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Keith Waldrop is “one of the most important writers, translators, and publishers of avant-garde literature in our time.” —PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

Several Gravities by Keith Waldrop is the first collection of the acclaimed poet’s visual art

Several Gravities by Keith Waldrop / Edited with an essay by Robert Seydel
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A signed, numbered limited edition of 30 includes an original, miniature collage from the series “Metro Tickets.” \$100
Release: April 30. PDF and media kit available now. Review copies available Feb. 12.

For nearly four decades, Keith Waldrop has been creating a body of visual art that—while mirroring his extraordinary and internationally acclaimed oeuvre of poetry, fiction and translation—has lived largely outside the public eye.

Several Gravities, the first collection of Waldrop’s radiant collages, not only illuminates an essential aspect of Waldrop’s work but also reveals a vivid, mesmerizing world in which the invisible, the absent, and the spaces between things are roused and rise to the surface.

In his poetry, Waldrop often purloins or salvages language from eclectic sources (religious books, novels, ticket stubs, scraps of paper, etc.), then “collages” phrases into poems at once philosophical and personal. Similarly, he captures images from old newspapers ads, early Renaissance paintings, comic strips, ancient maps, architectural illustrations, candy wrappers, etc. to create startlingly beautiful visual juxtapositions that delight in contradiction and ambiguity. In both poem and collage, the fragments themselves, the residue that clings to them, and the formal structures that bind them point to the condition of indeterminacy.

Waldrop’s collages live somewhere between Kurt Schwitter’s gorgeous abstract arrangements of detritus and Max Ernst’s surreal, romantic sequences. Miniature in size but irrepressible in scope, these collages are enveloped in ghosted impressions, quiet tensions, strands of memory, and fragments of dream. Opacity and abutments dissolve beneath layers of transparent veils. The horizon collapses in the densities of atmosphere and architecture. Silences replace declarations and incompleteness persists. In Waldrop’s visual constellations and accumulations, a form of language emerges, transforming the image into a poem itself.

Several Gravities features a substantial selection of collages in full color, an essay by Waldrop that enunciates the relationship between his distinctive visual and poetic practices, as well as a new, previously unpublished serial poem, “The Proof from Motion.” Editor Robert Seydel also contributes an incisive essay on Waldrop’s work, its expression of the poet-artist “tradition,” and its expansion of the collage form.

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PETER GIZZI:

With candles burning in devotional space and stairs leading to inked occult openings, Several Gravities brilliantly documents the “potential random” so generative to Keith Waldrop’s wizardry as visual artist, prose stylist, and master poet. Whatever he compels or compels him is living, shining, astonishing.

MICHAEL PALMER:

This juxtaposition of prose commentary, verse and collage is a fascinating and illuminating work in itself. Several Gravities also serves as a bright window onto the landscape of Keith Waldrop’s poetics and creative life. It is suffused with his ineffable mix of gentle irony, humor and incisiveness, a tonal palette I have much admired across the decades of his deeply imaginative engagement with poetry, prose, drama, and the visual arts.

JOHANNA DRUCKER:

Deft precision and rich sensuality characterize Keith Waldrop’s collages. They haunt us in their evocation of what has disappeared from view but not from memory. How vividly these fragments, exquisitely excised and recombined, proffer their microcosmic scenes and complex ambiguities.

MORE →

This spring heralds three exceptional new books, providing an opportunity to consider Keith Waldrop's significant contributions to art and literature.

In addition to *Several Gravities*, Waldrop's much anticipated trilogy of collage poems *Transcendental Studies* will be released by UC Press in April, and his translation of Baudelaire's *Paris Spleen* will be published by Wesleyan University Press in May.

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READING at ST. MARKS POETRY PROJECT in New York on February 18.

EXHIBITION at the PO GALLERY in Providence, RI beginning March 14.

More readings and further exhibitions to be announced in February.

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KEITH WALDROP is the author of over two dozen works of poetry and prose, an eminent translator, and, with wife Rosmarie, founding editor of Burning Deck Press, now in its 47th year of publishing influential and innovative writing. His first book of poetry *A Windmill Near Calvary* was nominated for a National Book Award and *The Silhouette of the Bridge* won the 1997 Americas Award for Poetry. His many other awards include two NEA fellowships and the rank of *Chevalier des arts et des lettres* from the French government.

In the last fifteen years, Waldrop has published fourteen titles including *The Real Subject: Queries and Conjectures of Jacob Delafon with Sample Poems*, *Haunt*, *The House Seen From Nowhere*, *Analogies of Escape*, and with Rosmarie Waldrop *Well Well Reality* and *Ceci n'est pas Keith—Ceci n'est pas Rosmarie*. In 2009 UC Press will release *Transcendental Studies*, a virtuosic triptych of simultaneously metaphysical and personal collage poems, which reconcile Waldrop's romantic tendencies with formal experimentation.

He has translated almost two dozen volumes of poetry, including works by Charles Baudelaire, Edmond Jabès, André Breton, Paul Éluard, and by many contemporary poets, often as part of Burning Deck's *Serie d'écriture*. This year, Wesleyan University Press publishes his innovative translation of Baudelaire's *Paris Spleen*, a powerful, reimagining that releases the music, intensity, and dissonance of the original work.

Waldrop's visual art has had a parallel life to his literary career: his collages have graced the covers of numerous books and have often been featured in literary journals. Group shows include "This is Not Here," an exhibition curated by Yoko Ono at the Everson Museum in Syracuse, New York, as well as "Pictures of the Passing Word" at the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art. He has had solo shows at several Providence, RI galleries as well as at the Centre International de Poesie in Marseille, among other venues.

He is currently the Brooke Russell Astor Professor of the Humanities at Brown University where he has taught since 1969.

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*from Imagination's Artifacts:
On the Art of Keith Waldrop
by Robert Seydel*

"Hands regularly reach down into the collage's field and are both a pointing in the Proustian sense and an acquisitive holding, and are of course indicative as well of a creative charge consonant with illustrations of the *Book of Genesis*. A garden or pastoral scene vies, often in the same image, with urban architectural density. Figures regularly float from one space to the other, opening precisely to Waldrop's central care for 'the interval.' Registration marks on stamps are concrete evidence of flight; bodies in space and animal forms, the quick gestures of a calligraphic marking, free-floating alphabetic stutters, like small Dada sound phrasings, are all evidence *against* gravity and designate that in-between space, a liminality, that is so central to both his visual and poetic lexicon. Marvelous, romantic, and contradictory in their shapings, his pictures gesture toward, accommodate, and open up free territories of drift and dream. In their fullness they spell both an architecture of contemplation and a vision at odds with the solid structures of time."

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