

Stephen Paul Miller: Hi Norman, My Film and Lit class read your piece in RADICAL POETICS [see [http://www.critiphoria.org/Issue1/Norman\\_Fischer.pdf](http://www.critiphoria.org/Issue1/Norman_Fischer.pdf) ], and I noticed your response to Susan on Facebook:

Susan M. Schultz wonders what your ambitions are for your poems (not to be confused with yourselves).

Norman Fischer: Good question. Maybe I don't have any.

I'm typing this in class. Why do you think it was a good question if you have no answer? Is having no answer the goal? How so?

Eugene just pointed out that you have no ambitions, not answers. Do you think the distinction is important?

Eugene says your piece blew his mind because he never realized you could be speaking and silent at the same time.

Kelli wants to know why you wrote about silence. Why would you want to put silence into words?

Aleanah wants to know if you lean more towards John Cage or the Zen monks that you write about. Is there a difference?

Jonathan wants to know if you think silence is a hundred percent of life or just a big part of life?

Thank you for entertaining our questions.

Norman Fischer: Hi Stephen, too bad I couldn't have answered this live, so to speak (not that I am dead now, but maybe.....), but anyway here are some responses: good questions usually don't have any answers, right? But it is really good to ask them and think about them. Not that you don't have a lot to say or think about but no final answer or maybe even not a provisional one. Isn't a poem a provisional answer to a question? Eugene, I am not sure I have no ambitions, I am still thinking about this. I did say "maybe." Kelli, I am a person who writes, I don't know why, and maybe that is not the best thing but there it is. Since I spend a lot of time in silence I sometimes write about silence, though it's never really about silence it's about language. No silence no language though. Aleanah, certainly Cage and Zen monks couldn't be more different but possibly the thrust of what they are interested in is the same. Jonathan, a hundred per cent - but this raises more questions than it answers. I thought the anthology was really interesting Stephen and have read most of it. I never really thought about what a "secular Jew" was but it turns out to be a very interesting and fruitful question. I am reading about Spinoza in Rebecca Goldstein's book *betraying Spinoza*. She claims that he is the first secular person, invented the secular as we know it. This book is causing me to have a lot of interesting thoughts. Thanks for your questions everyone.