

POST NUBILA PHOEBUS

AFTER THE CLOUDS, THE SUN

“Frustration is the perfume
of perseverance, extracted
through the written word.”

— C. D. J.

THE ALTERNATIVE
NEW YEAR'S DEFERRED
SPOKEN WORD / PERFORMANCE
EXTRAVAGANZA

2021 ANTHOLOGY

Front Cover

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2021 Anthology

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POST NUBILA PHOEBUS

AFTER THE CLOUDS, THE SUN

**THE ALTERNATIVE
NEW YEAR'S DEFERRED
SPOKEN WORD / PERFORMANCE
EXTRAVAGANZA
2021 ANTHOLOGY**



www.AlternativeNYD.org

Dedicated to the deceased of 2020
who were the victims of disease, hatred,
violence, indifference, and ineptitude.

With the resolution that one day we may
be capable of better.

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Postscript: This Concludes The Great Work

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

An event of such magnitude couldn't happen without a dedicated staff of volunteers, so it is only appropriate to offer a shout-out to the dedicated people who make the event happen. A big thank you to this year's staff:

Madeline Artenberg, Lydia Cortés, C. D. Johnson, Linda Kleinbub, Ptr Kozlowski, Tsaurah Litzky, Ellen Aug Lytle, Su Polo, Robert Roth, Thad Rutkowski and Sarah Sarai. And thanks to Bruce Weber and Joanne Pagano Weber for keeping the event going for so many years.

And special thanks to all of the contributors whose work swelled the pages of this robust volume of verse. We couldn't have done it without your love and support.

AFTER THE CLOUDS, THE SUN (POST NUBILA PHOEBUS)

INTRODUCTION

It was sad and disappointing to have spent New Year's Day at home. This past January 1st was the first time since I arrived in New York City that I did not spend the first day of the year at the **Alternative New Year's Day Spoken Word and Performance Extravaganza**. I have participated in each since the second, in 1996, when the event was held in a loft above the Pyramid Club on Avenue A.

Bruce Weber had started the event a year earlier, not knowing who might show up or what might happen. The event was an immediate hit with New Yorkers, however, and already in that second year there was an overflow crowd all day and the event was in need of a bigger venue. We've appeared at several venues in lower Manhattan over the years, but the event has never lost its popularity. Nor has the quality of the work presented ever eroded — and that is a testament to the amount of talent given that more than 150 people appear each year.

Bruce eventually moved upstate, and I found myself Bruce's replacement as the coordinator of the event for New Year's Day 2020. That day proved to be another excellent eight-hour event, a chance to hear so many outstanding poets and performers. But although the first reports of a dangerous new disease in Wuhan, China, had begun circulating in the world's media by then, none of us could have imagined what the year 2020 would have in store for us.

Like so many other cultural events that light up the year in New York, our January 1st, 2021, event was canceled, interrupting a streak of 26 years New Year's Days when ANYDSWPE got a new year off to a rousing start. This year's theme would have been **"Smoldering Tundra,"** reflecting the environmental crisis of global warming and hinting at the political unrest percolating across the United States. What could we salvage from the disappointment?

ANYDSWPE 2021 Anthology

In recent years, C. D. Johnson and Rogue Scholars Press have generously produced an anthology to accompany the event. That tradition resumed for 2021, and the result is the book you are holding in your hands. The work of more than 120 poets are featured here, allowing us a sample of what we missed on January 1st. We have every hope of seeing everybody on the next New Year's Day, when ANYDSWPE will again present a breathtaking range of talent to New York and the world.

Enjoy the book, and we look forward to seeing you next year.

- Pete Dolack

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«Sol et Aquilo certabant uter sit fortior. Conventum est experiri vires in Viatorem, ut palmam ferat qui excusserit Viatoris manticam. Boreas horrisono turbine Viatorem aggreditur. At ille non desistit, amictum gradiendo duplicans. Assumit vires Sol qui, nimbo paulatim evicto, totos emolitur radios. Incipit Viator aestuare, sudare, anhelare. Tandem progredi nequiens, sub frondoso nemore, obiecta mantica, resedit et ita Soli victoria contingebat.»

The Sun and the North Wind had a contest to see who was stronger. It was decided to test their strength against a traveler, and the palm of victory would be carried off by the one who managed to shake off the traveler's knapsack. The North Wind attacked the traveler with a howling whirlwind. But the traveler did not halt and as he went along he wrapped his cloak doubly tight around him. The Sun donned his powers and after gradually dispersing the cloud he shone forth with all his sun-rays. The traveler began to grow hot, to sweat, to pant. Finally, unable to keep going, he cast aside his knapsack and sat down beneath a shady grove and thus victory was awarded to the Sun.

- Aesop's Fables (1687):

34. De Sole et Vento (The Sun and Wind)

Francis Barlow, translator

The Wind And The Sun



Illustration by Francis Barlow, *Aesop's Fables*, 1687.

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001

Austin Alexis

Austin Alexis: new fiction in LummoX, The Parliament Literary Journal, Great Weather for Media Flash Fiction of the Month; poetry in Maintenant, Brevitas, About Place Journal, Waymark: Voices of the Valley, the Poets Wear Prada Website, Cooper Square Newsletter, Indolent Books Poem of the Week; nonfiction in Cooper Square Newsletter, Point of View, Conceit Magazine. His full-length poetry collection is Privacy Issues (2014).

Grandmother's Ritual

The Secret Storm.. The Edge of Night.

My grandma married the TV screen
to engage with her soap operas,
her necessity every weekday afternoon.
She skipped saying, "Hold me,"
since the actors did that and more
with their audience boxed outside the box.
In alluring screen cosmetics
they embraced each other;
Grandma hugged their images.
When the characters did or dared to say
anything outlandish or untoward
she would exclaim, "Oh Jesus!"
then throw her head forward,
lean as if ready to sprint from her recliner,
appalled but amused—and aroused—
her hazel eyes twinkling.

She observed realities different from her own,
lives she wished she could've lived.
She tuned in to *Days of Our Lives*
as the hours of her life flickered by.
Sanely she'd watch *As the World Turns*—
already conversant with the backstories—
her attention a monster-eyed observatory
studying the craziness she craved.
As her world spun, orbited,

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as her long days unspooled their sameness,
as the two-lane avenue outside her living room
unfurled mundane buses and the same old air,
she'd stay plopped down in her sofa chair,
caressed by its softness while she absorbed
dashing storms flash and blaze across the screen.
Maybe because of timidity, maybe because of fear,
maybe because fear breeds timid imaginations,
the disturbance of blandness around her
faded to a blackout, with her real life's volume
nearly too low to be detected.

Harboring

I am an antenna,
the horizontal, rectangular kind,
picking up all the anger
nature is harnessing
to unleash
toward humankind,
to unleash, to unleash
when the ozone layer
is erased to ghostly dimensions
by rising toxins
and the ports are vomiting
and the irreplaceable icecaps
melt like ice cream cones
as serial sadistic heat
shoves their sugary heads in ovens.
You will know when nature is ready
to take up arms, to kick ass.
Oh, you'll hear the thunder!

My warning, however,
doesn't assume
your avoidance, dear world,
nor any type of prudent preparation.



AFTER THE CLOUDS. THE SUN (POST NUBILA PHOEBUS)

002

Joel Allegretti

Joel Allegretti is the author of, most recently, *Platypus* (NYQ Books, 2017), a collection of poems, prose, and performance texts, and *Our Dolphin* (Thrice Publishing, 2016), a novella. He is the editor of *Rabbit Ears: TV Poems* (NYQ Books, 2015). The *Boston Globe* called *Rabbit Ears* “cleverly edited” and “a smart exploration of the many, many meanings of TV.”

Ritual Piece for John Cale

Context

Prior to the Velvet Underground, John Cale was a member of La Monte Young’s Theatre of Eternal Music, which experimented with duration.

The Ritual

Listen to *The Academy in Peril*, Cale’s 1972 recording of his own classical music, eight times a day for eight months, eight representing the number of tracks. [1] When the prescribed time has passed, try to play “Brahms,” the first of the album’s three piano works, note for note, even if it will be your first time touching a keyboard. If you fail, perform the ritual again and continue as needed until you learn the composition.

Repeat the process for “The Academy in Peril” and “John Milton.”

[1] The album as originally released on Reprise Records; CD and digital reissues divide “Intro/Days of Steam” into two tracks.

Ritual Piece in Sea Major

This exercise is for acoustic guitarists who live near the ocean.

Bring your guitar to the beach at sunset on the first day of summer. Tune the A string to the sound of the waves. The result will be your reference tone for tuning the other strings.

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Sing a song to the ocean, one to which it could relate, e.g., a traditional folk song like “The Greenland Whale Fisheries” or a popular song like Bobby Darin’s “Beyond the Sea.”

Go back to the shore with your guitar every Saturday evening for the duration of the season. Use the same tuning method. Sing a different song on each visit.

The damp air will degrade the strings, but don’t change them until last day of the ritual.

On the Saturday before Labor Day, remove the strings, wind them into tight circles, and deposit them in a large glass jar. Bring the jar to the beach and fill it with seawater. Screw on the lid. Sing, this time a cappella, your final song.

Wave goodbye and take the jar home. Never let it go.



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003

Madeline Artenberg

Before falling for poetry, Madeline Artenberg was a photojournalist and street theatre performer. Her work has appeared in many publications, such as Rattle and The POET. She was semi-finalist in Margie, The American Journal of Poetry contest, and finalist in the Mudfish 2020 contest. One of her poems was nominated as Best of the Net 2020 by Poets Wear Prada. "Lot's Wife" was previously published in Wormwood Press, Revenge, 2012.

Lot's Wife

So many times Lot said
Eyes straight ahead.
My peripheral vision
caught him with maidens
by the roadside,
and I said nothing.

How many times
he'd walk ahead, order me
Follow, carry the pots,
grain, keep your head down,
while we lost our way.
When I would say *Let us beseech*
assistance, he'd turn around,
his steel stare withering
my muscles to jelly.

One day, God said *Leave,*
said if we looked back,
we'd be turned to pillars
of salt. I looked back, didn't care
what Lot was up to.
For one sweet second,
I was the pillar.



Dorothy Friedman August

Dorothy Friedman August is a widely published and award winning poet, teacher, and editor. She has published two books of poetry and her 3rd and 4th book, *The L Shaped Room* and *Drinking Alaska*, will be published in 2021.

My Father Heard Me Calling

My father is drugged. His huge body turns and opens and
his arms reach up to hug you, You run, as through scissors
to catch him. You are small and pale, pounding and spreading
the weeks to dry in the light. My father heard me calling
and later I held him in the wind. Through him I thought
I entered the dead.

I wanted to live so I woke and walked at dawn through the leaves
and the tops of branches. I took the poems out of clouds
and filled the clouds with dark feelings. And I ate the poems
which became like glass because they had no feeling.



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Susan Yung

Susan Yung. Domestic–violence; misogynist–hater; anti–racist; democratic–anarchist; ghetto–girl; Chinatown–Harlem; East Village–West Village; homesteader–gentrifier; yuppie–squatter; homeless–sheltered; American–Asian; World–Traveller; Adventress–Common–Law–Wife; Photographer–Videographer; Martial–Fine–Artist; Musician–Drummer; Artist–Scientist; Geologist–Librarian; Mathematician–Designer; Collector–Exhibitionist; Buyer–Seller; Cook–Politician; Migrant–worker; Independent–Dependent; Pacifist–Activist.

Oh Snap!!

Oh Snap
Musicians coming out of the woodwork
In ol' venues
Made new again
Once occupied
Oh Snap!
They dig the music
After 20 years of playing
With no audience
Now with the dead
Poets Society
Oh Snap!
Once only musicians
Occupied this space
Oh Snap!
Here he is with a new book
Oh Snap!
He's a writer
also
Oh Snap!
Dig his poetry

Oh Snap!
When will the homeless be homeless
Homes for homeless
Homeless homes
Homes 4 Sale
For more homeless people

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Oh Snap!!
I'm annoyed being
American born & (still)
Foreign to
Americans.



Artist: Susan Yung
Title: "Self Portrait"



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127

Marguerite Zaira

Marguerite Zaira. painter, writer, designer, cyclist, gardener, karate practitioner, voracious reader and former taiko drummer. Happiest when outdoors, most content when creating.

Objects

old comics
broken computers
music CDs
a jar marked “do not throw away”
religious books—assorted bibles
often brittle and musty
a large box of porn videos
Hawaiian shirts
dress shoes
mismatched socks
years of unopened bills
bank and brokerage statements

Over the years I often stared at the piles
moved them around the basement
finally taking the videos to a recycling center.

A clear and peaceful morning
interrupted by a pounding at the door
loud, insistent—distracted—I ignored it.
Neighbors, concerned and curious
texted to inform, the police had come.
When called, they would give no info
not over the phone
officers would arrive—shortly.

I was told, gently, that
you had killed yourself.
Did you have family?
Could I help find them?
Parents, a brother in Boston I think.

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How—I wondered but didn't ask
thinking you had hung yourself
you didn't have a gun
poison seemed too complicated.
Easter had just passed. Did you want
that last holy day?

The next day I pulled open file cabinet drawers
old letters, previously respected
now disclosed stories
former lovers and friends
invitations to parties, family weddings
pictures of your wife and daughter
postcards sent from my travels
decades ago.

Framed awards
that once graced your home
left, along with your portfolio
containing print samples of
corporate ads
institutional brochures
political campaigns
along with promotion materials
a picture of you, a designer
an illustrator, in your 20s
the large format negative
now water damaged from a burst pipe
expressing a hint of distress in your eyes.

Gift

The moths have feasted
on my much admired wool knit jacket
deep purples and blues, lovingly made
and a note, to enjoy, left in a pocket
by my long deceased Aunt Jo.

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A favorite object not to be discarded
I slowly stitch the holes, I don't have yarn
I take too long repairing it
bring it to be cleaned, then stored
in a newly bought cedar chest.



Micah D Zevin

Micah Zevin is a librarian poet living in Jackson Heights, Queens, N.Y. He has published articles and poems most recently at the What Rough Beast Series at Indolent Books, Heavy Feather Review, Big Other, The Bowery Gothic, Brooklyn Vol. 1., The Poets of Queens Anthology and Narrative Northeast. My first book of poems, Metal, Heavy was published on December 1st, 2020 from Olena Jennings and Poets of Queens Press. He created/curates an open mic/poetry prompt workshop called The Risk of Discovery Reading Series.

Falsified-Reality

12/19/2019 (inspired by Perfect Transition) Tony Hoagland Poem

The wind blows furiously through my apartment hallway
in the cold of December, moaning in agony, rattling our door open
and closed again and again.

The New York Times says “as sea levels rise, so do ghost forests.”
Salt water is killing off woodlands along the Mid-Atlantic coast
far from the sea.

Wildfires on the west coast chase people and dogs from their homes
not just celebrities like LeBron. The book I am reading is “The Death
of Virgil” by Herman Broch.

It says, Virgil, in his last hours, is between birth, rebirth and on the
cusp of death as is history, and he realizes he may have falsified
reality while attempting to create beauty.

It is one thing to dream of Dodo birds in Times Square,
of George Washington Bridge eroding its foundation into a
pile of rubble.

It is another to open your doors to wild fires.
I am hoping humans do more than apply balm
to their wounds, the earth’s.
That the trees will not be bare and sing once more, not overcome

AFTER THE CLOUDS. THE SUN (POST NUBILA PHOEBUS)

with melancholy. I'm hoping not just the vultures and falcons return to devour what is left, that all life swiftly reemerges.

Let it be like a revelation that we never ever noticed. We were asleep before; and now that we are permanently awake, the fish, the great mammals of the ocean can never forget us even if they never knew who we really were, as our plastic lines their homes and stomachs.

Let the guinea pigs return to nature, all the domesticated grab bags of pets repopulate the singed and drowned landscape as the remaining children mutate and adapt or perish.

It is important that we perspire but not every second and not until death.
It's a thin veil of negligence we must try to reverse and overcome.

Today, out of the east coast, the cold wind becomes a squall of snow.
I lean out my window to glory in it.

The car alarms go off, the babies and Cats cry and shriek, and the dogs bark at each other and their masters.
I see the buses with commuters are packed and the sidewalks are cracked and in need of repaving.

I see the sparrow has found a way to build a nest underneath an air conditioner and is still dancing...

Ode to Climate and Your Changes

The sunshine will take you?
Will the jobs? The crazy smelly slob
make or erase?
Will your back straighten
on highway or beach?

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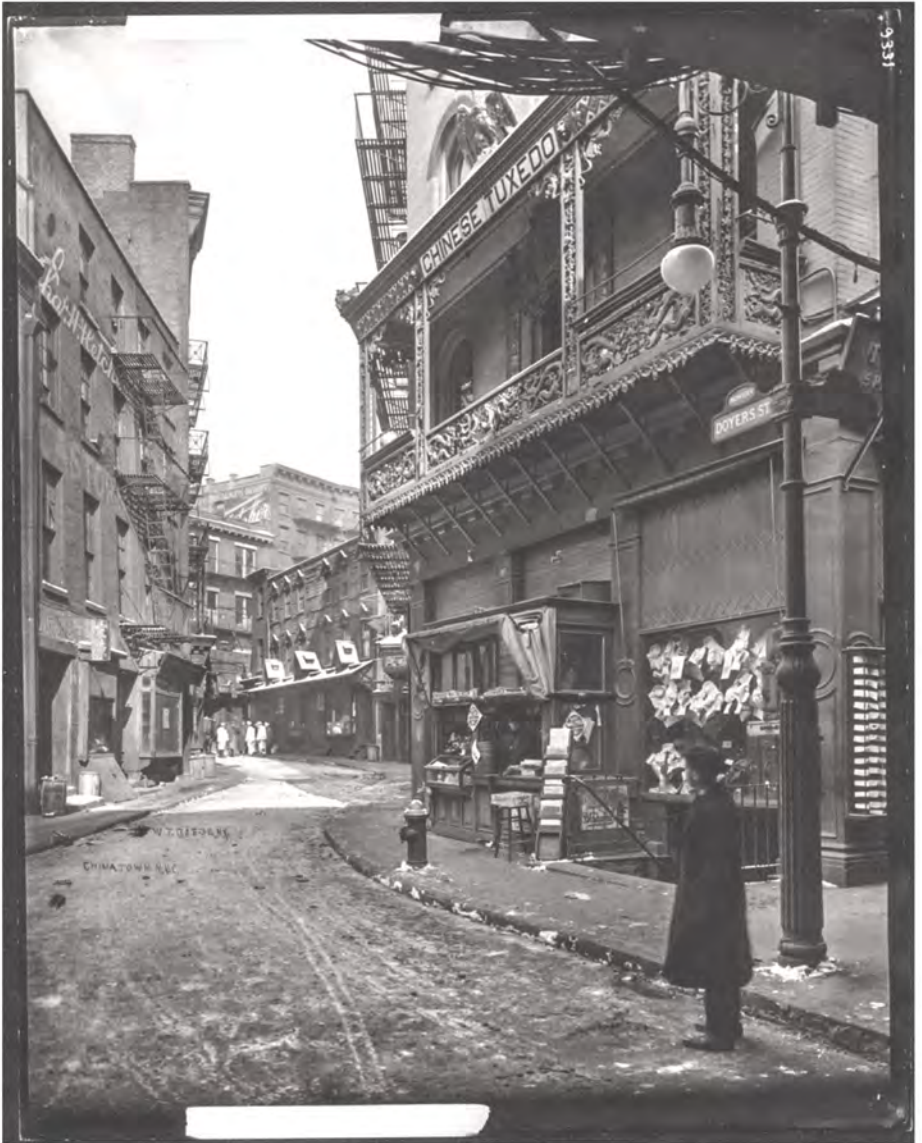
Will you wear sunglasses
in the rain?
Maybe allergies will disappear
on beaches by the waves
in a new more affordable home
never too far from sand
or swamp full of the world—

The sunshine will take you
and feed you
if you do not allow
repressive micromanaging
bosses or Tin Pot dictators
to bleed you dry,
pollute and erase you
until you are a shriveled version
of your former self,
burned beyond recognition.

Your health, care and poverty
will not be resolved
without lifeguards in their chairs
when the sharks or flood water
threaten disrepair
by moonlight—



AFTER THE CLOUDS, THE SUN (POST NUBILA PHOEBUS)



Doyers Street at the Bowery, circa 1926
Photographer: Unknown

POSTSCRIPT

*This concludes the Great Work, easily the largest volume
of poetry to date ever be produced by
Rogue Scholars Press, in the shortest amount of time.
Much blood, sweat, tears, and alcohol was spilt in service
to The Art. Now the editor shall sojourn for one year.
And then, perhaps, we'll do it all again.*



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Before The Dawn

**“Hail, gentle Dawn!
Mild blushing goddess,
hail!”**
- William Somerville



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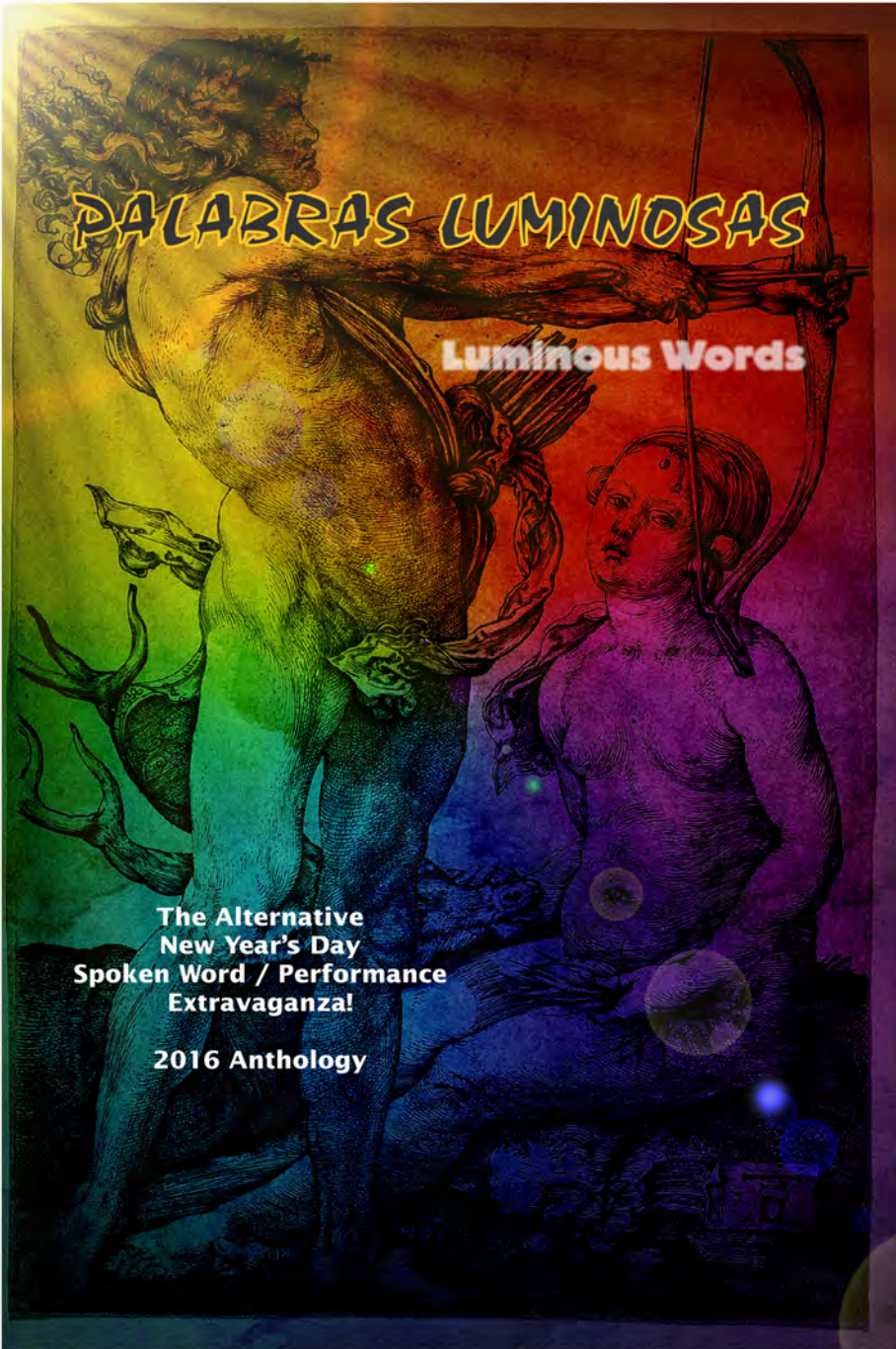
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