

## Many Blind Rivers: a Phenomenology of Blindness

Let us assume blindness is never static and always takes its meaning in phenomenological terms from movement. Let us describe blindness as “Proleptic Imagination.”

*Proleptic: Rhetoric. the anticipation of possible objections in order to answer them in advance.* Traveling blind is a performance both within normative subventions of assistance and outside cultural denotations of helplessness. This paper asserts blind travel, taken as performance, is proleptic, both anticipating and answering implicit objections to the concept of blind independence in the very process of navigation. Drawing on poems and literary nonfiction this paper will demonstrate the polysemous tropes of blind travel as they pertain to the incitement and enactment of art while walking.

**Bio:** Stephen Kuusisto is the author of the memoirs *Planet of the Blind* (a *New York Times* “Notable Book of the Year”) and *Eavesdropping: A Memoir of Blindness and Listening* and of the poetry collections *Only Bread, Only Light*, and *Letters to Borges*. A graduate of the Iowa Writer’s Workshop and a Fulbright Scholar, he has taught at the University of Iowa, Hobart & William Smith Colleges, and The Ohio State University. He currently directs the Renée Crown Honors Program at Syracuse University where he holds a professorship in the Center on Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies. He is a frequent speaker on disability and diversity issues around the US and abroad.