Witness for the Prosecution: Erasure Poetics

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Samantha Schaefer, having been admitted to the Carl and Winifred Lee Honors College in the fall of 2008, successfully completed the Lee Honors College Thesis on April 16, 2012.

The title of the thesis is:

*Witness for the Prosecution: Erasure Poetics*

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-- Jen Bervin, afterword to Nets: "I stripped Shakespeare's sonnets bare to the 'nets' to make the space of the poems open, porous, possible--a divergent elsewhere. When we write poems, the history of poetry is with us, pre-inscribed in the white of the page; when we read or write poems, we do it with or against this palimpsest."

-- Philip Metres on Bervin's Nets: "To use another metaphor: Bervin's poems are like rubbings of old slate gravestones whose original names and dates have faded into near-obscurity; the poet, the pencil etcher, wants to retain the artifact through a kind of representation of it. However, through time and weather, it is possible only to have a partial version. Still, as in good stone etchings, they take on a new life in their new form, become something other."


-- Meghan O'Rourke on Carson's Nox: "'Nox' is as much an artifact as a piece of writing. The contents arrive not between two covers but in a box about the size of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Inside is an accordion-style, full-color reproduction of the notebook, which incorporates pasted-in photographs, poems, collages, paintings, and a letter Michael once wrote home, along with fragments typed by Carson. The reproduction has been done painstakingly, and conjures up an almost tactile sense of the handmade original."


-1st published in 1977

-- Ronald Johnson, introduction to Radi Os: "the 'words' are those of an 1982 edition of Paradise Lost I picked off a Seattle bookshop shelf the day after hearing Lucas Foss' Baroque Variations. He writes of Variation I, on Handel's Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 12, 'Groups of instruments play the Larghetto but keep submerging into
inaudibility (rather than pausing). Handel's notes are always present but often inaudible. The inaudible moments leave holds in Handel's music (I composed the holes). the perforated Handel is played by different groups of the orchestra in three different keys at one point, in four different speeds at another."

**Travis MacDonald**, "A Brief History of Erasure Poetics,"

d [jacketmagazine.com/38/macdonald-erasure.shtml](http://jacketmagazine.com/38/macdonald-erasure.shtml)

--“The poetry of erasure is taking place all around us. Underneath the pavement, behind newspaper headlines, on paste-layered billboards and graffiti-laden walls, our communal landscape is continuously peeling away and papering over itself. Its very surface is a living thing in flux between the dueling processes of decay and renewal, driven in the name of progress to adapt to the shifting contextual demands of culture or be replaced, removed, re-imagined. While this process can, at times, be artificially postponed, nothing escapes its effects forever. This world demands of its denizens a constant and vigilant revision of form.”


Wave Books website on erasure: [www.wavepoetry.com/erasures](http://www.wavepoetry.com/erasures)