



The Poethical Wager

Joan Retallack

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The Poethical Wager Joan Retallack

In these highly inventive essays, Joan Retallack, acclaimed poet and essayist, conveys her unique post-utopian vision as she explores the relationship between art and life in today's chaotic world. In the tradition of the essay as complex humanist exploration, she engages ideas from across history: Aristotle's definition of happiness, Epicurus's swerve into unpredictable possibility, Montaigne's essays as an instrument of self-invention, John Cage's redefinition of Silence. Within her unifying rubric of poethics, Retallack gives the reader plenty of surprises with a wonderful range of examples, situations, and texts through which she conducts her exploration. A computer glitch, a passage from Gertrude Stein's favorite detective novelist, the idea of the experimental feminine, a John Cage performance—all serve as occasions for inquiry and speculation on the way to her poethics of a "complex realism."

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