

*About Keith Waldrop*

*from "Several Gravities"*

*collage and text by Keith Waldrop, edited by Robert Seydel*  
*Siglio Press 2009*

Keith Waldrop is the author of over two dozen works of poetry and prose, an eminent translator and advocate of French avant-garde poetry, and with wife Rosmarie Waldrop, founding editor of Burning Deck Press, now in its 47th year of publishing influential and innovative writing. His contributions to literature as both writer and translator have earned him numerous awards, including two NEA fellowships, a Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts, Amy Lowell Traveling Poetry and DAAD Fellowships, as well as the rank of *Chevalier des arts et des lettres* from the French government. His first book of poetry *A Windmill Near Calvary* was nominated for a National Book Award and *The Silhouette of the Bridge*, part of a trilogy, won the 1997 Americas Award for Poetry. *Publishers Weekly* recently wrote of Waldrop that he is "one of the most important writers, translators, and publishers of avant-garde literature in our time."

Waldrop was born into a deeply religious family in Emporia, Kansas in 1932. His father, a worker for the Santa Fe railroad, and his mother, a piano teacher and nurse, moved the family to South Carolina, searching for the right religious community and educating Waldrop and his siblings in various forms of fundamentalism. In his fictional memoir *Light While There is Light: An American History* (Sun & Moon, 1993), Waldrop explores the intertwining of madness and spirituality, memory and its hauntings, the quest for meaning and its loss. He returned to Kansas to study pre-med

but was drafted in 1953 and sent to Kitzingen, Germany as an Army engineer. He met his future wife Rosmarie there; she joined him later in Ann Arbor, Michigan where he completed his PhD in Comparative Literature in 1964. During his time at University of Michigan, he founded, with X.J. Kennedy, Dallas Wiebe, and others, the Wolgamot Society, and also began editing the magazine Burning Deck which evolved into the press. After a short stint teaching at Wesleyan University, he moved in 1968 to Providence, Rhode Island, to teach at Brown University, where he is currently the Brooke Russell Astor Professor of the Humanities.

He has translated almost two dozen volumes of poetry, including Baudelaire's complete *Flowers of Evil* (Wesleyan, 2006) and *Paris Spleen* (Wesleyan, 2009), as well as works by Edmond Jabès, André Breton, Paul Éluard, René Char, Pascal Quignard, and Pierre Reverdy. His translations have introduced English-speaking audiences to contemporary French poets such as Anne-Marie Albiach, Dominique Fourcade, Jean Grosjean, Claude Royet-Journoud, Paol Keineg, Jacques Roubaud, and Esther Tellerman, among others, frequently as part of Burning Deck's *Serie d'écriture*, an annual of current French literature. He has also collaborated with Wang Ping, Forrest Gander, and others on translations of work by dissident Chinese poet Xue Di. His own works of poetry and prose have been translated into French, German, and Danish.

In the last fifteen years, Waldrop has published fourteen titles including, most recently, his trilogy of collage poems *Transcendental Studies* (UC Press, 2009), and *The Real Subject: Queries and Conjectures of Jacob Delafon, with Sample Poems* (Omnidawn, 2004), of which Ben Marcus wrote, “Keith Waldrop’s astonishments continue with this madhearted masterpiece. *The Real Subject* is a brilliantly sidwinding embrace of uncertainty, a pulpit for arcane knowledge, and cleverly constructed language filter that keeps out everything but beauty and strangeness.” Other recent books include *The Locality Principle*, *Haunt*, *Semiramis If I Remember*, *The House Seen From Nowhere*, *Analogies of Escape*, and with Rosmarie Waldrop *Well Well Reality* and *Ceci n’est pas Keith—Ceci n’est pas Rosmarie*.

Waldrop’s visual art has had a parallel life to his literary career: his collages and artwork have graced the covers of numerous books and have been featured in literary journals, most recently in the 2008 volume of *No: A Journal of the Arts*. His work has been included in “This is Not Here,” a group exhibition curated by Yoko Ono at the Everson Museum in Syracuse, New York, as well as in “Pictures of the Passing Word” at the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art. He has had solo shows in several Providence galleries including Anyart, PO Gallery, and the Anchor Project, as well as at Hampshire College and the Front Street Gallery, both in Massachusetts, and at the Centre International de Poesie in Marseille.