

From reviews of **WHAT WE HAVE LOST: NEW and SELECTED POEMS 1977 - 2001**:(2 spoken word CDs enhanced with multimedia):



Jeffery Beam's poems provide a wide range of pleasures. Herein find children's lullabies, love poems, minimalist flowers, surrealist rifts, metaphysical and spiritual excursions into the natural world, sexual adventure, medieval-inspired songs, and eastern infused lyrics. Chosen from two unpublished scripts, one work-in-progress, and nine published works, these poems explore the relationship between the physical and the spiritual through natural history, the vagaries of love and attraction, myth, dream, perennial philosophy, and the senses.

Enhanced by multimedia through the visual art of Dürer, James McGarrell, Baron Von Gloeden, Andrea del Sarto, Ippy Patterson, David Terry, and others; complemented by video clips of readings, artist portraits, essays by and about the poet, review excerpts, poem texts, and original compositions by Oboist and composer Bo Newsome; see why poet Kenny Fries in The San Francisco Bay Times declared Beam's work "an essential antidote to our time."

This CD contains audio tracks playable in a standard audio system as well as multimedia playable on a personal computer. IBM and Mac compatible.

What We Have Lost: New & Selected Poems

Written and performed by Jeffery Beam

Multimedia Design & Production by Huong Ngo

Graphics by David Terry

Packaging Design & Production by Dave Wofford of Horse & Buggy Press

Video Clip Digitization by Bill Via

Sound Recording & Production by Hubert Deans, Snow Hill Music

Original music by Bo Newsome

Performed by Bo Newsome, oboe; Virginia Ewing Hudson, cello; Daniel Shaughnessy, violin; Jim Williams, clarinet

Music Recording by The Rubber Room

For more information, contact Jeffery Beam at:

jeffbeam@email.unc.edu

Green Finch Press, 3212 Arthur Minnis Rd., Hillsborough, NC 27278

2003 Five Finalist Audie Award in Poetry from the Audio Publishers Association.

The Audie Award in Poetry is given for excellence in narration, direction, engineering, and mix of an audiobook featuring poetry as its primary content.

Nominee American Library Association Gay / Lesbian Non-fiction Book Award.

From the nomination:

What We Have Lost chronicles over two decades of the career of Jeffery Beam, a prolific poet, tireless collaborator, and—by the way—accomplished botany librarian. It is an exceptional literary production that deserves your consideration. As librarians we should be open to new media. Beam's CD set, because it is gathered around the texts of his published and forthcoming books of poetry deserves our recognition because it preserves the value of the texts while adding layers of images, commentary, sound, and accessibility to the poetry.

As I say in the article on Beam in Greenwood Press' forthcoming *Dictionary of Gay Poets and Playwrights*, "Beam writes for the voice, as his collaborations with Lee Hoiby attest, but he is as intent on how a poem sounds when it is spoken as when it is sung. His ability to entertain as a reader is neither an accident nor a minor part of his role as a poet." Beam keeps up a steady schedule of readings, and always leaves his audience fascinated with the pleasure of the sound of words. His unaccompanied singing of some of his poems, such as "The Song" from *The Fountain*, is remarkably moving and appropriate to the text. Beam uses his sensitivity to sound as well as a keen eye for design to make the compact disk set *What We Have Lost: New and Selected Poems 1977-2001*, his most impressive production so far. Few writers have the understanding of media or the willingness to take risks that such a project requires, but Beam is equal to the task. This collection of text, sound files, and graphics exudes sensuality and makes the poetry as appealing as any multi-media effort to date. It compares favorably with such well-funded efforts as *Atlantic Unbound*, the online expression of the venerable periodical.

—**Cy Dillon**, Library Director, Stanley Library, Ferrum College, Virginia, and Associate Editor *Nantahala Review*

Long ago and far away, I was a raw young college student at the raw young University of North Carolina at Charlotte, whose accreditation was then so green that its PR machine could only brag that UNCC was "no longer an emerging university but a university in fact." When I was no longer an emerging sophomore but a sophomore in fact, I enrolled in UNCC's fledgling Bachelor of Creative Arts Program, and soon found myself in the company of various raw young Southern bohemians who were living out their creative ambitions to the fullest in the sheltered confines of a fancy new arts building. Most of them would remain artistes only as long as it took to earn a degree, after which they would come to their senses and enter the career tracks of marketing executives, bankers, car salesmen or Baptist preachers.

And then there was Jeffery Beam. Though they say he was born the same year as myself — in a towel-spewing mill town just a few miles from another mill town where I came whining into the world — Jeffery always seemed to have sprung

full-grown from some dense and mysterious forest, temporarily shedding the raiments of the wood sprite to bring a dose of magic to the mundane humanity of Dixie. I could never quite figure out if I belonged in Creative Arts — strung out as I was between a poet's lonely garret and the hubbub of the student newspaper office (gee, *la plus ça change...*) — but Jeffery always seemed to have "Congenital Artist" stamped on his aura. Though we lost touch in the years immediately after college, over the last decade or so I've been pleasantly surprised to find the occasional Jeffery Beam chapbook in my mailbox. I always assume that it has been placed there in the wee-est hours by the West Coast brethren of Jeffery's Carolina wood-sprite network.

And now comes *What We Have Lost* — a splendiferous 2-CD anthology of Jeffery's award-winning chapbooks, loose scripts, and offhand remarks, all woven together with music, audio voiceovers, photographs and even a couple of QuickTime video clips. There are all kinds of credits dutifully given to some talented multimedia artists who helped create this magical brew, with Jeffery's spare yet emotional verse as the root stock. Still, all the technology is but another spritely ruse, for I know 21st-century alchemy when I see it. As always, this man is an affront to American pop culture; it's like he wants us all to ascend to a higher, more sensitive plane of existence. And to think we went to school together in the dark ages, when even the wildest wizards in the deepest woods had yet to conjure up CDs and websites... You can visit Wood Sprite Central at Green Finch Press .

—D. Patrick Miller in *The Fearless Reader* webzine (May 3, 2002)

What We Have Lost ... is moving, even spellbinding. In every way, from the design, choice of harmonizing colors, the vellum covers for the two discs with the single heart in flames, then the double heart in flames for the second disc—it is a total work of art. The music and your lyrical singing really set a mood. What We Have Gained here, your high art, certainly militates against anything we / you have lost since 1977. I also think that you are 'way ahead of other poets in seeing that you have to "go out to the people," and "package your work attractively," by using the technology of the people, CDs, and not wait for them to come to the small literary magazines, or even the large ones like *The Georgia Review*, for example.

—Linda Hobson, Director, North Carolina Writers Network (letter to author, May 2002)

You are a master of the simple. I am in admiration.

—Novelist Daphne Athas (email to author)

Jeffery Beam's new collection of poetry comes on two CDs. The CD format enables the collection to include vastly more material than one would expect in a collection of poetry — including movies (*sic* video clips), an interview with the poet, excerpts from past reviews of his work, the poet's own voice reading and sometimes singing his words, lots of beautiful art, and several books worth of poems ... much of which is evocative and fine. His poetry is laudable and lovely ... and the illustrations and artworks ranging from movies (*sic* video clips) to photography to monotypes and drawings are first rate.

—*White Crane: A Journal Exploring Gay Men's Spirituality*, (Summer 2002, No. 53)

Beam breaks the mold in this multimedia compilation of new and selected poems, essays, articles and art, a standout work that earns an A for content — and a half grade higher than that for presentation. Beam ... includes selections from his vast arsenal of poetry from 1997-2001, an astonishing range of work that covers everything from children's lullabies to gay sexual love.

Admits Beam in the liner notes, "My audience is so wide that some will certainly find poems that are not to their liking. This is really an adult collection. I hope someday my children's work, which is also meant for adult enjoyment, can be presented on its own for a young audience. I write not to offend or confuse however, but to delight and embrace. I trust you will open your inner eye in order to journey with me."

It's a key point, for to completely enjoy the material within is to completely surrender to an open heart.

—The Boox Review (Monday July 8, 2002)

This is a great production, masterfully put together, and stylish down to the most minute detail. The music portion is soothing and the design for both the pullout and the CD aesthetically pleasing. ... The same can be said of Beam's poetry which ranges from earthy, in touch with nature. ... Both CD's begin and end with classical music by Bo Newsome that is well suited to the soft pastoral cadence of Beam's voice. *What We Have Lost* is a collection of well-constructed lyrical poems, carefully packaged in a multimedia presentation that is extremely well suited to the new millennium.

—Editor and publisher, M. Scott Douglas, in *Main Street Rag* (v. 7 no. 2, Summer 2002)

It's not often that poets read at Carnegie Hall, but Jeffrey Beam read there this last April, which should give you some sense of what you might find if you catch him at McIntyre's Fine Books in Farrington Village, Saturday, July 27 at 11 a.m. Beam's reading celebrates the release of a spoken-word CD, *What We Have Lost: New and Selected Poems 1977-2001*, a retrospective collection taken from his award-winning chapbooks. Those who have heard Beam read know that his spare,

emotionally charged poems come to life in performance with openhearted and honest warmth that challenges this era's love affair with irony and power. This reading, drawing from the whole range of his work, should be particularly special.

—David Need in **The Independent Weekly**, [Best Bet](#) for the week of July 24-30, 2002, (v. 19: no. 31)

I found myself touched in a different way by this new, digital medium. It makes issues of atmosphere and place, normally more ephemeral in poetry, concrete and tangible ... It was an intimate, interactive reverie, with Jeffery's careful voice parsing ... I felt as if I were in someone's house, perusing through old photos and pieces of the past, an intersection between my own private spaces and Jeffery's ... Wisely, Beam never attempted to make himself sellable. He chose instead a smaller scale, working with regional, small presses, building connections with regional artists to produce an array of projects. ... Like Blake before him, the economy and scale at which Beam chooses to work has political implications. The choices he made run counter to the deadening norm, yet they've enabled him to pronounce an aesthetic that carefully and deliberately affirms what is often lost in our culture's overuse of irony ... His simply carved lines belie the difficulty of working in so minimal a medium ... He has mastered the difficult work of stopping at the awkward or seemingly naïve celebration and leaving it bare, without another layer of words, so that no other surfaces lies between reader and poem ... It's the curious union of American objectivist aesthetics, whose democratic intent seeks to free the poem's subject from the weight of the author's hand, with a more distant landscape still populated by ... light and spirit. Beam's position on the margins is doubled. As a queer poet, he has a desire that the mainstream world is discomforted by and he lives in a world where his value is openly contested ... here as elsewhere, Beam attempts to redeem an abject nature by recovering its light ... Like Rilke and other late-modernist poets, Beam abandons the Romantic or symbolist desire to bring down the beautiful. Instead he seeks that supposedly lost light in small things ... Our redemption appears, not as an image in his poems, but in the spaces between lines where the word, left alone, we realize, in order to reach after that moment of redemption possible in all grief ... In poetry, there is such a history of intelligent inquiry into (and passionate defense of) a painful, ecstatic relation to world, that we are astounded whenever we are in real need to find words that exactly speak to us, and touch us. Jeffery Beam's new CDs conveys this in ways past counting.

—David Need in [The Independent Weekly](#) (week of September 25 – Oct 1, 2002)

Your CD ... lays bare all the riches of your skillful spare music of just-right language and just-so silences and rhythmic space that resonate in the listener's ear in full-throated song. You catbird you, sing on and on!

—Novelist and memoirist, **Michael Rumaker** (email to author)

Really stunned by the beauty of your poems—their simplicity and their power and their goodness in encountering the world.

—Composer **Joel Feigin** (letter to author)

Are you thinking of giving books by North Carolina writers as gifts for Christmas or Hanukkah? ... Three other memorial works that would make memorable gifts are Jeffery Beam's two-CD collection of poems, *What We Have Lost*, read and sung in his fine, strong tenor; Winston-Salem writer and NCWN board member Emily Herring Wilson's latest, *Two Gardeners: A Friendship in Letters* (Beacon Press, 2002); and Elizabeth Spencer's latest collection of short fiction, *The Southern Woman* (The Modern Library, 2001). These three are masters of their art and you can trust that a gift of one of these works, or all of them, will provide hours of worthwhile entertainment. No, that's not an oxymoron when it comes to literature and reading.

—**Linda Hobson**, Director, North Carolina Writers Network (**The Writers' Network News**, "Report from the Executive Director" (v. 18 no. 3, November/December 2002)

"The unmistakable Mr. Beam": I have been admiring your immaculate disks—everything so perfectly done, so carefully, words and music—even the liners and notes. I was listening to your voice ... from *Althea rosea* to the pliant voice of St. John to pleasure and bright repose! It is really lovely to hear you read the poems that I know well, like the *Dame Kind* poems. You managed to read that poem about Christ hurling a fire at the world in just the right way. Hard one to carry off, I think. And you are at once amusing and potent as the bee goddess! Meanwhile my wandering mind was pondering on your name, the quiriness of your mama's Jeffery-spelling, the roof-supporting dark heavy weight of beam—also its bright lightness. Fits you so well. Okay, I'm going to go clean and pretend I am somewhere else as I listen to the Mr. Beam on the "the heart's rude madness" and gladness, etc.!

—Novelist **Marly Youmans** (email to author, November 20, 2002)

Beam's books, broadsides, and "kennings" have always been beautiful objects; his readings have always been events. Just this winter I heard a bookstore owner in a small North Carolina town describe Jeffery's performance in his shop with an attitude approaching reverence. So there is little wonder that with this history and with a librarian's experience with the power of electronic publishing that Beam's double CD collection is a treat for eye, ear, and mind.

In addition to drawing on his own taste and expertise, Beam assembled an exceptional team of collaborators to

produce a multi-media buffet of photographs, drawings, graphic art, music and the spoken word. Some of the contents of the CD are even accessed online through embedded links, but most is available without that connection. The design and production by Huong Ngo is innovative and artistic, and the original music of Bo Newsome, produced by the Rubber Room in Durham County, NC, creates a sympathetic mood for the photographs and other artwork, such as David Terry's drawings. Hubert Deans' production of Beam's reading blends seamlessly with the music and artwork. The flexibility of the medium, enhanced by user-friendly menus, allows Beam to include interviews, reviews, and his own criticism without intruding on the texts and sound files of the poetry. This compendium creates the opportunity to understand Beam's work and philosophy of art in a depth far beyond that supported by a collection of poems alone. It is especially helpful to have the major unpublished material included. In fact, *What We Have Lost* becomes a definitive reference for the first two decades of a remarkably productive career. But by far the best feature of the production is the ease of listening to the reading or singing of the poetry.

Beam is known for the *a cappella* singing of poems, and the versions recorded here are excellent. His rendition of "The Song" from *Fountain* is the one I find most moving, with its depth of emotion, but many others are noteworthy. Nor are the spoken poems dull. Beam has excellent range in his reading; he can communicate his own emotions or portray that of a character like an accomplished actor. All this, of course, would mean little if the poems themselves were pedestrian.

Beam is above all a poet of the intuitive spirituality of the natural world, an Objectivist in the tradition of Pound and Williams who does not hesitate to eschew the fashionable in favor of the lasting. Beam's careful attention to diction and imagery sets his work apart from much of the lush, verbose sentimentality that characterizes far too much Southern poetry. As Beam recently told Mark Roberts in an interview in *Nantahala Review*, he strives for "elevated, yet common language" that will put his work "not in the mainstream—but in the mystical stream of poetry."

As a writer responding to the natural world, Beam's landscapes are always charged with the spiritual just below the surface, waiting for discovery. While I believe that Beam's most mature and consistent writing to date appears in *Visions of Dame Kind* and *The Fountain*, which are primarily lyrical responses to natural objects or setting, his treatment of homoeroticism also cultivates a feeling of discovery in a world charged with possibility. In *Submergences*, and the yet unprinted *The Beautiful Tendons*, the author openly intends to celebrate desire for men, but the hidden sensuality of male bodies appears in all his collections of poems. *Submergences* ... is especially intense and self-revealing. The narrator seems driven by a combination of wonder, fear, and shame that, as Beam matures, distills to wonder alone.

A reader can spend many hours with *What We Have Lost* getting a full a picture of Jeffery Beam's work, experiencing the wonder this remarkable poet finds in the smallest and most humble objects.

—Editor and Librarian Cy Dillon, [Oyster Boy Review](#) (v. 17, Fall 2003)

This collection, on two CDs ... is nothing short of a study of the life and writings of Jeffery Beam. Disc 1 includes a number of reviews of his work, written by noted poets and novelists from North Carolina and beyond. There are two lengthy interviews between Beam and Thomas Meyer and Kevin Bezner. In addition, there are critical essays by and about Beam as he discusses the aesthetics of his art. The selections included in the various audio books in this collection are equally pleasing to the ear and the eye. Listening to the poet's voice, the reader comes to appreciate ... deeply the images that he conjures up through language, and often with such economy of words. It is comforting and soothing to hear ... Beam's arresting voice that rises like freshness from a green meadow. *What We Have Lost* is so much more than that. It is what the literary world already knows about the talent of Jeffery Beam. It is what we have found—some of the best of the very best from a magnificent voice that cannot be ignored.

—L. Teresa Church in [North Carolina Libraries](#) (v. 62 no. 1, Spring 2004)

It was a revelation to hear your voice – so enthusiastic and enunciated, so buoyant and communicating. And to return to a sense of your poems and chants and songs through you and your way of articulating them. Although I don't write reviews, I was mightily

impressed – the spirit of poetry and nature and Eros are carried forth into and for the future. All children should hear you, the universe glistening. A morning chiaroscuro. Healing tongues of dogs and serpents. "Illusive shadblow." "Between snowflake the butterfly's heart." "In these catacombs I perfect my sweat." Thanks for the visionary CDs which I've delighted in – your range and uniquely sensitive approach toward nature and Eros. May sweet love be kind to you. I hope to meet you and your comereday.

—Poet **Antler** (letter to author, January 2003)

Jeffery Beam recently filled our space with all that is human and beautiful by reading from his new multimedia collection of poetry. His voice and his bare-to-the-bone emotions that stripped away all falsehood were magnificent to behold. His new interactive CD is a fabulous treasure for poetry lovers.

—Bookseller Eموke B'Racz, **Malaprop's Bookstore / Café Newsletter**, Asheville, NC (Holidays 2002)

Jeffery Beam's **What We Have Lost** is the richest and handsomest offering among these CDs. From the packaging and design ... to the interactive links and video feeds, the viewer / listener is able to enjoy an array of experiences. The tone, established by the strings and woodwinds of the opening "Evocation," speaks to Beam's fascination with the Celtic and glades and Druids – not my favorite tone of his work. I love the air and light and Bartram verse of the poems in **Dame Kind** and of "Credo." Beam's voice is far removed from those of the other three poets. He hits each syllable, sings on a rise at the end of each line. Indeed, Beam bursts into song on several lullabies and poems. I wish Beam had published a book with this CD booklet inserted into a slipcase. Then the reader would be able to attend to the marvelous poems and supplement the strength of the poem's images with the effects and sounds of the CDs.

—J. W. Bonner reviewing four poet CDs in [Asheville Poetry Review](#), vol. 11 no. 1, issue 14, 2004

Featured book in **Rapid River Magazine: A Magazine of Arts and Culture in Western North Carolina**, Open Book Column, (v. 6 no. 1, September 2002)