

Matina L. Stamatakis

“There’s always an element of desire that can be found in words; the desire to copulate with other words in a way that brings on a manifestation of bodies that coalesce, like in the art of dance and lovemaking.”

Matina L. Stamatakis discusses her poetry with **Kane X. Faucher**.



Matina L. Stamatakis currently resides in upstate New York. Some of her works can be found in *Coconut*, *Inertia*, *BlazeVOX*, *Crash Test*, *Hutt*, *La Petite Zine*, and elsewhere.



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Kane X. Faucher: Your poetry seems to take a whimsical, yet lubricious view, on wordplay. Could you elaborate on how you reconcile (or perhaps keep in tense strife) the relation between the copulating nature of wordplay with a semi- or meta-eroticism in your subject?

Matina L. Stamatakis: There’s always an element of desire that can be found in words; the desire to copulate with other words in a way that brings on a manifestation of bodies that coalesce, like in the art of dance and lovemaking. A brush stroke to canvas. Yet, it’s done with lightheartedness at times, or childish wonderment. Other times it morphs into a voyeuristic tango steaming with debauchery and fuck. Words can be brutal or beautiful. Sometimes both. Sometimes neither. Sometimes contradictory and metaphysical. Yet they all communicate with the body in a way that

signifies the body exists and is able to use voice as an operative means of expression. When I write, there is a moment where I lose parts of myself to ambiguity. The terseness of my mind is elongated by words. I wouldn’t say it’s mystical, or I lose my sense of “self”, but it is definitely a way to bring out what I cannot say vocally. Because of vocal repression, there is a need to use every word delicately and meaningfully.

Not many people know this, but I am an aphasiac. My condition is most extreme when I suffer from fatigue. I forget how to pronounce certain words, their order and meanings. It has made me self-conscious in social situations. But when it comes to writing, what I want to say is registered, planned, not under so much scrutiny. It is the only way – along with music and art – that I can communicate with ease. So I treat it with

utmost respect, yet allow myself to breathe within it. To not take it too seriously, but appreciate and realize its diversity.

KXF: The fact that you use poetics as the conduit to express the inexpressible, especially given that your aphasia seems to border on affecting both brain areas – Broca’s and Wernicke’s – is admirable. But beyond admirability, which seems only to inspire the “overcoming despite condition x” that merely masks pity and arranges the discourse to view the “afflicted” with the label of that “despite of”, it actually makes your poetic productions interesting. It calls to mind the work of Felix Guattari in his founding of schizo-analysis. But, from the sounds of it, and beyond clinical designations, your writing process would be rather close to that of the anagogical and ecstatic mode – that rare transportation from the anchors of space and time that attended the inspired productions of those like St Francis of Assisi and Hildegard von Bingen (but sans the theological palaver). Could you say more about this intriguing tension between terseness and elongation, as well as how ambiguity seems to an instance of liberation? If you could say that you “fetishize”, would this be more on the order of that freeform ambiguity or on the side of the “inner editor” that polices the selection of words?

MLS: You are right, Kane. There is a presence of the anagogical in my writings. Even the theological is present, but in a way that does not deviate from the implied and the perceived. I am fascinated with the mystical and the illusory condition of “reality”. I do not treat my condition X as paralysis – or some ataxic limb – but rather a tool of manipulation. Of what can be and shall be, despite any neurological limitations.

There is always an underlying tension and the need to quell one’s repression with ambiguity. Is it safe to say liberation can be achieved this way? Or is it merely covering up what should be said outright and boldly? The mouth is a crude object of fetish. The “fetishized” mouth is an object of want – of desire. I desire speech, but fail in grasping. So I select words from metaphorical hats in hopes that each hat I wear is symbolic of what words I fail to utter correctly in speech.

There is a bit of “inner policing” present in my works, but only as instance – never predetermined or deeply scrutinized in accord with analytical thought. My

writing tends to be more fluid, less stifled. At least, I’m hoping. It’s hard to interpret, yet not so hard it becomes intangible or fails to at least provoke some sort of emotion.

KXF: It is always the scene of asking the ugly question, and this will have been such an ob-scene inquiry. If we could fairly assess your output as being somewhat akin to outsize annals that represent a mixture of virtual history and creative production of the individual, I suppose this leaves us with the shadowy notion that you may actually be a kind of sentimental chronicler of that “alter” history of vispo-virtual work. So, my question will snuggle somewhat upon the pediment of an older historical question. Would poetic catharsis for you be an instance of textual elements speeding toward or away from you as a poet? Would you classify your work as that which aggregates into a dense, neutron-star sort of solidity, or a kind of scattering into the void from a central-poet figure that disgorges itself?

MLS: Cathartic poesy would be, to me, like an instance in centrifuge; the constant rotation of thoughts, of texts overlapping, slapping into one another, then stilled. Once stilled, they separate, disband, take on new shapes.

I like to think of my own poetic output as a tender science – something that grasps what most of humanity lacks. By this I mean an inherent ability to channel into one’s mind to produce an entity that resembles both chaos and control. But it is delicate in its genetic makeup; a mere egg yolk.

I do romanticize this notion a bit; it constantly shows itself in my writings. Having said that, it does not mean my poetry is an act of strict deliberation. Rather, it is an act of liberation, as it were...there’s almost a voyeuristic and exhibitionist quality to poetry which ties into free-thought; the nudity of words, the nudity of the poet in relation to these words. As readers, we observe this symbolic nudity, and in observing this nudity find within ourselves an open chasm – something profoundly child-like and vulnerable.

As writers, we undress ourselves, sometimes only revealing the good parts we want others to see. Sometimes we reveal the things we don’t want people to

ditch,

see. Sometimes we expose without realizing, and in this exposure take on new, almost frightening, forms.

To focus on your second question, I would classify my work as having both an element of disbandment and an element of bodily cohesion. When I find myself about to romanticize the elemental, I switch to making statements about my vagina. Usually, I find out of sexual frustration, there is an almost present hymenia which blankets my consciousness and causes me to impregnate myself with words, unsettled emotions, hermaphroditic sex tapestries. It's all rather asexual, and less about some cosmic vortex. Unless you're referring to the cervix – romantically, of course.

KXF: So, as you proceed as a “tender scientist”, it is doubtless that you have a fair idea of what controls you place on your experiments, and where you direct them. The fact that you appear to position style as being the tension between deliberation and its opposite, this tension seems to power your mode of writing. I don't mean to play Barthes' card too hard here, of course. The “hymenic” hypothesis which fills the vacuity with words sounds like a dynamic brokerage with one's own subconscious. However, to take this outside of ourselves, what do you think is currently “at issue” in contemporary poetics? For, if your tender science grasps what most of humanity lacks, it may also grasp at some of the lacunae in poetics as well.

MLS: I do not like to generalize, but feel most of contemporary poetry is asexual. It lacks musicality and sensuality. It lacks love or logolepsy, thrives on basic pointedness and all-too-common themes. It doesn't growl, or howl, or get dirty. Most of what I've read regarding contemporary poetics is shrouded in uninspiring dribble. It sucks the life right out of me, so I don't even bother trying to read it anymore. Of course there are exceptions, but those are few and far between.

I'm not sure what is going on, Kane. Maybe it's a lack of public interest. Maybe it's the fact that poetry is no longer uber-elitist, or for the uber-elites. Maybe it's the fact that we, as a whole, are constantly being raped of our knowledge and independence of free-thought; we are hurting because we are unaware of it. Maybe it's all farcical; a seething cesspool of unmoti-

vated, unoriginal dullards with PhDs in bullshit. There are a lot of maybes. My guess would be there's a waning public interest.

Most of today's poetry is being read by poets. Which is not completely bad because we've systematically (and unintentionally) created this monster poetry community, where we basically feed off of each other's metaphorical entrails.

There is something truly amazing about where the current state of “underground” poetry is heading. I do not see this virtual womb as a breeding ground for stagnancy, or the root of poetry's demise. It is just the beginning, the start of something that lives, and will one day cause a great stir. Maybe even a revolution. I feel it is already starting...

And I do think there is something to be learned from contemporary poetry, – learned, applied, rearranged, then fucked into disorientation. Then fucked again for effect. Yet it's not my goal to constantly strive for and achieve shitting in the face of contemporary poet-ics. There are others out there who do it far more effectively. Like yourself.

The “tender scientist” is merely a frotteur with mit-tens.