

*Rabbit Ears: TV Poems*

Edited by  
Joel Allegretti

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# *Contents*

PREFACE / xxiii

## *Prologue*

---

David Messineo  
CONCEIVING TELEVISION AT AGE 14 ATOP A PLOW IN  
RIGBY, IDAHO / 27

## *Channel 1: The Beautiful Brand-New Dream Machine*

---

George Held  
THE NEXT BIG THING / 31

Erik La Prade  
THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL / 32

John Foy  
THE TELEVISION SET / 33

Kurt Brown  
TIM TYLER'S LUCK / 34

Bob Holman  
HEAD OF KOVACS / 37

Gerard Malanga  
THE BIG BEAT / 39

Tantra-zawadi  
RADIATOR GROOVES / 41

Ann Cefola  
VELOCITY / 43

*Clare of Assisi, patron saint of television, pray for us.*

---

Marjorie Maddox  
CLARE OF ASSISI / 47

*Channel 2: Whose Mirror Image?*

---

Lynn Levin  
IDYLLS OF MAYFIELD / 51

Patricia Polak  
TRAVELIN' MAN / 53

Jeanne Marie Beaumont  
A MUNSTERS' BREAKFAST / 54

Susanna Rich  
THE THING: MY CRAZY FAMILY / 55

Gerry LaFemina  
HUMIDITY / 57

Stanford M. Forrester  
[RERUNS] / 59

Michael Montlack  
"COME AND KNOCK ON MY [CLOSET] DOOR" / 60

Abiodun Oyewole  
ME ON TV / 61

*And now, a word from our sponsor...*

---

Aaron Belz  
PANTENE / 67

*Channel 3: Make Me Laugh*

---

Elaine Sexton  
LAUGH TRACK / 71

Joel Allegretti  
*THE DICK VAN DYKE SHOW: THE UNAIED EPISODES* / 72

Stephen Roger Powers  
THE BALLAD OF THOSE LEFT BEHIND / 73

Ravi Shankar  
SITCOMPOSITE / 78

George Guida  
IN ITALIAN AMERICAN T.V. COMMERCIALS... / 79

Marcus Wicker  
LOVE LETTER TO DAVE CHAPPELLE / 81

*Channel 4: Zip-up Cardigans and Goofy Cake*

---

Maggie Dubris  
MY MEMOIRS: EPISODE ONE / 85

Jeannine Hall Gailey  
INTRODUCTION TO ENGINEERING BY WILE E. COYOTE,  
SUPER GENIUS / 87

George Wallace  
A CARTOON REVOLUTION / 88

Marj Hahne  
NEIGHBOR / 89

Peter E. Murphy  
THE NEW BOY / 90

*And now, a word from our sponsor...*

---

Peter LaBerge  
ODE TO THE SNUGGIE / 93

*Channel 5: Paws, Jaws, and Claws*

---

John J. Trause  
TOPO GIGIO / 97

Joey Nicoletti  
THE FLASHLIGHT FISH / 98

Billy Collins  
THE DAY LASSIE DIED / 99

Matthew Pennock  
POEM ENDING WITH LINES FROM *RIVER MONSTERS* / 101

*Channel 6: Idols! Icons!! Divas!!! Trendsetters!!!!*

---

Alan Feldman  
FAME / 105

Austin Alexis  
BETTE DAVIS IN THE BOX / 107

Hilary Sideris  
THAT SWELL KID BROTHER SHTICK / 109

Suzanne Cleary  
LAWRENCE WELK / 110

Amy Gerstler  
THE ZONE / 112

Collin Kelley  
GIRL CRUSH / 115

Regie Cabico  
POCAHONTAS GRANTS AN INTERVIEW WITH BARBARA  
WALTERS FROM *THE VIEW* / 116

celeste doaks  
NOTE TO DON CORNELIUS / 118

David Lawton  
HOPE FOR US ALL / 120

*And now, a word from our sponsor...*

---

Steven Riel  
WHITE DIAMONDS / 123

*Channel 7: "Stars, I Have Seen Them Fall"*

---

David Trinidad  
*PEYTON PLACE: A HAIKU SOAP OPERA* / 127

Angelo Verga  
LOCAL ACCESS CHANNEL # 629 / 133

Timothy Liu  
FALLING TRUST / 134

Penny Harter  
[LONELY EVENING] / 136

Michael Broder  
MOD SQUAD POEM / 137

David Vincenti  
PAMELA HENSLEY'S HIPS / 138

Grace Zabriskie  
THE HOLE / 139

Gloria Vando  
LYDIA'S PHANTASMAGORIA / 141

Diane Lockward  
THE MISSING REMOTE / 146

*This is a test. This station is conducting a test of the Emergency  
Broadcast System. This is only a test.*

---

George Witte  
TEST / 149

*If this had been an actual emergency, you would have been instructed to  
tune to one of the broadcast stations in your area.*

---

*Channel 8: From Collinwood to the Fangtasia Bar*

---

Tony Trigilio  
FROM "THE COMPLETE DARK SHADOWS (OF MY  
CHILDHOOD)" / 155

Debbie Yee  
COMMON PLOT LINES ON THE SYFY CHANNEL / 162

Jason Schneiderman  
THE BUFFY SESTINA / 163

Maria Terrone  
LISTENING TO MY HUSBAND DESCRIBE AN X-FILES PLOT  
WHILE DRIVING PAST SPRING'S FIRST POPPIES / 165

Ice Gayle Johnson  
TRUE BLOOD—ENTERING THE FANGTASIA BAR... / 166



*Channel 9: Climb Inside, Enter at Your Own Risk*

---

Philip Fried  
STEALTH / 171

Annie Finch  
TELEVISION / 172

Bill Zavatsky  
TELEVISION / 173

Martine Bellen  
FRINGE / 174

steve dalachinsky  
A SUPERINTENDENT'S EYES #40 (DREAM—THE TIME  
TUNER) / 176

Tracie Morris  
SOMNIAC / 178

Jeffery Conway  
THE COOLEST THINGS ARE NEVER IN BOOKS / 179

Stephen Massimilla  
ZENITH / 183

Rick Mullin  
LEXANNE / 184

Rosalind Palermo Stevenson  
THE TELEVISION / 187

*And now, a word from our sponsor...*

---

Quan Barry  
THE 1984 APPLE SUPER BOWL COMMERCIAL AS  
INTERVENTION / 191

*Channel 10: Today's Top Headlines*

---

Dean Kostos

NEW YORK APOCALYPSE / 195

Monique Ferrell

AIRTIGHT ALIBI... / 196

Robert Manaster

ASIDE / 198

Matthew Lippman

NEWSCASTED / 199

Luisa A. Igloria

THE PATRON SAINT OF BAKERS AND OF FRENZY / 201

Estha Weiner

THE NEWS, NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1999 / 202

Susana H. Case

COPIAPÓ / 203

Neil Shepard

NO / 206

Steven D. Schroeder

ONE FRAME FAMOUS / 208

Emma Bolden

DATELINE: VENGEANCE / 209

MaryLisa DeDomenicis

SURVIVOR'S GUILT / 210

Michael Palma

YEAR OF OUR GRACE / 211

*And now, a word from our sponsor...*

---

Lauren Wells

INSOMNIA / 215

*Channel 11: Games People Play*

---

Cat Dixon

BEARDED SWIMMER / 219

Edward Field

FOOTBALL WITH THE SOUND TURNED OFF / 220

Catherine B. Krause

[FIRST DOWN] / 222

W. Todd Kaneko

MR. PERFECT IS WHAT HE SAYS HE IS / 223

Mervyn Taylor

THE BULL / 224

John F. Buckley and Martin Ott

THE NEWLYWED GAME / 225

Gayle Brandeis

VANNA WHITE IS PREGNANT / 228

*Channel 12: To Remember History You Have to Repeat It*

---

Philip Miller

WE WERE WATCHING *WHEEL OF FORTUNE* WHEN THE WAR  
CAME ON / 233

Stella Vinitchi Radulescu

FLOOD / 235

Aldo Tambellini

SEPTEMBER 30, 2006, 11:25 A.M. / 236

Ron Kolm

DEATH IS A SOLDIER WATCHING TV / 238

Tony Hoagland

TO REMEMBER HISTORY YOU HAVE TO REPEAT IT / 239

*Channel 13: Let's Hear It for Me!*

---

Ryan G. Van Cleave

DEAR SIMON COWELL, OR *AMERICAN IDOL*

CONFESSION #328 / 243

Aaron Anstett

SELF-PORTRAIT AS JACKASS ON DASH CAM / 244

Bethany Reid

ON THE ALL-GOSPEL CHANNEL / 245

Matthew Hittinger

WEDNESDAYS AT THE LAUNDROMAT / 246

Vasiliki Katsarou

*THE BACHELOR*, SEASON FOUR / 249

Thom Donovan

FROM "ALL BLACK" / 250

Janis Butler Holm

IF PARIS HILTON WROTE POETRY (*THE SIMPLE LIFE*) / 251

Raymond P. Hammond

COMPLICITY / 252

*Channel 14: POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS*

---

Nina Corwin

IN SEARCH OF LAW AND ORDER / 255

Lewis Warsh

*COLD CASE* / 257

David Phillips

PLAYING DEAD / 259

Kelly McQuain

BOY WONDER IN BONDAGE, OR ROBIN GETS SNARED IN  
WONDER WOMAN'S MAGIC LASSO / 260

Charlie Bondhus  
COP LOVE / 262

Colette Inez  
SLUMNIGHT / 264

*And now, a word from our sponsor...*

---

Dorianne Laux  
LATE-NIGHT TV / 267

*Channel 15: Miss Managing Expectations*

---

Karla Huston  
FIFTIES WOMEN AT WINDOWS / 271

Lynn McGee  
BONANZA / 272

Diane Wakoski  
LA FEMME NIKITA / 273

Ellen Bass  
HOW I BECAME MISS AMERICA / 277

*Channel 16: Our Costly Stories*

---

Josh Humphrey  
BIOLUMINESCENCE / 281

Ellen McGrath Smith  
THE HISTORY CHANNEL / 284

Jacob Oet  
RE-WATCHING A SPECIAL ON SAINT-SAËNS' *THE SWAN*  
TEN YEARS LATER / 286

David Yezzi  
PAN AM / 287

Amy Holman  
DENIAL / 288

Michael T. Young  
HOUSE, M.D. / 290

Aram Saroyan  
THE TRANSPARENT MAN / 291

Chris McCreary  
PROS AND CONS / 294

Guillermo Filice Castro  
TELEMUNDO TELENOVELA / 295

Chip Livingston  
WITH FIRE / 297

Peter Carlaftes  
RUN FOR YOUR LIFE / 299

### *Epilogue*

---

Hal Sirowitz  
THE PROBLEM WITH TV / 305

### *Afterword*

---

Terese Svoboda  
ON THE DEATH OF TV / 309

### *Addendum*

---

Roy Lucianna  
THERE'S NOTHING ON TV / 313

## Preface

I grew up on *The Honeymooners* reruns, *Batman*, and *The Carol Burnett Show*, but waited until late 2011 to write my first television-themed poems. I produced two, one that imagined lost episodes of *The Dick Van Dyke Show* and the other on Bob Crane, he of *Hogan's Heroes* and seedy extra-curricular activities.

January 2012. With my pair of TV poems still drying, it occurred to me that I had never seen an anthology of poetry about the medium that has influenced our language, our perceptions of the world, our politics, our economy, our opinions, and our tastes and interests. I conducted the requisite due diligence and determined it hadn't been done.

The absence to date of a poetry anthology about TV naturally raised a question in my mind: How many poets have written about the topic? I admit I had some trepidation when I drafted the invitation to submit. Would the concept generate sufficient interest and, consequently, material to fill up the space between front and back covers?

Crossing my fingers, I sent the first set of invitations on April 6, 2012. To my very pleasant surprise, I received close to 20 submissions within three days. My conclusion: I'm on to a good thing.

The submission period lasted five and a half months. I received work from 300 or so poets; I read and evaluated roughly 800 poems. The book you're holding contains 129 poems by 130 poets (one poem is a collaborative effort). I'm gratified beyond my ability to express it that so many of the poets in *Rabbit Ears* wrote new work exclusively for this volume or contributed previously unpublished poems. We'd like to extend a special word of thanks to Billy Collins for suggesting the title *Rabbit Ears*.

I'm listed as the sole editor of *Rabbit Ears*, but in a sense all the contributing poets are co-editors. Their rich and engaging work directed me to subjects, perspectives, and themes I hadn't considered. TV is a vast and protean medium that tries to appeal to anyone and everyone. I sought to produce a book that captured TV's dizzying variety and, above all, an

anthology that would be fun to read. Thanks to the 130 poets in these pages, I'm convinced we accomplished our goals.

Any anthology bears the stamp of its editor's identity and tastes. In my case, professional experience exerted a strong influence. Unlike most poets, I'm not in academia. Nor am I a passive TV viewer. My career was in business, specifically public relations. My last position was director of media relations for a national not-for-profit organization. I dealt with producers and reporters for national TV shows like *Nightly Business Report* and *60 Minutes* and at local news stations throughout the United States. I prepared senior executives and other spokespeople for interviews. That knowledge and experience informed the way I selected some of the work, particularly the poems dealing with broadcast news and coverage of war.

An abundance of voices and forms makes up *Rabbit Ears*. In the following pages, you'll read narrative poems, persona poems, poems that employ found text, formal poems, prose poems, haiku and senryu, and poems that incorporate non-poetic forms, like the interview and screenplay. They explore a robust array of subjects: the history and early days of TV, sit-coms, children's programming, the news, horror and science fiction, detective shows, soap operas and romance, reality TV, and commercials, among others. The poems are funny, poignant, witty, mysterious, and educational. In short, the poems are much like TV itself.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to *Rabbit Ears*. Happy reading!

Joel Allegretti, Editor  
December 2015