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A Transnational Poetics

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“America is my country,” remarked Gertrude Stein, only to fracture this apparently nationalist claim by adding, “and Paris is my home town” (61). Stein’s translocal claim of identity—splaying herself between the spectral context of one nation and the lived metropolis of another—accords with the transnational affiliations and identities of many other modern and

contemporary poets, though she is often absorbed into nationalist narratives of “American” literature. Studies in cultural transnationalism have recently proliferated in a variety of humanistic subfields, but in studies of modern and contemporary poetry in English, single-nation genealogies remain surprisingly entrenched: an army of anthologies, job descriptions, library catalogs, books, articles, and annotations reterritorializes the cross-national mobility and migrancy of modern and contemporary poetry under the banner of the single-nation norm. If Stein were an exception among twentieth-century poets, this...

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