

WRITING CLASS: The Kootenay School of Writing Anthology

EDITED BY ANDREW KLOBUCAR AND MICHAEL BARNHOLDEN. New Star [SPD, dist.], \$16 paper (208p) ISBN: 0-921586-68-X

The KSW surfaced as a response to the mid-1980s closing of the David Thompson University Centre in Nelson, British Columbia. Since the 19th century--when the Doukhobors, a Russian radical spiritualist sect, settled there--the city has had a reputation for progressive, even utopian, attitudes, as the informative introduction by the poet-editors recounts. Founded by writers such as Gary Whitthead, Calvin Wharton and Jeff Derksen, who has since become an important Canadian poet and critic, the school forged early, however troubled, ties with radical labor movements in Vancouver, most notably with the Wobblies (see FYI below). The writers themselves found inspiration in the New American poetics of the '60s (and its Canadian counterparts), but later made a turn toward Language writing techniques, though always refusing to assimilate into any sort of literary or academic culture ("school" or no). This anthology is the first devoted to the group. Highlights include Gerald Greene's [sic] intricate, long poem "Resume"; Peter Culley's elegant social-pastorals such as "Winterreise"; the bracket-within-brackets section of Kevin Davies's book *Pause Button*; Kathryn Mcleod's technically dazzling public meditations, like "The Infatuation"; Dan Farrell's "Thimking of You," a psycho-puzzle of nouns and verbs; Dorothy Trujillo Lusk's sand-blasting "Oral Tragedy," along with excellent work by Lisa Robertson (*Xeclogue*; *Forecasts*, Mar. 6) and Derksen (*Downtime*; *Dwell*). Whether the poems succeed in rearticulating and rendering visible the toxicities of class relations in a manner that can be taken up by the culture-at-large is a matter for debate. But more than any anthology of American poetry produced in the States recently, this book fulfills the promise of Donald Allen's seminal *New American Poetry*, bringing an unacknowledged and masterful group of subversive works into the light. (Apr.)

FYI: Back in print this month, Joyce Kornbluh's *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology*, originally published in 1964, makes for a terrific introduction to the Industrial Workers of the World (the Wobblies) and their activities, collecting missives, cartoons, manifestoes, songs, poems, photos, dispatches and other documents. (Charles H. Kerr, \$24 464p ISBN 0-88286-237-5).

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citation: Title: forecasts: Nonfiction., Publishers Weekly, 00000019, 04/24/2000, Vol. 247, Issue 17