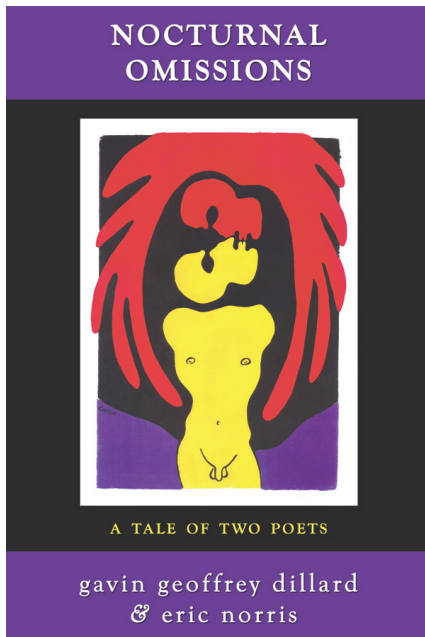


NOCTURNAL OMISSIONS: A TALE OF TWO POETS



By Gavin Geoffrey Dillard And Eric Norris

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Nocturnal Omissions: A Tale of Two Poets: Birthed through correspondence between authors Gavin Geoffrey Dillard and Eric Norris – is an unabashedly erotic, romantic, poetic, sometimes even philosophical dialogue on love, sex, and art’s glorious life and afterlife.

A NOTE FROM PUBLISHER BRYAN BORLAND

I was late to the party. I didn’t get my hands on Gavin Dillard, or rather his anthology, *A Day for a Lay: A Century of Gay Poetry* (Barricade Books, 1999), until nearly a decade after its publication. By the time the book ended up in my hands, I was attempting to train and magnify my own poetic voice, and *A Day for a Lay* was my master’s class in gay poetry.

I became acquainted with Eric Norris when our mutual friend and publisher John Stahle died. We met in New York at John’s Memorial Service. Afterwards, a small party of John’s friends went to dinner. Over cocktails, to lighten the mood of the mourners, Eric expressed his determination to “boink” Gavin Dillard, one of the poets featured (along with Eric) in the first issue of *Assaracus*. We laughed.

Eric was a day removed from a painful dental procedure. I attributed his delusional state of mind more to the pain medication he was popping than to the wine he was washing it down with. But Eric was already corresponding with Gavin. Their private conversation began after I’d raved about *A Day for a Lay* in a Facebook status update.

From their online exchanges, *Nocturnal Omissions* was born. Truly “A Tale of Two Poets,” it chronicles Gavin and Eric’s conversation-through-verse as they moved toward meeting for the first time. I’ll admit to being proud of this book. I’ll admit that it’s a feather in my SRP crown, and that bearing witness to Gavin and Eric’s interaction, at times playful, at times warlike, has been entertaining (and, okay, titillating). It also contains a beautiful poem-as-foreword written by Michael Lassell, another *A Day for a Lay* contributor.

What Gavin and Eric have written will mean different things to different people. Since it takes place in cyberspace, since Gavin and Eric both use Macs, some will see it as an iLove story. Some might see Letters to a Young Poet here: a poetic exchange where Gavin Geoffrey Dillard channels Rainer Maria Rilke, guiding and chiding a stubborn young man with much to learn about his craft.

As for me, as a gay publisher, I hope to see this book as our *Bridges of Madison County*. But maybe not for the reason you suspect. You see, when Gavin and Eric are gone, there will still be curious boys sneaking up to Auntie Mame’s attic. First, they will discover each other. Then, they will discover love. They will find a lump hidden under Auntie’s worn-out old mattress. That will be Gavin and Eric, tied up in a bundle of really hot porn.

When you get *your* hands on Gavin and Eric, you’ll see what I mean.

PROLOGUE by GAVIN DILLARD

In the summer of twenty-ten I met a young lad on Facebook named Eric Norris. He was a poet and had responded to some comment about one of my books, *A Day for a Lay*. Eric was cute, of course, seemed to regard my work highly, and so I introduced myself.

I lived on Maui at the time, and Eric in the Big Grapple. With a click we became “friends” and began chatting. It was a matter of a day or two before he sent me a poem. I responded in kind, Eric retaliated, and so it began. We wrote every day.

Merely a handful of poems into this, and I suggested the possibility of a book. Eric agreed immediately, and Bryan Borland of Sibling Rivalry Press, who had been watching our play, agreed immediately to publish the thing. Our working title was *The Courtship of Passion*.

Now, I was slated to, six weeks down the road or so, read at the big NCA media conference in San Francisco. I was the featured author within the gay contingent, and a couple of scholars were doing presentations about me as “The Naked Poet”—a moniker once bestowed by the *LA Times*. Given the theme, then, it seemed essential that I once again read in-the-buff.

I am in my fifties—tho remain reasonably fit—and it has been years since I’ve exposed my wobbly bits to the literati. So I figured it might be nice to have some fresh wobblies to back

me up, and so asked Eric—who immediately agreed. And thus the presence of a publisher and the eventuality of a fixed meet-up became themes within the “letters.”

One other thing I want to mention is that we also kept up a practically air-tight vigil of emails. We sent hundreds. We had discussed including portions of our mailings as a part of the collection, as certain points in certain poems allude to themes, photographs, even video exchanged in cyberspace.

But there is only so much a book can do. In the end, we thought it best to trust the imagination of the reader and let the poetry speak for itself. We hope that you’ll agree.

In joy!

Gavin Dillard
Black Mountain, NC

ERIC'S VIDEO MESSAGES TO GAVIN

[Video 01](#)

[Video 02](#)

EXCERPT FROM *NOCTURNAL OMISSIONS*

Dick First, Queries Later (by Gavin)

As the “Naked Poet,” I became used to putting my
junk before my stuff; standing naked before
audiences gave me the edge—I came in with nothing
to conceal; having at one time been the #1 queer
porn star, I got used to meeting people who had

long before met me—it’s hard to chase a rabbit that’s
not running. As a lonely and addlepated old monk on a
farm in Yosemite, a cabin on the coast of Marin, a
shack in the Maui rainforest, I have reacquainted with
anonymity—only the deer, the cats, the

mongoose are around to watch me pee in the
morning. And then there was you—spirit in the
dark; pixie poet in the ethers—sending me all
your nasty funk, your wagging tail, your
dripping tongue; hell yes we’re gonna

fuck—it's been half a decade since my last! But
do not think this tryst a carnal mishap, or com-
pulsive homo hookup; I have waited long and (*er*)
hard for this moment—like a forest creature en-
slaved to the rut—not to mate for life, not to

procreate or architect a nest, but for the poems we
may find under leaf and log, the rhymes we may
render in flurry and fog, the rhythms we wend as we
dance and jog ... and the metaphors to which we
are so hap'ly enslaved. —Love? I think the love is in the

writing. —A life together? we have a publisher already
committed! Our saliva has already mingled, our
fur entwined, our semen combined; we are coauthors of the
world's first kiss—why question this?
Ecstasy becomes us.

The Camel (by Eric)

The love is in the writing, yes. It is
this pencil—architect of all my hopes.
I suck on my eraser, like a nipple.
The friction of the lead provides some heat.
The little squiggles that adorn my man-
uscript swim wonderfully between the
lines, like freshly ejected sperm,
seeking, out of instinct, a nice, warm
place they can kick off their flippers,
crack a Michelob, exhausted, and unwind.
A mouth, a hand, some other place. Who knows?

Your last poem mentioned your career,
retiring from porn, continuing to appear
naked, reading poetry in California.
I was in college then, learning from dad
sucking cock was probably something
a boy in Buffalo ought not to do.
Soon after he discovered my diary,
I found myself searching for a butt one
night along the shoulder of a road
so dark it seemed to lead into a future
paved entirely in blackness, coal.

A scattering of stars, a slice of Moon,
the prick of a pink planet, Mars, I think,
took pity on me, like the passing cars.
Those headlights allowed me to pick out
a discarded pack of Camels which
concealed one cigarette and puff of air.
How incredible that find: how Moon
and Mars, Camel and cars, kept
me company that night. But the sparks

of a tossed Marlboro let me smoke
where I was going—a dim, orange glow.

I thanked the driver as he sped away,
truck dwindling to a pair of rubies. I
had no matches in my pocket—no-
thing useful, no money, no house keys:
a Latin book in my backpack, Ovid's
Metamorphoses, toothbrush, clothes,
socks and soiled underwear. And still
how lucky I felt—and not too cold—
now that I could smoke. The poetry
we'd write together was so far away—
farther than Mars, that truck driver, you

standing naked in L.A. And love,
while that Camel lasted, didn't seem
a possibility all that remote.

Breaking the Camel's Back (by Gavin)

Camels and Michelob—from white trash cowboy to
white collar slave; *ooo*, I have such finer things
planned for you! Asheville brew, Scottish booze; a
fag to puff on that perpetually glows—and a butt that
won't stop smoking ...

And all I ask is your pure, unadulterated addiction.

* * * * *

BTW, I would have picked you up that night, on that lone dark highway-to-Metamorphosis; I wouldn't have let you smoke, but I would have taken you home and made you forget your religion, your mom and dad and all things bad ...

The Road to Hell is just the backdoor to Heaven.

* * * * *

We are winged creatures from another world, you and I and "our kind," moons that wobble between the globes and leave no calculable orbit; every eviction is an invitation, every assassination an ascension, where we alight, poems are written ...

We who delight in crime!

Damascus (By Eric)

Yes, pick me up, dust me off, fill
my mouth with testicles, goat-cheese, grapes,
change my oil, enlarge my cock, replace
my heart with something softer than the plum
stone I suspect is throbbing there. Be
Prometheus to me, be Frankenstein, but leave
the memory of that lonely road intact.
I wasn't ready then—to hold a pen
or penis properly. Forget a hand.
There is this transformation I still have
to undergo, to be myself. I smoked

that solitary Camel to Damascus.
The butt the truck driver flung from his cab
seemed a sign—a well-meant meteor
crashing against the asphalt, splashing sparks,
rolling to a stop ten feet away,
glowing. I ran to pick it up, before
the filthy filter put the fire out! I had
no matches, maybe, but I had a chance
to put one corner of my Cosmos right,
light the lost cigarette I found—to
let my lungs fill up with poetry.

To accept the universe like this,
to welcome an old Camel as just one
of those small gifts that Providence bestows,
is harder for me now than it was then.
I'm older and less flexible. I've lost
some of my looks, the hair I once dyed red,
my combat boots, the 1950s trench
I pawned my silver boom box for—
all those external things I thought were me—
adorn a boy I fear is dead. His ghost
appears in steamy windows. He haunts
my eyes when I am shaving. When I fuck,
I make the love he was incapable of
making. I do this in his memory.
I regard tattoos and scars the way
he looked at certain birthdays. Something must
remain besides the pools of melting ice
cream and wax. Still pictures. Poetry.
All we carry over from the past.
Stale Camels. Cars. A butt flung from a truck
rolling to a stop somewhere. Like here.

Happy Samhain, Darling, (By Gavin)

Goddess knows I've done my share of making love to
ghosts—West Hollywood cadavers, San Francisco
zombies, 8th Avenue ephemera of the sordid kind—but
I was stumbling then, I hadn't lost God; I was still
fumbling around in someone else's delusion. Then

in some etheric closet I perceived the Light, a
door cracked, a way to escape—and I made a
run for it! Darkness turned to Light, Dorothy Parker to
Hafiz, "making love" to *being* Love; this time when the
train left the station I was at the wheel; and the

goblin took wing, took song, and became the
Lark of Spring.

This week I had implanted my first bionic tooth—a
titanium screw into my lower mandible; I have
felt no pain, the process clean, the surgeon a
hottie; I cannot wait to bite something! You are
dear to me, as you are *now*; and at 55 I feel

prepared to make young love to you—younger
love than ever I could before; for I have been made
anew—no Frankenstein’s monster from borrowed
parts, from someone else’s closet—a babe in the
woods, frightened not at all, but

joyous of his own inherent Nature.

So let the boogiemens swarm and storm—Repub-
licans, Christians, the homo elite ... they cannot
touch us for we are Divine; angels feather our
nest, and the Tree that holds us grows steadily up-
ward toward Galaxy Center.

Ah men.

ABOUT THE POETS

Gavin Geoffrey Dillard has published ten collections of verse, two anthologies, and his infamous Hollywood tell-all, *IN THE FLESH: Undressing for Success*. Also known as “The Naked Poet,” his poems have been recorded by James Earl Jones, Don Adams, and published in anthologies and periodicals worldwide. The author of dozens of songs and three musicals, Gavin has written lyrics with and for such luminaries as Sam Harris, Jake Heggie, Peter Allen, Chanticleer and Disney Studios. His classical art songs have been featured at Lincoln Center by mezzo Jennifer Larmore. He has written comedy with and for Dolly Parton, Joan Rivers, Peggy Lee, Vincent Price and Lily Tomlin. Two new musicals, *OMFG!!!* and *The Naked Poet* premiere in 2011 in San Francisco and Los Angeles, respectively.

Eric Norris was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1968. He dabbled in astrophysics, archaeology, and classics as a student at Boston University, before he settled down to study English. His work appears in many online journals and e-zines as well the anthology, *This New Breed: Gents, Badboys & Barbarians*. Eric is the author of the epic poem “Takaaki” and a slender novella called *Terence*, a comic translation of A.E. Housman’s *A Shropshire Lad*. Both are available on Lulu.com from Square Circle Press.