

Press Release

Tiresias: The Collected Poems of Leland Hickman

Edited by Stephen Motika

Preface by Dennis Phillips

Afterword by Bill Mohr

Nightboat Books and Otis Books/Seismicity Editions

Pub date: February 1, 2010; Distributed by SPD (spdbooks.org) and UPNE (upne.com)

Paper | \$14.95

ISBN: 978-0-9822645-1-5

7 x 10 || 220 pages

Contact: Stephen Motika (info@nightboat.org) or Paul Vangelisti (pvangel@otis.edu)

This landmark volume returns to print the poetry of Leland Hickman and presents previously unpublished pieces drawn from his archives at the University of California, San Diego. With the publication of this book, Hickman's innovative, emotional, and absolutely unique verse rejoins the landscape of twentieth-century American experimental poetry.

Los Angeles poet and editor LELAND HICKMAN (1934-1991) was the author of two collections of poetry: *Great Slave Lake Suite* (1980), which was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Award, and *Lee Sr Falls to the Floor* (1991). His poetry also appeared in *The Hudson Review*, *Bachy*, *LA Weekly*, *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, *Little Caesar*, *Invisible City*, *Box Car*, and the anthology *The Streets Inside: Ten Los Angeles Poets*. He was the editor of the poetry journal *Temblor*, which ran for 10 issues during the 1980s.

DENNIS PHILLIP'S many books of poetry include *Credence*, *Study for the Ideal City*, and *Sand*. He teaches at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California.

BILL MOHR'S *Backlit Renaissance: Los Angeles Poets During the Cold War* is forthcoming from the University of Iowa Press in 2010. He teaches at Cal State Long Beach.

Tiresias: The Collected Poems of Leland Hickman is a co-publication of Nighboat Books, a small, non-profit publisher based in New York, and Otis Books/Seismicity Editions, the publication project of the Graduate Writing Program of Otis College of Art & Design in Los Angeles. Both presses are dedicated to publishing innovative works of fiction, poetry, essays, creative non-fiction, and translation in high quality, trade paperback editions.

Praise for the book

I bow to Hickman's grueling and powerful honesty, to his ability to sustain an affirmation in spite of a near-murderous sado-masochism that is flayed into the language itself. T.S. Eliot wrote that William Blake "was naked, and saw man naked, and from the center of his own crystal." Hickman is certainly as naked a writer as Blake, perhaps even more so, and with his steel-like and strangely vernal language, he arrives intact through the darkness beneath the world to draw a mortal caught in that darkness out with him into the light.
— Clayton Eshleman

I found quickly that the concept of taking "a quick peek" does not pertain to any reading of Leland Hickman's poetry. I *can* tell you, however, that what I read and re-read, and again re-read, is utterly compelling in its song, clang, pain, urgency & curiosity. He is some sort of GGianTT. — Kathleen Fraser

Maximal: as if the towering world above him, writing from the kneeling position, were bursting with element and import — and down they rain! Leland Hickman's poetic abjection is one of deep saturation, a full-body sensorium, slurped to the brim and fearless of overflow. The stance is worshipful even as it sorrows, incantatory while it keens. His verse lines open in paratactic elaborations that are also compressions: a restless, animating, outward-seeking erotic energy that wants to turn event into body, cauterizing memory and sizzling attention via absorption. Poetry in *Tiresias* is a relational act in the Whitman tradition, where the reader is taken in and stuffed underneath the shirt to lie close to a shameless beating heart. As I see it, the goal is to make two hearts beat as one. Reading throbs for such poetry at last! — Aaron Shurin