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Let's do it, let's fall in luff

by [William Logan](#)

On *A Worldly Country* by John Ashbery, *Forty-Five* by Frieda Hughes, *Dance Dance Revolution* by Cathy Park Hong, *Ooga-Booga* by Frederick Seidel, and *Selected Poems: Expanded Edition* by Robert Lowell.

John Ashbery has long threatened to become a public monument, visited mainly by schoolchildren and pigeons. For half a century, he has pressed the limits of the expected and at last become an expectation itself—if the avant-garde has to die somewhere, become rear-guard at last, it will be in poems like those in *A Worldly Country*, where promises remain unkept, meaning is never surrendered or redeemed (as worthless as a Confederate bond), and gestures are frozen *in medias res*.^[1] Ashbery has become too self-parodic not to be his own joke (“So why not, indeed, try something new?/ Actually, I can think of a number of reasons./ Wait—suddenly I can’t think of any!”), yet that joke lays waste to a lot of the poetry of the past half-century. If such a curate’s egg loves to be bad, God help us should he ever try to be good.

Not the smoothness, not the insane clocks on the square,
the scent of manure in the municipal parterre,
not the fabrics, the sullen mockery of Tweety Bird,
not the fresh troops that needed freshening up. If it occurred
in real time, it was OK, and if it was time in a novel
that was OK too. From palace and hovel
the great parade flooded avenue and byway
and turnip fields became just another highway.
Leftover bonbons were thrown to the chickens
and geese, who squawked like the very dickens.

This is tosh, but Ashbery’s patented, vitamin-enriched tosh. The lines begin with Augustan composure, like Auden fingering his favorite props and imagining himself John Dryden. Ashbery can’t pretend to be a *philosophe* very long; his inner child soon drags in Tweety Bird and then all hell breaks loose.

There’s so much froth and frippery here, the reader might not even notice the rhymed couplets. Many of Ashbery’s poems recall, with ironic fondness (or sullen mockery), the age of the Age of Reason; in our own muddled, maddened century, apparently all we can expect from a philosopher prince is the notion that the fissure between fact and fiction is of little consequence. Postmodernism’s fond delusions give comfort to many a religion; but, if real life doesn’t matter, why should we care about the dying or the dead? In the aesthetic fiction Ashbery inhabits, Death never

calls—perhaps the Grim Reaper hasn't thought of a punchline yet.

Ashbery's new poems are wearily discursive (Helen Vendler suggests that his short poems are diary entries, but I prefer to think that Ashbery writes every morning and never has a thing to say). The poet's continual low mutter about art and perception is often brilliant in a secondhand way. He can make sense when he wants to ("Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror" is one of his few poems of sustained invention that doesn't lack sustained sense), but he's a lot more fun when he's goofing off.

Cannily you looked on from the wings,
finger raised to lips, as the old actor
slogged through the lines he's reeled off
so many times, not even thinking
if they are tangential to the way we
slouch now.

The way we slouch now! The stray lines offer social commentary as keen as anything Trollope wrote about Victorian England.

Perhaps I'm not the only reader who thinks that, while scribbling down far too much poetry in the past fifteen years, Ashbery lost the cunning of his sentences, which sometimes dodder about as if they've forgotten their subject. Were he unfortunate enough to develop Alzheimer's, the poems wouldn't change a bit. Besides, he long ago created a world nonsense surplus—with a nonsense mountain somewhere in Belgium, like the EU butter mountains of old. Ashbery has written some of the worst lines in contemporary poetry, just to show he can:

So often it happens that the time we turn around in
soon becomes the shoal our pathetic skiff will run aground in.
And just as the waves are anchored to the bottom of the sea
we must reach the shallows before God cuts us free.

The ghost of William McGonagall must be jealous.

Critics have often compared Ashbery to the abstract expressionists (I've probably done so myself); but his hectic, Scotch-taped compositions are much closer in form and spirit to Roy Lichtenstein—campy, cartoonish, with no pretension but a lack of pretension. Pop Art never wanted to be taken seriously, which means it's treated far more seriously than necessary. Though nearly eighty, Ashbery still loves to shatter the small vases of lyric, even if he doesn't know what to do afterwards. (He stares at the reader, as if to say, "I *told* you they were glass!") If the old lyric was fragile, the new one offers little beyond glib puckishness. As soon as you think Ashbery has a serious idea, he makes you regret it; yet we return to him, those of us who return, because we don't always mind regretting it.

Happy families are all alike, but unhappy families ... look out! Your mother will leave journals, Hollywood will option them, and Gwyneth Paltrow star in the movie (lucky you, it will bomb at the box-office). Frieda Hughes is the daughter of Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes, a fact suppressed in her first book but known to anyone not on long-term duty in the Antarctic. Her original idea in *Forty-Five*, her fourth, is to devote a poem to each year of her life—and then make a painting about it, too. [\[2\]](#)

Hughes was too young to remember her mother's suicide, which remained a secret kept from her until a newspaper published the story. This may explain the lack of emotion in the daughter's memory:

My mother, head in oven, died,
And me, already dead inside,
I was an empty tin
Where nothing rattled in.

Had the poems continued in this Hansel-and-Gretel vein, the book might have become a remarkable document of a child's growth to consciousness, something Wordsworth attempted in *The Prelude*, not entirely successfully. (The believable children in literature are rarely interesting, and the interesting rarely believable.) Hughes thought her aunt was her mother; when her father remarried, her new stepmother stepped from the pages of "Snow White"—"She thought me too familiar/ She said, smiling over spaghetti sauce/ in the frying pan." (Her father's seven-year affair with Assia Wevill, who also committed suicide by gas oven, is dismissed in a single obscure phrase.)

The princess in this fairy tale grows up fat, insecure, bulimic, and soon develops a thing for bikers. Later, she marries any guy with a smooth line of patter, specializing in men who will slap her around or rob her blind. (The poems read like a captivity narrative.) She takes a naive pleasure in being married, in becoming a "Mrs.," the *same* naive pleasure her mother recorded in her journals. It's eerie—you wonder if all young children who lose a parent feel so unloved. Where's Father in this? Brooding, remote, apologetic, he's a faraway mountain seen across an armed border.

Few confessional poets have possessed a life with so many built-in headlines; it's a shame Frieda Hughes doesn't have the literary skill to take advantage of them. She excels in wide-eyed, slightly crazed run-on sentences that sound like excuses and read like indictments—they're so near to being illiterate, you weep for English syntax:

My new lover was as rotten as bad meat
At the bin's bottom. His truth
Rang hollow in the separation
That now divided me from his daily anger
At my head full of independence.
But my business plan became a funnel
Straight into the new man's business arms,
His blacklisted insurance sales history
Making a proxy of me,
And I'd no idea he'd fuck a friend
And make her my enemy.

About the time the *plan* becomes a *funnel*, I no longer know what's fact and what's figure—and I'm not sure Hughes can tell the difference.

There's nothing wrong with going into the family business, but literature offers no capital accrued by previous generations (even Dumas *fil*s had to bribe Dumas *père* with a steaming chop for help in finishing some play or other). It pays to be talented; but, if your parents are *very* famous poets, you're forever going to work in their shadows (at twenty-four, Hughes "gave up writing poetry;/ The parental comparisons/ Would be too painful for me"—unfortunately her resolve didn't last). It makes things no better if you have trouble keeping your thoughts in order:

Excitement at my first Sydney exhibition
Launched me straight into the gallery owner's
Locked doors, behind which

He drank my sales, and endometriosis
Bled me inwards, until a hysterectomy.

Even before the litany of Hughes's illnesses (endometriosis, chronic fatigue, M.E., Crohn's disease, a twisted colon, an allergy to fleas, and some mysterious problem with her feet), her roller-coaster ride of elation and depression provokes the reader's sympathy. The poems are hypnotic as a train wreck; but it's hard to pity someone so good at pitying herself, someone who loves playing the victim and manages to be humorless about it.

Hughes has the bad luck she inherited and bad luck all her own—a London show of her paintings was hung the day of Princess Diana's death (the poet bitterly refers to the “vast scow of national grief,” a witty phrase). Her dead mother haunts her; but, when Hughes writes a line that begins “Daddy, Daddy,” the effect isn't accidental—it's creepy. There's so much melodrama in these poems, the reader is numb by the time she gets around to September 11:

The Twin Towers fell,
And all the people in them, I had never seen
Such carnage on a TV screen,
The images remain with me.

The images remain with me. All you can say is “Huh?” Hughes is a perfect example of what happens when a poet, though possessing none of the art necessary to turn a plain old messed-up life into literature, is the sun in her own Copernican system (she puts the Sol back in solipsism). We remember Plath, not because her life was worse than anybody else's, but because she was able to set it down in blood. Every poem here comes with its very own five-foot-long abstract painting, displayed on a handy web site (if you want to save yourself the trouble, the lurid, blobby images resemble a dissection of diseased kidneys). The poems don't make you like Frieda Hughes. They make you afraid Robert Lowell's children will take up poetry, too.

When Alice fell down the rabbit hole, the Mad Hatter and the Queen of Hearts at least spoke the King's English; but novelists who invent a new country sometimes like to make up a language to go with it. The Lilliputian and Houyhnhnm of *Gulliver's Travels*, the Elvish of *The Lord of the Rings*, and the Nadsat of *A Clockwork Orange* are highbrow equivalents of *Star Trek's* Klingon and the fertile babble of countless science-fiction tales. In *Dance Dance Revolution*, Cathy Park Hong has created a future resort called the Desert, whose hotels are modeled on famous cities and whose people speak Desert Creole, a weird mish-mash of languages very hard on the ear. [3] The place sounds like Las Vegas.

The speaker of these headlong, take-no-prisoners poems is a tour guide who chatters away cheerfully to an unnamed historian.

... Opal o opus,
behole, neon hibiscus bloom beacons!
“Tan Lotion Tanya” billboard ... she
your lucent Virgil, den I's taka ova
as talky Virgil ... want some tea? some pelehoo?

The jacket copy calls this a “fluid fabricated language.” I'd go as far as fabricated. Hong is droll enough to make the guide our Virgil, though the inspiration of the *Inferno* goes no deeper. However tiresome the sci-fi premise, she sees the advantage, as Swift and Tolkein and Burgess did, of making things new by making them partly incomprehensible. When the guide refers to each hotel as a McCosm, the microcosm has just met McDonald's.

A little Desert Creole goes a long way; after a few pages of this contorted pidgin, though it's sometimes mellifluous as Caribbean patois, the reader might well demand a Berlitz course, or subtitles.

See radish turrets stuck wit tumor lights around hotel
like glassblown Russki castle sans Pinko plight,
only Ebsolute voodka fountains. Gaggle fo drink?

Hundred ruble, cold kesh only. Step up y molest
hammer y chicklets studded en ruby y seppire almost
bling badda bling. Question? No question! Prick ear.

Not many poets can go from *bling bling* to Shakespeare's *prick-ear'd* in a line; but the joke begins to wither even before you realize the author has a not-so-subtle agenda. Born in South Korea, the guide was one of the dissidents behind the Kwangju Uprising of 1980, in which hundreds were killed or imprisoned. Beyond the Desert lies a heavily guarded ghetto for exiles and malcontents, off limits to visitors. It's no shock that Adrienne Rich, who chose this book for the Barnard Women Poets Prize, is delighted by the heavy-handed politics ("The Guide ... plays whatever role she must in the world of the global economy, using language as subversion and disguise"—this isn't an introduction; it's a manifesto).

For the poems, however, the political gloss is like a bad coat of varnish. Armchair lessons in modern Korean history gradually take over, and the reader might reasonably feel that the ticket he bought for Club Med turned out to be for a visit to the Black Hole of Calcutta. The narrative stalls badly, while the nosy historian (whose father was once the guide's lover—what are the odds?) provides her own tiresome memoirs and pages of workshop poetry—what the author herself might write without the trappings of Desert Creole. The guide's demented gabble is far more poetic, if far less intelligible:

Odes scuppa off lika fat wingless birds
from hum-a-day coralim streets.

Hurdy-gurdy sounds: cricket shrieks
o mahikit, abraded music slum scent.

How-kapow pops, a lime streak starled
lika Gerty's bloomas fire crack de dusky violet sky.

This has its own cracked genius and nutty integrity—Gertrude Stein would have lapped it up.

The rich are different from you and me. They write better poetry, or did when poetry was an art of leisure. It sometimes seems that, in the centuries after scops stopped singing for gold rings in the meadhall, few men except Sir This or Lord That had the free time to bother with verse—if you weren't nobility, or landed gentry, or clergy, you were about out of luck. Later, poetry made some great poets rich, like Shakespeare and Pope, and some rich poets great, like Byron and Shelley. Wordsworth and Coleridge were able to scrape by without much by way of day jobs; and neither Tennyson nor Browning ever had to shovel coal. There are exceptions, but many well-known poets never earned a pay check. Only in the twentieth century did poetry become a middle-class art not just read but written by the middle class.

Frederick Seidel is a throwback, a *bon vivant* who rubs shoulders with politicians and film directors, fashion designers and heads of state, at least when he isn't roaring around on a handbuilt motorcycle

or getting measured for a pair of bespoke shoes. You have to admire a poet who finds time to worry about the rag trade:

Huntsman indeed is gone from Savile Row,
And Mr. Hall, the head cutter.
The red hunt coat Hall cut for me was utter
Red melton cloth thick as a carpet, cut just so.
One time I wore it riding my red Ducati racer—what a show!—
Matched exotics like a pair of lovely red egrets.

The jaunty meter underlies a lament for vanished graces—Seidel is a man who believes that “Civilized life is actually about too much.”

Seidel dares you to dislike *Ooga-Booga* for who he is.^[4] (He dares you to dislike the title *Ooga-Booga*. Perhaps it’s not surprising that he’s so rarely anthologized, while so many right-thinking sapheads are.) He won’t kowtow to the mob; yet there’s a great deal of tastelessness in his good taste, not just in the fancy goods and dropped names (“Diane von Furstenberg in those sweet bygone days/ Got it in her head I had to meet her friend”), but in the masochism, the Balthus-style Lolita-watching, and the priapic sexuality that absorb his waking imagination. When I wrote that American poetry had too little sex in it, I wasn’t hoping for lines like “My dynamite penis/ Is totally into Venus” or “I love it when you make me get down on all fours and crawl.”

The mystery of Seidel is whether his abasement is a vulnerability indulged or an act of power disguised as submission. His early poems, in *Final Solutions* (1963) and *Sunrise* (1980), were so much under the thumb of Lowell they bore the older poet’s inky fingerprint; but the later poems, produced with ever greater rapidity in late maturity and old age, are full of brute misanthropy and lavish disgust—Seidel revels in the savagery of the underclass and the decadence of the obscenely wealthy:

White linen summer clouds squatted over Dien Bien Phu.
It must be 1954 because you soil yourself and give up hope but don’t.
The boys are reading *L’Étranger* as summer reading.
My country, ’tis of thee, Albert Camus!

The host sprinted upstairs to grab his fellow Existentialist—
To drag him downstairs to the Embassy’s July Fourth garden party.
The Ambassador’s son died horribly the following year
In a ski lodge fire.

That world of linen suits and embassy parties seems as distant as Edwardian England, but then so do existentialists. Seidel is a connoisseur of experience, and expensive handmade goods are one of the last preserves of the artisan—it’s not the price Seidel admires, but the authenticity. (It’s curious that he’s such an unreflective soul—he’s one of those existentialists who uses Nietzsche as an excuse not to think.) Beneath his contradictions there must lie some simple slogan like MASS MARKET = FASCISM. As for Fascists, he turns them into a joke: “Mussolini in riding boots stood at his desk to stuff/ Himself into the new secretary who was spread out on the desk. He goes *uff*./ He goes *uff wuff*, *uff wuff*, and even—briefly—falls in luff.” *In luff!*

It’s hard to get the radical sympathy and aristo loathing in focus—Seidel’s an original, but you’re glad there aren’t more like him. At best this Cassandra offers a peek from behind the arras at the “useless royals,” beautiful people, and oligarchs who run the world. These new poems are clumsy,

hideously uneven, smug in their misanthropy, sometimes more agitprop than poetry, jingly, and often comically vulgar. The fretted, distressed lines itch to be something else and end up like nothing but themselves.

Is it possible Seidel knows no more senators than he does sultans? I've always thought there was half a chance he was a Walter Mitty figure holed up in some East Village garret, doomed to press his nose against shop windows like most of the rest of us. It worries me that such a high-hatter doesn't know that H. Huntsman and Sons still sits proudly at 11 Savile Row, as it has for almost a century. What sort of snob wouldn't know that?

The year before his death in 1977, Robert Lowell published the most peculiar of his many books, a *Selected Poems* that featured maimed and crippled versions of some of his most famous poems. Lowell suffered from revision mania, never content unless tinkering with his lines; his poems endured so many home improvements he sometimes seemed to forget why he'd written them in the first place. His friends indulged him in this practice, when they did not encourage it.

Having belatedly published Lowell's *Collected Poems* (2003), his publishers have done an about-face and dragged the ruins of *Selected Poems* back into print, now in an expanded edition, as if enlarging a bad idea somehow improved it.^[5] What were they thinking? The unwary reader will find some poems in versions no reader could love—once a poet contracts revision mania, there's no stopping him until he has revised his poems down to a line, then a word, and finally just a punctuation mark. (Yet, in Lowell's case, what a punctuation mark!)

Lowell's bouts of revision may not have been wholly separate from his manic depression. Confined to a mental hospital, he once started to rewrite *Paradise Lost*, convinced he was John Milton. The poems in *Selected Poems* were revised as if Lowell were under the impression he was Robert Lowell. He reduced "In Memory of Arthur Winslow," "The Death of the Sheriff," and "Her Dead Brother" to their first sections, "Thanksgiving's Over" to its opening and close, and his longest poem, "The Mills of the Kavanaughs," to its last five stanzas. You open *Selected Poems* to discover corpses with only the head or feet remaining, or in one case the head *and* the feet. (Perhaps stung by his reviewers, in a revised edition Lowell restored the cuts he made to some poems, but not to those above.) *Selected Poems* is the most famous example of poetic butchery since Marianne Moore took a hatchet to her *Collected Poems*. The notes to this expanded edition make almost no mention of Lowell's roughshod alterations and say nothing of the controversy they engendered.

Frank Bidart, the co-editor of Lowell's *Collected Poems*, has provided a peculiar, woolgathering foreword to this edition; but he nowhere takes credit for editing it. He argues that Lowell was what is now called a "transgressive" artist, one who "again and again broke taboos, both thematic and formal." It's true that Lowell changed American poetry at least twice, first in the high-octane meter of *Lord Weary's Castle* (1946), which won the Pulitzer Prize, and later in the disturbing family gossip of *Life Studies* (1959). The hurricane of the first book passed quickly, but we have lived in the climate of the second for half a century.

Lowell's formal poetry, however, shattered no taboo, merely reviving and elaborating, with a strong dose of Milton, the style of Fugitives like Allen Tate. The verse of *Life Studies* was a sea change in subject more than theme or form—Lowell, to use a theatrical metaphor, broke down the fourth wall of the stage, speaking *in propria persona* of the private life once off-limits to poetry. (It hardly broke a *taboo* when the poet at the same time, partly influenced by the Beats, changed his style to a metrically haunted free verse). Lowell saw the advantage of being Lowell—or seeming to be. He considered the poems a fictive autobiography, changing details like a Flaubert, not a Rousseau. Still, having long been a cousin of the novel, poetry after Lowell became the stepdaughter of autobiography. This change was as radical as modernism's shift to free verse.

Like Picasso, Lowell was a restless artist who believed that originality required constant change (unfortunately, as with urban development, if you tear down too much, you have no *urbs* any more). Bidart calls him the “poet of the irremediable.” Though Lowell often considered the past with a rueful despair, a poem like “Skunk Hour” isn’t beyond hope, having found, in the lowliest places, the will to go on.

The anonymous editor has restored Lowell’s prose memoir “91 Revere Street” to *Life Studies*, now printed in its entirety, adding a couple of poems to *For the Union Dead* (1964) and a dozen or more sonnets to one of Lowell’s beautiful follies, the sonnet-mad volume of *History* (1973). Poems from *Day by Day*, published weeks after Lowell’s death, have now been included. Many of these new choices show a sensitive and informed taste. Less happily, seven sonnets have been dropped in Lowell’s revised selection from *The Dolphin* (1973)—why keep his deformed versions of some poems, only to banish poems he wanted to include? (Indeed, why not call this the *Expanded and Contracted Edition*?) No justification is made for such eclectic pantry-raiding, masquerading as sober editing. Worse yet, the informative notes, borrowed from *Collected Poems*, remain uncorrected, though reviewers took pains to point out many errors of fact and fancy.

Lowell was the most brilliant poet of the post-war period. If he remains out of fashion, our postmodern day loathes poetry that refuses to be easy or clever. (I feel like a reviewer with a taste for Bergman when most everyone wants to watch *Pirates of the Caribbean 3*). An editor with a fresh and severe eye must produce the selected edition of Lowell’s work now desperately needed. There were no reasons other than perversity and laziness to bring this bedraggled *Selected* back into print, where it will confuse Lowell’s readers for years to come.

Henri Cole’s spare new book is a meditation serving as memoir—scenes come and go; parents fade away; the poet takes sidelong glances at his aging, graying face in the mirror. *Blackbird and Wolf* shows the confidence of a poet no longer struggling toward expression (Cole’s early books were rococo wedding-cakes of expression). [6] These quiet, unsettling poems often seem fractured from within, distracted in the intensity of their observation.

My lilacs died today, floating in a bowl.
All week I watched them pushing away,
their pruned heads swollen together into something
like anger, making a brief comeback
toward the end, as if secretly embalmed.

The psychological nuance of these images shows the botanical eye of Plath, not the naive curiosity of Roethke. Few recent poets have been this Freudian, Viennese to their fingertips—it’s as if Cole had read *The Interpretation of Dreams* and then memorized it. (For the past century, the chicken-and-egg problem has been whether dreams are Freudian because they’re dreams or because the dreamers of dreams read Freud.)

The speaker here—cautious, anxiety-ridden, devastated by the air he breathes—is trapped in the self, which would seem self-centered if self were not the very thing he was trying to escape. Cole’s recent books, *The Visible Man* (1998) and *Middle Earth* (2003), gave astringent analysis to a homosexual temperament tormented and miserable. The new poems wrestle with an inarticulate anguish. As with Bishop, as with Moore, the poet has found, among animals and in the “effortless existence” of the plant world, surrogates for all he cannot say. (The things a writer most wishes to say may be what he has no words for—and the love that cannot speak its name is sometimes, like all love, the love of which nothing can be said.) Of a dead wren:

When I open your little gothic wings

on my whitewashed chest of drawers,
I almost fear you, as if today were my funeral.
Moment by moment, enzymes digest
your life into a kind of coffin liqueur.
Two flies, like coroners, investigate your feathers.

Those hilarious fly-coroners give almost scientific detachment to death (the “coffin liqueur” might have come from an episode of “CSI”); but *gothic* takes us back to the incense-laden air of medieval churches, to the old religion that no longer consoles or absolves. The poet has mixed relations with his God, wrestling, not just with faith, but with the faith in faith.

Blackbird and Wolf is fascinated by nature’s violence—in the human world, there is only a mediated loneliness. These poems are more obscure than Cole’s recent work, more uneasily and sometimes clumsily phrased. All the guff about animals can make him seem a poor man’s Galway Kinnell, going on about bears, or, worse, a slightly dotty Dr. Dolittle (the poet talks to crow and hornet and weed, but the poems are no wiser for it). Worse, there are poems about the war in Iraq that try to turn the poet’s gifts for troubled reflection into a medium of public outrage.

When Lowell wrote his version of family history, he did not omit the comedy; and Cole is most indebted to the older poet when seeing his father plain:

My father lived in a dirty-dish mausoleum,
watching a portable black-and-white television,
reading the Encyclopaedia Britannica,
which he preferred to Modern Fiction.
One by one, his schnauzers died of liver disease,
except the one that guarded his corpse
found holding a tumbler of Bushmills.

The schnauzers, the Bushmills—these are the inheritance of *Life Studies*, Flaubertian details that secure the habitation of the eye. The precision of observation has its dry philosophical flourish—to the voyeur comes loneliness, but also the spoils of beauty.

Poured through the bees, the sunlight, like flesh
and spirit, emits a brightness pushing everything
else away except the bees’ vibrating bronze bodies
riding the air as if on strings that flex
and kick back as they circle the hive.

The moody grandeurs of this short book are those of a poet who keeps company with himself and can offer no more, not the social torsions of Lowell or the vengeful hostilities of Plath. Misery doesn’t love company—misery *is* company.

Notes

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1. *A Worldly Country*, by John Ashbery; Ecco, 76 pages, \$23.95. [Go back to the text.](#)
2. *Forty-Five*, by Frieda Hughes; HarperCollins, 109 pages, \$22.95. [Go back to the text.](#)
3. *Dance Dance Revolution*, by Cathy Park Hong; W. W. Norton, 125 pages, \$23.95. [Go back to the text.](#)

4. *Ooga-Booga*, by Frederick Seidel; Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 101 pages, \$24. [Go back to the text.](#)
5. *Selected Poems: Expanded Edition*, by Robert Lowell; Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 420 pages, \$18 (paper). [Go back to the text.](#)
6. *Blackbird and Wolf*, by Henri Cole; Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 61 pages, \$23. [Go back to the text.](#)

William Logan's most recent book of poetry, *Strange Flesh* (Penguin), was published last year.

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