

LITCITY

LYN HEJINIAN
READING

Lyn Hejinian, a poet, essayist and translator, will be reading her poetry at the Albright-Knox this Friday, April 14 at 8pm. Hejinian has published eight collections of writing and was elected the 66th Fellow of the Academy of American Poets in the fall of 2000.

4/14

Booksigning. 12-3pm. Erno Rossi, author of *Crystal Beach: The Good Old Days* and *White Death: The Blizzard of '77*. Boulevard Mall Borders Express (Niagara Falls Blvd., Amherst, 834-8600)

4/15

Book launch and poetry reading. 8pm. Gregg Biglieri's new book of poetry, *Sleepy with Democracy*. Big Orbit Gallery, 30D Essex St., Buffalo (883-3209).

Booksigning. 11am-3pm. Erno Rossi, author of *Crystal Beach: The Good Old Days* and *White Death: The Blizzard of '77*. Waldenbooks (Galleria Mall, Cheektowaga, 685-3477)

4/17

Booksigning. 2-4pm. Erno Rossi, author of *Crystal Beach: The Good Old Days* and *White Death: The Blizzard of '77*. Waldenbooks (Galleria Mall, Cheektowaga, 685-3477)

4/18

Literally Speaking. 12-1pm. Lunchtime book discussion group will talk about Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Buffalo and Erie County Public Library (1 Lafayette Square, 858-8900)

4/19

Open Reading. 7:30pm. "Spring Break Reading." Ten slots available for open readers. The Screening Room, Northtown Plaza (3131 Sheridan Dr., Amherst 837-0376); \$2.

4/20

Sci-Fi Roundtable. 8pm. Booksigning and discussion with authors Anne Bishop, Lynn Flewelling, Nancy Kress, Josepha Sherman, and Harry Turtledove. Borders Books (2015 Walden Ave., Cheektowaga, 685-2844)

Open Reading. 7pm. Featuring Dan Sicoli, with slots available for open readers. The Book Corner (1801 Main St., Niagara Falls, 285-2928).

Poetry Reading. 7pm. Buck Downs and C. A. Conrad at Big Orbit (30D Essex St., 883-3209).

RECURRING EVENTS

EM Tea Coffee Cup Open Mic Poetry Series. 7-9:30pm every Tue. EM Tea Coffee Cup Café, 80 Oakgrove Ave. at Hughes St. (884-1444).

Northside Writers Group. 7pm, first and third Thurs. of each month. Ascension Lutheran Church, 4640 Main Street, Amherst. (626-4204).

Send weekly literary event info (name, description, location, date, time, and admission) to: editorial@artvoice.com or fax to: 881-6682. Due the Wednesday before publication.

BOOKREVIEWS

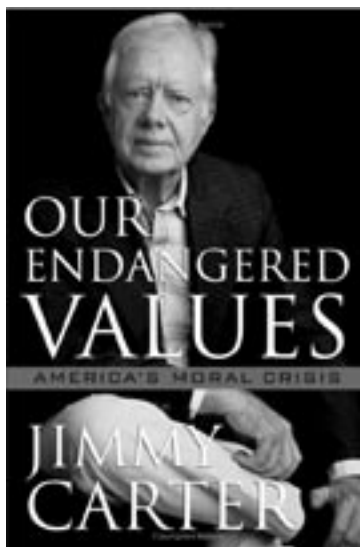
*The Book of Jon*

by Eleni Sikelianos

City Lights Books, 2004 \$11.95

The Book of Jon is vast in its smallness. Writing a memoir about the death of one's father—or the death of any loved one for that matter—that doesn't turn saccharine or personal to the point of alienating the reader is a feat that few achieve. Sikelianos pulls it off by using a collage of stories, poems, photos, dreams, journal entries and remembrances from other family members. Although the book is a mere 116 pages, this pastiche creates an effect similar to attending a rollicking wake: There is sadness, of course, but there is also laughter and half-remembered stories that float away as they are being told; photos that are passed around and reminisced over; there are family huddles about formal decisions; and there is the bittersweet awareness that old debts will never be paid, coupled with the realization that repayment was unlikely to begin with. In this case, the debts involve Sikelianos' father's lifelong addiction to drugs and alcohol. An addiction that culminated in three years of homelessness on the streets of Albuquerque and, finally, an overdose in Room 152 of the De Anza Motor Lodge. The room cost \$33.10 a night. Among his possessions were "2 packs of cigarettes (both opened, one pack Camels, one pack Marlboros)."

—peter connors

*Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis*

by Jimmy Carter

Simon & Schuster, 2005 \$25

Former United States president Jimmy Carter is an evangelical Christian who continues to live in the heart of the Southern Bible Belt. Who better then to speak out against the excesses of religious fundamentalism in this country? After establishing his own credentials as a deeply religious person whose actions reflect his thoughtful commitment, Carter ticks off a series of contemporary moral problems on which an unfortunate combination of dogmatic religion and far-right politics is taking us in the wrong direction. Many of the problems derive from a posture of "us versus them." Christians against the rest of the world. Selected biblical texts against science. Entwining church and state. Divorce and homosexuality as sins. Abortions and the death penalty. Subservient women. A foreign policy distorted. Terrorism outscoring human rights. Belligerence replacing cooperation. Preemptive war replacing negotiation. The environment be damned. Carter cites chapter and verse on each of these topics and for each makes a strong case that we should change our ways. He also details the different directions he took as president and continues to take in what has to be regarded as the presidential retirement that has best served this country. To some readers this will come across as self-serving, and indeed Carter does put the best face on his record. Despite this, however, this bright and thoughtful public servant—who better deserves that title?—offers much in this extended but well-written sermon to which we would well heed.

—gerry rising

*Enchantments*

by Linda Ferri

Vintage International, 2006 \$12.95

Linda Ferri's debut novel, *Enchantments*, is slight but heady, a strong brew composed of a series of simple but striking vignettes, each a vivid snapshot images of a young girl's life growing up in Tuscany and Paris, resulting in a mythical photo album of the early part of the heroine's life that ends abruptly as she is unwillingly thrust into adulthood.

Written in Ferri's native Italian and translated for publication in the States, *Enchantments* at times seems austere and overly straightforward. However, couched in the uncomplicated text is a candid story of maturation and a detailed look at the girl's perceptions of life and the relationships that are most important to her—her younger sister; her beautiful American mother, and her handsome, intelligent, jovial and often misunderstood Italian father.

Complex issues of familial love and the multitude of components that comprise womanhood are explored in each short sequence. In an episode devoted to the character's desire to acquire a new Barbie doll, she rides in the family car en route to the drugstore, animatedly telling her father which doll she hopes to purchase. When he asks why no one wants a Ken doll, she decisively states that she doesn't like men. The father questions his daughter about the veracity of this claim: "Not even your dear old dad?" "Yes Papa," I murmur, lowering my head. "Yes." But I'm not telling the whole truth. Because even though I'm very fond of him, I would like him better if he were a woman."

Enchantments captures a young girl's mixed feelings toward her father, the youthful energy, naivety and optimism that infuses the best of childhoods, and finally, in the last pages, the shocking jolt of reality that cuts through the rapture of innocence at a moment when the girl is forced to face the devastating mortality of someone she loves.

—jill froebel