The trouble with all the Sufi poets translators is a tendency to make the mystics’ words seem off-handed, as if they were little radios constantly spewing out advice and knowledge. What’s lost is the hard work, the interminable bleeding sweat even Rumi’s sudden enlightenment took.

Despite my complaints, Barks is *the* Rumi translator of our time and much joy, wisdom, and knowledge can be found in his work. Rumi’s wisdom is not rational, at least in the traditional sense, but there is method to it. Rumi truly opens the door to a richer relationship to the universe and Divinity with his poems. Barks captures Rumi’s ability to break psychological barriers to inner work and to the Divinity that permeates all: “Love comes with a knife, not some shy question / and not with fears for its reputation.”

Luckily Barks translates a whole book of Rumi’s *Masnavi* for us. Composed on the tongue as Rumi wandered the streets of Konya, the massive book holds nothing back using everything human, no matter how low or high, as sourcebook for teaching. These are Barks’ most felicitous versions yet. Rumi is here in all his opinionated wit, his pointed observations, and his generous soul, and without the heavy-handed sentimentality apparent in some of Barks’ earlier work. “With your teacher you are safe . . . / He makes you green like / garden ground. He makes you stony

and sandy, so roses and / vines may grow there.”

Rumi’s luminous mysticism is like Whitman’s, Blake’s, Dickinson’s, and Ikkyū’s—earthy and otherworldly. It refuses illusionary definitions of time, space, and material: “We give value to a piece of ground for the same reason we / give food to the poor. The / ground has external dullness and internal luminosity. The / two seem opposed like a jewel / embedded in common rock. The outside says, ‘This is all / I am.’ The inside, ‘Look / further. Look everywhere.’ The outside, ‘There’s nothing inside.’ Inside, ‘Wait. I’ll / show you what’s true.’ . . . Parts of earth have stolen / bits of God. We make them confess.”

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Manifesto: A Century of Isms.

Mary Ann Caws, editor.

University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

713 pages. \$35.00 (paperback).

This book has gone on my shelf alongside Rothenberg and Joris’ groundbreaking two volume *Poems for the Millennium* as an accompanying and replete source-book for understanding twentieth century radical literary and artistic aesthetics. Caws, a distinguished scholar and translator in the field of Surrealism, explains that a manifesto “at its most endearing . . . has a madness about it. It is peculiar and angry, quirky, or downright crazed. Always opposed to something, particular or general, it has not only to be striking but to stand up straight.” Manifestos define a perpetual newness. They are an act of excessive reason in which madness, aesthetics, and purpose express the hope, expectation, and fruition of principles of belief and action against a presumed or actual static condition. Caws reminds us that manifestos are a “loud genre” “often noisy in appearance, like a typographical alarm or an implicit rebel yell.” They define new moments and are essentially Modernist as opposed to Post-Modernist in intent—for they take themselves seriously, as true revolutions always do.

Caws’ over 200 selections begin roughly with the Symbolist movement of the late 1880s and 90s and continue up through the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E movement of the 1970s and Compactism of 1995. The selections are eclectic, familiar, obscure, sudden, and lengthy. Caws occasionally deliberately mixes time frames, including Whitman, for example, with the “Individualism and Personism” of Marsden Hartley (1916) and William Carlos Williams (1974). However, these mix-ups ring true—Whitman’s work spoke to the aesthetics of Hartley and Williams as if he were a co-conspirator in a revolution. Again Caws stretches the meaning of “Ism” by coining her own terms to define moments—whether short or extended (like the Whitman-Williams line)—that form central aesthetic principles guiding artists with similar outlooks and

methods.

Included in these pages are texts from well-known movements—Imagism, Cubism, Fauvism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Vorticism—and relatively unknown ones—Rayonism and Oulipo. Caws offers literary texts such as Wilde’s preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Eudora Welty’s “Place in Fiction,” and poems such as Mallarmé’s “A Throw of Dice” and John Cage’s “Bang Fist.” She submits Whistler’s infamous “The Ten O’clock,” Morea’s “The Symbolist Manifesto,” Artaud’s “All Writing is Pigshit,” Kandinsky and Marc’s “Preface to *Der Blaue Reiter*,” Schwitters’ “Cow Manifesto” (“First. I find it very unnatural to milk different cows into a single pail. You should milk different cows into different pails. Even like that it isn’t really ideal . . .”), and writings by Apollinaire, Cendrars, Mandelstam, Munch, de Kooning, Duchamp, Tzara, Arp, Mina Loy, Pound, Tatlin, Dali, and Huidobro. The list goes on and includes such works as W.E.B. Dubois’ “The Souls of Black Folk,” and writings by Hélène Cixous, Charles Bernstein, and Edmond Jabès.

Some of these works, as obsessive theoretical writing tends to be, makes for hard reading, but most not only entertain by their excessive urge to argue and convince but also by the imaginative verbal, philosophical, and artistic rifts employed to make their point. For example, here’s an excerpt from Umberto Boccioni’s “Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto”: “On the 18th of March, 1910, in the limelight of the Chiarella Theatre of Turin, we launched our first manifesto to a public of three thousand people—artists, men of letters, students and others; it was a violent and cynical cry which displayed our sense of rebellion, our deep-rooted disgust, our haughty contempt for vulgarity, for academic and pedantic mediocrity, for the fanatical worship of all that is old and worm-eaten.” These works frequently take spiritual flight—no matter what art form, country, or time supports their origin. Again, “Futurist Painting” is not unlike many when it states: “Thousands of miles divide us from the sun; yet the house in front of us fits into the solar disk.”

A Century of Isms fascinates and inspires. Where are such voices now? Do they speak and yet the bigness (and thus collapsed smallness) of the world prevents us from hearing? What shockwaves many of these artists created in our time; it’s almost impossible to have the same effect now. Shame! These works, for all their inventiveness in art and thought, resonated particularly for me in a comment by Williams Butler Yeats from “Anima Hominis”: “We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry.” It’s true these rebels yelled at the “others” around them, but one finally gets the feeling that the argument was with themselves. Thus, instead of pure rhetoric each created pure poetry. It’s great fun to listen in on a century’s worth of these prin-

cipléd verbal battles—even more fun to try to figure out where you yourself stand in relation:

A dress that is ingeniously conceived and carried well has the same value as a fresco by Michelangelo or a Titian Madonna.

Women's fashion can never be extravagant enough. And here too we will begin by abolishing symmetry.

In woman we can idealize the most fascinating conquests of modern life. And so we will have the machine-gun woman . . . the airplane woman, the submarine woman . . . We will transform the elegant lady into a real, living, three-dimensional complex.

The reign of silk in the history of female fashion must come to an end . . . We fling open wide the doors of the fashion ateliers to paper, cardboard, glass, tinfoil, aluminum, ceramic, rubber, fish skin, burlap, oakum, hemp, gas, growing plants, and living animals. Every woman will be a walking synthesis of the universe. ["Futurist Manifesto of Women's Fashion" by Volt (Vincenzo Fani)]

If you read the recent *New Yorker*, which extracted excerpts from the letters and office memos of Diana Vreeland, one wonders . . . was she Volt reborn?

*Don't Touch the Poet:
The Life and Times of Joel Oppenheimer.*
Lyman Gilmore.
Talisman House, 1998.
256 pages. \$17.95 (paperback).

Joel Oppenheimer, who died in 1997, strove to make earth confess its "stolen bits of God." This biography, which grew out of a hypnotherapist's sessions with Oppenheimer as he attempted to lessen his tobacco habit, brings attention to this poet who received much less than he deserved during his life. Oppenheimer, a student at Black Mountain College during its Charles Olson / Paul Goodman heyday, a figure in the Greenwich Village scene most of his life, and a notable critic for *The Village Voice*, published mostly through small, but distinguished, presses such as The Jargon Society and Perishable Press.

The book begins with his death, and the text of his last poem "animal." In the poem a young goat reaches unsuccessfully for some green leaves tempting it nearby, and an old dog tangled in undergrowth by his lead spends a whole day without water and later runs away. In the final verse Oppenheimer describes the tumor pressing against his cerebellum "afraid i won't / make it looking / at the goat / the empty doghouse." It's a perfect Oppenheimer poem. His poems all have a steely strength. They are inner and quiet and joyful and welcoming all. They are unstaged and dramatic in turn. They are lyrical and subtly narrative. One sees in his last poem a sterling example of his polished ear,

and the natural, virile, compressed rhythm which make his poems so powerful on the page, but fully alive when read aloud. This man knew his periods and commas. His breath. Gilmore has done a fine job in capturing a tender, humane, difficult and complex man and poet.

Don't Touch the Poet constructs a sympathetic yet honest portrait of this quiet, yet demonstrative man. It also begins the work of establishing Oppenheimer as a poet to remember, to save from loss. Gilmore uses poem texts effectively to trace the development of Oppenheimer's work, but also to analyze what made him tick as a person and a writer. The many friends, colleagues, and family members who were interviewed for the project, and a seven-year study of Oppenheimer's papers enliven the book. I recommend this to lovers of poetry as a fine supplement to reading the poems. The poems are the Fiddler's Green. Gilmore carefully leads the way.

Basil Bunting On Poetry.
Peter Makin, editor.
Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
234 pages. \$42.00 (hardcover).

This book collects two series of lectures Bunting delivered in 1968 and 1974 at Newcastle University and expressive of the same interests—Persian poetry, music, Elizabethan poetry and song, Wordsworth, Whitman, Pound, Eliot, Yeats, and Louis Zukofsky—that make his poetry so unique. Peter Makin observes in his introduction that "Bunting assumes that art is shape, not content. There is no excuse, of course, for decoration; it simply spoils shape. In this art, in the English language, rhythm is the most essential shapeable: and if the poet has the rhythm right, he probably needs nothing else to give main form to his poem." For Bunting the "ear" is more important than intelligence, sound more important than meaning. Nevertheless, proving Makin's statement, Bunting's work, some of the most aurally complicated and carefully honed in English poetry, is also some of the most dazzling and rich with meaning, while being accessible and instructive.

In these lectures Bunting laments the loss of music in poetry, leads the reader to poets who can instruct by example such as Sir Thomas Wyatt, advocates simplicity of syntax, the use of the colloquial, and realism in speech and matter. There are many interesting essays here, and all conspire to make one of the most sustained poetic arguments for poetry as a form of music than any I know. This does not mean he solely advocates traditional forms. Bunting advocates what works when it works and that sound is what primarily makes it "make."

"Precursors" is a fascinating study of the forces and

poets at work in Victorian poetry that led to Pound, Eliot, H.D., Yeats, and Zukofsky. Bunting argues in "Wyat" that this Tudor poet, not Chaucer, was "the effective founder of modern English poetry, and delineates Wyatt's strengths while placing him in the context of his European contemporaries. In "The Codex," Bunting states: "Whether you listen to a piece of music, or a poem, or look at a picture or a jug, or a piece of sculpture, what matters about it is not what it has in common with others of its kind, but what is singularly its own." Bunting's wit combines an easy familiarity with literary esoterica making for absorbing reading. The many examples of poetry from Beowulf to Zukofsky provide a primer of extraordinary poetic practice over the centuries. Professor Makin and Johns Hopkins have done a valued service in bringing Bunting's readable and provocative prose writings to print.

Voices of Light: Spiritual and Visionary Poems by Women Around the World from Ancient Sumeria to Now.

Aliki Barnstone, editor.

Shambhala, 1999.

287 pages. \$26.95 (hardcover).

I didn't actually receive this title as a review copy, but stumbled upon it on a remaindered book table at my local bookstore. I've been a fan of Barnstone's work since her and Willis Barnstone's groundbreaking and encyclopedic *A Book of Women Poets from Antiquity to Now* (Schocken Books, 1980) and Willis Barnstone's *The Other Bible* (HarperCollins, 1984). Both books retrieve from obscurity works and literature of spirit and spirituality, poetry and belief, barred from traditional canons. In *Voices of Light*, Barnstone turns her consummate skills as an editor and translator to collecting a core sample of women's spiritual poetry across time and geography. These women converse forcefully with Divinity—always considering themselves equal to, one with, the all-in-all. Their spirituality defies shackles of political and sexual constraint, manifesting instinctual, passionate, determined, and self-aware poems of great beauty, strength and variety. God frequently becomes a lover, or consort, as in this anonymous Egyptian poem of ca. 1,500 B.C.E.: "I find my love fishing / His feet in the shallows. // We have breakfast together / And drink beer. // I offer the magic of my thighs / He is caught in the spell." Enlightenment discloses itself through everyday things and experiences. As in all great spiritual writing the veils between the worlds drop and either the illusionary misery of this world vanishes, or the splendor of the next overcomes this one as in Praxilla's poem from ca. 450 B.C.E.: "Most beautiful of things I leave is sunlight. / Then come glazing stars and the moon's face. / Then ripe cucumbers and apples and pears."

Arranged chronologically, the anthology begins with Enheduanna, a moon priestess and royal daughter of Sumeria, who is the first known writer in world history, and concludes with a generous selection of living poets from across the globe. Over one hundred poets are represented, including many of my favorite poets: Sappho, Lady Ise, Lady Izumi, Metchthild of Magdeburg, Mirabai, Barrett Browning, Dickinson, H.D., Moore, Akhmatova, Tsvetayeva, Niedecker, Levertov, Rukeyser, Fuertes, Plath, Gregg, Glück, Carson, and Hillman. The great joy is becoming more familiar with poets of whom I knew a little such as the group of anonymous Sanskrit poets, the Sufi poet-mystic Rabia, Hildegard of Bingen, Lalla, Sachs, and Hébert. And poets of which I knew nothing: Zi We, Sangha, Yu Xuanji, Sun Buer, Hadewijch of Brabant, Sor Violante do Céu, Bibi Hayati, Affonsina Storni, and Ruth Stone. Luckily the book includes short biographies with lists of major works so that the reader can pursue other poems by the poets who attract.

As with any anthology, there are minor quibbles. Why not more Levertov, Fuertes, and Glück, rather than so many pages of the Bromas/Begley "Sapphics"? And where are Sitwell, Mistral, Raine, Smith, Di Prima, and Oliver—each noticeably missing? Nevertheless this and the other Barnstone anthologies are worth searching out.

This excerpt from "Nothing" by Julia de Burgos, a Puerto Rican poet who died in 1953, can best encapsulate the beauty and wonder of *Voices of Light*:

We come from not being and march toward not being:
 nothing between two nothings, zero between two zeros,
 and since between two nothings nothing can be,
 let's drink to the splendor of not being our bodies.
