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Small Press Points

by Kevin Larimer

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Some personalities are ready-made for small press publishing. For example, what would **City Lights Publishers** [3] be without the Bohemian eclecticism of Lawrence Ferlinghetti? Nothing, that's what. Where would **Grove Press** have gone without the spirited risk taking of Barney Rosset? Nowhere, that's where—not even to Morgan Entrekin's **Grove/Atlantic** [4], Grove's ever-independent home alongside **Atlantic Monthly Press** since the two presses merged in 1993. And don't forget the boldly independent James Laughlin and his brilliant creation, **New Directions** [5]. Then there's the younger but equally individualistic Allan Kornblum. Get him to tell you some of his stories from the sixties and seventies, and his role as publisher of **Coffee House Press** [6] takes on a whole new depth and dimension. Among the (even) younger generation, there's Johnny Temple, whose energy could find no more perfect outlet than **Akashic Books** [7], though the punk band Girls Against Boys, for which he is the bassist, seems to do the trick too. The point is that some people possess a potent energy that serves them well in the grassroots world of independent publishing. One could easily say this about Peter Money, the publisher of the lesser-known **Harbor Mountain Press** [8] in Brownsville, Vermont—well, actually the press was founded in Brownsville in 2006, and while its letterhead still uses that address, Harbor Mountain is now located a couple of towns away, in White River Junction, which is just the kind of detail that launches Money into a line of thought that can lead to, say, a fascinating fact about the town's baker—"He used to work at the Plaza!"—or maybe the dimensions of the press's office (thirteen by twenty-three feet). Harbor Mountain's logo is another good conversation piece. Just a couple of brush marks depicting a mountain, right? Nothing, it seems, is quite so simple to Money, who says the logo was drawn in a *sumi* style and depicts nearby Mount Ascutney—the granite from which was used to make the columns of Columbia University's Low Memorial Library in 1895. More than a *Jeopardy!* contestant with a penchant for literature, though, Money is a poet who studied with Allen Ginsberg and founded the literary magazines *Writers' Bloc* and *Lame Duck*; he's also written a number of poetry collections, including *To day—Minutes only*, a prose poem sequence with Arab poet Saadi Youssef, published in 2004 by **Goats and Compasses Press**. All of which—and much more—fuels the fire that heats Harbor Mountain Press, which aims to publish six poetry collections annually. So far the press has published twelve titles, all of which are available through Small Press Distribution. They include Sinan Antoon's *Baghdad Blues*, which was

reviewed in *Time* magazine, and Norman MacAfee's *One Class: Selected Poems 1965-2008*. In addition to running the press, Money teaches at the Center for Cartoon Studies in White River Junction—the nation's only two-year cartooning college, he is quick to explain—but it's clear his real passion is the written word. And it's on this point that Money is the most succinct. "Poetry is good food," he says. (Want to point out another potent small press personality? Send us an e-mail or post a comment.)

Taking their cue from the populist philosophy of poetry slam creator Marc Smith, Ron Maruszak and Mark Eleveld founded **EM Press** ^[9] eight years ago in Chicago to get poetry in front of the widest possible audience. The press's latest release is *Everyday People* by Kevin Coval, founder of Chicago's Louder Than a Bomb and probably the only poet to garner praise from the likes of ninety-two-year-old author Studs Terkel *and* actor and rapper Mos Def. In addition to the half dozen books the press has published, including *Quarters in the Jukebox* by Marc "So What" Smith himself, EM has released several CDs. In 2005, the press collaborated with **Perceval Press** ^[10] in Santa Monica, California, to produce *Live at Beyond Baroque 2*, a recording of an event at that literary center in Venice, California.

Kevin Larimer is the deputy editor of *Poets & Writers Magazine*.

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