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**Women of the San Francisco-Bay Area Poetry Community:**

**A Pathfinder**

Melissa Eleftherion Carr

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The SF Bay Area “poetry community” is both intricate and immense. Comprised of various movements, ideologies, beliefs, sub-genres, and styles, the diversity of poets considered to be part of this “community” is astounding. It is easy for beginning writers or poets new to the scene to become lost in both the social politics and web of names and affiliations. Poets from various schools of thought mesh, clash and sometimes cross between genres and movements.

Despite the prominence of women poets actively publishing and engaging with poetry, women are often underrepresented and have been historically marginalized in various poetry anthologies, journals, and other forms of professional literature. I created this pathfinder as a means to aid undergraduate students and others interested in the women figures of the San Francisco Bay Area poetry scene. Included in this guide are a select group of women poets whose work is regarded as highly influential to poetry and poetics.

In creating this pathfinder, my aim is to aid visibility of these renowned works for all who wish to use it. While my target audience is undergraduate students at City College of San Francisco (CCSF), I also think it can be useful to mature teens, graduate students, and anyone else seeking a way in to the topic. Unfortunately, while I had hoped to link directly to CCSF’s (academic) library poetry holdings in my pathfinder, I discovered that many titles were unavailable. As a result, I linked to CCSF when titles were available, and to San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) when they weren’t.

I decided to include women poets from the 1950’s to the present because the 50’s spurned many influential women poets whose work is still considered highly relevant. It was during the 1950’s that women became more prominent in poetry circles, and sought to distinguish themselves as individuals worthy of merit outside the kitchen. These women resisted societal norms and set precedents for many women actively seeking new societal and gender roles.

The women poets of the 60’s continued this vision with actions against the Vietnam War, and gave way to radical feminist actions of the 1970’s. Poets like Pat Parker paved the way for many young women seeking new ways of being in the world.

The 1980’s were also a pivotal time for the SF-Bay Area poetry community with the burgeoning of the Language Poets. To represent that movement, I have included works from both Leslie Scalapino and Lyn Hejinian, two key figures who illustrate some of the working questions and concerns about the limitations and concrete nature of words, hence language. I have also included *How(ever)*, a poetry journal that dated from 1983-1992, which published solely women poets and was perceived as a critical asset to women’s poetry.

While both *Tender Buttons* and the *Women of the Beat Generation* anthology were published in the 1990’s, both of these works represent an earlier time for poetry: the former, self-published by Stein herself in 1914, and the latter a chronicle of women poets from the 50’s. Works from the early 2000s are also included to reflect contemporary women poets, many of which are still actively publishing and performing today.

The poets I’ve selected seem to best personify the SF-Bay Area poetry community, and capture the most influential women poets both to the community and the world of poetry as a whole. My selection criteria were primarily based on the quality and iconography of both the poets and their works.

In selecting resources for this pathfinder, I based my criteria on key figures of four discrete poetic movements that sometimes overlap: Radical Feminists. the Beat Generation, Language Poetry, and New Narrative. One of the few challenges I encountered was selecting individual poetry books representative of the spectrum of SF-Bay Area women poets. To do so, I had to exclude many worthwhile voices, which was difficult and at times felt subjective. One workaround I found useful was to include three major anthologies, each of which gave an overview of several SF-Bay Area women poets. While I would have preferred to include many of their individual works as well, I was satisfied that each anthology would potentially transport readers into the various writers’ worlds contained within, due to the incredible range and composition of each book.

As a creative participant in this poetry community, I have a background and understanding of renowned works as well as knowledge of which books are most utilized in graduate school curriculums. Therefore, I also based my criteria on works likely to be taught in an undergraduate writing curriculum.

**Bibliography of resources used:**

**Books:**

**Di Prima, Diane. (1998). *Loba.* New York: Penguin Poets.**

Diane di Prima’s *Loba* is regarded as the female counterpart to Allen Ginsberg’s *Howl,* and is an epic, iconographic account of the desire for the reintegration of the feminine and its many fragments. I chose Loba because it best represents di Prima’s enormous body of work, and has been critical to the palimpsest of women’s poetry.

**Hejinian, Lyn. (2002). *My Life.* Los Angeles: Green Integer.**

At its publication*, My Life* was a watershed piece that captured (again, in a new form) the fragmentary experience of the feminine. Hejinian conveyed her unique story by collaging together several forms previously considered to be discrete (autobiography, narrative, fiction, poem). I chose *My Life* because it is most emblematic of Hejinian’s work and early contributions to the Language movement.

**Jordan, June. (2005). *Directed by Desire: the collected poems of June Jordan*. Heller, Levi & Miles, Sara eds. Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press.**

Fearless poet and social advocate for women's rights, and founder of Poetry for the People at UC Berkeley in 1991, June Jordan was also an essayist, teacher and mentor to many young people. Her impassioned writing about her experiences as an African-American woman immersed in white culture at a young age inspired many. I have chosen to include this posthumously published collection of her works for it portrays the range of her life’s work.

**Parker, Pat. (1978). *Movement in Black : the collected poetry of Pat Parker, 1961-1978* / foreword by Audre Lorde ; introduction by Judy Grahn. Oakland, Calif. : Diana Press.**

Pat Parker was a critical voice of the women's movement as well as a tireless advocate for social justice and women’s rights. Dubbed a “radical lesbian feminist”, her poetry addressed violence against women, and established her as a pioneer for women’s literature. I have included her collected poetry for it best captures the magnitude of her work.

**Scalapino, Leslie. (1988). *Way.* San Francisco : North Point Press**

*Way* is a long signature poem of Scalapino's which captures her style and grace. Published mid-career, it was widely recognized as one of her best works and won numerous poetry awards. I chose *Way* because it is one of her more accessible books, and is a rewarding introduction to her poetics.

**Stein, Gertrude. (1997). *Tender Buttons*. Mineola, N.Y. : Dover Publications**

These poems make accessible a gateway to the marvelous mind and legacy of Gertrude Stein. While some of Stein’s other works may be considered to be overwhelming to a beginning reader of poetry, *Tender Buttons* captures Stein’s circular lyricism in fragments, which allows one greater opportunities for understanding.

**Anthologies:**

**Knight, Brenda. Ed. (1996*). Women of the Beat generation: the writers, artists, and muses at the heart of revolution*. Berkeley, CA: Conari Press.**

Standout signature anthology of women Beat poets. A comprehensive and stunning compilation for anyone interested in the women alongside and behind Kerouac, Ginsberg, Cassady, and Burroughs. Winner of the American Book Award 1997.

Contributors include SF-based/affiliated women poets: Helen Adam, Diane di Prima, Eileen Kaufman, Lenore Kandel, Joanne Kyger, and ruth weiss. Comprised of several women meritorious of individual mention for this guide, I selected this anthology as a means of encapsulating so many of the women voices representative of the zeitgeist of the Beat movement.

**Rankine, Claudia & Spahr, Juliana. Eds. (2002). *American women poets in the 21st century: where lyric meets language.* Middletown, Conn. : Wesleyan University Press.**

This anthology investigates the intersections between lyric and language poetry while recognizing the discrete values of both forms. It reads as a crash course in both styles, and asks important questions about poetics and their boundaries, as well as captures significant pieces by several notable SF-based/affiliated women poets: Rae Armantrout, Barbara Guest, Lyn Hejinian, and Brenda Hillman.

**Burger, Mary; Gluck, Robert; Roy, Camille & Scott, Gail Eds. (2004). *Biting the error: writers explore narrative*. Toronto: Coach House Books.**

The idea for this anthology originated with Narrativity Magazine, based at the Poetry Center, San Francisco State University. Writers explore narrative and question the boundaries between forms and genres. Regarded as a key "New Narrative" compilation. Contributors include SF based/affiliated women poets: Dodie Bellamy, Mary Burger, Carla Harryman, Laura Moriarty, and Camille Roy. I chose this work because it also presents many prominent women figures in the SF-Bay Area poetry scene, and is a highly influential work to many contemporary poets.

**Poetry Index:**

**Newton, Keith. Ed. (2004). *The Columbia Granger’s index to poetry in collected and selected works*. New York : Columbia University Press**

This second edition includes 315 works, by 266 different poets, locating more than 65,000 poems by title, first line, author, and subject. I’ve included this index as a means for beginning poets and writers to branch out and explore women poets from all over.

**Spoken Word:**

**The Poetry Center and American Poetry Archive. (1957, April 7*). Helen Adam reading from Ballads and other poems*. Retrieved from** [**https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/poetrycenter/bundles/191189**](https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/poetrycenter/bundles/191189)

The Poetry Center was founded in 1954 at San Francisco State University (SFSU) and began to record and archive works in the 1950’s. In 1974, Kathleen Fraser (who went on to publish How(ever)) founded the American Poetry Archive as part of the Poetry Center. This institution has made a unique place for poetry, and continues to record and archive present-day readings and performances. I have included this link both to inform and educate beginning writers/poets about the Poetry Center as a venerable cultural resource, as well as to showcase Helen Adam, who is renowned as the Mother of the Beats. Helen Adam is featured here reading her famed Scottish ballads.

**The Poetry Center and American Poetry Archive. (1956, November 14*). Madeline Gleason reading from her poetry*. Retrieved from** [**https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/poetrycenter/bundles/191186**](https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/poetrycenter/bundles/191186)

Key innovator among the SF and Berkeley Renaissance poets, here is Madeline Gleason reading selected works. Gleason was the founder of the San Francisco Poetry Guild, and was one of only four women included in Donald Hall’s landmark anthology: *The New American Poetry 1945-1960*.

**Databases:**

**Women Poets. (n.d.) *Literature Resource Center*. Retrieved from** [**http://go.galegroup.com/ps/limitExpandSearchResults.do?actionCmd=DO\_LIMIT\_SEARCH\_RESULTS&lm=DB~allElectronicResources~~DG~%22Bios%22+Or+%22LitCrit%22+Or+%22Multimedia%22+Or+%22PrimarySources%22+Or+%22ReviewsNotes%22+Or+%22TopicWorkOverviews%22~~TX~%22women+poets%22&inPS=true&prodId=LitRC&userGroupName=berkeley\_main&tabID=T001&searchId=R1&searchType=BasicSearchForm&qt=KE~poetry&limiterFieldValue%28SU%29=%22Women%20poets%22**](http://go.galegroup.com/ps/limitExpandSearchResults.do?actionCmd=DO_LIMIT_SEARCH_RESULTS&lm=DB~allElectronicResources~~DG~%22Bios%22+Or+%22LitCrit%22+Or+%22Multimedia%22+Or+%22PrimarySources%22+Or+%22ReviewsNotes%22+Or+%22TopicWorkOverviews%22~~TX~%22women+poets%22&inPS=true&prodId=LitRC&userGroupName=berkeley_main&tabID=T001&searchId=R1&searchType=BasicSearchForm&qt=KE~poetry&limiterFieldValue%28SU%29=%22Women%20poets%22)

*Literature Resource Center* allows students and other users to find versions of poems published in various contemporary journals. This database also contains articles, essays and reviews on diverse literary topics. I have selected this database as a valuable source for students to access literary criticism and secondary sources about women poets.

**Women Poets (n.d.) *Oxford Reference Online*. Retrieved from** [**http://0-www.oxfordreference.com.www.berkeley-public.org/views/SEARCH\_RESULTS.html?y=0&q=%22women%20poets%22&x=0&ssid=542831793&scope=global&time=0.528009631532864**](http://0-www.oxfordreference.com.www.berkeley-public.org/views/SEARCH_RESULTS.html?y=0&q=%22women%20poets%22&x=0&ssid=542831793&scope=global&time=0.528009631532864)

Many dictionaries and encyclopedias of interest to writers are featured in this database including the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms,* *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable*, and the *Oxford Companion to 20th Century Poetry.* Also contains a variety of dictionaries and encyclopedias dedicated to subjects ranging from Art-Zoology. I’ve selected Oxford Reference Online because it is truly awesome, and no reader/writer should be without it! Ever! Also, it contains a worthwhile compilation of links to women poets of merit.

**Poetry Journals featuring Women Poets**

**Cross, Del Ray. Ed. (n.d.) Shampoo Stars and where to find them*.* Retrieved from** [**http://www.shampoopoetry.com/shampoostars.html**](http://www.shampoopoetry.com/shampoostars.html)

Shampoo is an influential poetry journal, which actively publishes women (and male) poets. Included here are 12 years of Shampoo featuring new and established poets in conversation. Some key influential figures include: Norma Cole, Susan Gevirtz, Elizabeth Treadwell, and Stephanie Young. This resource provides a valuable insight to the current experimental poetries being published today, as well as those from the last twelve years.

**Dahlen, B; Fraser, K; Gevirtz, S; & Jaffer, F. Eds. (n.d.) *How(ever)* Archive. Retrieved from** [**http://www.asu.edu/pipercwcenter/how2journal/archive/**](http://www.asu.edu/pipercwcenter/how2journal/archive/)

Included here are archives for both *How(ever)* and *How2*: publishers of contemporary and experimental women poets. I have selected *How(ever)*, a poetry journal that dated from 1983-1992, because it was a preeminent publisher of women poets and was perceived as a critical asset to women’s poetry. *How2* is an offshoot of How(ever), and is currently accepting submissions from poets so it’s also a valuable source for writers seeking avenues for their work.

**Small Presses by and for Women Poets – selected for their contributions to women’s poetry as well as sources for students and other women poets seeking sources for publication of their works.**

**Aunt Lute Books. (2012). Contact& Submissions*.* Retrieved from** [**http://auntlute.com/contact/#submissions**](http://auntlute.com/contact/#submissions)

Multicultural SF-based publisher dedicated to promoting literature by women whose voices have been underrepresented in major and small presses.

**Calyx Press. (n.d.) Submission Guidelines. Retrieved from** [**http://www.calyxpress.org/submission.html**](http://www.calyxpress.org/submission.html)

Publisher and advocate for women's writing for over 35 years.

**Kelsey St. Press (n.d.) About Kelsey Street. Retrieved from** [**http://www.kelseyst.com/about.htm**](http://www.kelseyst.com/about.htm)

SF-based publisher features quality innovative and experimental works by women writers.

**Kore Press. (2012, April 26). Submissions. Retrieved from**

[**http://www.korepress.org/Submissions2006.htm**](http://www.korepress.org/Submissions2006.htm)

Publisher, distributor and advocate for women-based works and social activism since 1993.

**Paris Press. (n.d.) Submission Guidelines. Retrieved from** [**http://www.parispress.org/submission.html**](http://www.parispress.org/submission.html)

Publisher of "daring and beautiful books" by women writers since 1995.

**Bibliography of resources not used:**

**Prominent Male Writers – Outside Topic**

Duncan, Robert. (1997). *Selected Poems.* New York: New Directions.

Ferlinghetti, Lawrence. (1958). *A Coney Island of the Mind.* NY: New Directions.

Ginsberg, Allen. (1956). *Howl and other Poems.* San Francisco: City Lights.

Hass, Robert. (2007). *Time and Materials: Poems 1997-2005*. New York: Ecco Press.

Kerouac, Jack. (1957). *On the Road*. New York: Viking Press.

Spicer, Jack. (2008). *My Vocabulary Did this to Me*: *Collected Poems*. San Francisco: Wesleyan University Press

**Well known but excluded books by SF- Bay Area women writers – beyond scope**

Bellamy. Dodie. (2001). *Cunt-Ups.* New York: Tender Buttons*.*

Cole, Norma. (2002). *Spinoza in Her Youth* Richmond, CA: Omnidawn Publishing.

di Prima, Diane. (2007). *Revolutionary Letters*. San Francisco: Last Gasp Press.

Gottlieb, Daphne. (2003.) *Final Girl.* New York: Soft Skull Press*.*

Guest, Barbara. (2008). *The Collected Poems of Barbara Guest.* Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Harryman, Carla. (2001). *Gardener of Stars*. Berkeley, CA: Atelos Press

Hirschfield, Jane. (2011). *Given Sugar, Given Salt.* New York: HarperCollins.

Mirikitani, Janice. (2003). *Love Works*. San Francisco: City Lights.

Tea, Michelle. (2004). *The Beautiful: Collected Poems*. San Francisco: Manic D Press.

**Poetry Anthologies – not enough SF-based women to justify inclusion**

Davidson, Michael. (1989). *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and community at mid-century.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hoover, Paul ed. (1994). *Postmodern American Poetry: A Norton Anthology.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Swensen, Cole & St. John, David*.* Eds. *(*2009). *American Hybrid: A Norton anthology of new poetry.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

**Poetry Anthologies featuring lesser-known SF-based women writers**

Zawinski, Andrea. Ed. (2012). *Turning a train of thought upside down: an anthology of women’s poetry.* Oakland, CA: Scarlet Tanager

**Out-of-Print Poetry Anthologies that would have been otherwise included but were not findable**

Simone, Carole. (1979). *Networks: 1979 Anthology of SF Bay Area women poets.* San Francisco: Vortex Editions

Small Press Traffic (SPT) Eds. with Kelsey St. Press & Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) . (2002). *Technologies of measure: a celebration of women writers.* San Francisco: Small Press Traffic

**Popular Web Sources for those seeking to publish in Poetry Journals/Small Presses – beyond scope (not women focused)**

Duotrope, LLC. (2012). Duotrope Digest. Retrieved from <https://duotrope.com/index.aspx>

Poets & Writers, LLC. (2012). Poets and Writers database of small presses. Retrieved from [http://www.pw.org/small\_presses?perpage=\*](http://www.pw.org/small_presses?perpage=*" \t "_blank)

Selby, Spencer. (2012, January 1). Spencer Selby’s List of Experimental Poetry/Art Magazines. Retrieved from <http://www.selbyslist.com/>

**LIBR 210 Reference and Information Services**

**Spring 2012 Holschuh Simmons**

**Pathfinder Assignment Sheet**

**Due Monday, May 14 by midnight (Pacific Time)**

**Upload to D2L**

**25% of final grade**

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| **The project includes the following components:** | **Comments** |
| **Introductory section:** The author provides a discussion of the topic, the scope of the pathfinder, the challenges of the topic, the type of library, and the intended audience. | Useful introduction to the topic. A section on the challenges to researching this topic would have been useful |
| **Introductory section:** The author provides an explanation of criteria for inclusion and exclusion, as well as the parameters by which the criteria are being defined or measured. | Useful criteria. |
| **Annotated bibliography:** The author includes a bibliography of sources included in the pathfinder with full citations and with brief but meaningful annotations describing the source and explaining why each was included. | Your annotations are nicely done |
| **Annotated bibliography:** The author includes a bibliography of sources consulted (but not selected) with thoughtful explanations describing why the sources were not included. | Your exclusions generally are well done, but on a few of them I wasn’t entirely sure how they did not fit the criteria. A bit more explanation would be useful |
| **Pathfinder:** The pathfinder is two pages (or the equivalent length in a webpage), includes a scope note (indicating the audience and purpose of the pathfinder), and is formatted attractively and organized appropriately for the chosen audience. | What a nice picture of you! Great tips about finding poetry in the middle of the first page. I see you mention the C-G Poetry Index at the bottom of the page, and I’m wondering why you don’t pull those two chunks together. My concern about the method you mentioned is that most poets don’t have a collected works published, and so if someone were to look for a particular poem by a particular author (or to find a poem on a particular topic), s/he would not find it. The poetry index is made for this purpose (in addition to the purposes you mentioned).  Nice to include your meebo widget. |
| **Pathfinder:** The pathfinder is informative and provides a range of appropriate sources to help a user get started in researching this topic. The pathfinder includes helpful hints or search tips and is not simply a bibliography of sources. | So much great value-added information through useful annotations, hints, tips, etc. |
| **Written presentation:** The author demonstrates a facility with the conventions of written English, including using a standard citation style (APA or MLA, for example). | Nicely written |
| **Total** | **34/35 (25% of final grade)** |

**Comments:**

Great job, Melissa! You explained your criteria well and created a useful and user-friendly pathfinder. I hope you hold onto this assignment for Comp F (collection creation and evaluation), Comp I (reference), Comp N (evaluation), and perhaps others. Thank you for your good work.

(FYI: Most advisors do not want students to “reuse” one piece of evidence more than two times for different comps, so I only offer these as suggestions of potential comps.)