

Ten-SIDEd

By Francis Hwang, with Johannes Göransson, Jess Kilby, Tao Lin, Brendon Lloyd, Jessica Penrose, Glenis Stott, John Woods, Taren McCallan-Moore, and why the lucky stiff

Today, practitioners in online culture are adopting blogs to serve as personal diaries, outlets for journalism and commentary, corporate P.R. channels, and tools for political campaigns. But attempts to use the blog as a directly creative medium can be challenging, because the blog is a tool that downplays the role of the individual author. Instead, bloggers place themselves within a dense web of interlinking authors, and the act of blogging is more like participating in a conversation than giving a rehearsed speech. This stands in stark opposition to the standard model of artistic authorship, in which an individual or tightly coordinated group creates an artwork for a passive audience.

Ten-sided explores a new form of creative practice that comments on and employs the decentralized nature of creation through blogs. Ten fiction writers collaborate with one another using a simple set of rules:

- Each author creates a fictional character for use during the project. There are no limitations as to what these characters might be.
- Each author is responsible for creating and maintaining a blog in the voice of that fictional character, and is required to employ RSS or Atom or both, so it will be easy for readers and the other authors to follow along. This blog will last for three months, from March 18, 2006, to June 18, 2006.
- All ten fictional characters are somehow connected, but the nature of those connections cannot be decided beforehand, they can only be discovered, or perhaps asserted, during the process of writing.
- Any sort of pre-planned coordination regarding the narrative is forbidden. Authors are supposed to only take their cues from the public writings of others.

The resulting improvisation resembles a jazz performance or a session of exquisite corpse, but in a new form of creative practice that comments on and employs the multivocal nature of blogging communities.

Ten-sided is a 2006 commission of New Radio and Performing Arts, Inc. (aka Ether-Ore) for its Turbulence web site. It was made possible with funding from The Greenwall Foundation.

Ten-sided uses the free software library [rPlanet](#), by Joel Watson, Phil Hagelberg, and Andre Arko.

Other visualizations

[Fictohedron](#) is an alternate visualization by *Ten-sided* writer why the lucky stiff. See <http://redhanded.hobix.com/inspect/howFictohedronWorks.html> for more information.

About the writers

Francis Hwang is an artist, writer, and software engineer. His earlier artwork includes *The Unauthorized iPod U2 vs. Negativland Special Edition*, in which he combined a U2 iPod Special Edition with Negativland's back catalog and auctioned the result online; and *firmament.to*, which uses the Google Web

API to turn any HTML page into a free-associated index for the rest of the web. His writing on technology and culture has appeared in *Spin*, *Wired*, *ArtByte*, and *FEED Magazine*. He is an active member of the Ruby community who has spoken at the International Ruby Conference and currently serves as a technical lead on free software projects such as Ruby-DBI and the object-relational mapping library *Lafcadio*. He lives in Brooklyn with one roommate, two computers, and two cats.

Johannes Göransson was born and raised in southern Sweden. Together with his wife Joyelle McSweeney, he co-edits Action Books, a press for contemporary American poetry and poetry in translation. Together with Joyelle and John Woods, he co-edits the online quarterly *Action, Yes*. Action Books published his book of translations, *Remainland: Selected Poems of Aase Berg* last fall. Ugly Duckling Presse is publishing his translation of 1920s Russian-Finnish avant-gardist Henry Parland's *Idealrealization* next winter. He edited recent issues of the journals *Fourteen Hills* and *Typo* (online) devoted to Swedish-language poetry. He is a PhD candidate at the University of Georgia, but he currently lives in Tuscaloosa, AL, and teaches a class on the historical avant-garde at the University of Alabama.

Jess Kilby is a figment of your imagination. Last seen at the scene of the crime, she left no fingerprints and took your time. In her waking hours she impersonates an Eskimo and tries her best to stay out of trouble. Fails miserably. High crimes and misdemeanors documented [here](#).

Tao Lin is the author of a collection of poetry, *You are a little bit happier than I am* (Action Books, October 2006), and a collection of stories, *Bed* (Melville House, Spring 2007).

Brendon Lloyd is a writer from Los Angeles, CA. When he's not writing about himself in the third person to give the appearance that someone else has taken the time to write about him, he hustles a TV pilot and a screenplay.

Jessica Penrose is a poet and short story writer. A former lawyer, she escaped just in time and now lives on the edge of the beautiful Yorkshire Dales in the north of England where she shares her house with a dog, a philosopher and lots of books. Jessica is in the final year of an MA in Writing at Sheffield Hallam University tutored by Sean O'Brien. Her poems have been published widely in anthologies and magazines including *The Rialto*, *Staple* and *Orbis* and her work has been featured in the Ilkley Literature Festival and Sheffield's Off the Shelf literary festival. She is drawn towards cross-art from collaborative projects, and recently worked with a visual artist and a dancer/choreographer to produce a short film of embedded poetry *Outside-In Inside-Out*. Future projects include a collaboration with a mosaic artist and interactive work with a fellow poet on the theme of dreams.

Glenis Stott lives in England with her husband and two black cats. She is in the final year of a part-time, online MA in Creative Writing. Glenis has never blogged before but has some experience in online collaborative writing, including taking part in [Quickshift](#), a project where an international group of writers, working in shifts, wrote continuously online for 31 hours. Glenis has recently chosen to take a year long break from working in order to focus on her writing full time. Her hope is that she will find a market for her writing and be able to describe herself as a writer for the rest of her working life. However, while publication is her main goal, she also hopes she will continue to gain as much pleasure from writing as she does now. Glenis has recently completed a novel, *And Some Caught on Stones*, as part of her course requirement. It covers four months in the life of a woman whose 17 year old daughter died unexpectedly. It isn't her own story but is based on her experience of losing a daughter. She also has an almost-complete novel, *Brother 'Lijah Built the Ark*, which looks at life in a religious cult. Glenis has recently developed an interest in genealogy and feels that several of the characters in her family tree are ripe for development into novels. Glenis is very pleased to have been chosen to take part in Ten-sided and

is looking forward to developing a character in real time.

John Dermot Woods lives in Tokyo, where he teaches in the English and Intellectual Heritage departments at Temple University Japan. He is an editor of the international arts quarterly [Action, Yes](#). His fiction and comics have been published in the *Indiana_Review*, *3rd_Bed*, *Salt_Hill* and other journals.

Taren Phillip Churchill McCallan-Moore lives in Cambridge with his two dead cats and a cellar packed with stuff that he doesn't want but can't get rid of. He shares a studio with himself in which he draws, paints and entertains. He is soon to appear nude in an exhibition of photography presented by a friend in London who has asked him to write a short and irreverent tale about taking photographs of people without any clothes. He doesn't wake up screaming anymore, he goes for a bike ride across meadow land each night, always wipes the toilet seat and wishes that he'd been closer to his father.

why the lucky stiff is a computer progger and aspiring author with no true achievements under his belt. unless you count his gracious volunteer appearances on Norwegian television each weekend, wherein he holds one single note of the treble clef in order to give the country's piano technicians a short relief from the burden of a tuning fork.