

## **PUBLIC POETICS: CRITICAL ISSUES IN CANADIAN POETRY AND POETICS**

Mount Allison University, Sackville NB, 20–23 September 2012

Poetic discourse in Canada has always been changing to assert poetry's relevance to the public sphere. While some poets and critics have sought to shift poetic subjects in Canada to make political incursions into public discourses, others have sought changes in poetic form as a means to encourage wider public engagement. If earlier conversations about poetics in Canadian letters, such as those in the well-known Toronto *Globe* column "At the Mermaid Inn" (1892-93), sought to identify an emerging cultural nationalism in their references to Canadian writing, in the twentieth century poetics became increasingly focused on a wider public, with little magazines, radio, and television offering new spaces in which to consider Canadian cultural production. In more recent decades, many diverse conversations about poetics in Canada have begun to emanate from hyperspace, where reviews, interviews, Youtube/Vimeo clips, publisher/author websites, and blogs have increased the "visibility" of poetry and poetics.

Acknowledging the work that emerged from the 2005 "Poetics & Public Culture in Canada Conference," as well as recent publications considering publics in the Canadian context, we are interested in examining a growing set of questions surrounding these and other discursive shifts connected with Canadian poetry and poetics. How have technological innovations such as radio, television, and the Internet, for example, made poetry and poetics more accessible or democratic? How does poetry inhabit other genres and media in order to gesture toward conversations relevant to political, cultural, and historical moments? What contemporary concerns energize those studying historical poetics and poetics? How do commentators in public and academic circles construct a space for poetry to inhabit?

The conference sets out to explore the changing shapes of and responses to poetic genres, aesthetic theories, and political visions from a diverse range of cultural and historical contexts. In the interest of reinvigorating conversations about the multiple configurations of poetics, poetry, and the public in Canada, we invite proposals for papers (15–20 minutes) on subjects including, but not limited to:

- Public statements/declarations of poetics
- Publics and counterpublics in Canadian poetry
- The politics of public poetics
- Tensions between avant- and rear-garde poetics in Canada
- Shifting technological modes of poetic and critical production (print/sound/video/born-digital)
- Poetics of/as Activism
- Public Intellectualism and Poetics
- Recovery and remediation of Canadian poetry and poetics
- Poetics and collaboration in Canada
- People's poetry and /or the People's Poetry Awards
- Poetry and environmental publics in Canada

Proposals should be no more than 250 words and should be accompanied by a 100-word abstract and a 50-word biographical note. Please send proposals to [publicpoetics@mta.ca](mailto:publicpoetics@mta.ca) by 29 February 2012. For more information visit [www.publicpoetics.ca](http://www.publicpoetics.ca).

In conjunction with the conference, a one-day workshop will be hosted by The Canadian Writing Research Collaboratory / Le Collaboratoire scientifique des écrits du Canada. The purpose of this workshop (CWRShop) is to introduce, in accessible and inviting ways, digital tools to humanities scholars and to encourage digital humanists, via a turn to close reading, to connect with the raw material, which is the basis of digitization efforts.

The PUBLIC POETICS conference is organized by Bart Vautour (Mt. A), Erin Wunker (Dal), Travis V. Mason (Dal), and Christl Verduyn (Mt. A). The conference is sponsored by the Centre for Canadian Studies at Mount Allison University, the Canadian Studies Programme at Dalhousie University, and The Canadian Writing Research Collaboratory / Le Collaboratoire scientifique des écrits du Canada. We plan to publish a selection of revised/expanded papers as a special journal issue and/or a book with a university press.