

An eclectic sampling of some upcoming literary events in the Mid-Hudson Valley. CURATED BY PHILLIP LEVINE. Send your events listings to outaloud@chronogram.com

THURSDAY, 4/7 7PM

PAULINE UCHMANOWICZ

Reading, signing, open mike with poet Pauline Uchmanowicz, author of *Sand & Traffic*. Jacobson Faculty Tower 1010, SUNY New Paltz. (845) 257-2751. Free.

FRIDAY, 4/8, 7:30PM

KAZIM ALI

Reading and Book Party, for novelist Kazim Ali's, Quinn's Passage. Oblong Books, 6420 Montgomery Street, Rhinebeck. (845) 876-0500. Free.

SATURDAY, 4/9, 2PM

SPARROW AND BRETT BEVELL

Woodstock Poetry Society poetry reading & open mike. Woodstock Town Hall, 76 Tinker Street. Hosted by Phillip Levine. www.woodstockpoetry.com. Free.

SATURDAY, 4/9, 2PM

RUSSELL EDSON

Reading, reception, open mike with Prose poet, Russell Edson. Catskill Mountain Foundation, Main St., Rte. 23A (movie theater), Hunter. (518) 263-4908. Teenspeakpoetry@aol.com. Free.

SATURDAY, 4/9, 7PM

IONE & PAULINE OLIVEROS

Book party, readings and dream talk with Ione, author of *Celebrating Listening in Dreams* and Pauline Oliveros, author of *Deep Listening: A Composers Sound Practice*. Alternative Books, 35 N. Front Street, Kingston. (845) 331-5439. Donation.

THURSDAY, 4/14 7PM

DAVID APPLEBAUM

Reading, signing, open mike with poet David Applebaum, author of *Nieuw Pfalz*. Jacobson Faculty Tower 1010, SUNY New Paltz. (845)257-2751. Free.

SATURDAY, 4/16, 12-5PMHUDSON VALLEY LITERARY
MAGAZINE & SMALL PRESS FAIR

2pm: "Publishing 101: Getting Past the Gate," panel with Council of Literary Magazines' Jeffrey Lependorf. 3:30pm: reading by Ledig House International Writers Residency Program at Art Omi. Hudson Opera House, 327 Warren Street, Hudson; (518) 822-1438. Free.

TUESDAY, 4/19, 7:30PM

GUY REED & ARIELE RUTH BROOK

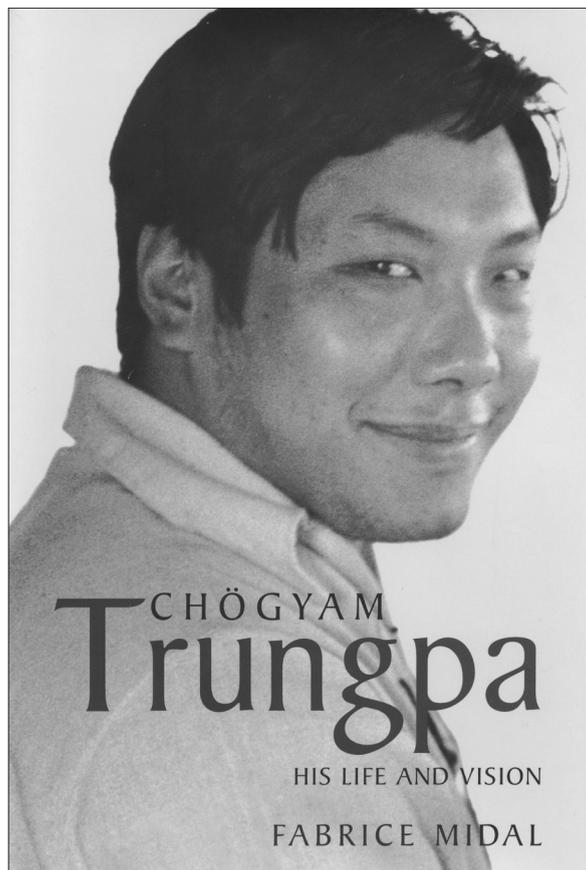
Poetry reading & open mike with Guy Reed & Ariele Ruth Brook. Cross Street Atelier/Gallery, 7 Cross Street, Saugerties; (845) 331-6713. Hosted by Teresa Costa. \$3 suggested.

WEDNESDAY, 4/20 11AM, 7:30PM

JANE HIRSHFIELD

Poet, essayist, and translator Jane Hirshfield. 11am: Informal presentation (Vanderlyn Hall Student Lounge); 7:30pm: Reading & reception (Quimby Theater); SUNY Ulster, Stone Ridge, (845) 687-5262. Free.

Book Reviews



*Chogyam Trungpa:
His Life & Vision*
Fabrice Midal

SHAMBHALA PUBLICATIONS, 2004, \$26.95

Fabrice Midal begins his book by letting his readers know exactly where he stands on his subject, Chogyam Trungpa, the reincarnated lama from Tibet and one of the most illustrious and controversial Buddhist teachers. Midal writes: "I wrote this book in the hope that, at a time when people are so disoriented that they are open to all sorts of charlatans, the depth and brilliance of Chogyam Trungpa's vision may help them to rediscover their true path." While this is a noble hope, it is also a bit odd in light of the fact that his subject encouraged disorientation in ways that were sometimes so extreme that, almost 20 years after his death, they are still

felt and pondered. Chogyam Trungpa's outrageous behavior—excessive drinking, sleeping with his students, asking students to adopt an Oxford accent, wear military uniforms, and wait on him like liveried servants—can certainly be seen as ways to throw people way off of their conventional understandings, and thus open them to the radical teachings of the Buddha. But since Trungpa is viewed as a no-holds-barred-ego-slayer, anything that he did can be understood (some may say excused) in this light.

In 1970, Trungpa moved to the US and was greeted by what Midal calls "Hippie America." Trungpa immediately began his subtle war on people's ideas by pointing out the aggression in his students' desires to become "enlightened." He had a remarkable capacity to communicate in English and was very direct, even funny, trying to jolt people out of their complacency by saying things like, "You are put into the big dungeon and boiled like lobsters, and you work until you die." He was also a remarkable artist, pilling together Western forms such as Beat poetry and drama, and Eastern forms such as calligraphy and flower arranging, into one dynamic dharma activity.

Trungpa's relentless quest to "turn ego on its head," which included many books (*Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, *Shambhala: Sacred Path of the Warrior*, *The Heart of the Buddha*, *The Myth of Freedom*, *Journey Without Freedom*, *Dharma Art*, and *Meditation in Action*, to name a few), and attracted thousands of students. He was also a master organizer: he established Naropa University in Boulder, spearheaded huge organizations such as Shambhala, developed dharma arts programs, and worked with some of the leading voices of his day, including Allen Ginsberg and Ram Dass.

Midal's book takes the reader through the various aspects of Trungpa's life and teaching, and shows how tirelessly this teacher worked on behalf of his students' awakening. Midal interviewed many people who were close to Trungpa, some well-known such as the Buddhist teacher Pema Chödrön. Midal does a wonderful job of painting a portrait of Trungpa's life and vision. Reading the book, one can almost imagine what it might have been like to study with Trungpa. And what a trip *that* would have been!

However, as much as Midal tries to allow for complexity, his book reveals that he has placed Trungpa high on a pedestal, thus missing the most compelling point of dharma practice and Trungpa's teaching: that there is no difference between Buddhas and ordinary beings. Trungpa himself said, "With regard to your inquiry about my lifestyle, you must understand that I regard myself as an ordinary person." As he wrote in one of his final poems, "it is time to be a human being."

—Bethany Saltman