

Cry: violist Sarah Darling '02 and violinists Miki-Sophia Cloud '04 and Alex Fortes '07. All three played in the self-conducting, still-kicking Brattle Street Chamber Players (BSCP) as undergraduates. Fortes remembers the ensemble fondly, but also recalls how its rehearsals could devolve into “very little playing and a lot of talking.” Darling’s experience with the challenges of the BSCP and groups like it colored her first reaction to the “Criers” when, as an NEC master’s student, she heard they had formed: “I smiled to myself and thought, ‘Oh, haha, we’ll see how that goes—you guys don’t know what you’re in for.’” Then she attended one of their concerts, and discovered a group “so gorgeously in sync with each other and the music—everyone dreaming about Beethoven in just the same way.”

No group of this size and kind could come so far without some rules. In earlier years, rehearsals sometimes became free-for-alls, getting feisty and then derailed, as members quarreled over how to play a particular work. These days, A Far Cry runs like the high-functioning parliament of a small country. Each work has a new set of principals—one leader from each instrumental section—who lead the group’s practice. Only a principal may stop a run-through. Then, the floor opens to any two musicians who wish to comment on an issue small enough to be quickly addressed—a few bars, a particular phrase. Because of this system, a rehearsal for a single concert can shift styles from hour to hour. One set of principals may tape up a diagram of a Mozart divertimento, to help the group visualize its shape. Another team, leading a Stravinsky concerto, may narrate a scene to evoke a desired mood, instructing everyone to imagine “Romeo first setting his eyes on Juliet—‘I see you, I want to dance around you, feel you out.’” On rare occasions, the Criers appoint a “spanker,” a member empowered to unilaterally cut off a discussion, or just to yell. They follow equally civil procedures to determine the year’s concertmaster, programming, and distribution of principal parts.

This fall, A Far Cry launched their own recording label, Crier Records, with their first concept album. Miki-Sophia Cloud conceived of *Dreams and Prayers* as an exploration of mysticism, and of music’s role in humanity’s relationship to the di-

vine. It spans three religious traditions: a sequence from medieval Christian abbess Hildegard von Bingen’s *The Origin of Fire*, played by the violins in monody; a commission from Turkish composer Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol, inspired by Sufism; and a new arrangement of Jewish composer Osvaldo Golijov’s *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind*. It also includes one of Cloud’s favorite pieces, Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 15, “Heiliger Dankgesang,” written after the composer had recovered from a long illness. In the liner notes, she writes about how, before each concert, she freed the audience of their obligation to clap politely. They could sit in silence to absorb the last notes of a piece as it faded—or, as some did during the livelier works, get up, clap, and whoop.

The Criers’ eighth season will include

their first live-streamed concert, and—in a decision debated at length—the first time they will ever be conducted, as they collaborate with composer Matthew Aucoin '12 on an opera at the American Repertory Theater. Darling and Lee say that A Far Cry feels more like a “thirties group” than a “twenties group,” but also that aging has made the orchestra more, not less, experimental. When skirmishes break out in rehearsal, they’re easier to control. “The worst thing you can do,” explains Lee, “is take two striking views and average them.”

The wild urgency of their youth, when any season could be their last, has ebbed away. A Far Cry can look toward a longer future together than they’d dared to hope for. As Darling says: “Your repertoire of sounds increases, the longer you stand on the earth.”

A Love Affair with Haiti

Amy Wilentz on her “touchstone and central obsession”

by CRAIG LAMBERT

IT WAS PROBABLY Graham Greene’s *The Comedians* that sealed the fate of Amy Wilentz '76. Set in midcentury Haiti, the 1966 novel paints a scorching portrait of the dictatorial regime of François “Papa Doc” Duvalier and his secret police, the *Tonton Macoutes*, who ruled there for decades. Greene’s novel brought that unsettling world vividly alive for Wilentz, who was living on the Upper West Side of Manhattan in the mid 1980s. She had noticed Haitian refugees showing up in her neighborhood, and overheard snatches of their conversations. (Though very comfortable in French, she was just beginning to feel her way

into Haitian Creole.) She also grew interested in reading Haitian newspapers and stories on Haiti in *The New York Times* and *Time*, where she worked as a writer.

In early 1986, Wilentz [WILL-entz]

sensed that the regime of Papa Doc’s son, Jean-Claude Duvalier—“Baby Doc”—was about to fall, and resolved to go to Haiti. Otherwise, she says, “I was going to miss the dictatorship.” She secured an assignment from *The Village Voice* and flew to Port-au-Prince just before Baby Doc was overthrown and left for France on February 7 on a U.S. Air Force plane.

Wilentz’s incoming flight be-

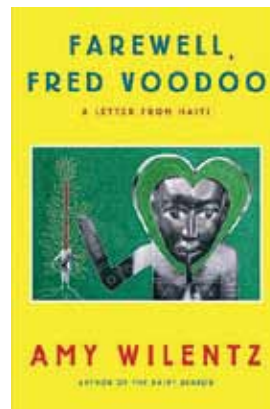


COURTESY OF AMY WILENTZ

gan a love affair with Haiti that has lasted ever since, including 30 or 40 trips to the island nation—she has lost count. For two years in the late 1980s, she was a full-time resident, and today she is one of the most knowledgeable Americans on Haiti; she has published many journalistic reports, essays, and two books on the subject (amywilentz.com).

Her first book, *The Rainy Season: Haiti Since Duvalier* (1989), renders a nuanced portrait of the chaos under the series of juntas that seized power after Baby Doc's fall. "Walk-

ing down the Grande Rue, I saw black smoke from near the market....," she writes of one episode. "I noticed that everyone in the street was looking at it, stopped dead in their tracks. Then there were shots, and everyone started running. The market women packed up their stalls in a rush, and shoppers jumped into their cars. I got into my car and put my press signs up, but a



friend I had run into said, 'No, take the press signs off, it's the Army, they shoot at the press.'...[S]ome market people had seen two city garbage trucks leaving town, unusual on a Saturday, when most government workers were not on the job, and then they noticed feet and arms sticking out of the backs of the trucks. Corpses—and the people presumed the government was

Off the Shelf

Recent books with Harvard connections

What Does a Black Hole Look Like?

by Charles D. Bailyn, Ph.D. '87, JF '90 (Princeton, \$34). The Giamatti professor of astronomy and physics at Yale (and inaugural dean of faculty at Yale-NUS College in Singapore) steers a middle course in explaining the science of observing black holes: some undergraduate physics helps, but you need not be an advanced theorist to follow along.

Why Government Fails So Often,

by Peter H. Schuck, J.D. '65, A.M. '72 (Princeton, \$27.95). Summing up why Americans hold a "dismal view of the federal government's performance," the Yale Law professor emeritus considers problems of incentives, information, powerful markets, and the limits of the law. No bomb-thrower (the subtitle is "And How It Can Do Better"), he points to successes (the GI Bill, Voting Rights Act, and Earned Income Tax Credit) and meliorative reforms. To put things in (dismal) perspective, consult **Thieves of State: Why Corruption Threatens Global Security**, by Sarah Chayes '84, G '91 (W.W. Norton, \$26.95). The former National Public Radio correspondent examines the criminalized state apparatus in Afghanistan, Egypt, and Nigeria, and the extreme responses it provokes.

The Vegetarian Flavor Bible, by Karen Page, M.B.A. '89 (Little, Brown, \$40). A 554-page tome complete with vegetarian timeline (1847, the first Vegetarian Society

is formed in England) and an A (açai) to Z (zucchini blossoms) directory of flavor affinities, dishes, etc. With yummiest photos than the average reference book.

Bridging the Gender Gap,

by Lynn Roseberry, LL.M. '92, and Johan Roos (Oxford, \$44.95). Combining legal, academic, and business experiences, the authors address persistent gender imbalances in positions of leadership as issues of governance. They colorfully address common misconceptions about gender, even searching cultural sources as diverse as the nursery rhyme about "Slugs and snails/ And puppy-dogs' tails."

Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas,

by Tamar Herzog, Gutman professor of Latin American affairs and Radcliffe Alumnae professor (Harvard, \$35). A global history of Spain and Portugal, interacting on both sides of the Atlantic, as established nations and newly colonial powers, by one of the University's recently arrived Latin Americanists.

Currency Politics: The Political Economy of Exchange Rate Policy,

by Jeffrey A. Frieden, Stanfield professor of international peace (Princeton, \$39.95). Arriving, serendipitously, amid a strong dollar and weak yuan and euro, this book addresses "the most important price in any economy." Frieden explicates the factors favoring exchange-rate fixity or (on the part of various trading interests) self-serving manipulation, and policymakers' "trilemma" of managing openness, autonomy, and stability.

Marrying Out: Jewish Men, Inter-marriage, and Fatherhood,

by Keren R. McGinity, A.L.M. '97 (Indiana University Press, \$28 paper). In a companion to an earlier volume on American Jewish women and intermarriage, the author probes attitudes and behaviors through oral histories, examining assumptions about the gendered transmission of faith, heritage, and ethnicity. Spicily illustrated with telling photos (Mel Brooks and Anne Bancroft, Eddie Fisher and Elizabeth Taylor's wedding kiss) and other examples from popular culture.

A Tale of Two Plantations,

by Richard S. Dunn '50 (Harvard, \$39.95). The author, long emeritus from the University of Pennsylvania, spent 40 years tracing 1,103 slaves from the Mesopotamia sugar plantation in Jamaica and 973 slaves from the Mount Airy plantation in tidewater Virginia, using their owners' "property" records and family trees. The painstaking result explicates both their lives and the differing economies of Jamaica (where high mortality led to constant slave importing and buying) and Virginia (where high natural growth rates led to slave sales and the dispersal of families)—a topic of interest to this magazine's November-December cover subject, sociologist Orlando Patterson, a native of Jamaica and scholar of slavery. The associated website (www.twoplantations.com) enables readers to explore these family histories in detail.

Disconnected: Youth, New Media, and the Ethics Gap,

by Carrie James, lecturer on education (MIT, \$24.95). The author, a sociologist and research director at Project Zero, explores the "digital dilemmas" of privacy, appropriation, and offensive speech

carting away those killed by the Army in the previous day's demonstration, a very bloody one." *The Rainy Season* gives special attention to the unrest among Haiti's peasants and urban poor, and to Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the radical priest who voiced their anger and, in later years, was thrice elected president (and twice deposed).

A generation later, *Farewell, Fred Voodoo: A Letter from Haiti* (2013) describes the aftermath of a different cataclysm, the 7.0-level earthquake that rocked the island in 2010.

in the flattened online world where so many young people spend so much time. Amid the Web's attenuated sense of responsibility and seeming blindness to larger ethical relationships, one would like to feel encouraged by the "bright spot" she identifies in conclusion: the possibility of "conscientious connectivity."

Only the Longest Threads, by Tasneem Zehra Husain (Paul Dry Books, \$16.95 paper). A former Harvard postdoctoral fellow, now a theoretical physicist, crafts accounts—from the standpoint of fictional witnesses—that explain fundamental breakthroughs in her field: relativity, quantum mechanics, string theory, and so on. Inventive in style and form.

Chinese and Americans: A Shared History, by Xu Guoqi, Ph.D. '99, RI '09 (Harvard, \$39.95). The author, now professor of history at the University of Hong Kong, writes "not about cultural difference and confrontations...the clash of civilizations, America's decline, or the collapse of China," but about the *cultural* traffic as individuals from one country immersed themselves in the other—including a useful account of how of Ge Kunhua became America's first Chinese-language teacher, at Harvard, in 1879 (see Vita, March-April 2008, page 44).

The Marquis: Lafayette Reconsidered, by Laura Auricchio '90 (Knopf, \$30). An admirably well-written, fresh look behind the encrusted myths at the French orphan who crossed the ocean to fight in the American Revolution un-

Inevitably, the book illuminates the author's soul as well as Haiti's; although it is "not an autobiography," she says, it won the 2014 National Book Critics Circle Award for autobiography. "Like Joan Didion and V.S. Naipaul, she has an ability not only to provide a visceral, physical feel for a place," wrote Michiko Kakutani in a *New York Times* review, "but also to communicate an existential sense of what it's like to be there as a journalist with a very specific and sometimes highly subjective relationship to her subject."



America's (and Harvard's) first Chinese-language teacher, Ge Kunhua, circa 1880

der George Washington—and in so doing found an identity and acclaim always denied him in his native France, during its bloody revolution and after.

Patients with Passports: Medical Tourism, Law, and Ethics, by I. Glenn Cohen, professor of law (Oxford, \$98.50; \$39.95 paper). A definitive examination of exceptionally thorny issues on the horizon, or already here. Can your employer ship you overseas for a cheaper hip replacement? If such a procedure goes wrong, whom do you sue? And can citizens evade domestic laws by finding a jurisdiction for an abortion, or for assisted suicide? The author directs the center for health law policy, biotechnology, and bioethics—a growth field, if ever there were one.

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TOM HOLLAND
Wall Street Journal

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That subject would include Aristide. In *Fred Voodoo*, Wilentz recalls him vividly from the late 1980s: “His sermons were fiery, explosive, eloquent things that heaped irony, invective, and metaphor in stunning blows upon the reputations and personalities of the ruling junta and the thugs, soldiers, and gangsters who continued to wield power in the months and years after Duvalier fled. Aristide’s personal courage was also astounding....[H]e would give his regular sermon at Sunday mass even on days when he knew the regime was sending its killers out into the church. I sat in the hot, overflow-

ing church for so many of those sermons, squeezed between proper church ladies in their Sunday satins and taffetas, or between men in thin suits, their backs rigid with attention.” Wilentz got to know Aristide well, but he cooled considerably after she criticized him in print years later.

She did, however, sustain her relationship with the titular “Fred Voodoo,” an archaic term the British media coined for the Haitian “man in the street,” embracing both the wisdom and folly of his views. “Fred” in some ways embodies the nation that became “my touchstone and my cen-

tral obsession,” says Wilentz. Her status in Haiti is a rare one: she is both outsider and insider, an intimate, sympathetic observer who remains acutely aware of how the outside world views Haiti, how it distorts the country’s nature and barges into its life in self-serving ways. This includes her colleagues in the media. “The objectification of the Haitians’ victimization—that’s one aspect of the Fred Voodoo syndrome,” she writes of the earthquake’s aftermath. “How beautiful the Haitians look in their misery: they always do. You can count on them.”

Let the Sonnets Be Unbroken

Neil Rudenstine guides readers through Shakespeare’s lyric masterpiece.

by SPENCER LENFIELD

THE SUBTITLE of former Harvard president Neil L. Rudenstine’s new book, *Ideas of Order*, announces that it is “A Close Reading of Shakespeare’s Sonnets.” But it is not really a “close reading” in the usual sense—and that is the heart of its strengths. Rudenstine instead interprets the sonnets as a sequence, paying special attention to how the poet develops his increasingly pessimistic concerns about the honesty and durability of romantic love in these 154 lyric poems.

“Close reading” was the favored term of the New Critics in the 1930s to describe and denote the method of interpretation they advocated to replace the philological criticism and belletrism then dominating the study of literature. They wanted to study poetry not just as an instance of language, but as art. However, they insisted that literary study should be more like a science than like mere book-reviewing,

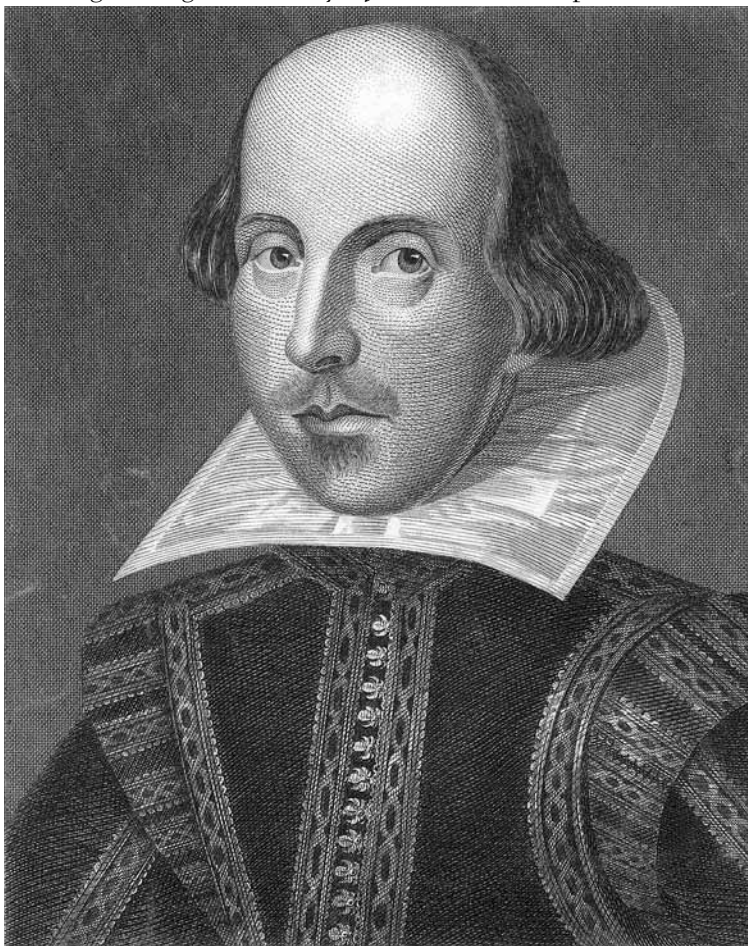
Shakespeare, as rendered in an eighteenth-century engraving

with a rigorous consideration of a poem as a self-enclosed object possessing its own internal coherence. At its best, close reading is the literary equivalent of microscope

work in a biology lab: scrutinizing every element of a poem, no matter how minute, and its impact on the poem’s range of meaning. The technique, which has long outlasted

the doctrine that gave it rise, has forcefully shaped the way poetry is taught in the English-speaking world in both high schools and colleges. Entire class sessions are often spent on a handful of short lyric poems. It is somewhat unusual to find a syllabus assigning an entire volume of poetry by a single poet that is taught as a continuous whole rather than as a set of discrete texts.

This tendency to focus on close reading has also affected and perhaps distorted how we read lyric cycles, including the Elizabethan sonnet sequences, Shakespeare’s in particular. One symptom is that none of the major anthologies used for survey courses reproduces the sonnet cycles of Spenser, Sidney, and Shakespeare in full. Instead, they are presented through a kind of “greatest hits” approach that further pushes students toward understanding them



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