

# FOLLY

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Peter Reginato  
Sculpture

Marina Read Weiss  
Poem

Nolan Chessman  
Poetry

Robert Parrot  
Poem

The Japanese Art of Ukiyo-e

*The Captain Asks for a  
Show of Hands* by Nick Flynn  
Review by Romalyn Martinez Schmaltz





## FEATURES

Peter Reginato **3**  
Stainless Steel Sculpture

Marina Read Weiss **12**  
Poem

Nolan Chessman **13**  
Poetry

Robert Parrot **16**  
Poem

The Japanese Art of Ukiyo-e **17**

*The Captain Asks for a Show of Hands* **33**  
by Nick Flynn  
Review by Romalyn Martinez Schmaltz

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## Peter Reginato

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**"DEAR PURPLE"**

First View  
89"x78"x43"

2011 Stainless Steel Painted with Enamel

**"LITTLE MO"**

Commission for the Owensboro Museum of Fine  
Arts, Owensboro, KY  
11' x 10' x 8'  
Welded Steel, Insl-tron Paint



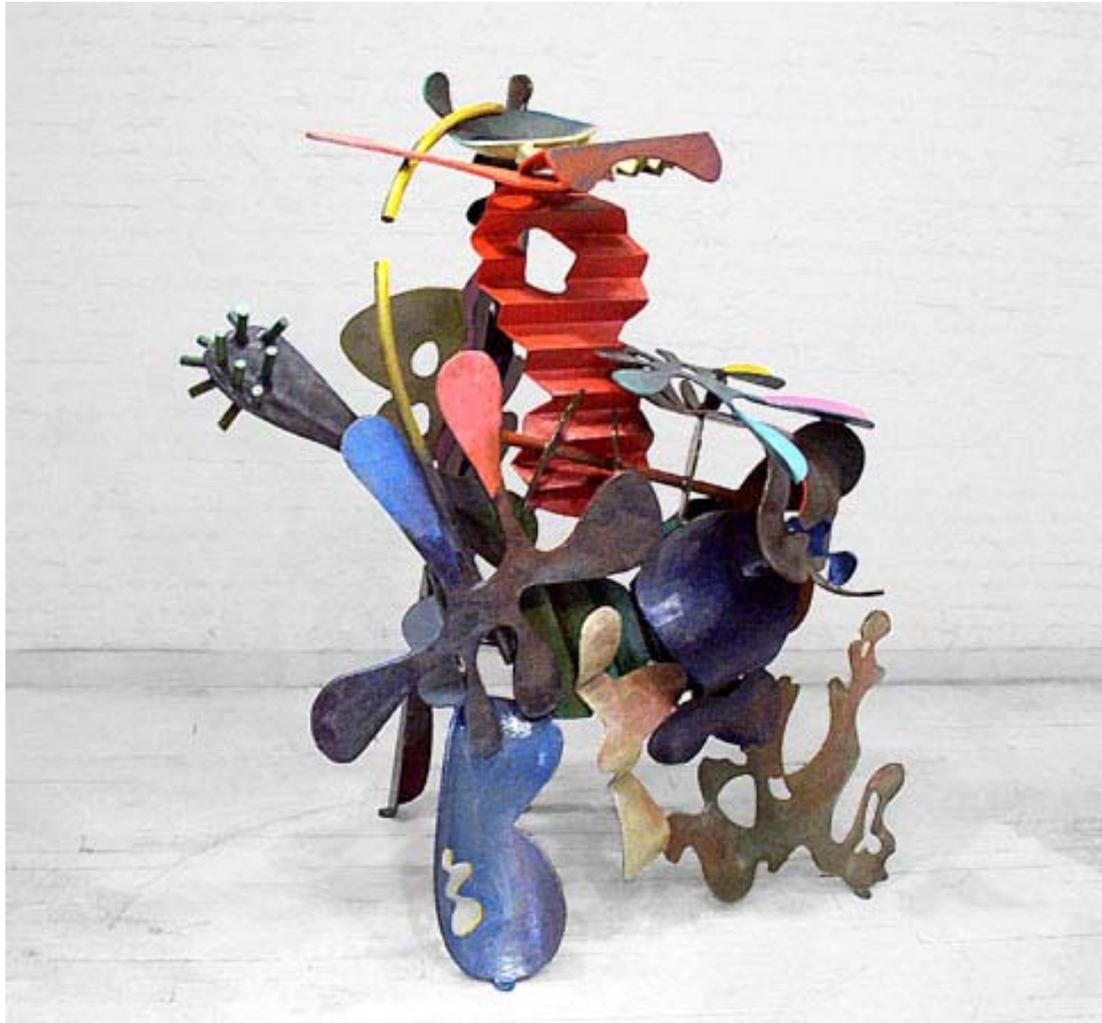
**"DRUNKEN ANGEL"**  
First View  
92"x79"x60"  
Stainless Steel and Enamel



**"DRUNKEN ANGEL"**  
Second View  
92"x79"x60"  
Stainless Steel and Enamel



**"DRUNKEN ANGEL"**  
Third View  
92"x79"x60"  
Stainless Steel and Enamel



**"BIG SQUAT"**  
66" x 59" x 43"  
Welded Steel, Insl-tron Paint



**"SQUAT"**  
33" x 32" x 24"  
Welded Steel, Insl-tron Paint

**Peter Reginato** (b.1945-) was born in Dallas, Texas and grew up in the Bay Area, California. He studied at San Francisco Art Institute and taught at Hunter College. He has had numerous one-person exhibitions around the country and has shown internationally. His work is included in major public collections such as Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, CA; and Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, FL; among others. He is the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant and National Endowment for the Arts, Sculpture Grant, Washington, DC. Peter lives and works in New York, New York.

*Photos cover, pp 2-10 courtesy of Peter Reginato © 2011*  
[www.peterreginato.com](http://www.peterreginato.com)

## Marina Read Weiss

### Corpus Delicti

(Orgy at Eco-House, Ithaca, New York)

She calls,       tremulous,  
confesses       a tentacle, a mound of  
convulsing skins:  
                  –what air had squared off

some *thing*       discrete between them       torn open  
crawling with areolae, lychee fruit,  
                  crimped hairs, syrup, a stench, a shuddering  
                  release;

and everyone is strangers  
in suits which (after commingling  
so chemically at the cleaner's)  
must pass on the sidewalk

and deadpan at the middle distance. Snatch  
your eyes into your pockets:  
unflappably, sheepishly, ashamedly,  
or wetly –it's a common disease.

**Marina Read Weiss** has had the good fortune to study poetry with Daniel Hall, Terrance Hayes, and Craig Arnold. She received a Fulbright and an Academy of American Poets Prize for her writing, which has been published or is forthcoming in *34<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, *Boston Review*, *Brink*, *Caper*, *Clapboard House*, *Explosion-Proof\**, and elsewhere.

# Nolan Chessman

## Poem with My Head on the Neck of a Great Bird

Cumulonimbi bear down,  
an irascible  
slowworm of traffic.

A belonging, then  
a letting go the leash.

In near-distant  
miniature, blackest ponies canter.

Rain-  
runneled prints in gray  
October soil.

The skyline furrows before me,  
my crate of stones,  
my sheep eyes dry.

A river of blue shoes on the tracks.

Into every stump  
of tree I've chopped  
a face,  
a shrunken lake,  
myrrhy smear

of mice.

Their bodies packed with poison.

I take what's left,  
the purpled bark of  
been here before.

It is a guest in my house.

**Slow Quake**

In the barnacle-fouled horizon he  
derealized

The car filled up with smoke

A gulf of quiet  
inconceivable

I came to sweeten  
my tea with worry

A battery in the body  
of an eel

The virtue of  
*no wonder*

No brick too thick  
No boat too slow to spill

What was a stream is strangled

Another face a cog  
in the crowd

A hand  
before the mouth

The teeth kiss and crack up

Deer appear  
gnawing a way

Pockets  
stripped of their maps

In temples of straw  
we flicker

Awake, asleep

**Good People**

Float your fist  
so the fish appears, slender  
motive, storm-sick, your hands  
kettle-drawn, hail-beaten  
fields of tree smoke. Make your eyes

crow-bold, brick-hewn bits  
of Saturdays spent cement-set, no  
small step of wonder  
we're quick in. It is true

we brought the cypress, slurry cannon,  
to its knees, black hull  
of blindness, flung our clothes  
upon the sea cave floor. Rat-dragged

night, we awoke, our mattress leaking moss.  
People are good, and sometimes they leave us.  
We are sometimes good people.

**Semidesert**

From taxis  
you tumbled

sick. I went  
days dry, dust

alighting glass,  
the gray

sea withered.  
After the rain

the water just stood  
there awhile, welling.

When you collapsed  
I took a knife

and spread  
our names out

in the soil.  
Tufts of green

chaparral  
exploded in the wind.

The trenchmen came  
to dig me out.

A tornado  
of legs

at the center  
grinding the badnesses

down. Smog lights  
carried me home

in buckets of rubble  
and smoke.

From the road  
I watched you

watch another  
as the house

filled with mud  
to the eaves.

**Nolan Chessman's** poems have appeared in *DIAGRAM*, the *Sycamore Review*, *Black Clock*, and the *Columbia Poetry Review*, and are forthcoming from *Court Green* and *Juked*. He currently lives in Brooklyn, where he works as an adjunct English professor at New York University.

# Robert Parrott

## Bubble Suits

*"Save Water: Shower with a Friend" – 60's bumper sticker*

"Bubblesuits," you say, and the codeword permeates,  
Sinking into my realtime fantasy node like a fish  
Wriggling itself into warm welcome watery flight  
To find my pleasure-response button, and I light up "Yes!"

And the dreamy jaunt begins with candles lit,  
Peeled bodies slip giggling through flamingo curtains  
Unprotected into the showerhead's mind-scrambling storm,  
A torrent of hot rain relentlessly pelting happy gooseflesh,

Our slippery dance, you a dolphin-skinned nymph in my arms  
Turning, foam spangled, pink nipples Venusian breasts gliding  
Against my skin as you twirl my big cake of patchouli soap  
In your hands, churning us a tide of thick flowing froth,

The soap's head-filling scent matching that of our candles,  
Their light coloring our encounter in soft-focus liquidy gold.  
And as your head's sudsy bouquet of shampoo blossoms  
Around my probing fingertips, you fashion my bubble tux,

Bow-tie at my throat, ruffled shirt with dripping jacket tails.  
We turn and sigh, and I begin to apply your bubble gown  
Of warm lathered lace, flowing down your French-curve body  
In rivulets of pearls until our happy washing's gone deeper than skin.

"Music," you say, and I reach our plastic flutes from the ledge,  
Our processional, Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* warbles in the rain,  
And our harmonies resound in the steamy, echoing bathroom  
Like we're in a cavernous sanctuary, not a dry eye in the place.

**Robert Parrott** is a perpetual student of literature and human nature. He loves to read, write, and plays several musical instruments including Indian tabla, flute, and guitar. He studied literature and writing at Towson University in Baltimore, MD.

# The Japanese Art of Ukiyo-e

Japan's long, rich, and linguistically unbroken history of cultural development are rich in myth, legend, and history. In the seventh century, a series of emperors ordered the compilation of genealogies for the various noble and aristocratic households. In the eighth century, the rulers ordered Japanese provinces to compile local oral histories and submit them to the capital. Waves of contact with the Asian continent provided the Japanese with intimate knowledge of Chinese (often through Korean filters), and Buddhist history, literature, and legend, further enriching Japan's cultural heritage.

Against this backdrop, the Japanese have over time meticulously observed and interpreted events, major and minor. Among others, these have included the violent rise of the military class to power in the twelfth century, the schism between two competing courts in the fourteenth, the chaos of the warring states period in the sixteenth, and the great vendetta by the forty-seven masterless samurai (*ronin*) in the eighteenth. These events generated a host of heroes and villains that the Japanese featured on the kabuki and puppet stage and glorified in woodblock prints.

The Japanese art of Ukiyo-e developed in the city of Edo (now Tokyo) during the Tokugawa or Edo Period (1615-1868). These two names refer to the relatively peaceful 250 years during which the Tokugawa shoguns ruled Japan and made Edo the shogunal seat of power. The social hierarchy of the day, officially established by shogun rulers, placed the merchants, the wealthiest segment of the population, at the lower end of the scale. With their political power effectively removed, the merchant class turned to art and culture as arenas in which they could participate on an equal basis with the elite upper classes (warriors, farmers, and artisans). It was the collaboration among the merchants, artists, publishers, and townspeople of Edo that gave Ukiyo-e its unique voice. In turn, Ukiyo-e provided these groups with a

means of attaining cultural status outside the sanctioned realms of shogunate, temple, and court.

Although Ukiyo-e was initially considered "low" art, by and for the non-elite classes, its artistic and technical caliber is consistently remarkable. Reading the images demands an extremely high level of visual, textual, and cultural literacy. From its earliest days, Ukiyo-e images and texts frequently referred to themes from classical, literary, and historical sources. At the same time, Ukiyo-e constantly expanded to reflect contemporary tastes, concerns, and innovations over the two and a half centuries of its development. The result was an art that was both populist (of and for the people, readily accessible, plentiful, affordable) and highly sophisticated. In summary, Ukiyo-e presented both the historical and all that was current, fashionable, chic, and popular. In the hands of the Ukiyo-e artist, the ordinary was transformed into the extraordinary.

The art of the woodblock is exemplified in Ukiyo-e, which exploited the full potential of this printmaking medium. In Ukiyo-e, each image was created through the collaborative effort of four skilled individuals: the publisher who coordinated the efforts of the specialized artisans and marketed the artworks; the artist who designed the artworks and drew them in ink on paper; the carver who meticulously carved the designs into a woodblock, or, in most cases, a series of woodblocks (during the Edo period the number of blocks averaged ten to sixteen); and a printer who applied pigments to the woodblocks and printed each color on handmade paper. Each member of this team was highly skilled and had nearly equal responsibilities for the final result.

The early prints are spare and monochromatic, printed in black ink only, some with minimal hand-coloring. Later works are built up in lavish layers of printed color, some with embossed areas created by the interplay of pressure, carving, and paper texture. In some works, flecks of ground metal or mica have been applied to surfaces,

creating areas that shimmer; in some a thick passage of glue and black printing ink creates a lacquer-like surface.

Perhaps most associated with loose sheet prints, Ukiyo-e is also richly represented in woodblock-printed picture books, called *ehon*. Printing techniques which both text and illustrations were carved into woodblocks provided the means by which large numbers of books could be produced without having to undergo the laborious and expensive process of hand copying, which had previously been the norm. Popular books, art manuals, and albums were produced in quantity using the same techniques that allowed for the mass production of Ukiyo-e prints.

As a vehicle for Ukiyo-e, woodblock printing was particularly successful, producing in quantity stunningly beautiful artworks that were available at a relatively low cost. Japanese art is laden with images and allusions. Contemporary viewers may encounter difficulty recognizing the literary and historical allusions and other cultural codes embedded in early modern Japanese works. Japanese art covers themes familiar to Westerners and Easterners alike. The individual versus society; humanity and the forces of nature; this world *vis á vis* the *Ultimate*--are among the themes handled in Japanese art as they are in other cultures' artistic expressions.

Understanding the archetypes and motifs that inform the Japanese sense of self can deepen a Westerner's appreciation beyond this recognition of commonality. Thus, for example, a cherry tree or a kabuki actor dressed as a beauty has significance beyond the visible and immediate depiction. The following selections (pp 19-31) are images whose full significance rests in both their visual effectiveness and their cultural significance. The prints selected explore the Japanese cultural context through works that have a fantastic or supernatural subject.

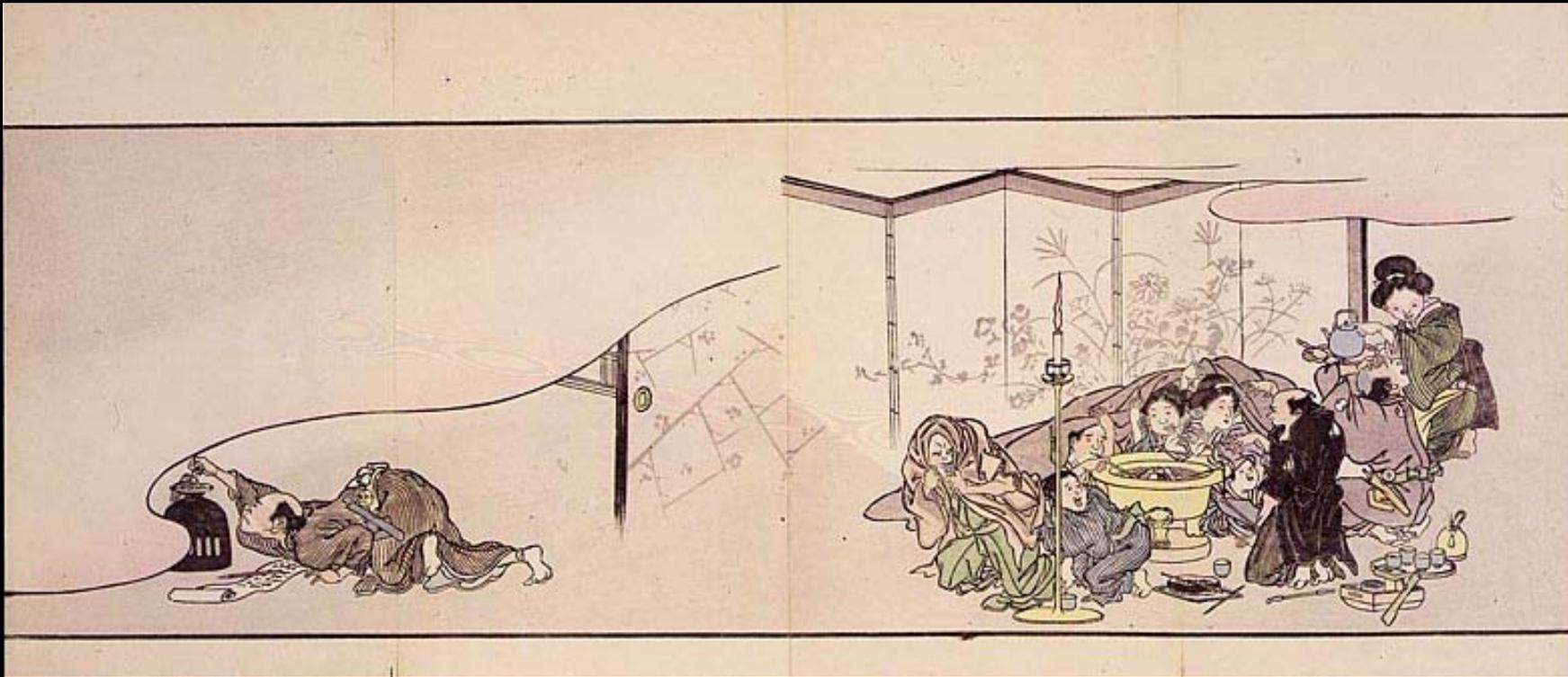
The fantastic, the occult, and the supernatural have fascinated people

in all parts of the world and at all times. The Japanese are no exception and drew on the rich traditions of the fantastic found in China as well as in Buddhist lore to make a distinctive contribution. They have identified and classified a rich variety of ghosts, demons, transformed creatures, and the like. Included among them are famous ghosts (which include the spirits of people wronged by those they trusted), long-nosed and flying creatures, as well as a set of mischievous beings who take on the guise of common animals. Fantastic creatures can appear as substitutes for social or political maladies that afflict society.

The development of woodblock printing enabled Japanese artists to generate images for a mass market, which encouraged them to imagine and depict any number of strange, unusual, and fantastic creatures that can be simultaneously engaging and disturbing to the viewer.

### Hokusai's Ghoulish Masterpieces

**Katsushika Hokusai** (1760-1849) is known for several masterworks, but perhaps one of the rarest and most intriguing is a set of five fantastic subjects from his series, *One Hundred Tales (Hyaku monogatari)*. The following prints explore the Japanese cultural context through works that have a fantastic or supernatural subject.



### A Hundred Ghost Storytelling Session

In this woodblock-printed book by the gifted Meiji artist Kawanabe Kyōsai (1831-1889), the tradition of telling ghost stories is shown. On certain nights, especially in the summer, people gather together to tell ghost stories by the light of one hundred string wicks burning in an oil lamp. As each story is told, one of the wicks is extinguished, thus making the room darker and darker. At the conclusion of the hundredth story, the room is thrown into darkness--and a spirit is said to appear.

Kawanabe Kyōsai.  
*Kyōsai's Pictorial Record of One Hundred Goblins*  
(*Kyōsai hyakki gadan*). Tokyo: Inokuchi Matsunosuke, 1890.  
Woodblock-printed book, 8 3/8 in. x 6 in.  
Asian Division, Library of Congress



### Yoshitoshi's One Hundred Ghosts

This print is based on the tenth-century story of Princess Taki-yasha, who used witchcraft to avenge the death of her father. Minamoto no Yorinobu, head of the loyalist forces, sent his lieutenant Ōya Tarō Mitsukuni, seen here, to quell any remaining resistance. In the upper right corner of the print the inscription by the famous writer, Kanagaki Robun (1829-1894), reads:

The person who sits calmly without losing his wits, looking at the forms of one hundred battling skeletons in the ruined palace at Sōma, is Yorinobu's fearless vassal. The magic, which was intended as a plot to test his strength of will and bring him over to the other side, was the product of Prince Hei's (Taira no Masakado's) daughter, Princess Taki-yasha's, witchcraft.

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi.

"Ōya Tarō Mitsukuni"

*Illustrated Hundred Tales (Ehon Hyaku monogatari).*

*(Wakan Hyaku monogatari), 1865.*

Color woodblock print, *ōban*, 15 in. x 10 in.

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress



"The Plate Mansion"  
(*Sara-yashiki*)

The legend of Okiku tells the story of a maid who, after breaking one of a set of precious Korean plates, was bound and thrown down a well by her master. The tale was told throughout Japan in a great variety of forms, the most popular version established in 1795, when Japan suffered an infestation of a type of worm found in old wells that became known as the "Okiku bug" (*Okiku mushi*). This worm, covered with thin threads making it look as though it had been bound, was widely believed to be a reincarnation of Okiku.

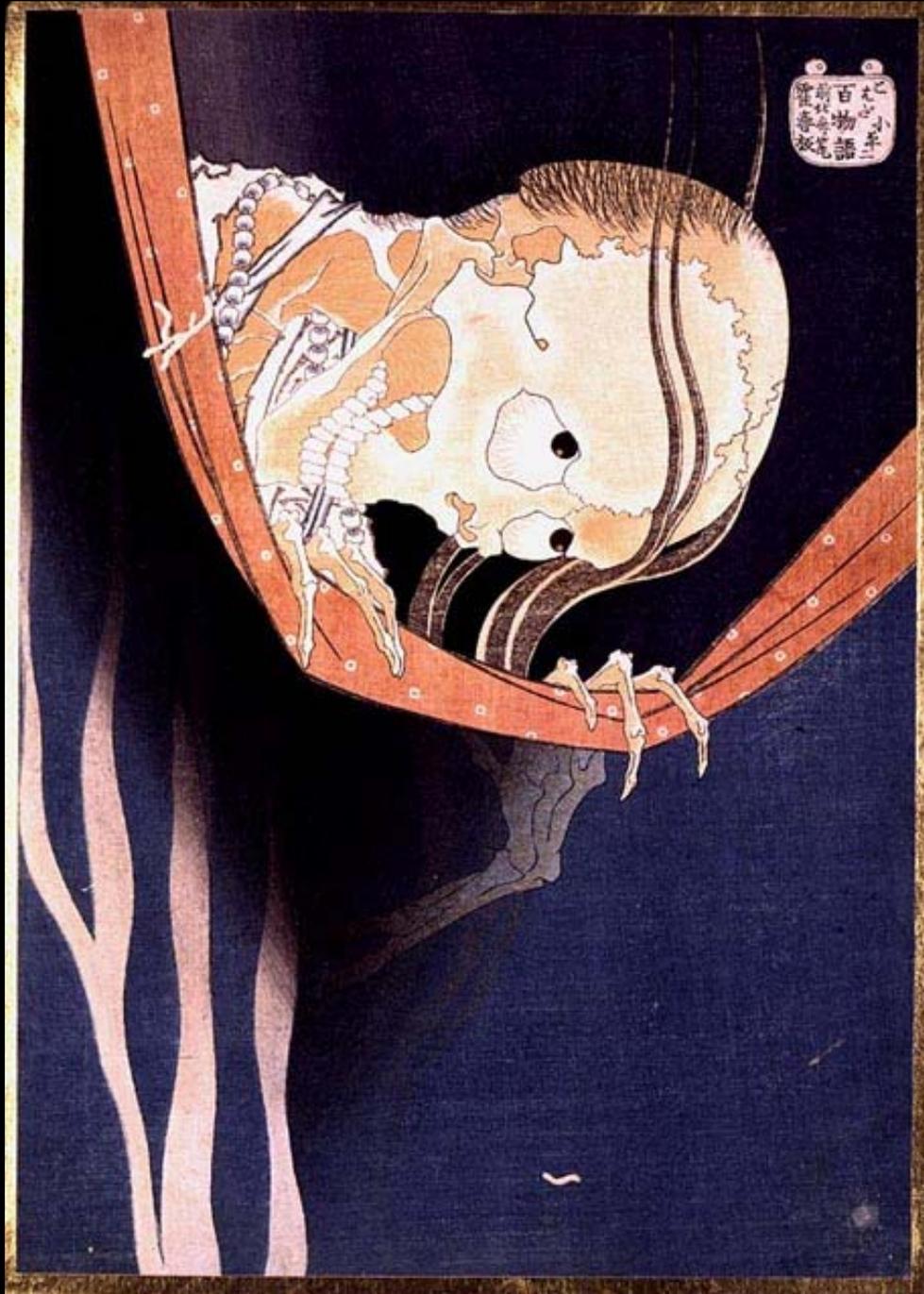
Katsushika Hokusai.

*One Hundred Tales (Hyaku monogatari)* [ghost emerging from well].

Edo: Tsuruya Kiemon, 1830.

From an album containing five color woodblock prints, 12 in. x 10 in. each.

Asian Division, Library of Congress



### "Kohada Koheiji"

In this tale based on an actual event, Koheiji was killed by his wife and her lover. As revenge he returns to haunt the couple while they are in bed together inside mosquito netting. The writer Santô Kyôden, also known as the Ukiyo-e artist Kitao Masanobu, developed the Koheiji story in his 1803 novel, *Bizarre Tale of Revenge at Asaka Marsh* (*Fukushû kidan Asaka-numa*). In 1808, the story was told on the kabuki stage, where it was an immediate hit.

Katsushika Hokusai.

*One Hundred Tales* (*Hyaku monogatari*). [skeletal ghost]

Edo: Tsuruya Kiemon, 1830.

From an album containing five color woodblock prints, 12 in. x 10 in. each.

Asian Division, Library of Congress



"Obsession"  
(*Shūnen*)

In Hokusai's time, a person's obsessive feelings of jealousy were believed to continue beyond the grave. The vengeful spirit was thought to return to this world in the form of a snake or serpent. Hokusai's print on the notion of "obsession" depicts a snake wrapped around a memorial tablet (*ihai*), customarily placed in the Buddhist altar for worship at home.

Katsushika Hokusai.

*One Hundred Tales* (*Hyaku monogatari*). [snake]

Edo: Tsuruya Kiemon, 1830.

From an album containing five color woodblock prints, 12 in. x 10 in. each.

Asian Division, Library of Congress



**"The Laughing *Hannya*"  
(*Warai-hannya*)**

In this image, Hokusai combines the visage of two demons, a *hannya*--a woman who was believed to change because of deep-seated jealousy, into a demon--and a *yamanba* (also, *yamauba*, "mountain woman")--a demon believed to devour infants brought to the mountains. In this ghastly portrait, the *hannya/yamauba* is shown reveling in her demonic meal of a live infant.

Katsushika Hokusai.

*One Hundred Tales*

(*Hyaku monogatari*) [horned figure with child's head]

Edo: Tsuruya Kiemon, 1830.

From an album containing five color woodblock prints, 12 in. x 10 in. each.

Asian Division, Library of Congress



"Oiwa" (*Oiwa-san*)

Oiwa suffers facial disfigurement after being poisoned by her husband. She dies after going insane, and returns in various forms--particularly that of a paper lantern--to haunt him

Katsushika Hokusai.

*One Hundred Tales*

(*Hyaku monogatari*) [lantern-headed ghost].

Edo: Tsuruya Kiemon, 1830.

From an album containing five color woodblock prints, 12 in. x 10 in. each.

Asian Division, Library of Congress



### A Japanese Abominable Snowman

This scene from a nineteenth-century book of ghastly tales illustrated by Takehara Shunsen (1762-ca.1830), depicts an illustration of a creature bent over a traveler, with the following caption:

Yama-chichi: This creature inhales people's breath while they are sleeping and pounds their chest until they are absolutely dead. However, if it happens to rouse its victim's companion, then the victim will be blessed with long life. It is said that many live in Michinoku Province.

Tôkaen Michimaro.

*Illustrated Hundred Tales (Ehon Hyaku monogatari).*

Illustrated by Takehara Shunsen.

Kyôto: Ryûsuiken, 1841.

Woodblock-printed book, 9 1/2 in. x 6 1/2 in. 5 vols.

Japanese Section, Asian Division, Library of Congress

**After Hours Backstage at the Puppet Theater**

The puppet theater, known as *bunraku*, developed its current form early in the eighteenth century. Ghosts and scary tales abound in these plays. The eerie mood of this image suggests these puppets will continue their atrocities long after the lights have gone out and the audience has returned home. The two figures shown here, engaged in a life-and-death struggle, are identified as the infamous villain Kô no Moronao and the lord of the forty-seven *rônin*, En'ya Hangan, as they are known in the stage versions of the real-life vendetta.

Tôkaen Michimaro.  
*Illustrated Hundred Tales (Ehon Hyaku monogatari)*.  
 Illustrated by Takehara Shunsen.  
 Image 1 - Image 2 Kyôto: Ryûsuiken, 1841.  
 Woodblock-printed book, 9 1/2 in. x 6 1/2 in. 5 vols.  
 Asian Division, Library of Congress

さういふちがはく血條のちがはくもてぬれ  
 了あせむ笑つてりし人のまはりて  
 慶長の時と人形ハ皆土政ありか佐左の満は  
 多勢の木をてて闘ててててててててて  
 文かきし ぞんま  
 ぬしとて人形師土まがてて  
 将ねもも家てててててててててて  
 鬼も佛ももてててててててててて  
 陰年のまをまほす小通とてと土まがて  
 碑らうらうらま井氏らうらうらうらうらうら





### Humorous Twists

This work by Ichiôtsai Yoshiume (1819-1879) is a series of humorous illustrations that depict various figures of speech taken literally. On the left, a very rare book wrapper (*fukuro*) graphically expresses the notion of "breaking open the piggy bank," or in Japanese, "digging up those savings you've tucked away in your navel." On the right, a man is demonstrating a twist on the Confusion precept that teaches to "follow the great and broad Way." Shown here is a man with arms outstretched in an expansive gesture; the sleeves of his garment are actually said to be filled with money to use for bribery.

Ichiôtsai Yoshiume, illus.

Proverbs: *The Navel's Change of Address* (*Kotowaza: Heso no yadogae*).

Osaka: Wataya Kihei, c. 1830s.

Book wrapper - Page from book

Woodblock-printed book, 7 in. x 4 3/4 in.

Woodblock-printed book wrapper (*fukuro*), 7 in. x 4 3/4 in.

Asian Division, Library of Congress



### Fit to be Tied: Two Versions

In his series on Japanese proverbs, Kawanabe Kyōsai (1831-1889) depicts a pair of long-necked goblins who have bound a helpless noodle customer, and, judging by their opened mouths and extended tongues, are about to make a meal of him. It is unlikely he will survive the ordeal. The caption states, "Let yourself get bound up by whatever is long," or, "Resistance is futile." This collection survives in a series of forty-nine separate sheets, kept in six original wrappers, as well as a later, bound edition.

Kawanabe Kyōsai, illus.

*Kyōsai's Hundred Pictures*  
(*Kyōsai hyakuzu*), ca. 1862.

Six packets of loose-leaf woodblock prints.

7 in. x 4 3/4 in.

Asian Division, Library of Congress



Fit to be Tied: Two Versions (*continued*)

Kawanabe Kyōsai, illus.

*Kyōsai's Hundred Pictures*

(*Kyōsai hyakuzu*)

Edo: Wakasaya Yoichi, ca. 1863.

Woodblock-printed accordion book (*orihon*), 7 in. x 4 3/4 in.

Asian Division, Library of Congress



### Deity of Good Fortune

Shown here is Hotei, based on an actual Zen monk in China. Recognizable by his rotund proportions and by a large cloth bag (*ho-tei*), Hotei is believed to bring wealth and comfort to those who worship him. Using a wet brush and ink watered down to provide shades of grey, the artist provides a masterful image which conveys both humor and charm. The image is one of a collection of more than sixty anonymous sketches and drawings attributed to the school of Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849).

School of Katsushika Hokusai Hotei  
Hokusai School Collection of Drawings  
Ink on paper, 10 1/2 in. x 7 1/2 in.  
Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

The Japanese Art of Ukiyo-e courtesy of Library of Congress, “The Floating World of Ukiyo-e” online exhibition: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/ukiyo-e/>. Curator, Katherine Blood, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. Principal Guest Scholar, Lawrence Marceau, University of Delaware. Guest Scholars, Sandy Kita, University of Maryland; Shojo Honda, former Japanese Reference Librarian, Library of Congress. Interpretive Programs Office: Irene Chambers, Interpretive Programs Officer, Kimberli Curry, Exhibition Director, Susan Mordan, Education Specialist, Deborah Durbeck, Betsy Nahum-Miller, Giulia Adelfio, Denise Agee, Tracey Avant, Margaret Brown, Seth deMatties, Carroll Johnson, Tambra Johnson, David Hayward, Ajia Henderson, Martha Hopkins, Antonio La Greca, Christopher O'Connor, Cheryl Regan, Leda Starks, Pamela Steele, and Gwynn Wilhelm. The Library of Congress recognizes and appreciates the special contributions of James Douglas Farquhar, Patricia Graham, Kuo-Sheng Lai, Jenny Lee, David McFall, Harold Meinheit, Elizabeth Nash, Valerie P. Ortiz and Seojeong Shin.



Nick Flynn, © geordie wood 2010

## Who's the Bosun?

### Navigating *The Captain Asks for a Show of Hands* by Nick Flynn

Review by Romalyn Schmaltz Martinez

My early zeal for maritime literature was awakened by Stéphane Mallarmé's poem "Salut," which typically begins his anthologies much like Baudelaire's "Invitation au voyage" does Baudelaire collections: the writer is inviting the reader to join him on a wild adventure. In Mallarmé's he juggles triple-entendres invoking sirens and champagne, calls himself your captain, and declares the sail a stand-in for the

writer's blank page. It's the first French poem I ever memorized because it's nice and short and clever—and it rhymes—and figured largely in my moribund dissertation on Maritime Themes in 19th Century Literature. Most of his anthologies also end with the same piece, the shipwreck that is *Un Coup de dès*, that is explicitly about the shipwreck of the birthpangs of modernism. It consumes 20 pages in almost 10 typefaces with not only no rhyme or rhythm scheme but also a disregard for linear narrative, and is generally considered to be the most torrential poem of its time. Nick Flynn's recent book of poetry reminds me of this sonataform approach to book orientation, with single, oboe-like notes sounded early on and culminating in a full-blown orchestra complete with gongs and the Marseillaise.

The first word in the book is "manifest," found at the topsail of the Table of Contents, which is then divided into three roughly equivalent movements whose Byzantine titles make very little manifest, but you do wonder which other words might be secretly married to this lone head—I thought of the word "destiny" first, and indeed, by the end of the book's now-sparse, now-dense adventure whose contrast reminds the reader very much of the gulf between a calm sea and a 20-foot swell, we are plunged into the high tides of such disasters as Abu Ghraib. Disasters very much the result of modern American manifest destiny. The voyage to this black island reminded me of reading *Heart of Darkness* with all its slow ululations that crescendo in unimaginable brutality and psychonautical reality. Even the quiet opening retains an ominous air as you struggle to make sense of seemingly unrelated fragments in a poetic game of Gestalt. Its mystery pulls you forward though you're never at the helm, and its seeming isolation between themes and events is betrayed in beautiful mutiny by a deeper isomorphism. Like all good books, it rewards its reader's patience, but nothing is for free, and if you want to sit at the captain's table, you start by scrubbing the deck.

There is a map at the back, a series of endnotes indicated neither in the Table of Contents nor in the poems themselves (which would spoil the sinewy drift of the words' forms), that explains a sea of cultural references so deep that no one could fathom them all. From these notes we learn how ASCAP is taking the US military to task, asking for royalties for permissionlessly using Britney Spear's and Metallica's music in their extraordinary rendition techniques, and we are made aware of Paul C elan's bunking on the same ship as Modest Mouse, Leonard Cohen in the galley with the *Bhagavad Gita*. We're here also dubiously gifted transcripts of the Amman and Istanbul testimonies of seven Abu Ghraib detainees obtained some five to seven years after the War on Terror began. These are the last of the book's voices, each one as haunted as a Flying Dutchman.

Flynn's extant work is reminiscent of the buoyant flexibility required of a ship's bosun, and his two memoirs *The Ticking Is the Bomb* and *Another Bullshit Night in Suck City* present a very different kind of voyage than his poetry. The former opens with a moving meditation on the in utero photo of his new daughter, weaves backward to—yes—Abu Ghraib, and continues its time travel in rich vignettes of joy and pain that feel more personal and less anemic than his poetry. He refers at length to San Francisco's Rebecca Solnit and her own navigational effort *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*. Like Flynn, Solnit has made a career out of mapping adventures—her book *Infinite City* came out late last year and is a luscious tribute to the city very much by the bay she calls home. The book itself is less of a book than a cultural cartographer's reverie or a linearist's nightmare, and it sailed out of bookstores during yet another dry-docked holiday season. Turns out we're many of us armchair captains. For those whose literary yearnings list toward the unchartable adventures of life that we nevertheless ceaselessly strive to map, hopefully cruising more than capsizing, Nick Flynn is the bosun-as-juggler, keeping you vaguely on course while trusting you to do the heavy lifting on deck. As a reader, it feels good to be trusted by your leader.

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