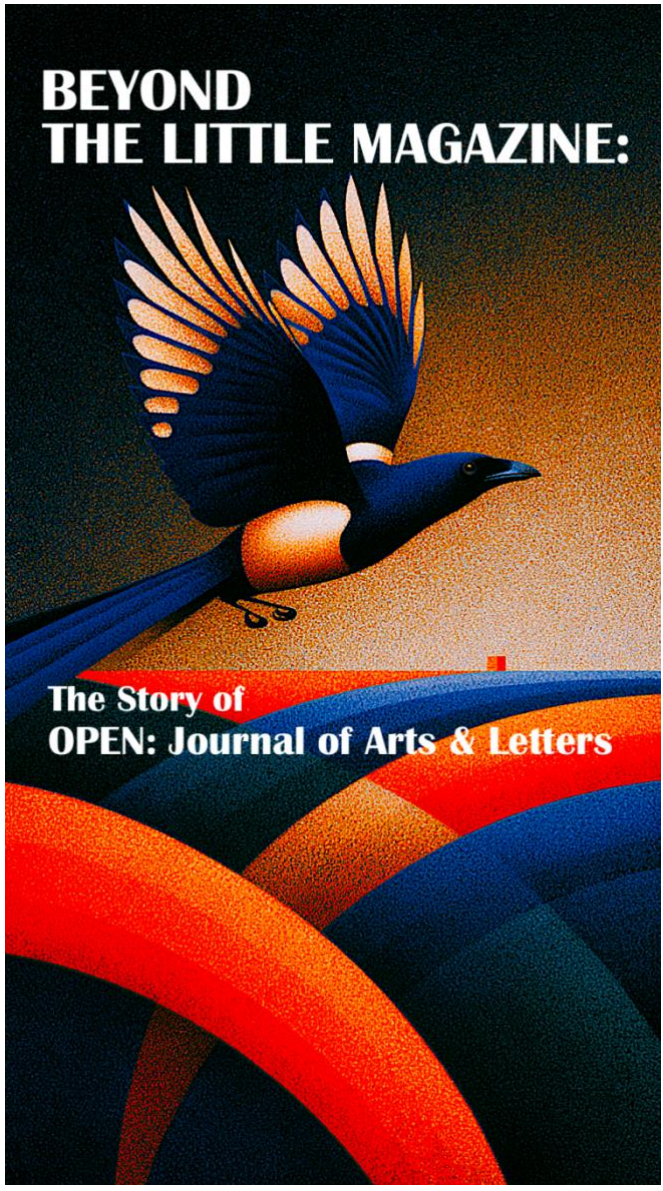
Issues of Contemporary Aesthetics
PAMPHLET SERIES



HAL: *Heuristic Algorithmic Library*
An Imprint of OJAL Art Incorporated

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An imprint of OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters (O:JA&L)

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Publishing since 2017 as OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters (O:JA&L) and its imprints
Buttonhook Press, HOT BUTTON PRESS *Contemporary Issues*,
HIGH BUTTON PRESS *Contemporary Art*, Dally Post Press: *Cowboy Poetry*,
HAL: Heuristic Algorithmic Library and FIREFIGHT PRESS: *Trench Arts & Letters*,
OJAL Art Incorporated serves artists and writers worldwide.

HAL is the O:JA&L imprint featuring AI-assisted discourse.

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BEYOND THE LITTLE MAGAZINE:

The Story of OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters (O:JA&L)

OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters—widely known as O:JA&L—has been a vibrant independent home for contemporary art and writing since 2017. From its earliest days, the journal welcomed readers into a wide-ranging world of fiction, poetry, essays, reviews, visual art, interviews, recordings, chapbooks, pamphlets, broadsides, and serial works. More than a magazine, O:JA&L has grown into a distinctive arts-and-letters platform for readers who value imagination, craft, and serious cultural conversation.

Published by OJAL Art Incorporated, the journal has expanded through a family of imaginative imprints, including Buttonhook Press, HOT BUTTON PRESS: *Contemporary Controversies*, HIGH BUTTON PRESS: *Contemporary Art*, DALLYPOST PRESS: *Cowboy Poetry*, FIREFIGHT PRESS: *Trench Arts & Letters*, and HAL: *Heuristic Algorithmic Library*. Together, these imprints demonstrate O:JA&L's creative reach: a publishing project rooted in literary seriousness, artistic curiosity, and a commitment to making contemporary work available across formats and audiences.

O:JA&L stands out for its flexible, multi-platform approach. Readers can discover new work online, explore free PDF chapbooks, pamphlets, and broadsides, follow interviews with writers and artists, and encounter dramatic readings through video. This accessibility gives the journal a lively public presence and invites a broad community of readers, writers, and artists to engage with contemporary arts and letters wherever they are.

At the heart of the project is a simple but powerful editorial promise: "Good writing & art." A 2019 Duotrope interview with associate editor Jeff Streeby captured the journal's early spirit—international in outlook, open to many cultures, and welcoming to writers of different generations. That broad welcome is matched by clear standards, giving O:JA&L an identity that is generous in range and discerning in quality.

Rather than following a conventional issue-by-issue model, O:JA&L has built a growing digital archive of posts, projects, PDFs, and special series. Its pages invite readers to move by genre, author, imprint, or

theme, creating a rich experience that feels both curated and exploratory. The result is a publication that continues to evolve while remaining anchored in craft, clarity, and meaning.

Today, the journal's archive reflects an energetic range of contemporary work, with labels such as prose, fiction, short story, poetry, flash essay, nonfiction, lyric essay, close reading, and featured collaboration. Its Featured page also highlights literary arts, chapbooks, broadsides, close readings, cowboy poetry, and other ongoing projects. For readers seeking a living map of contemporary creative practice, O:JA&L offers a welcoming and unusually varied point of entry.

Buttonhook Press has become one of O:JA&L's most visible examples of publishing innovation. Through free PDF titles, chapbook series, and longer works released in parts, the imprint brings small-press energy into an accessible digital environment. This publishing model gives writers room for ambitious work and gives readers an easy way to follow projects over time.

The journal's submission calls further reveal its breadth. O:JA&L welcomes literary arts, studio arts, theater arts, performance arts, fiction, poetry, nonfiction, visual art, criticism, drama, long prose, and special series. Its editorial vision prizes serious craft, thoughtful meaning, place-based writing, inherited communities, moral consequence, and work that can speak clearly to general readers. This combination makes O:JA&L especially appealing to artists and writers who want rigor without unnecessary gatekeeping.

As its mission has sharpened, O:JA&L has presented itself as a purpose-driven arts organization serving writers and artists worldwide. Its founder's statement and mission statement emphasize serious thought, strong craft, clear writing, artistic skill, and lasting human concerns. The journal is faith-friendly without being devotional, skeptical without being cynical, and especially attentive to writers outside major cultural centers.

This mission gives O:JA&L its distinctive energy. It is not merely a place to publish work; it is a sustained invitation to think, read, look, listen, and participate in a broad creative conversation. Its imprints allow the project to champion many forms of expression while maintaining a recognizable editorial character across the whole enterprise.

By 2026, O:JA&L had become a robust and flexible archive of contemporary creative work. Recent pages point readers toward close

readings in HAL: *Heuristic Algorithmic Library*, projects with the Bluff Coast Writers, cowboy poetry in DALLY POST PRESS, broadsides in FIREFIGHT PRESS, chapbook projects in Buttonhook Press, and work by a growing range of contributors. Readers can enter through genre, imprint, author, or downloadable title—an open structure that reflects the journal's name and ambition.

For readers, writers, artists, and supporters of independent culture, *OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters* offers more than publication history. It offers a living, expanding arts-and-letters commons: part digital magazine, part small press, part archive, and part invitation. Since 2017, O:JA&L has shown how an independent publication can keep widening its reach while remaining faithful to craft, thought, accessibility, and enduring literary value.

Online sources consulted: O:JA&L Vision Statement; O:JA&L About Us; O:JA&L Submission Guidelines and Submittable listings; O:JA&L Featured and Buttonhook Press archives; OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters LinkedIn profile; Duotrope editor interview with OPEN; Chill Subs listing for Open: Journal of Arts & Letters.

THE O:JA&L FREE PRESSES PRESS PAMPHLET SERIES

Discover the O:JA&L Free Presses pamphlet series: a growing, freely accessible library of compact literary works from Buttonhook Press, Hot Button Press, and High Button Press. Since 2020, these downloadable pamphlets have showcased distinctive voices in poetry, prose, flash, haibun, haiga, ekphrasis, Americana, formal verse, criticism, craft, translation, and collaboration. Designed for readers, teachers, writers, and arts communities, each title offers a vivid entry point into contemporary literature and visual imagination. Browse the series to encounter accomplished authors, emerging talents, inventive forms, and compelling artistic conversations—serious small-press publishing, open to every curious reader, everywhere, anytime, free.

2020

Safe Spaces: A Pretty Lie
Editorials on Issues of Poetic Practice by Rachel Custer

Against Art as a Radical Subjectivity
Editorials on Issues of Poetic Practice by Rachel Custer

Songs on the Way to God: A Theory of Poetics
Editorials on Issues of Poetic Practice by Rachel Custer

The Artistic Power of Silence: On Letting Art Speak for Itself
Editorials on Issues of Poetic Practice by Rachel Custer

Special Edition: Experimental Discourse
…are serious offenses, and…
A closet drama in two acts by Anthony Hamilton

How to Love a Headstone
Poetry by Sloane Asakura

The Last of the Gallants
Poetry by Atar Hadari

2021

Salt
Poetry by Amanda Leal

Deer in Fog at Twilight Near Squalicum Lake Road
Poetry by Richard Widerkehr

Democracy has Lifted Up Its Voice
Poetry by Mike Puican

2YC Review: The Works
Poetry and prose by members of the Two-Year College Caucus at AWP

Promises
Poetry by Ellis Elliott

Home
Poetry by Amanda Leal

Study of Burkas
A poem by Dana Sonnenschein

The Open Window
Flash vignettes by O.G. Rose

Light in the Cathedral: Russian/English Poems
Poetry in two languages by Andrey Gritsman

2022

Poems for Families
Poetry by Kirby Olson

Mogollon Rim
Poetry by Allisa Cherry

Hanno
Poetry by John-Michael Bloomquist

Poem scrawled on a maize-sheaf for her (last offering)
Poetry and art by Arturo Desimone

The Curve of the Open Page
A poem by Bruce Bond

Murder in the House: The "Nutshells" of Frances Glessner Lee
Poetry by Jessica Purdy

War and Riff
Haibun by Keith Polette

Family Photo of America
Poetry by Lynn Potts

Chester River Reverie
Poetry by Priscilla Long

Salton Sea
A short story by Mike Murray

The Fiddler
Poetry by Tim Hunt

A Balloon Called *Young America*
Poetry by Jennifer Clark

High Fashion
Featured Collaboration
Poetry by Adjei Agyei-Baah & Fine Art Photography by Jerome Berglund

2023

Rain Comes to the Central Valley
Poetry by Adrienne Pilon

DECIDUOUS
Poetry by Jean Kane

Potter's Valley Road
Poetry (Americana) by Richard Widerkehr

Old Barn *or* How Things Go On
Poetry by Penelope Schotte

Nothing To Be Sorry For
Poetry by Lynn Cohen

Small Lantern
Featured Haiga Collaborations
Haiku: Hassane Zemmouri and Photography: Megali Bretou & Bea Bauer

A Sport and a Pastime
Haiku (Americana) by Ron Scully

Night Train
Haiku by Jerome Gagnon

The Aquarian Foundation
Poetry (Americana) by Jeffrey Gray

Once There Was a Way
Poetry by Steve Myers

Local Habitations
Poetry by Edison Jennings

Occasions for Listening (Excerpts from a WIP)
Spencer Silverthorne

2024

Needful Things
Micropoems by Ronald J. Scully (Americana)

Designation
Poetry by Wendy Taylor Carlisle

California Summer
Poetry by Michael Lee Johnson

Once Is Enough
Formalist poems by Peter Austin (Americana)

Garden
Poems by Jianquing Zheng (Americana)

Let Me Say This Up Front
Poetry by David James (Americana)

GEMS
Poems by Larry D. Thomas

BESTIARY
Poems by Larry D. Thomas

2025

WEST Toward Squalicum Mountain
Poems by Richard Weiderkehr

Mississippi River Delta: A Bestiary
Poems by Larry D. Thomas

A Week Late...
Haibun & Tanka Prose by Carolyn Martin

OAI
OJAL ART INCORPORATED
SUPPORTING WRITERS AND ARTISTS WORLDWIDE

OJAL Art Incorporated, publishing since 2017 as OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters (O:JA&L) and its several imprints, including Buttonhook Press, Hot Button Press *Contemporary Controversies*, High Button Press *Contemporary Art*, Dally Post Press *Cowboy Poetry*, Firefight Press *Trench Arts & Letters*, and HAL: *Heuristic Algorithmic Library*, supports writers and artists worldwide.

THE O:JA&L FREE PRESSES MASTERS SERIES

The O:JA&L Free Presses Masters Series (from OPEN: Journal of Arts & Letters) gathers acclaimed writers for concise, downloadable chapbooks that pair fresh work with candid reflections on craft. Each installment—often framed by an interview with an associate editor—opens a window onto how masters of poetry, prose poetry, flash fiction, and related hybrid forms build voice, compression, and surprise. Designed as a reader's invitation and a writer's toolbox, the series celebrates literary art that moves fast, cuts deep, and lingers long after the last line.

Click on the titles below to explore or download the free PDF chapbooks.

PROSE POETRY AND FLASH DISCOURSE

The Buttonhook Press Masters Series: Brian Clements on Prose Poetry
With an Interview by Associate Editor Pamelyn Casto

The Buttonhook Press Masters Series: Mark Budman on Flash Discourse
With an Interview by Associate Editor Pamelyn Casto

The Buttonhook Press Masters Series: Ray Gonzalez on Prose Poetry
With an Interview by Associate Editor Pamelyn Casto

The Buttonhook Press Master Series: Michael Martone on Flash Fiction
With an Interview by Associate Editor Pamelyn Casto

The Buttonhook Press Master Series: Roberta Allen on Flash Fiction
With an Interview by Associate Editor Pamelyn Casto

The Buttonhook Press Master Series: Peter Conners on Flash Fiction
With an Interview by Associate Editor Pamelyn Casto

The Buttonhook Press Masters Series: Maxine Chernoff on Prose Poetry
With an Interview by Associate Editor Pamelyn Casto

The Buttonhook Press Masters Series: Pedro Ponce on Flash Fiction
With an Interview by Associate Editor Pamelyn Casto

The Buttonhook Press Masters Series: Kent Dixon on Flash Fiction & Nonfiction
With an interview by Associate Editor Pamelyn Casto

MIXED FORMS: HAIBUN, HAIGA, & TANKA PROSE

The Buttonhook Press Masters Series: Roberta Beary on Haibun
With an interview by Associate Editor Pamelyn Casto

EXPERIMENTAL DISCOURSE

The Buttonhook Press Masters Series: Jim Meirose on Experimental Discourse (XP)
With an interview by Associate Editor Warwick Newnham

POETRY: ALL FORMS & STYLES

The Buttonhook Press Masters Series: Poetry from Bruce McRae
With an Interview by Associate Editor Jeff Streeby

The Buttonhook Press Masters Series: Poetry from Richard Widerkehr
With an Interview by Associate Editor Jeff Streeby

The Dally Post Press Masters Series: Cowboy Poetry from Rod Miller
With an Interview by Associate Editor Jeff Streeby

ALWAYS MORE TITLES IN PRESS

AVAILABLE NOW FROM O:JA&L'S BUTTONHOOK PRESS

FLASH FICTION: Alive in the Flicker
A Portable Workshop

PAMELYN CASTO

"Pamelyn Casto's *Flash Fiction: Alive in the Flicker* is insightful, comprehensive, and brimming with inventive prompts and exercises to make your flash truly leap off the page."

~ Dinty W. Moore
co-editor of the *Best of Brevity: Twenty Groundbreaking Years of Flash Nonfiction*

"Pamelyn Casto has been the most useful person in flash for years. This "portable workshop" proves it. *Flash Fiction: Alive in the Flicker* is an amazing flash compendium of everything for anyone who is interested the form. It's also a writers' workshop from prompts to where to send flashes. What's not to like?"

~ Robert Shapard
co-editor of many Flash and Sudden Fiction anthologies, the latest are *Sudden Fiction Latina: Short Stories from the United States and Latin America* (2010) and *Flash Fiction International: Very Short Stories from Around the World* (2015)

"Pamelyn Casto's valuable book *Flash Fiction: Alive in the Flicker* is an astonishing illumination—a total history of the form with essays, strategies and exercises; lessons, examples, how-to's, markets, marketing, contests, anthologies, prompts, advice from pros, new directions (flash film!), reader psychology even—it is all here, with hundreds of internet links. There will never be a fuller single resource, with a good teacher's encouraging tone about it, to boot. You can say flash fiction begins with Aesop; with Casto you can begin anew.

~Kent H. Dixon
translator of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (2018) and co-editor of *Stone Wall Book of Short Fictions* (1976)

"Pamelyn Casto is a deep font of flash knowledge, and this portable workshop is a thorough, indispensable resource for writers and instructors who want to know more about what this thing called "flash" is, how to write it, and more important, how to read and understand it."

~ Tara Lynn Masih
editor of *The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Writing Flash Fiction* (2009) and founder of *The Best Small Fictions* (founded 2015)

Buttonhook Press titles on Amazon
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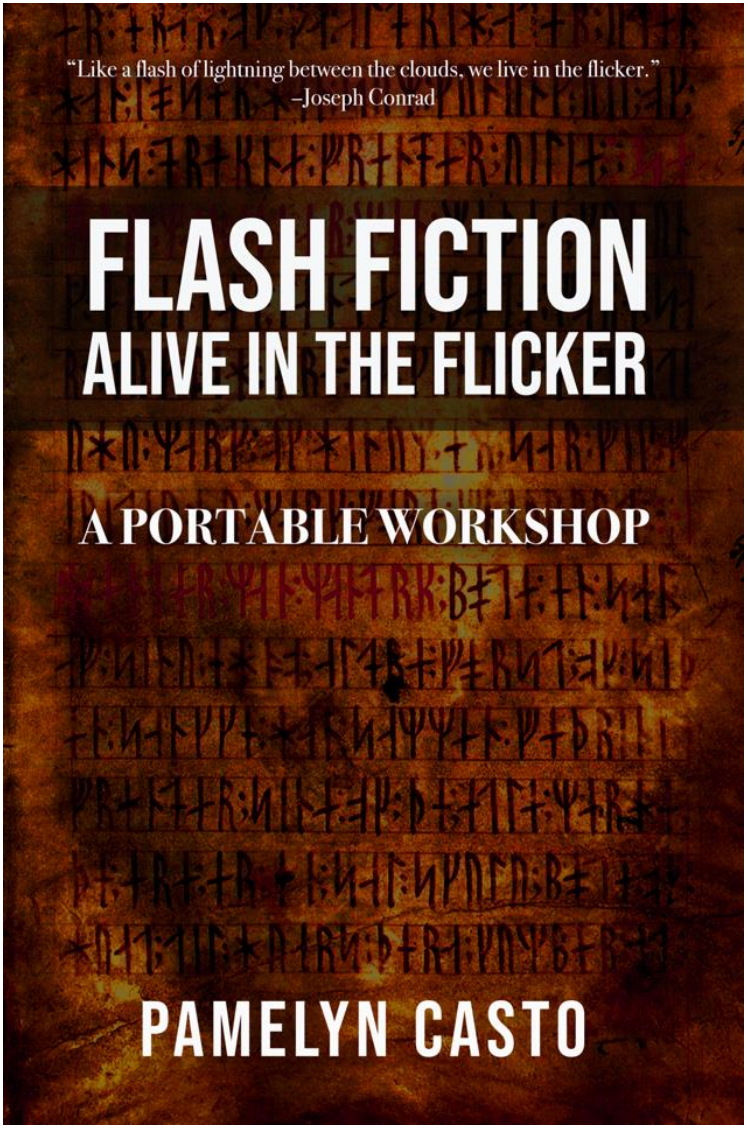

AMAZON REVIEWS

for Pamelyn Castos's *FLASH FICTION: Alive in the Flicker*

Daniel J. Nicholas
Reviewed in the United States on August 26, 2024
Verified Purchase

If I were to teach a class, this book would be required reading or a course outline for discussion. Bravo, Pamelyn! In addition, I look forward to your monthly blog to start up again.

David Lignell
Reviewed in the United States on November 23, 2022
Verified Purchase

Pamela Casto's new text, Flash Fiction: Alive in the Flicker, is a must have "portable workshop" workbook for anyone who desires to learn and practice the many forms of flash fiction.

W.R. Rodriguez
Reviewed in the United States on October 5, 2022
Verified Purchase

An authoritative overview of the genre, combined with practical advice on the writing process and an abundance of writing prompts.

Norman Jensen
Reviewed in the United States on April 2, 2024

Reading is great but hands-on prompts are even better.

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Supporting artists and writers worldwide

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