

Friday, July 7, 2023 | 4:00 pm–7:00 pm CEST | 10:00 am–1:00 pm EST | on Zoom

Collaborating poets Mathilda Cullen and Dominick Knowles are joining us for the sixth installment in this series of workshops interested in capitalist crisis poetry. They will read from their most recent publication *Stanzas for Four Hands: an Ophanim* (published with Woe Eroica in 2021). Cullen and Knowles' work has been praised for both its political interventions that directly target the oppressive structures of US capitalism and for its formal innovation. In poet Julianne Neely's words: "This book uses the page as a visual and sympathetic field to contend with a radical dialogical and the complex histories and contemporaries of the lyric that dispenses the content of the poetry into what truly feels like a brand-new poetics. I haven't read a contemporary book of poetry in a long time with as dynamic a lyric, as radical a use of language as a site for political engagement." Poet Wendy Trevino has found the following words of praise: "Every 'I' is a 'we' in waiting" say Mathilda Cullen & Dominick Knowles in *Stanzas for Four Hands: An Ophanim*. & it is this relationship, between the lyric 'I' & the collective that attends to its myth, that is central to this stunning collection of collaborative poems. [...] What results is a compelling refutation of the idea of poetry & 'I' as autonomous 'I' separate from the material conditions that tear "us" apart.

This workshop series seeks to debate the links between politics, poetry, and capitalism. That is, we ask how poetic language constitutes and defines subject categories so far barred from existing in the symbolic order of current, late-capitalist political contexts. The social and political functions of poetry, it can be argued, have a lot in common with actual policy-making processes. Both can be propelled by a sense of progressivism, urgency, social justice, and their strong appeal to the imagination, i.e. that things can change, or rather that things can be thought and be thought differently. Both poetry and politics are interested in how the subject is structured and how it relates to others, society, the world at large, even if with very different trajectories. Neoliberalism, in contrast to both democratic politics and poetry, has a primary interest, however, in isolating the subject from fellow subjects as well as from any institutional responsibilities. Many of our contemporary political crises are the product of 'Late Capitalism' and what William Davies (2016) calls "punitive neoliberalism" (130). Today's audits and assessment centers restrict access to resources to a select few and curb the autonomy of the individual. In this context, poetic practices represent a creative, liberating force that can allow the subject to regain (some) autonomy.

Rather than a traditional workshop, we want to create a forum for a transatlantic conversation on capitalist crisis poetry. Therefore, workshop meetings are structured in two parts: **in Part 1, which is open to the public, a currently active poet reads a selection of their poems followed by a Q&A which allows us to assess their work in light of capitalist crisis poetry together with the writer.** In Part 2, we broaden the conversation to critically contextualize and discuss the link between politics and poetry from the individual workshop participants' perspective. This way we seek to work together towards a living forum that traces the various ways in which poetry intersects with the current capitalist crises and political work.

In order to register, please get in touch with the organizers via email:

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