

**Virtual Verse in the Library:  
Exploring the e-Poetry Landscape**  
**2013 Chicago Colloquium on Digital  
Humanities and Computer Science**

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# Wither Literature and Culture?



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Issue 58: November 2012

### NEWS

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[The Independent]

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# The Landscape:

- “As glossy magazines die by the dozen and blogs become increasingly influential, we face the reality that print venues...are rapidly ceding ground to Web-based publishing.” —Sandra Beasley, *Poets & Writers* (2009)
- The [Poets & Writers](#) and [Council of Literary Magazines and Presses](#) databases of literary publishers and journals currently feature **nearly 800** venues that publish online-only poetry, even if the title has a print counterpart

Poets&Writers

[clmp]

# Need for Documentation of E-Lit

- “Though it would be impossible for even a large staff of librarians to track and document everything available electronically, some effort needs to be made. . . . The current challenge seems to be to expand the library’s responsibility beyond information of the past to include information that is being generated in the moment.”

—Jake Berry, interview in *The Serials Librarian*

# NEW ORLEANS REVIEW

5.2 / POETRY by ALICIA OSTRIKER

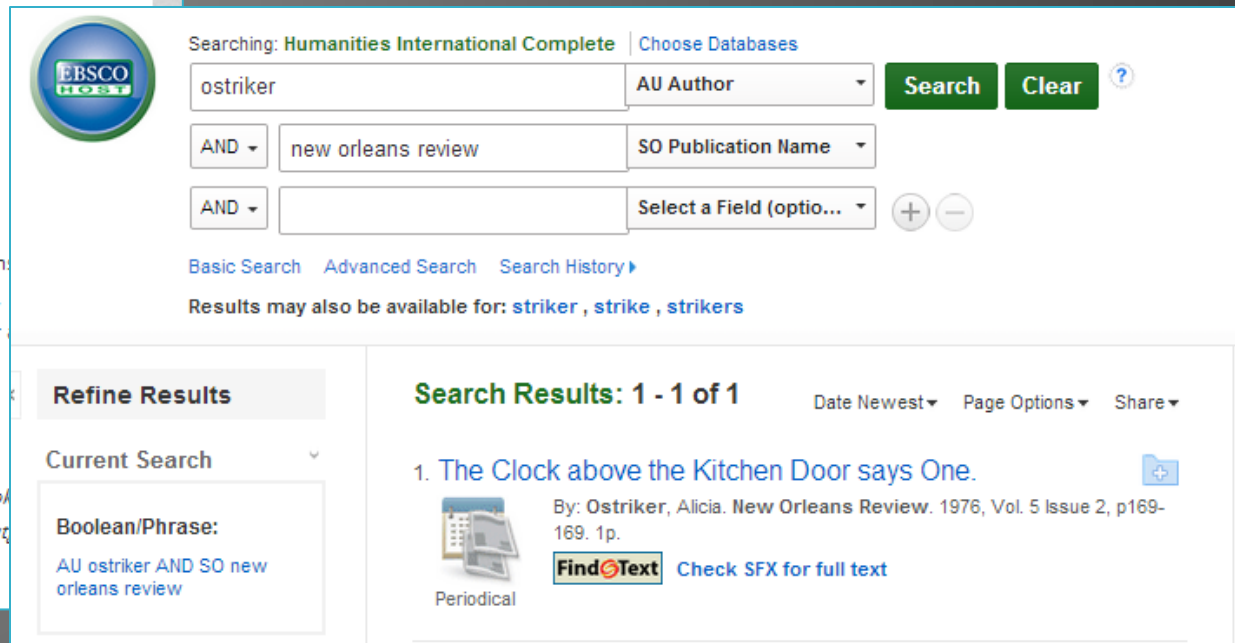
## The Clock Above the Kitchen Door Says One

*The devil is, if you write an excellent poem  
I am glad, you know, but when your sullen, milky  
Tongue hung, last year, following me, I drank...  
Needed. Come back.*—The new dull waitress comes  
Out of the kitchen, sets down soup, salad,  
Hamburgers, beers, she is feeding the academics,  
Her lipstick smeared, on the checkered tablecloth.  
She lacks the cockney temper of Doris, who quit.  
We lack the music mankind yearns asleep for.

The devil is, I want you to love me  
Here in the Corner Tavern, while I tell you  
About Poetry.—We wipe our mouths with paper napkins  
We're spitting blood, we're coughing, we're killing time,  
We're eating lunch. Keats was dead when he was your  
When he was my age, Mozart.

*Alicia Ostriker (b. 1937) is the author of numerous books  
and criticism. She is professor emerita of English at Rutgers  
University.*

While individual  
poems and short  
stories published in  
many print titles are  
indexed...



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By: Ostriker, Alicia. *New Orleans Review*. 1976, Vol. 5 Issue 2, p169-169. 1p.

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Periodical



# NEW ORLEANS REVIEW

POETRY by ANGIE MACRI

## Panther bourne

on the tendons of summer, the twitch of air,  
the eyes, liquid, bare, and the glare of wheat

not yet cut. Six panthers lounge in the sun,  
and who knows how many else hidden.

The panthers can't hold up the sky,  
having come from underground like sun

explodes in summer with the hum  
of susans and their black (brown) eyes,

like daisies, like marigolds. What can  
make shade bright? Pale as a ghost,

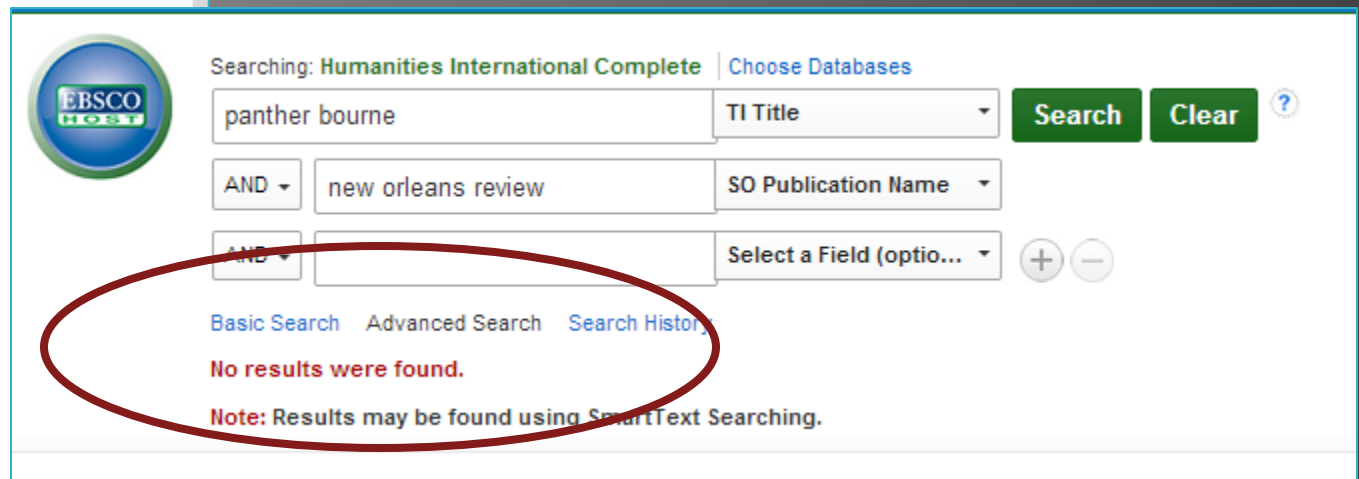
I play in the wake of ovate leaves,  
a few trees grown up on an old home place

for which no one knows the name,  
island in the shoulder's pace of wheat.



One of the panthers sleeps on his back.  
I burn even in the shade.

*Angie Macri's recent work appears in 32 Poems and Alaska Quarterly Review. An Arkansas Arts Council fellow, she lives in Hot Springs and teaches in Little Rock. "Panther bourne" takes its title from a Carroll Cloar painting, and echoes of the painting appear in the poem.*

Very few poems that appear on the web **only** are indexed in standard sources...even if they are published on the web pages of print publications.



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**No results were found.**

**Note: Results may be found using SmartText Searching.**

## Result?

Poems published in web-only publications are discoverable only by “known-item” searching: **by title and/or author.**

panther bourne macri

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the glare of wheat. not yet cut. Six panthers lounge in the sun, and who ...

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and who knows how many else hidden. The panthers can't hold up the ... 5.

Results for similar searches

[Tav Falco's Panther Burns - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)  
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tav\_Falco's\_Panther\_Burns ▾  
The band's assorted song subjects and album photography themes have included  
Memphis scenery, Carroll Cloar's Panther Bourne painting, the occasional ...  
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[panthermap - Rutland and Leicestershire Panther Watch](#)  
www.bigcats.org.uk/panthermap.html ▾  
(Lynx shouldn't have a tail?) Panther type cat observed crossing road near Bourne,  
Lincs. close to disused railway. Site is 20 miles north east of Ketton, and is in ...  
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# Existing Online Archives and Indexes

- Electronic Literature Organization (ELO): ELO Directory, Electronic Literature Collection vols. 1-2
- Electronic Literature as a Model of Creativity and Innovation in Practice (ELMCIP) Knowledge Base
- PennSound
- Univ. of Buffalo Electronic Poetry Center
- UbuWeb
- New Pages
- Jacket2
- From the Fishhouse
- Websites: Barteby.com, Poetry Foundation, American Academy of Poets (Poetry.org)



# Other Issues

- FACULTY:

- Promotion & tenure for writing faculty – how to find, access, and evaluate the quality of online-only magazines?

- LIBRARIES:

- Preservation of uncommon materials: graphic novels, zines, now online content
- Need tools to refer users to repositories of online literature

# The Project:

- Funded through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) National Leadership Grant Program:
- Planning Grant
- One year in duration
- Issues related to creating an index of online-only poetry:
  - Need?
  - Stakeholders and Uses?
  - What to include?
  - Features and Functionality?

# Research Design:

## Environmental Scan:

- Current efforts or models?
- Number of publications, indexing?
- Scope:
  - number of issues
  - poems per issue.

## Stakeholder Consultations:

- Surveys:
  - Creative Writing Faculty
  - Librarians with Literature/Digital Humanities-related responsibilities
  - Literary Editors/Publishers
- Interviews with same

# Key Findings:

- Scholarly Communications and Research with online poetry
- Functionalities and Tools
  - Types of uses for an index - how would they use it?
  - Predominant functionalities that the respondents desire in an index/archive of e-poetry
- Digital Preservation Needs
  - Trends in the field for digital vs. print

# Scholarly Communications and Research

“Usually I search for a poem or poet, either for teaching purposes (poetry from tradition, generally), or to get a brief look at the work of a poet with whom I'm unfamiliar. Very occasionally I look at something like Poetry magazine online. Sometimes I will follow links to work that I'm notified of by e-mail.” (Faculty)

“personal website or just works published online - another bonus of online publication [is] instant gratification for a reader interested in someone's work.” (Publisher)

- “A place for reviews and evaluations of these sources. A way to maybe preserve some of these publications when they go under. I know I have provided links to e-zines only to find out that they closed up shop and there's no access to what was there before.” (Librarian)



# Functionalities of an Index

- “The Poetry Foundation has a wonderful feature that lets you browse or search the archive of their online poems by subject/season/occasion/etc. It's a wonderful tool when looking to poetry for something specific, and could be a helpful tool for poems published elsewhere online.” (Publisher)
- “An index of digital appearances of poems on edited sites only - those which can conceivably count as publishing. Would also help with tracking down all those freeloaders who "publish" one's work to draw people to their blog - without asking permission or paying rights.” (Faculty)
- “Maybe a website sort of like a shopping mall that would simply bring together, and provide links/thumbnails for, as many online-only poetry sources as possible.... Maybe designed like a checkerboard with each square being a link to a magazine.... Then, your proposed index could be based on the content that is represented by the titles in the checkerboard. ...Also, you'd need to decide whether to include subscription-controlled content along with OA content, whether to integrate them or segregate them, etc.” (Librarian)
- “This would be harder to do, but I'd like a curated list of which on-line only journals are most respected. For example, which online journals have been awarded Pushcart Prizes; which online journals have been acknowledged in Best American Poetry series. This kind of selected info would make it far more enjoyable and practical to access poetry on the Web.” (Faculty)

# Digital Preservation

- I do also have a concern that smaller e-zines and/or experimental forms will disappear off the web, and aren't preservationally stable enough to warrant cataloging for our library collection.” (Librarian)
- “Many online venues up and disappear, or, like DM, have their own Archive of past issues liquidated by a host such as Microsoft's late OfficeLive.” (Publisher)
- “Formatting the work, maintaining accurate archives, the sense of an "eternal present" for an archived work (i.e., having a work from 2005 accessed by a reader who finds it hard to understand that work is 8+ years old and the author's bio note is not up to date), occasional technological issues.” (Publisher)

# Digital Literature and Scholarly Practice

“For me it is about an expanded set of artistic tools, presences, venues: diversity and range. It is not about \*reducing\* the range of these experiences to a digital experience.” –Faculty/Poet

“The way in which electronic technology enables the use of primary materials and the way in which scholars engage with primary sources in electronic form are the central issues in the employment of electronic technologies in the humanities.”

—Suzana Sukovic, “Convergent Flows: Humanities Scholars and Their Interactions with Electronic Texts,” *Library Quarterly*

# Future Steps:

- Forthcoming white paper and journal articles with in-depth analyses of findings
- Apply for full 3-year grant from IMLS to build index and archive of online poetry
  - How do we build an index that integrates into the workflow and research needs of creative writing faculty, literary publishers, and information professionals today?
  - What and who do we need to attend to as this index is developed and launched?

“Recognition that the future is now, and it is online - whether to be browsed, downloaded, or archived.”—Faculty

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# THANK YOU!

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