

Two Comments by Gail Sher

1. I'd like to thank Jim Hartz, Executive Director of the Poetry Center at SF State, who introduces this reading (and makes a brief announcement at the end). It was my good fortune to have his generous, thoughtful support at the beginning of my poetry career.

2. At the beginning of the reading, I mentioned how much I was influenced by “On Barnaby Jones” by Barrett Watten, which begins:

A jeep pulls up to a house in the woods. A man gets out of
the jeep. The man's face and what the man is looking at:
blank wall of trees.¹

In 1981, when I first read “The man's face and what the man is looking at,” my mind, opening, launched an experiment which became my first published book of poetry, *From another point of view the woman seems to be resting* (1982) that is now (in 2017) being developed in a new work² as a series of “plays without the play”—think of stage directions for an improv (all the dialogue made up on the spot).

That “opening of mind” from the bits & pieces of another artist (such that a whole new way of using language suddenly appears) reminds me of Diebenkorn—his response to Matisse for example. He felt, he said, that he could go on “endlessly exploring” a certain idea, and he did. He worked that way as I have throughout my career. So I'm very moved to realize that something that influenced my first book of poetry is still having an effect thirty-five years later.

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¹ Watten, Barrett. *Frame (1971-1990)*. Sun & Moon Press, 1997, p. 203.

²*Crossing* (planned for publication in late 2017).