

CRISTIN TIERNEY

Retyping *Ironweed* at the Albany Institute

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You'd retyping William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* at the author's home in Oxford, Mississippi in 2014. / photo: Robert Jordan, University of Mississippi.

Gotta admit we don't know what to think about this, but if you see a guy typing on old-school typewriter outside the Albany Institute next week...

Performance artist Tim Youd will be [at the museum Sunday and Tuesday-Saturday](#) retyping William Kennedy's *Ironweed* as part of an ongoing project to retype famous novels in locations that are somehow significant to the author's work. Press release blurbage:

Employing the same make and model typewriter used by the author, Youd types each novel on a single sheet of paper, which is backed by an additional support sheet. The artist loads the two-ply paper through the typewriter repeatedly, until the entire novel has been retyped. As the typing progresses, the top sheet becomes saturated with ink and perforated from overuse, while the sheet underneath becomes embossed from indentation. Upon completion, the two pages are separated and mounted side by side as a framed diptych, recalling two pages of an open book with the words obscured. The diptych remains as a relic of the performance that embodies the novel, even though it is completely illegible.

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According to the artist, "The genesis of the project came from my recognition that on a formal level, when you are looking at two pages of a book, you are looking at two rectangles of black text inside two larger rectangles of the white pages. I had the palpable desire to crush the words of the entire book into this formal language." It also becomes an investigation of memory, attention, and the act of reading. The artist explains, "We don't remember every word no matter how prodigious our memory--rather, we are left with some kind of layered impression."

[Youd](#) will be in the atrium of the Albany Institute, and if the weather is nice, outside on the museum's Washington Ave lawn. There's also a Thursday evening reception with samples of Albany Distilling Company's "Ironweed" products. See that link above for the schedule.

See also this Paul Grondahl [article about the upcoming performance](#), including William Kennedy's quote at the end.

Youd is currently working through [a Hudson Valley phase](#). He's at [Olana](#) this week, where he's retyping *Light Years* by James Salter.