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CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

◆ PRIZE ANNOUNCEMENT ◆

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE is pleased to announce the recipient of the sixth annual **L. S. Dembo Prize** for the best article published in the journal during the preceding volume year:

Keith D. Leonard, “Postmodern Soul: The Innovative Nostalgia of Thomas Sayers Ellis”

The L. S. Dembo Prize honors Lawrence (Larry) Dembo (1929–2002), longtime editor of *Contemporary Literature* and visionary scholar and teacher. Guiding this journal for twenty-four years, Dembo established it as one of the crucial voices in the field—a collective voice marked by philosophical and critical rigor, an openness to the new, and rich, probing phrased questions. Many of the now-leading scholars in the field were nurtured under his guidance. The author of five books and the editor of six, Dembo enacted in his critical practice exactly what he called for in this journal—writing international in scope, alert to the past, unintimidated by difficulty, unconstrained by party or poetic affiliation, and linguistically responsive. Two early books—*Hart Crane’s Sanskrit Charge: A Study of “The Bridge”* (1960) and *The Confucian Odes of Ezra Pound* (1963)—established the range and rigor of his way of looking at poems. His most important book, *Conceptions of Reality in Modern American Poetry* (1966), with its focus on an “objectivist logic” of language and perception in Ezra Pound and Wallace Stevens, among others, anticipates much now being written about writers in the generations after the moderns. Building on that work, Dembo’s dense, challenging interviews with the objectivists George Oppen, Louis Zukofsky, Carl Rakosi, and Charles Reznikoff, published in this journal in 1969, are his most often cited critical contribution. Here, as with so many of the areas he touched, Dembo left behind “what still is / The look of things”—his way of looking now part of the world of words itself.



Courtesy of Brian Kim Stefans

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