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**Not Non-Violent:
Armed Self-Defense
in the Civil Rights Era**

**“State Hospital No. 4
for the Insane”**

**Southern Religion
and the Devil's Music, Part 2**

confronted stereotypical notions of black female hypersexuality and sexual violence. Meanwhile, J. Douglas Smith's essay points readers to the anxieties surrounding racial definitions and affiliation through a study on interracial marriage laws in Virginia in the mid- to late-1920s. He suggests that fears over the loss of white supremacy convinced many to quell interracial unions and redefine whiteness to preserve a sense of white racial purity. Both Smith and McGuire offer studies that highlight the interrelatedness of race and sexuality integral to our understanding of southern history.

The collection also enriches contemporary southern studies with essays that consider the U.S. South in a larger global framework. Sarah Gualtieri's essay on early Syrian/Lebanese immigrants considers how immigration debates and questions surrounding citizenship influenced southerners' understanding of racial identification and the region's growing ethnic diversity. While her analysis is primarily grounded in the first half of the twentieth century, Gualtieri's piece suggests a need to further explore early Arab American immigration as discussions over Arab racial and ethnic classification and self-identification gain attention. Raymond Mohl's "Globalization, Latinization, and the Nuevo New South" rounds out the collection with an examination of how transnational corporations and the resulting population shifts lead to dramatic ethnic and cultural changes across the South. Mohl argues that while the influx of Latino immigrants has created "new forms of nativism," the region's newest residents are becoming more politically organized and socially proactive in their communities.

Other Souths is an insightful exploration of southern history that serves as both an incredibly helpful companion to existing scholarship and an innovative collection of essays that asks us to reconsider the southern past from new and alternative perspectives. By employing emerging areas of study like environmental policy and

urban planning and uncovering obscured histories of the southern past, this collection demonstrates the exciting potential of what lies ahead for the study of the U.S. South.

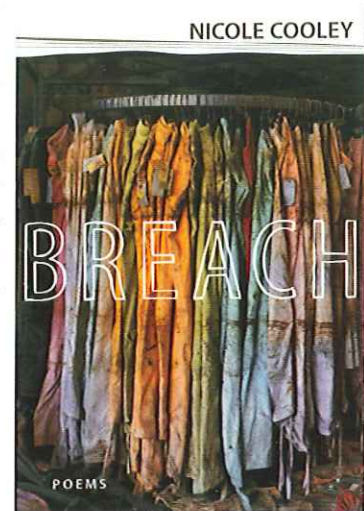
--Frank Cha



***Breach.* By Nicole Cooley. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010. Pp. xii + 77, acknowledgements, notes. \$17.95, paper)**

"Here is your road, tying // you to its meanings . . ." (p. vii). The epigraph of Nicole Cooley's third book of poetry, *Breach*, comes from Muriel Rukeyser's 1938 sequence, *The Book of the Dead*. Cooley's

thirty-seven lyric poems chronicle the poet's journey to New Orleans, her childhood home, just after Hurricane Katrina made landfall. In *Breach*, meanings are determined by the



road that the poet takes through "a salt-burned field where the Gulf / rose up to surge" (p. 51).

The first poem, "Topographies," presents the flooded landscape--"marshy spillover" and "black water"--as a central character (p. 1). Throughout *Breach*, Cooley anthropomorphizes the Gulf Coast; this rhetorical device relays the magnitude of the disaster. In the title poem, for example, we learn that the levee is "a mouth packed shut" that "wants to open" (p. 5). In "Fieldwork," set in Biloxi, "the sky hemorrhages

light" (p. 54). "Burning/Missing/
Flooded/Gone," set in New Orleans, demands
that we "watch the surface / of the city tear like
loose skin" (p. 31). In this post-apocalyptic
realm, every stone ripples with sensation.

Although most of these poems are set in the
Gulf Coast region, "Evacuation" takes place
under "the 9/11 sky" (p. 9) of New York City
where the poet lives with her husband and two
daughters. Once the infrastructure of New Or-
leans collapses, Cooley cannot locate her par-
ents who chose to ride out the storm; she can
only access "the saturated watercolored run-
down city . . . everywhere on TV" (p. 11). A
chilling anecdote closes the twenty-eight sec-
tion poem:

At the park in New York, a child named
Katrina wears pink cowboy
boots, rides the tire swing with my daugh-
ters.

I can't stop asking this girl to tell her
name, just to hear the word
over and over again out loud. (p. 14)

New York and New Orleans are compared
throughout the collection. "September Note-
book," the companion piece to "Evacuation,"
opens with an allusion to "The Magic Porridge
Pot," a fairy tale Cooley reads to her daughters
--one that, she tells us, her mother read to her.
"September Notebook" is a stellar poem that in-
troduces a new fairy tale. "Once upon a time
there were two Septembers in two cities" (p.
39), it begins. The storyteller, Our Lady of the
Uncomforted, allows neither the poet nor the
reader to tune her out: "Don't shut your eyes just
because you can't watch / TV: the jumping couples
from windows of Tower One, // the families, attics
split open, in the Lower Nine, waiting for rescue"
(p. 40).

The free verse structures of *Breach* incorpo-
rate ekphrastic writing, epistolary addresses, and
an interview, but the list appears most fre-
quently. "Write a Love Note to Camellia Grill"
catalogues "post-it notes stuck on the windows"
(p. 48), which beg the restaurant owners to re-

open. Cooley combines this found material
with her own letter: "Dear Levee. Dear Rusted
Barge," she writes, "Dear Girl//I once was,
smoking at that counter, writing boys names on
a napkin" (p. 48). "Debris" inventories a
flooded neighborhood: "a blonde-haired doll,"
"a toilet," "yellow bedsheet twisted in a tree,"
"dented fender of a school bus," "a refrigerator
spray-painted Help Me Jesus" (p. 45). For some
time after Katrina, the boundary between pub-
lic and private life vanished; Cooley captures
the nausea of living in that world.

As a longtime resident of New Orleans, I
am outraged by the egregious errors politicians
made before, during, and after Katrina. As a
poet, however, I am sick of "Katrina poetry"
that prizes didacticism over the curiosity of the
artist, the paradox of human experience, and
the plasticity of language. *Breach* avoids this
myopia. "The language of disaster," Cooley
shows us, must include the relics and inventions
of Katrina-- "beached" trolleys that read "*Tour
Historic Biloxi!*" alongside houses spray-painted
to indicate the number of dead bodies they con-
tain (p. 61). It must include etymologies, CNN
broadcasts, love notes, fairy tales, political
speeches, Bible verses, SOS messages, and Co-
oley's lyricism. This is the poetry of *Breach*, and
"the viewing area . . . is everywhere" (p. 75).

--Carolyn Hembree



The Ballad of the Two Tom Mores.
By Corey Mesler. (Bronx, New
York: Bronx River Press, 2010. Pp.
197. \$15.95, paper)

What is life like in a small Southern town
nowadays? If your answer includes decaying
gentry, Bible study groups, hunting and fishing,
or Fox News aficionados, you haven't been to
Queneau, Arkansas, the fictional setting of