

how has the notion
of the “literary”
changed over the
past thirty years?

literary history in the making

then & now

poetics and politics

we were writing in convergence
between theory and example

the effect of French theory,
critical theory, postmodern
Marxism at that time

The Grand Piano
is an experiment
in collective
autobiography
by ten writers
identified with
the rise of Lan-
guage poetry in
San Francisco:
Rae Arman-
trout, Steve
Benson, Carla
Harryman, Lyn
Hejinian, Tom
Mandel, Ted
Pearson, Bob
Perelman, Kit
Robinson, Ron
Silliman, and
Barrett Watten.

The Grand Piano

An Experiment in Collective Autobiography
San Francisco 1975–80

A conference by Barrett Watten

Monday 12 October 2009 at 5.30 pm, room A11
Institut Charles V, Université Paris-Diderot
10, rue Charles V, Paris, 75004

Barrett Watten is a “language-centered” poet and critic of modern cultures. His most recent study *The Constructivist Moment: From Material Text to Cultural Poetics* (Wesleyan University Press, 2003), received the René Wellek Prize in 2004; *Total Syntax* came out from Southern Illinois University Press in 1985. His creative work has taken the form of experiments in and between genres: a collected earlier poems, *Frame: 1971–1990*, appeared from Sun & Moon in 1997; *Bad History*, a nonnarrative prose poem “including history,” from Atelos in 1998; and *Progress/ Under Erasure*, a combined edition of two long poems, from Green Integer in 2004. He has collaborated on two multi authored experimental works: *Leningrad: American Writers in the Soviet Union* (Mercury House, 1992) and *The Grand Piano: An Experiment in Collective Autobiography, San Francisco, 1975–80*, which began its ten-volume serial publication in November 2006. He edited the language-centered magazine *This* in the 1970s and co-edited *Poetics Journal* with Lyn Hejinian in the 1980s. He is a Professor of English at Wayne State University, Detroit. www.english.wayne.edu/fac_pages/ewatten

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