



## January 2017 issue: Outstanding Academic Titles Highly recommended

Riffing on Heraclitus and Charles Olson, poet and critic Charles Bernstein (English and comparative literature, Univ. of Pennsylvania) admits to recasting an old aphorism: "You can never step into the same poem twice." In *Pitch of Poetry*—an unruly yet incisive collection of essays, interviews, and provocations—Bernstein wades back into the expanded field of language poetry, which has preoccupied him for years and which his own work has helped define. But Bernstein, a trickster figure par excellence, has little time for retrospection or self-congratulation. These "nonexpository, exploratory" pieces treat poets ranging from Gertrude Stein to Robert Creely and survey a variety of topics: the poetics of Occupy Wall Street, the allure of the audiobook, the hard paradox of Holocaust representation, and the evolving afterlife of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry. Compulsively readable, the essays assembled here skew toward the reader, though not exactly on account of their accessibility (a word that Bernstein distrusts). Instead, they serve as models of the "close listening," translation, and antiliteral thinking that avant-garde poetry requires. This compelling "pitch" will leave readers with a sense of poetry's ever-expanding range and the danger of remaining complacent in the face of its power.

Reviewer: J. Risinger, The Ohio State University

Recommendation: Highly recommended

Readership Level: Upper-division Undergraduates, Graduate Students, Researchers/Faculty,

Professionals/Practitioners Interdisciplinary Subjects:

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