

**J=O=U=I=S=S=A=N=C=E**

**K**nows **B**est

PS: I misread "you" instead of the "I" you have. How does this change the tone of the text? How does this change the idiomatic expression itself: "I break for strangers" or "I will rock you like a hurricane" or "the children are our future"? How does this change the sense of a dialogue between a subject and an object of desire on the skintight highroad of language?



If the queer theorist [Eve Sedgwick](#) is right and Allah language is [performative](#): What are the consequences, Mr.

Bones? Language performativity simply means that that **the words we use have a social effect** such as when a judge pronounces you “guilty” or when a matrimonial couple utters “I do” or when land reform protesters scream **“[ya basta](#)”**.

On May 11, the following event will take place in Bucharest, Romania at the café called Tramvaiul Douazeci Si Sase:

# Sweet Little Nothings: Contemporary Romanian Poets on Nihilism

Many recent poets have announced the death of postmodernism and the quick and subsequent births of Conceptual Writing, Fracturism, Flarf, Post-Avant Poetry, Slow Poetry, and so on. But is the age of deconstructing the metaphysics of history, god, and self indeed over in contemporary Romanian poetry? Otherwise put: what does it mean to write if nothing matters? What topics do self-conscious (and history-

conscious) poets write about after **the theory that the center does not hold no longer holds**? Is Cioran still relevant when he claims that the most heroic thing for modern man to do is commit suicide? What kind of nothing do you believe in? What kind of nothing do your poems represent? Which nihilism represents you as a poet: Nietzschean fecundity or confessional solipsism or another? Do you prefer to lose your past, your faith, your self in the infinite music of the void through Dionysian excess or in puritanical minimalism with its hidden Apollonian authority or in some other direction? How do your poems “take responsibility for their freedom” as Sartre put it? Camus found relief when the Sisyphian boulder was rolling back down the mountain. Where do you find relief? Is finding relief and closure why you write your poems?

This roundtable invites 5-6 poets to offer a definition and a poem showing what nihilism means to them and to their poems in 5 minutes. After these brief provocations, the audience is expected to harass the poets with questions about how Romantic (see John Keats’ negative capability) they still are to think they can **live in OR represent** the nothingness of being. Bring your potato salad. The objective of these brief

presentations and hoped-for audience response is **not** to make moral progress toward a True contemporary Romanian poetry but to make aesthetic progress by becoming more self-aware of our habits of mind.



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