ARTS

EDITED BY JOHN LEWIS

CityLit Project has blossomed into a local treasure on a variety of fronts—especially its public programming and workshops—and it recently added a publishing imprint to its list of minor miracles. For its debut release, CityLit Press smartly put together *City Sages,* a wide-ranging anthology of Baltimore writers, past and present. It includes the usual suspects such as Mencken, Poe, and Tyler, but it also highlights excellent work from contemporary scribes like Michael Kimball, Lia Purpura, Rosalia Scala, and Jessica Anya Blau. As a result, it dovetails nicely with CityLit's mission of "nurturing the culture of literature in Baltimore."

Artist Five years ago, we were thrilled to peek through the keyhole of the BMA's Latrobe Spring House and spy Richard Cleaver's altar-like installation of intricate ceramic figures practically glowing in the shadows. This year, we were glad to see his work prominently exhibited in the museum's Contemporary Wing, as part of the Baker Artist Awards show. Cleaver fully exploits ceramics' stiff, doll-like qualities to evoke a posed, sepia-tinged past. But he gives that nostalgic vibe a wicked spin by incorporating hidden compartments and elaborate layers of handmade ceramics into the work, all of which convey a sense of mystery and secrecy and hint at complex inner lives behind the stoic faces. This definitely isn’t your Aunt Ida’s ceramics.

Autobiography (Plus One) In *The Other Wes Moore,* the author tells the stories of two Wes Moores who grew up in Baltimore. As youngsters, their bios more or less parallel one another, but, as young men, they diverge sharply and dramatically—the author becomes a decorated vet, Rhodes Scholar, White House Fellow, and business exec, while "the other Wes Moore" becomes an accessory to the murder of a cop and gets sentenced to life in prison. Moore tells the stories with sensitivity and clarity, examining what went wrong and what went right, and crafts an uplifting memoir and cautionary tale rolled into one. And now, Moore can add another entry to his impressive resume—best-selling author. *The Other Wes Moore* made the New York Times best-seller list for nonfiction. (Read our interview with Moore on p. 240.)

Cabaret Tucked away in the upstairs dining room of an erstwhile Little Italy eatery, The Cabaret at Germano’s, 300 S. High Street, 410-752-4515, gets maximum returns from its small performance space and baby grand piano. From world-class entertainers—like the likes of Tracie Thomas—

ANTHOLOGY

THROWDOWN

(WRITERS)

H.L. MENCKEN

EDGAR ALLAN POE

THE LOWDOWN

The mighty journalist, eminent critic, and lifelong Baltimorean versus the mythic icon of American literature.

TALE OF THE TAPE

The influence of Mencken's work is enormous, though not always obvious; the cult of Poe is so pervasive that he inspired the naming of an NFL franchise.

THE DECISION

Mencken was certainly a titan in his day, but POE continues to capture the imagination. Poe lives!