

Think of doubling as reverb rather than mirroring repetition, to grasp the dynamic inventions of this work in which Selerie connects/refracts Thomas Hariot (sic) the 17th-century British scholar who voyaged to colonial Virginia for scientific exploration and Joe Harriott, a 20th-century American jazz musician who played in London in the 1950s and '60s. The crisscross of continental and temporal locations creates a deliberate asymmetry that Selerie reinforces through the use of shaped, scored, visually marked compositions. Artist Alan Halsey supplied graphics bearing traces of antiquarian signage and structures, but it's the poems that really communicate the sense of form migration and transmutation across time. Shaped, distilled, finely crafted in typographic figures of every sort, they perform language in sound and vocabulary, spelling and rhythm, line and rhyme. Selerie's dense compositions are richly researched and carefully wrought. Thus the works are not imitative, not versions of the texts of the Har(r)lots, but texts infused with the study of these two very different, equally compelling, figures. This is a double portrait in counterpoint tongues, musings, mutterings, riffs, and rants, reflections and peregrinations through lexical domains. Dense? Yes, but the details of voice, experience, and circumstance come through the emblematic richness of the work. The book addresses the question of how we engage with language at a historical remove and make it part of our contemporary poetic field. An elaborate work, thickly resonant, and truly virtuosic in its range and skill.

Johanna Drucker *The Brooklyn Rail* April 2017