

*pájaro*  
paintings by angel gómez

*the wooden bird*  
text by david rehorick

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11 October 1992 – 4 November 1992

UNB Art Centre  
University of New Brunswick  
Fredericton, Canada  
Curated by Marie E. Maltais

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## ***the dialogue between text and image: pájaro and the wooden bird***

*pájaro*  
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Initiated by the pictorial response of Angel Gómez to the textual interpretations of David Rehorick, this project was conceived by its two collaborators as a multi-dimensional approach to issues of self-discovery. Through the integration of text, image and sound, each pursues his exploration on an entirely separate level. For Rehorick, the Wooden Bird, easily dismissed as a common garden ornament, is here elevated to become the focus of his poetic enquiry. Gómez, on the other hand, translates this figurative object into the more generic *pájaro*, which simply means “bird” in his native tongue.

Presented in this catalogue are excerpts from a series of continuing dialogues begun by David Rehorick in 1990. Designed as explorations into the situation of the self defining the cultural contours of nature, these textual fragments examine the world of the Wooden Bird. The struggle between culture and nature, bounded by the backyard fence, is played out on a microcosmic scale. The Wooden Bird assumes a metaphoric significance within this limited horizon. Merely a man-made representation of a natural life-form, the Wooden Bird can only perform the function it has been designed for; it can pivot and its wings will spin, but mere simulacra will never allow this bird to fly.

The Wooden Bird is the intentional focus of the Narrator and serves as a means to examine his own identity as a composite of culturally and naturally defined selves. The bird is as much a captive of its post on the wooden trellis as the Narrator is a captive of his place in society. Within the limits of their confinement, the Narrator forms a bond of companionship with the bird and acts not as a jailer but as a guardian. The Narrator is witness to the persistence of nature exemplified by the creeping vine. Growing only in dumb response to the stimulus of sun and rain, the vine is perceived by the Narrator as a threat to order and the freedom of the bird. Through a series of self-reflexive conversations in which an interplay of voices expresses the dialectics of self and other, friend and foe, animate and inanimate, the Narrator eventually achieves a synthesis. Habit is penetrated and the banal is replaced by an uncommon approach to the customary. Freedom is found in the recognition and acceptance of the disordering principle. By looking out, the Narrator eventually discovers that he can see in.

Angel Gómez converts the text written by Rehorick into thematic and graphic elements in his paintings. Less concerned with the social dimension than Rehorick, Gómez draws freely on memories from his childhood, and presents a perspective on culture and nature that is informed by his Spanish ethnicity. The text touches off recollections of a very personal sort that become the vehicle for the more universalized experience of childhood. Just as the Wooden Bird is the object of fixated interest to the Narrator in Rehorick's texts, small precious objects like the jewelled cross, a tiny bird, or a scrap of paper are presented by the artist for intense study in the *pájaro* series. These icons of childhood are the keys to conjuring remembered rituals performed on a saint's day, stories passed on from a grandfather to his grandson, or simply a small boy's wonder of nature and his attempts to subdue it. Like the Wooden Bird which serves as a mirror to the Narrator, these tiny objects are the boyhood familiars which reflect in multifacets the man, the boy has become.

The paintings themselves are the threshold through which the viewer may depart from the present and enter into the *sanctum sanctorum* of constructed recollection. Within this metaphoric framework, doorways are painted, open to the possibility of another place and time. The representation of birds as the epitome of freedom is here paradoxical. While birds are free to soar, the *pájaro* like the Wooden Bird is fixed in space and time. Yet, the *pájaro* does exhibit the potential for flight unlike the wooden representation which is entirely subject to the external forces of nature and man.

Text is a structural part of the painted image, embedded, repeated, and transformed. Entire segments of Rehorick's poetic dialogue in various stages of completion have been inserted. These have been selected at random and are not meant to explicate the paintings. Rather, they present contiguous perceptions, and act at once as armature and idea forming an integral part of the paintings' overall fabric. In conjunction with Rehorick's text, the word *pájaro* is stencilled and repeated to form architectonic structures within the paintings. The embedded textual fragments are played against these columnar and cruciform arrangements creating a complex associative structure that uses text formally as well as figuratively.

This relationship becomes increasingly complicated when picture poses as word, and word resembles image. Text and image become, in fact, interchangeable signs. The word *pájaro* is treated in the same painterly manner as are the birds, yet, the word functions as a linguistic sign. Some of the birds are recognizable species, displaying particularized

characteristics of bill and plumage. The mimetic *pájaro* are juxtaposed against others that are flattened and nonspecific. These are stencilled and printed in sequence, forming abbreviated columnar structures similar to the textual columns. The birds can be seen as symbols carrying the weight of childhood memory or they can be read syntactically as a sequence of signs.

While the paintings present concrete manifestations of thought, the introduction of sound into the actual exhibition space superimposes another conceptual level onto the relationship between text and image. Music reflecting the avian themes of this collaborative project is overlaid with fragments of spoken text. The momentary experience of Rehorick's text perceived audibly is a counterpoint to the observable reality of the written word and the painted image.

Through word and image Angel Gómez and David Rehorick seek the entranceway to the Self through reflection on an object of personal significance. While Rehorick explores the world of the Wooden Bird, Gómez studies the sacred objects of memory. Rehorick's texts permeate the exhibition, incorporated into the ambient space and the paintings themselves. While the paintings present the artistic dialogue produced by the two colleagues, their overall aspect is far removed from the cultivated garden of the Wooden Bird. The exhibition of the *pájaro* series of paintings by Angel Gómez and the Wooden Bird texts by David Rehorick provide the viewer with metaphorical expressions of wonder which invite the viewer to see, hear and read to discover their own wooden birds.

MARIE E. MALTAIS  
Director, UNB Art Centre

## ***the wooden bird***

I worry about you,  
when winter ice pins your wings  
and heavy snows bear down upon your back.  
I attend to you, then clear a path.

Summer's beauty smiles its green deception,  
for lost in its glory I fail to see how slender vines  
slickly wrap around your wing-pins,  
stopping you from spinning with sudden gusts of wind.

You came from the West.  
A gift – mounted, then forgotten.  
I missed smooth moves by slim, green creepers,  
as Nature entangled you.  
For I was ensnarled by culture.

One day I saw you,  
and your presence became  
a permanent part of my selective watchfulness.

Twice I've retrieved your fallen wing  
when winter's ravages gave way to spring's mud.  
You've sat waiting on the workbench,  
drying out, I claimed,  
as inattentiveness lapsed into forgetfulness.

This time your tail feathers splintered off  
in unrepairable ways.  
All summer I've left you bared and broken,  
baked by summer's sun.  
And still you spin.

I stop for long moments to watch and smile  
when the winds are right.

Time has weathered us.

When our spinning days are over,  
I'll remember, with affection, how we soared together.



*pájaro II*



***presence of an absent bird***

In flat, grey winter's light,  
my glance catches an empty perch.  
Red posts accentuated  
by contoured mounds of white,  
joined by children's playful tunnels.

Summer's vine still threatens and constrains,  
but snow-mounds reach up toward the roost,  
a gestured support for unexpected falls.  
Wedges of white rest upon the trellis spine,  
tapering off near Bird's spot,  
respectful of spaces claimed.

I shift position,  
breaking a thousand little perspectives  
presented through a screened door.  
Blue lights, pinned to the trellis, peek through soft snow,  
reminders of tasks unfinished.

Strange,  
this need to adorn Nature, to adore it.



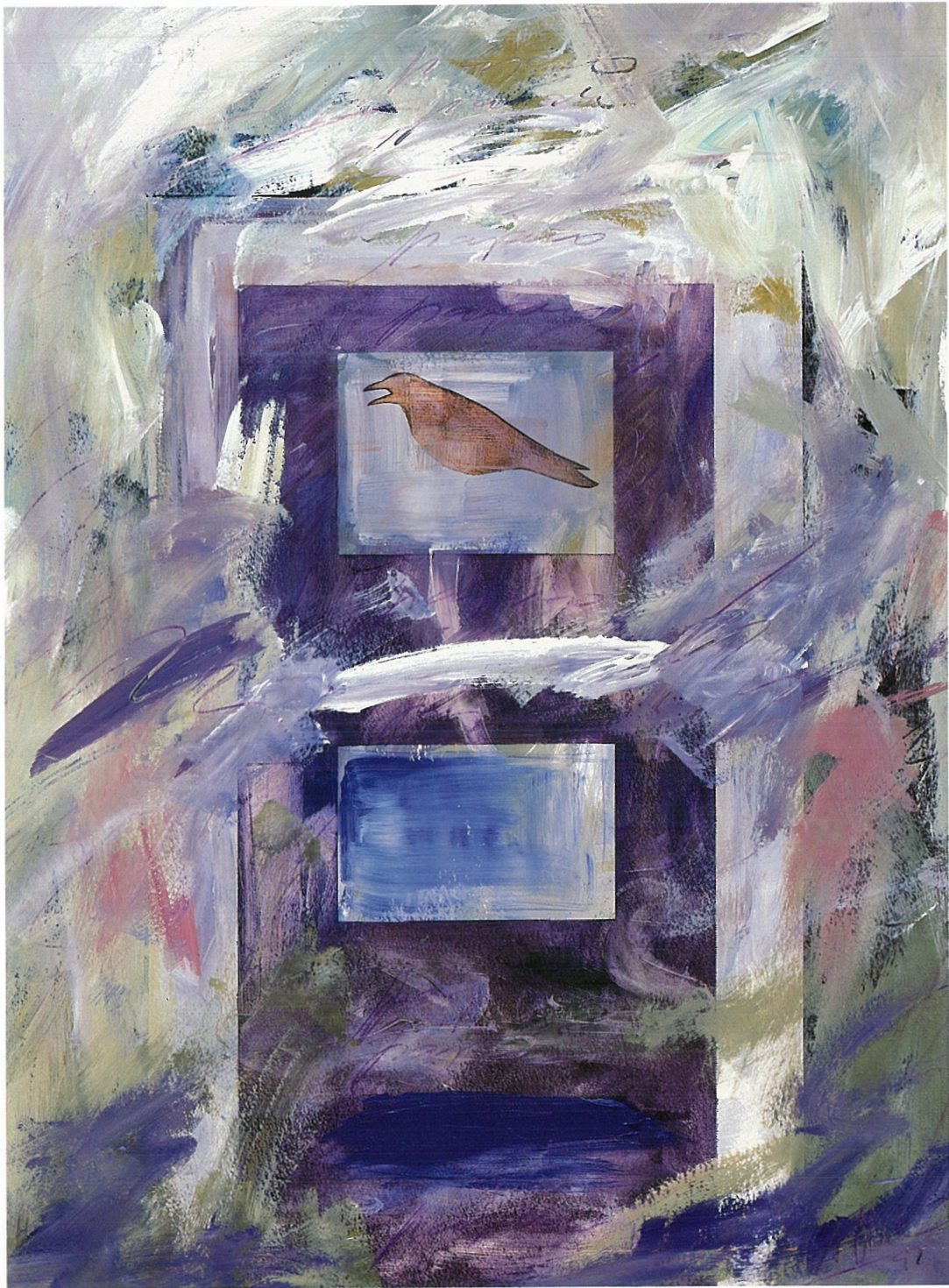
*pájaro VI*

*spring out*

Sun's warmth, a migratory call,  
to reclaim your privileged place  
at the end of the wooden trellis.

Pause, rest your beak on the tabletop,  
save energy for the last hop.  
Look through the kitchen window to summer's spot.  
Unoccupied, waiting as promised.

Rain comes. Windless, steady, straight to earth.  
The vine sends new sensors  
passed the sculptured haven of the lattice.  
Clippers gleam, snip, and snap,  
chopping, contouring tentacles,  
seeking forbidden paths.

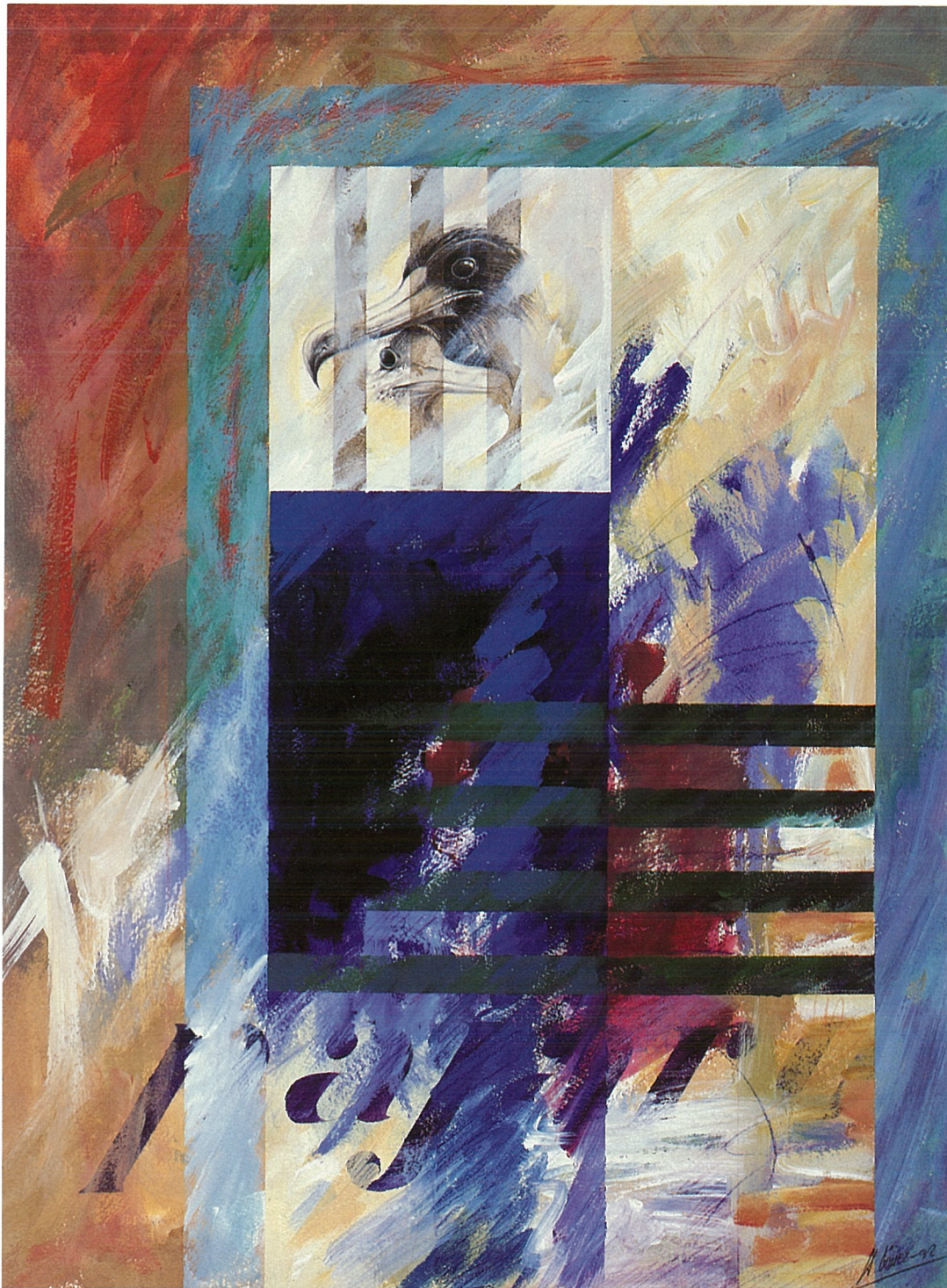


*pájaro X*

***the persistence of habit***

Restored in red, black and yellow,  
proud and sure you sit upon your perch.  
Unpainted wings reveal wise lines,  
etched through mindful struggle.

You've spun to look across the polished patio.  
Through the window I watch you watching me.  
On this quiet day, I feel communion,  
an appreciation for your reappearance near Nature,  
in a place that's groomed and guaranteed.



*pájaro V*

***the wooden bird's lament***

Arrogant, seasonal visitor, I,  
who never saw our bond.

They clipped away your tentacle threat,  
my license to look out,  
and down upon you,  
from this lofty roost.

Your sensors' touch announce, not harm,  
but common fate  
on a culturally orchestrated frame.

All-year resident,  
facing elements and shears,  
your courage helps me shape  
their summer's joy.

Next wind let's join  
and find a better way  
to know ourselves,  
then,  
one another.



*Requiem, pájaro I*



## ***list of works***

1. *Requiem, Pájaro I* (200 x 160 cm), acrylic/collage on canvas, 1992
2. *Pájaro II* (200 x 160 cm), acrylic/collage on canvas, 1992
3. *Pájaro III* (76 x 57 cm), acrylic on paper, 1992
4. *Pájaro IV* (75 x 57 cm), acrylic on paper, 1992
5. *Pájaro V* (72 x 53 cm), acrylic on paper, 1992
6. *Pájaro VI* (72 x 53 cm), acrylic on paper, 1992
7. *Pájaro VII* (72 x 53 cm), acrylic/collage on paper, 1992
8. *Pájaro VIII* (72 x 53 cm), acrylic/collage on paper, 1992
9. *Pájaro IX* (72 x 53 cm), acrylic on paper, 1992
10. *Pájaro X* (72 x 53 cm), acrylic on paper, 1992
11. *Pájaro XI* (200 x 160 cm), acrylic on canvas, 1992
12. *Pájaro XII* (200 x 160 cm), acrylic/collage on canvas, 1992
13. *Pájaro XIII* (72 x 53 cm), acrylic on paper, 1992
14. *Pájaro XIV* (72 x 53 cm), acrylic on paper, 1992

## *angel gómez*



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Angel Gómez was born in Carbonero el Mayor (Segovia), Spain. As an architectural student in Madrid, his interests turned to painting in earnest after contact with the great Spanish masters in the Prado. Gómez spent several years travelling though Europe in association with other artists studying the masterpieces of the past and of the twentieth century. He attributes his artistic approach and themes to this formative period. Gómez works chiefly with acrylics, and his love of colour is an underlying constant in a steadily evolving painting style.

Gómez had his first exhibition in Segovia, Spain, in 1968. Since then he has held several one-man shows and participated in numerous collective exhibitions in Spain and Canada. He is a founding member of Fredericton's artist-run centre, Gallery Connexion.

Angel Gómez currently resides in Fredericton with his wife Heather and their three children Erica, Mark and Daniel.

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1991 "Ecstascapes," Studio Watch, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, New Brunswick
- 1989 "Ecstascapes," Gallery Connexion, Fredericton, New Brunswick
- 1987 Windrush Gallery, Saint John, New Brunswick  
University Club, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick
- 1985 "Série Flamenco," Gallery Connexion
- 1984 Ring Gallery, Saint John, New Brunswick  
CBC Mini Gallery, Moncton, New Brunswick
- 1983 The Herring Gull Gallery, Chester, Nova Scotia  
The National Exhibition Centre, Fredericton, New Brunswick
- 1981 The Playhouse, Fredericton, New Brunswick
- 1972 New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, New Brunswick  
Franz Art Studio, Toronto, Ontario

- 1970 Pedro Flores Gallery, Estepona, Spain
- 1968-72 Caja de Ahorros Gallery, Segovia, Spain

#### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1991-89 "Connexion 5 ans déjà," travelling exhibition: Confederation  
Centre of the Arts, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island  
Eastern Edge Gallery, St. John's, Newfoundland  
UNB Art Centre  
Galerie de l'université de Moncton, Moncton, New Brunswick
- 1987 Del Bello Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- 1985 Arends Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta
- 1984 New Brunswick Juried Exhibition, Beaverbrook Art Gallery
- 1980 Landmark Gallery, Fredericton, New Brunswick
- 1977-79 Escuela de Artes y Oficios, Segovia, Spain
- 1976 Exposición Homenaje a Fausto Nuñez, Torreón de Lozoya,  
Segovia, Spain  
Certamen de Pintura, Segovia, Spain
- 1972 "Amigos de Segovia," Premio de Pintura, Segovia, Spain
- 1967 Sidi-Ifni, Africa

#### SPECIAL PROJECTS AND COMMISSIONS

- 1991 Design monument to mark the 30th anniversary of the founding of the  
Department of Surveying Engineering, University of New Brunswick.
- 1986 Graphics for the documentary "Metepenagiag: A Village Through  
Time," Fiddlehead Film Productions / New Brunswick Department  
of Historical and Cultural Resources.

#### PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

Caja de Ahorros, Segovia, Spain  
New Brunswick Art Bank, Fredericton, New Brunswick  
Spanish Embassy, Ottawa, Ontario  
University of New Brunswick Permanent Collection  
York Regional Library, Fredericton, New Brunswick

## **david rehorick**



Peter Weirick

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David Rehorick is Professor of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick. A native of Edmonton, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Alberta. His academic work is guided by a continuing commitment to interpretive and qualitative approaches to the study of human experience. In 1984, he received the Allan P. Stuart Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching.

David's creative work embraces textual and musical forms. As an accomplished jazz pianist, he plays in a quartet called Jazz Configuration. Through a series of essays and public presentations, he is articulating the existential face of post-secondary education, voiced by the mythical pedagogue, Prof. Dan Fatigue. In addition to his academic writing, David has published in newspapers and magazines.

### CREATIVE WRITING AND NON-ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

#### *Magazine articles, commentaries and reviews:*

"The Three F's: Lessons for a New Age Man." *Intervox*, Spring 1990.

"Bunker Mentality," editorial commentary. *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, Ontario, 22 July 1989.

"Religious space images," editorial commentary. *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, Ontario, 14 September 1989.

Review of *The Heart of Joshua*, by Dawn Winkelman Fuller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987). *The Telegraph-Journal*, Saint John, New Brunswick, 18 March 1988.

Review of *Jazz: Myth and Religion*, by Neil Leonard (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). *The Telegraph-Journal*, 17 October 1987, 51.

#### *The Voice of Prof. Dan Fatigue – readings and presentations to professional audiences, 1990-1992:*

The Bull Pen Prof.  
The Box  
On Waivers  
Awakening  
Dan Goes to Senate

The Last Orifical Frontier  
My Slot

*Varied Manuscripts:*

"The Volunteer" (1992)

"The Boots" (1991)

"Can Men Experience Pregnancy?" (1989)

"V is for Vasectomy" (1989)

"Hi! Long Time No See" (1989)

David believes that knowing should be like complementary healing – holistic and direct.

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