

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Jeff Rogers: “The White Liberal Poet Organizes a Reading Against Racism”

Jeff Rogers · Wednesday, December 9th, 2020

### The White Liberal Poet Organizes a Reading Against Racism

I’m not ashamed to say it, but I cried like a baby through John Lewis’s funeral.  
And I watched the BLM protests 24 hours a day for a solid week.  
Would have been out there myself except for my co-morbidities.  
Can’t risk the COVID. But I fucking hate racism.  
That’s why I left Florida and moved to L.A.—all those damn racists I grew up with. We don’t have that problem on the LA poetry scene, thank God.

And that’s why this idea just possessed me—  
that I had to pull together a whole bunch of my favorite powerhouse poets for a big reading against racism.  
Man, we’re gonna get in some good trouble.  
We’re gonna make a statement.

We’ve got a great lineup already. Everyone wants to do it.  
I’ve got feelers out to three black poets and one Latino  
and I sure hope one of them gets back to me before that last slot gets filled.  
‘Cause we’ve got Kenneth Bishop, the old neo-beat Buddhist communist bebop jazz poet. He’s going to do fifteen minutes from his 100-page epic “Horseshit Highway Manifesto,” where he roadtrips across racist America from coast to coast tripping balls on acid shrooms pot and peyote.  
He savages the South, bulldozes the Midwest,

and puts a stake through the heart of the plains states.  
Everywhere but here, he chants, Everyone but me.  
He’s got a lotta rhythm for a white dude LOL.  
Man, we’re gonna make a real statement.

Jennifer Pepper, that hot young blonde poet, is gonna do her poem called “Swipe Left Bitch, You Know I Don’t Fuck Racists.”  
And look. You gotta check out her Instagram. Scroll down to those bikini photos where she shows off all her tats.  
Just got word that Nick Bundt wants to be on the bill.

You remember him—from his old punk band Waxing Gibbous,  
 when he went by the name Giggy Ballsack?  
 He's got this piece called "I Pronounce Myself Guilty"  
 where he confesses every racist thought he's ever had.  
 It climaxes with him screaming Forgive Me! Love Me!  
 while he's yanking out clumps of his own hair  
 and throwing them at the audience. Then he  
 breaks down sobbing and pounding on the floor.  
 He makes a gorgeous catastrophe of his own feelings.  
 We're gonna make a righteous statement with this thing.

I sure do hope one of those black poets gets back to me soon  
 before someone else nabs that last spot,  
 because this is a real important fight, taking down racism.  
 Gloria Glitter, the 80s party-girl poet, is doing her signature piece  
 "Color is Just a Trick of the Light." It's kind of her  
 "Stairway to Heaven." Starts out as a lyrical ode  
 to sex, drugs, and her black lover who was killed by the cops  
 and then builds to a soaring crescendo on how race  
 has no scientific validity and we're all just children of Africa  
 and if we'd only realize it we could all live as one family.  
 See what I'm sayin? A statement, man, we're making a fuckin' statement.

I really thought about getting Mike the Poet to do his  
 hip-hop LA history stuff, but he always insists on  
 bringing along a whole flock of his urban high school students.  
 And I mean, they're talented and all and it's downright noble  
 but I'm not sure they're right for this crowd and  
 we don't really have the time for all that. We gotta  
 keep the program moving. So instead I've got  
 Jerry Reynolds, the kinda intellectual-looking poet with  
 the longish gray hair, beard, and glasses.  
 Looks a little like Steven Spielberg?  
 He does these real ironic Joycean Lewis Carroll wordplay-type poems  
 and he's got this one called "Life on Singing Street" which is just  
 a devastating takedown of 60s/70s white flight suburban hypocrisy.

Still no response from those black poets, though.  
 Such a great opportunity for them, I can't figure it out.  
 At this point, I almost hope they don't get back to me, frankly.  
 Sometimes it's just easier to go with the poets you can relate to.  
 Just between you and me, if I'm being real honest,  
 I'm kinda scared of those black poets. I always feel like  
 they're judging me. I'm always sure I'm gonna say something wrong.  
 Seems like every damn day there's five more ways to fuck it up.  
 And who wants to feel that guilty all the damn time, anyway?  
 I mean, goddamit—  
 it shouldn't be this hard,  
 should it?

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We've got a statement to make  
against racism.

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