

# Time Out

New York

**WARM UP**

*The Museum of Sex debuts a new look*

**GREAT WALKS**

*Tour comic book stores  
and indie rock clubs*

**CHE**

*Benicio speaks—and  
so does our critic*

# 1000

**THE  
BEST THINGS  
WE ATE AND  
DRANK  
THIS  
YEAR**

WITH  
**33**  
CHEAP  
PICKS!

*...including  
tarragon  
pappardelle  
at Falai*

Cover 2 of 4: the entrée



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**609**

**CHEAP OR FREE EVENTS!**

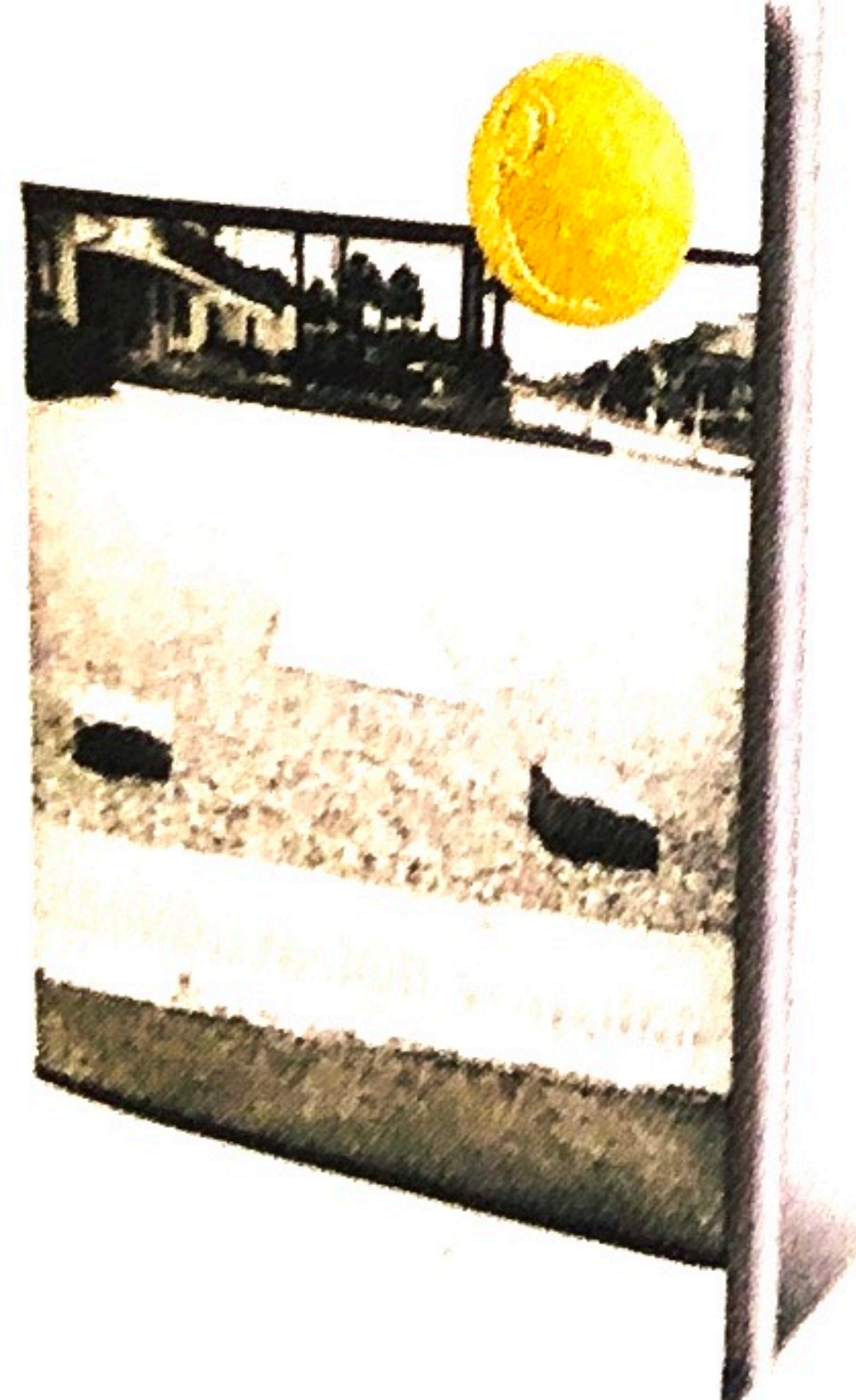
**By Andrew Porter.**

University of Georgia, \$24.95.

A gay Mexican exchange student comes to blows with his disturbed lover and loses. A young man obsessed with an Amish girl witnesses a fatal fight and is forever changed. A woman recounts the story of her physics professor, whom she still longs for even though she went on to marry her college sweetheart. Here are but a few of the men and women you meet in Andrew Porter's exquisite debut collection, *The Theory of Light & Matter*.

The author, who is from Lancaster, sets his stories mainly in rural Pennsylvania. Like the hilly, turbulent terrain he describes, the characters in *The Theory* often find themselves in untenable, if not violent, situations. Take this from "Departure": "Someone finally used a two-by-four to knock him out. It was an unnecessarily hard blow and even today I do not know which of the kids delivered it. His head split open near the hairline."

Replete with such awful moments, *The Theory* is a collection in which every story builds to a defining and defiant act. Yet this is never the final moment. The point comes later, after



the blood is cleaned and the bodies removed. Porter is obsessed with what comes next, the haunting his characters endure long after the tragedies subside. A rubbernecker with a gimlet eye, he makes his first-person narratives about the ways his characters struggle to pinpoint what went wrong in their lives. There are no literary pyrotechnics here, no metafictional devices, just good old-fashioned storytelling. But even at their most straightforward, the stories have a hard-won grit and imagination to spare. Porter, with a steady eye, excavates the subtler side of misfortune, and in the process delivers horror and constant delight.—David Levinson

Fredrik Nyberg's *A Different Practice*, and Yang has translated Su Shi's *East Slope*.

**\* FREE Yusef Komunyakaa + Idra Novey** *Pacific Standard*, 82 Fourth Ave between Bergen St and St. Marks Pl, Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-858-1951). Subway: B, Q, 2, 3, 4, 5 to Atlantic Ave; D, M, N, R to Pacific St. 7pm. In *Warhorses*, Vietnam veteran poet Komunyakaa considers battlegrounds past and present, as well as Abu Ghraib. He reads with Novey, author of *The Next Country*.

**FREE Annie Leibovitz** *Barnes & Noble*, 33 E 17th St between Broadway and Park Ave South (212-253-0810). Subway: L, N, Q, R, W, 4, 5, 6 to 14th St–Union Sq. 7pm. Leibovitz has photographed the famous and the nodding out, from Tom Cruise to Keith Richards. Here she discusses her new book, *Annie Leibovitz at Work*.

**FREE Michael Phelps** *Borders*, 100 Broadway at Pine St (212-964-1988). Subway: 4 to Wall St. 1pm. Half-man, half-fish Michael Phelps discusses his book *No Limits* and what it's like to be the Carl Lewis of the water.

**FREE Dr. Ruth Westheimer** *Barnes & Noble*, 267 Seventh Ave at 6th St, Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-832-9066). Subway: F to Seventh Ave. 7pm. With all the cybersexing and copulating going on among today's youth, it can sometimes be tough for parents to know how to approach their kids for "the Talk." In her book, *Dr. Ruth's Guide to Teens and Sex Today*, the good doctor breaks it down.

## Friday 12

**\* FREE December sale** *Book Culture*, 536 W 112th St between Broadway and