

same students would fare much better at local community colleges or vocational schools that have less prestige than the elite four-year colleges. Why have these cynical admissions policies not provoked more protest? Precisely because the appearance of compassion and sensitivity toward minorities is easier than the application of hardheaded policies that would actually work to their benefit.

What Hentoff sees as a struggle over the right to full expression, the participants view as a battle over who will control the culture. And they are correct; arguments of constitutional interpretation become irrelevant when the same First Amendment is used to ban public displays of Christmas scenes and to demand public funding of a crucifix submerged in urine. This is how shamelessly inconsistent the arguments of the secularists have become. They ban classic literature like *Huckleberry Finn* on the grounds that it includes offensive racist language and force students to read modern trash that offends their religious beliefs; expel students for satirizing gay activist groups or displaying Confederate flags; shout down conservative speakers they disagree with; set up centers for women's rights that systematically exclude women who are anti-abortion; enact speech codes that enforce sensitivity toward everyone but white males and Christians; conduct smear campaigns against prominent public figures who challenge p.c. clichés; prevent debate in law schools over the issue of homosexual custody of children . . . Hentoff's list is just the tip of the iceberg. One senses his amazement at the sheer gutlessness of today's campus radicals; rather than engage the opposition with arguments, they are all too willing to shut down debate where they have the power to do so—which is almost everywhere in the media and in academia. Revolutionaries once were made of tougher stuff.

But ironically, the roots of this new fascism grow from the no-limits absolutism of Hentoff and his fellow First Amendment ideologues. The notion that there is no higher expression of democracy and freedom than a society that tolerates absolutely everything must ultimately fail. Democratic societies by their very nature seek a sort of *corporate* expression whereby they act to set standards and make laws regarding acceptable behavior. Whether those standards should be derived from a relativist secularism or a moral tradition infused by

Christian revelation is the only relevant question in our declining Western society. At this point, you must pick a side or step aside. Mr. Hentoff, in the current feminist jargon, "just doesn't get it."

*Brian Robertson is a freelance writer living in Princeton, New Jersey.*

## Airs, Waters, Places

by Stephen Bodio

Named in Stone and Sky:

An Arizona Anthology

Edited by Gregory McNamee

Tucson: University of Arizona Press;

194 pp., \$15.95



I might say at the onset that I am usually not a big fan of anthologies, though I have edited one; most end up unwieldy grab bags of vaguely related material. This is emphatically *not* the case with Gregory McNamee's *Named in Stone and Sky*, a collection of Southwestern material that marvelously coheres into a portrait of this harsh and wonderful region. To assemble his portrait, McNamee does not rely on "literature" only, even in its broadest definition. He includes poetry and bits of fiction, but also searches out Native American songs and prayers, explorers' diaries, and scientists' writings. He is not afraid to add Zane Grey and the doggerel of old cowboys. The result may be the best local anthology I know. While he nods respectfully to *The Last Best Place*, a collection of Montanan literature by Annick Smith and William Kittredge published in 1988, I consider his to be a much better book.

McNamee has organized this book innovatively, not in chronological order or by segregating fact from fiction, prose from poetry, but around broad themes of "Airs," "Waters," and "Places." He knows, as did the New Mexican historian Ross Calvin (whose writings on the Gila River he includes) that "sky determines," that dryness and the uncertain water supply have shaped everything in the Southwest from the evolution of leaves to the (often) impermanence of settlement. He is a brave enough editor to cut in quick snippets from many authors and compose them into a kind of verbal col-

lage, while allowing others to stretch out—a fictional thunderstorm from Barbara Kingsolver, an almost-fatal adventure from the late Edward Abbey. In between, he comments and informs. He is an editor who wants you to learn the history of the land he loves, to use its traditions to heal its scars and those of its peoples. But he is also one who can comfortably refer to Sir Richard Burton and C.M. Doughty as fellow "desert rats"; serious, but not solemn.

Reading the anthology, you come to know the Southwest's landscapes gradually. McNamee opens with a Navajo chant, passes to an 18th-century Jesuit's account of the climate that still rings true, and gives us some passages from John Van Dyke and Ross Calvin that remind us that some of the best "visual" landscape writing has been inspired by desert light. There is the storm by Barbara Kingsolver already mentioned, so good it makes me envious—I have written a couple of Southwestern thunderstorm scenes, but none so wonderful. Soon, with "Waters," we are in the realm of exactly *what* "sky determines," up in the high mountains that in the winter resemble Montana, down in the canyons with M.H. Salmon, wondering what will be left wild. A reader from "normal" well-watered areas will learn a little about the importance of water rights in the West and about how water is wasted. Biologist Gary Nabhan details how the land has never completely recovered since the drought of 1891, and how the cities are sucking the aquifer dry.

But the real delights of the collection for me are in "Places," which takes up about half of the book. Just as you have adjusted to the idea of aridity punctuated by cloudbursts, McNamee will remind you of the difficulty of defining the term "desert" at all, quoting the plant geographer Forrest Shreve, who classifies the Upper Sonoran "desert" as a semitropical dry forest. Architectural critic Reyner Banham reminds us that the original definition had more to do with "deserted" than "dry," and tells how he has never spent a day in the desert that he didn't see other people. (I can hear Ed Abbey's ghost grumbling that he might have, if he ever got off the road.)

This section is amazingly diverse. McNamee has included rude Spanish poetry from the *Diccionario Malcriado*, Catholico-Yaqui creation myths in which Jesus carelessly creates the mountains of Arizona by spilling cornmeal from a

pouch his mother gave him, Charles Bowden's combination of apocalyptic fury with Cormac McCarthy-esque description, Abbey's adventure, and Page Stegner's silly-ass Beemer wanderings in the footsteps of his betters. (McNamee doesn't have to approve of his contributors; he all but destroys D.H. Lawrence by allowing him a drawn-out, obtuse, whiny plaint, in which the British novelist decries a trail as "utterly bumpy and horrible.") There is another reminder—temporal this time—of the region's greater-than-human scale, as biologist Larry Stevens speculates on whether the slow propagation of Joshua trees results from their seeds' dependence on being ingested by the "recently" extinct giant ground sloth. Aldo Leopold continues in this perspective, thinking like a mountain. And, suddenly, we're back in modern times—road time—as Jack Kerouac runs through Arizona fast, as most tourists do. McNamee's switches would look like showing off if he didn't perform them so well.

There are more treasures here, more than I can easily note. I never knew that George Simenon lived in Arizona (he writes like a flash flood). I like Mc-

Namee's championing of good, too-obscure living writers like M.H. Salmon and Rob Schultheis, both longtime favorites of mine. I like his ethnic mix—not politically correct, just rich as our tricultural area really is.

I have only one complaint, and it is a small one. On the first page, McNamee opens: "Begin on the gunsight northern line and follow the alternating sandstone escarpments and dry washes . . ." He is drawing a line around the state of Arizona. I wish he would do a similar anthology for the whole dry basin-and-range Southwest, the biological and geographical province west of the Pecos, southeast of the sage deserts, north of the tropical part of Mexico. It would be a more natural grouping, as he tacitly acknowledges in the introduction. And that way he could include Cormac McCarthy, Tony Hillerman, Frank Doble . . . and probably a hundred writers this New Mexican hasn't even heard of yet.

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exploitative agenda. Certainly, no one can make such criticisms of Schonberg's study, which has a couple of advantages in addition to the obvious absence of malice.

One of these advantages is ten additional years of perspective. In that time, Horowitz kept appearing and recording and even returned to Russia in a move that rounded off his life and actually had something to do with global politics. Schonberg's view of Horowitz is more comprehensive and more comprehending for that reason, and for others.

Another advantage is the author's lifetime of devotion to music and performance, and especially to the piano. Harold C. Schonberg has been leading his own "Romantic revival" since at least the 1950's in his books and reviews, and in Horowitz he finds the personification of 19th-century virtuosity. Schonberg's *Horowitz* is the book he was born to write. His themes of interpretative freedom and the singing line naturally find themselves exemplified in his subject. His love of great piano-playing finds its fulfillment in this treatment of just that subject. The puritanism, inflexible rhythm, and pseudo-historical consciousness that mar the performance of so much music today are all rebuked by the example of Horowitz.

And there is another advantage, I think. A biographer (like his subject) has to make up his mind about what Yeats called "perfection of the life or of the work." Schonberg has made his choice: he focuses on Horowitz's claim to fame and subordinates, though he does not scant, the personal elements. I think he is right to do so. Still, in describing the burden of musical prodigy and in showing the extent of Horowitz's self-absorption, Schonberg has at least by implication reckoned the cost in personal misery of so much musical achievement. Horowitz himself tried to separate life and art in many ways—in his dandyism, his isolation, his neurasthenia, his inversion, and his neglect of others, as well as in his mastery, his self-imposed challenges, and even his triumphs of connection with the public he teased. He paid a price in his mental and physical health, in his place in musical history, and even in his music-making. To some degree, I think Horowitz should be called to account a bit more strictly than Schonberg does.

Schonberg does his best work in outlining the Romantic context of Horowitz's

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## Volodya Again

by J.O. Tate

**Horowitz: His Life and Music**  
by Harold C. Schonberg  
New York: Simon & Schuster;  
428 pp., \$27.50



The stores are still vending the recordings of Vladimir Horowitz, the imposing pianist whose career is now as lucrative as it was during his lifetime. Nearly all of his work is out on compact disc, from sources dating back to the 1920's. Merit and celebrity coincide in this case, as they sometimes do—and when they do, we would like to understand why. That means it's time to hit the books.

This second biography of Vladimir Horowitz (1903-1989) barely mentions the existence of the first one—Glenn Plaskin's effort of a decade ago. And I suppose that is just as well, since Plaskin's book kept regressing to the Kitty Kelley mode and the tone of an exposé. Plaskin's book was spoiled by what still seems to be unresolved anger and an