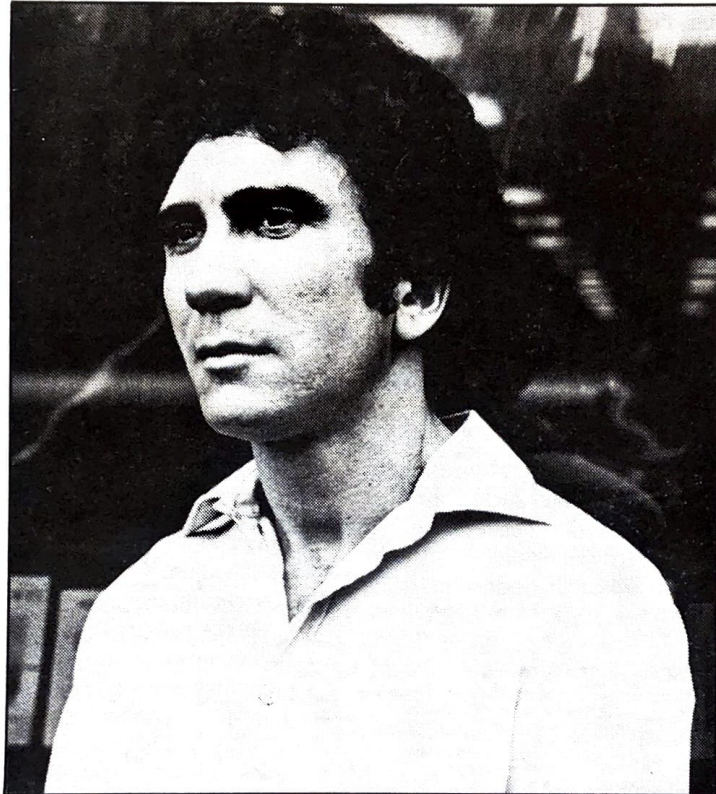


POETRY PROJECT

The Newsletter of The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery

Issue 112, March 1985 \$1.00



Reinaldo Arenas, Cuban Poet in Exile

POETRY, POLITICS & PROPAGANDA

The Writing of Castillo and Arenas

by Tim Dlugos

“Reading Roque Dalton...”

A New Poem by Bill Zavatsky

**AND: HELENA HUGHES AND ANNE WALDMAN CELEBRATE
GEORGE SCHNEEMAN, DENNIS COOPER ON L.A. POETS,
RICHARD HUTTEL ON MAXINE CHERNOFF, ALAN DAVIES ON
MARIAROSA SCLAUZERO, AND NEWS OF FOR AND BY POETS!**

LAMONT COMPETITION OPENS

Publishers in the United States are invited to participate in the Lamont Poetry Selection. The award is offered for an American poet's second book of poems, contracted for publication, submitted in manuscript form by the prospective publisher. Philip Booth, Louise Gluck and Charles Simic will judge this year's manuscripts. For information, entry forms and guidelines, write to The Academy of American Poets, 177 East 87th Street, New York, NY 10128. Submission deadline: May 15, 1985.

INTERNATIONAL POETRY COMPETITION: BIG BUCKS!

Faber and Faber announces the 1985 *Observer* and Ronald Duncan Foundation International Poetry Competition—the largest poetry competition in the English-speaking world, both in terms of prize money and number of entries. The competition is open to anyone writing in the English language, and the only requirement is that the poem be previously unpublished. A first prize of 5,000 pounds will be offered by *The Observer*, with 5 prizes of 200 pounds each and 10 prizes of 100 pounds each. This year's judges are the poets Amy Clampitt, Craig Raine and Anne Stevenson.

For guidelines and entry forms, write to Poetry Competition, Faber and Faber, 39 Thompson St., Winchester, MA 01890. Submission deadline: May 15, 1985.

MAG WANTS WORK

The journal PEREGRINE wants poetry, short fiction and essays (up to 1200 words) for the Summer/Fall issue. Deadline for submissions is March 31, 1985. Name on cover sheet only. Send to: PEREGRINE, P.O. Box 1076, Amherst, MA 01004. Enclose SASE.

St. Mark's Talks

Sunday, March 31, at 8 p.m., St. Mark's Talks presents

LYN HEJINIAN—*Language and 'Paradise'*
Perception, the consciousness of perception, and consciousness of consciousness of perception (an approaching psychology of language). The place of poetic language in mediated and unmediated experiences of the world. With reference to some of Gertrude Stein's work and to Hejinian's *The Guard*.

Lyn Hejinian's most recent book is *Redo* (Salt-Works). She is publisher of Tuumba Press and coeditor of *Poetics Journal*. Other books include *My Life*, *Gesualdo*, *A Thought is the Bride of What Thinking*, *A Mask of Motion*, and *Writing Is an Aid to Memory*. She lives in Berkeley.

A True Story of Enormous Significance

The other day I was making some tea so I put a pot of water on to boil, turned away and got a cup from the cupboard. I put a teabag in the cup. By and by, I went back to the stove and stood over it, gazing into the pot of water. Presently, the water began to boil before my very eyes. It wasn't the first time I had had such an experience.

—Ed Smith

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ALAN DAVIES is a leading "language-centered" poet; his work appears in *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book* (Southern Illinois University Press). **DENNIS COOPER** leads the Friday Night Writing Workshop at the Poetry Project. **BILL ZAVATSKY** edits *Sun Magazine* and Press; he is finishing a book about the making of *Rebel Without a Cause*. **ANNE WALDMAN** teaches at the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at the Napropa Institute in Boulder. **HELENA HUGHES** collaborated with James Schuyler on *Collabs*, published by Misty Terrace Press. **RICHARD HUTTEL** is a poet who lives in Itasca, Illinois. **TIM DLUGOS** edits this Newsletter.

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THE COLLECTIVE SMILE, THE SOLITARY "NO"

by Tim Dlugos

In Ignazio Silone's 1937 novel *Bread and Wine*, the revolutionary Pietro Spina, masquerading as a priest, scrawls anti-Fascist slogans on the walls and steps of buildings in the hill town where he is hiding. He explains to an incredulous peasant girl the outrage his guerrilla graffiti has provoked:

"In the Land of Propaganda, any man, any little man who goes on thinking with his own head imperils the public order. Tons of printed paper repeat the government slogans; thousands of loud-speakers, hundreds of thousands of manifestoes and leaflets, legions of orators in the squares and at crossroads, thousands of priests from the pulpit repeat these slogans *ad nauseam*, to the point of collective stupefaction. But it is enough for one little man to say 'No!' on the wall at night, and public order is endangered."

In this century, saying "No" has become an increasingly important function of poetry. For the borders of the Land of Propaganda have relentlessly spread, encompassing East and West, industrialized and developing countries, South Africa and South Yemen. Poets can be proud of the plethora of naysayers within our art: Allen Ginsberg saying "No" to the smug mediocrity of Fifties America. . . Neruda saying "No" to Yankee imperialism. . . Mandelstam flinging a contemptuous "No" at Stalin. . . Breyten Breytenbach shouting "No" to neo-Fascist South Africans, in their own language.

Behind most political "No"s it's clear that a "Yes" is lurking somewhere. . . at its best, an affirmation of the value of human experience. The "No" of a poet is often a "Yes." But there's another sort of "No" to which the imperatives of politics and the heat of the fray can lead a poet: a "No" to poetry itself. Such a "No" may stem from impatience; it may stem from doctrine; but it always stems from misunderstanding. Poetry turns language into truth not because its historical analysis or ideology is correct, but because it turns language into art. As the communist poet Roque Dalton wrote, the poet's main loyalty must be to the essence of the poetry, which is beauty—even when saying "No."

The two poets whose work I wish to examine are both famous because they said "No." Otto Rene Castillo is probably the leading Guatemalan poet of our century. A revolutionary who spent years in Eastern Europe before returning to struggle in his own country, he was captured by government troops, tortured for two days, and burned alive at the stake in 1967. He was 31 years old when he died. Reinaldo Arenas, on the other hand, survived the oppression of his government. A highly-praised young Cuban poet, he was arrested—"shanghaied" more aptly describes the process—and packed off to a forced labor camp in the countryside in 1970, during a roundup of homosexuals in Havana. Arenas left Cuba in the Mariel exodus of 1980, and currently lives in New York.

Castillo's "No" to tyranny—the ultimate "no" of martyrdom—has provoked much admiration. His poems have become powerful weapons in the fight for revolution in Latin America. In the introduction to *Tomorrow Triumphant*, a new selection of Castillo's poems, Francisco X. Alarcon, a member of the "Roque Dalton Cultural Brigade" that translated the poems into English, describes Castillo's work as "devoid of literary preoccupations. . . as lean and effective as a guerrilla's knapsack"; poems, that is, which contain the sustenance a revolution will need on the road to victory. For Castillo, the outcome is never in doubt:

Love, we're invincible.

Made of history and common people,
leading to the future.

There's a lot that's genuine about *Tomorrow Triumphant*: the youthful energy of the writing, the love which shines through the work. Its best poems, such as "Holocaust of the Embrace," manage to meld Castillo's political vision into poetry at once tender, extravagant and clear.

But it seems to me that Castillo's work is derailed as poetry (a criticism Alarcon may have anticipated with his crack about "literary preoccupations") when it plunges headfirst into agitprop. Propaganda is the enemy of poetry. For the "No" and the "Yes" that a poem can be is a weapon not only because of its *content*, the direction of its meaning against or for a political cause. Its simple existence as *art made of language* turns every poem into a powerful weapon against Propaganda. Propaganda yokes the language; poetry sets it free to be more than a beast of burden. When a poet becomes a propagandist, he stops producing art and starts producing artful propaganda.

Now please don't misunderstand my point. I'm not arguing against political, even fiercely political, content as part of poetry. And I'm not counseling political moderation; sometimes, in fact, it seems as though every great poet of our century has spent time as a revolutionary or a reactionary.

What I do deplore are the political or ideological constraints and purposes which rot the truth of a poem—not the historical truth, the "what happened" or the "what will happen," but the "what is happening here and now," at the intersection of language and the world.

Here's an example of artful propaganda masquerading as art, from Castillo's poem "Return to the Smile":

The children
born
at the end
of the century
will be joyful.

(Their smiles
are the collective
smile.)

I've never seen a collective smile; I never hope to see one. But I know enough to mourn a poem aborted because it blurs its focus in the service of doctrinaire claptrap.

Some of the poems that Castillo wrote during his stay in East Berlin in the early 1960s are among the most egregious offenders in this category. It was a time when such a large portion of the city was scrambling to move to the Western sector that the government built a wall to hold them back. Here's Castillo's East Berlin of the same period, from "Wings of the Song":

The blue pupil
of the workers
sings,
their strongest emotion
lives
in the prophetic smile
of triumph
in the unyielding
certainty
that their hands
are building
the broadest victory
of their people...

Everything turns to song
in this part of Germany.

Castillo's work is strongest when he takes off his rose-colored glasses and writes of what he cares about the most: the suffering of his own country, its peasants, and the terrible and hopeful things he's seen there. In one of the strongest poems in the collection, he reminds his country's "Apolitical Intellectuals" of the coming retribution, when

the humble people will come
those who never had a place
in the books and poems
of the apolitical intellectuals
but who daily delivered
their bread and milk,
their eggs and tortillas...
and they will ask:
"What did you do when the poor
suffered, when tenderness and life
were dangerously burning out in them?"

Apolitical intellectuals
of my sweet country,
you will have nothing to say.

The poem's use of the old Judgement Day image as a vehicle for shaming apolitical intellectuals makes it politically effective. But the point at which the throat catches, when the work's integrity is unassailable, is *not* in the reference to workers delivering eggs, nor in the damning question put to those whom the poem addresses. It's in the simple reference to "my sweet country." At that point, the poem's truth shines. For Castillo has stopped being a cheerleader long enough to be "any little man" who uses his language to take a whole country, to make it "his," to make it "sweet." It's what Whitman did to America... to create a new but familiar place to live, out of language. It makes words art.

Despite its strength, such identification with and creation of the familiar doesn't make for good ideology. In his afterword to Roque Dalton's *Poetry and Militancy in Latin America*, James Scully criticizes a similar tendency in Dalton's writing. "Dalton's phrase 'my people' is not synonymous with 'workers of all countries,' but is at once

less focused regarding class commitment (qualitative deterioration) and more exclusive (quantitative decline)... the resulting political incoherence left his poetry, sharp and impressive as it is, somewhat at a loss."

In Castillo, ideology's loss is poetry's gain.

Reinaldo Arenas is another poet whose "no" has been a crucible in which his poetry has been refined. A prize-winning poet, Arenas was rounded up in a "sweep" of homosexuals (imagine the prison buses parked on St. Mark's Place), and deported to a labor camp. (His story is detailed in the film "Improper Conduct," which should strip everyone who sees it of illusions about the results of any sort of license, artistic included, in today's Cuba.) A friend smuggled an 87-page tablet of paper into the prison. On it, Arenas wrote what is one of the most startling contemporary long poems I've read: *El Central*, named after the camp where he was held.

If Castillo is a revolutionary poet, Arenas is a post-revolutionary in a country where high hopes of justice have been replaced with the same old scam of manipulation, only this time inflicted by better propagandists. The poem is filled with scathing references to the chronic shortages, the daily brutality, the incessant propaganda, the pervasive hopelessness of contemporary Cuba. For Arenas, his prison is a microcosm of his nation.

But right-wing propagandists would have little to cheer in Arenas' analysis. In his prose-poem, he sees the current despoilers of Cuba as simply the latest in a long line of predators, stretching back to the first influences of Western culture on Cuba's shores:

The Florida Indians were great sodomites and
openly maintained male brothels where as many
as a thousand gathered
at nightfall. Last night, here, there was a "sweep"
at Coppelia.

The Florida Indians nevertheless refused their backsides to Juan de Grijalba and fought like devils...

The Indians of Cuba, the chronicler continues,
all died out from work and hunger.

They were not very tall and they liked
guabiniquinaj, their own guava. Will Western
culture gobble
me up? Will I drown in office ink? Or
will I die
applauding the Great Chief, the one who now wears
a beard
and is surrounded by automatic rifles?

I admire the historical sweep of *El Central*, though for this poet "To speak of History / is to speak of our own dung / piled up in a variety of latrines." But I'm astounded by its virtuosic range of tones... the craft that comes through, even in translation. Arenas cuts narratives from histories (from the work camp library?) into horrifying descriptions of beatings of blacks, the slaves of the Spaniards as well as the street queens of Havana, and the slaves he sees his countrymen becoming.

Does anyone feel the desperate crackling in the land,
in the Island of Cuba, where millions of slaves (no
longer of any color at all) scratch the earth without
any meaning?

There is nothing to say, except bend down and
scrape.

There is nothing to say about Humanity where everyone has the right to applaud or die riddled with bullets.

Arenas can temporarily distance himself from the horror by talking in the ironic tones of a flaming *maricone* ("O what a pessimistic queen this writer is, the up-to-date bourgeois will say... himself won over by the optimistic wall-writing and slogans of the Marxists who know that without the holy faith of a cretin they would not be able to gobble up the earth before it explodes.") But however he chooses to speak, the reality of his life as a prisoner is the bottom line throughout the work:

Put away those notebooks, my dear boy... Poetry, like the future, is gestated in the dizzying whirl of a four-speed piston; in the sickening procession of sugar-cane carts and the arid voice of the man ordering you to go "Faster! Faster!" This is where poetry lies, in the midday halt for a drink of dirty water. This is where poetry lies, in the fury of flies that swarm over your face when you lift the top off the outhouse hole.

One is reminded of Alarcon's description of Castillo as a poet whose works "comprise a high example of the unification of poetry, love, action and life." Writing in a place like Cuba, in a hellhole like El Central, tends to fuse poetry and life; Castillo, a revolutionary writing on the run in Guatemala, would certainly agree. But here, there are no propaganda-born visions of collective smiles to provoke love, and the only action possible is the silent, persistent "No." As for "literary preoccupations,"

Everything is so simple, so simple: no grand phraseology will do, not complicated philosophical speculations, not hermetic poetry. In the face of the terror there is the simplicity of epic verse: simply *to tell*.

One must tell.
One must tell.

A place where nothing can be told is a place where the most must be told.

Arenas' "No" is especially effective as poetry because he has no doctrinaire hidden agenda. Like many artists who have been forced to flee Cuba, he's not espousing a new Reaganite Manifest Destiny as a response to his nation's latest dictator. He and others of his compatriots face the Land of Propaganda without ideology, bearing the powerful weapon of poetry, which has caused their own country to drive them away. In a poem called "Sometimes I Plunge," Heberto Padilla, the most prominent Cuban poet in exile, tells what that's like:

Sometimes I plunge into the ocean, for a long time,
and emerge suddenly gasping, breathing,
and swim as far as I can from the coast
and see the distant blurred line of the shore
and the sun making the oily water boil.
The shoreline drowns in the vapor
and I close my eyes blinded by the light.
Then, a handsbreadth from those waves, the
country appears
that for so long we thought
we were carrying on our shoulders: white, like a
warship,
shining against the sun and against poets.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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READING ROQUE DALTON, SMOKING A NICARAGUAN CIGAR

1.
Roque, you wrote that your prison guard
"suggested that perhaps I could write him a poem...
so he could keep it for a souvenir
after they killed me."

Well, wasn't he
one of "the people" you said you wrote for?
Whose lives you said were your "ongoing concern"?
You worried about poetry, too,
in the three lines you wrote with this title:

The Art of Poetry 1974

Poetry
Forgive me for having help you understand
that you aren't just made out of words
Eventually someone did kill you,
someone from a rival leftist group

in your native El Salvador.
At 39, I've lived a year longer
than you.

I haven't smoked a cigar
in two years, but now I'm hooked again,
puffing on a Nicaraguan stogie,
55¢, the last of a bundle found
in a little tobacco shop on 38th.
"The guy who sold them
stopped coming around," the owner said.
"They blew up the factories in their revolution,"
he shrugged. What he meant was "How stupid
can you get?"

"I'm glad they did, I'm glad
they had their revolution," I answered back.
"The Somozas were monsters—they bled the country dry!"

He winced. I felt ashamed
before his reddening face as he shrugged again.
"I got them on a deal," he said,
almost apologizing, wary
of offending a new customer.

2.

All I know about Roque Dalton
is what I read in *Social Text*—
a brief biography, eleven pages of poems.
And the little book of his writing
published by the Curbstone Press of Connecticut,
Poetry & Militancy in Latin America.
One claims that "while he was in jail
under sentence of death, an earthquake
destroyed the cell walls, allowing him to escape."
Not a bad beginning for a myth. For a middle-class boy
brought up in Jesuit schools—
miracle in the service of the Revolution!
I sat in those schools myself
and soaked up the holy stories
of the gentle Christ who fed the multitudes
with a few loaves and fishes,
the Christ they couldn't kill.
I wonder if the guard returned
after the earth had split open
to find that Dalton had vanished,
the guard who asked for the souvenir poem,
the way the disciples returned to find
the tomb of Jesus—empty.

3.

I have never been locked in a cell,
waiting to be killed.
Smoking this Nicaraguan cigar
is the easiest thing in the world.
The "people" Dalton speaks of
so lovingly in one of his essays
are often hard for me to love.
When I find the splintered glass
of their bottles along my street
or hurry my wife past someone pissing
against the next door building
though the free toilets of the Port Authority
are clean and open a block away, I fly
into a rage. In the safety of my apartment
the ugliest things within me smash
against the bars of their cage.
I don't know where I want the whores
and their tricks to go, screaming
all night in the parking lot
below our window. I think of buying
a little gun, a bee-bee gun, to shoot
and scare them away. I think of leading
men from our building
armed with baseball bats
into the parking lot at three a.m.
I am sick and angry to be woken
by crazed voices, monster radios,
the slamming car doors and racing engines
of people who don't live here.
Roque, you would point at me and say:
"Don't let your anger go out at the victims!
Take your baseball team over to Trump Tower

or the Museum of Modern Art, where Lissitzky
sits in the gift shop window, his genius reduced
to a matching cup and saucer!"

I know you're right, Roque, but sometimes
I don't care. I take my life in my hands
and tell the kid in the doorway:

"Do I go piss on the street where *you* live?"

I rant and stomp around the rooms,
frightening my wife as I carry on.

4.

Roque, you must have seen this, too.
The bum wrapped around his bottle of "Night Train,"
struggling to focus on the limousines
that speed to the Saturday matinee
at the Metropolitan Opera, tickets
\$38 \$45 \$75
government-subsidized art
that only the rich can afford.
You must have seen a bum like this
shaking his head over where they get the money
when 55¢ in change
is tough enough to scrounge.
In these hard days
even the liquor store on Ninth and 44th
has closed its doors.
The painted brick flakes away
where the winos used to drowse
out of the sun, where one
demanded a quarter
to hail me a cab.
I told him I worked
damn hard for what I made.
Who can dig down
in his pocket every time?
And what can poetry buy
in the world of pennies
and limousines . . .
You can't change much
by giving your change away.
Or only for a little while,
a little sleep in the shade
of an empty storefront
as the shadows of the limousines whoosh by.

5.

My second cigar tastes as good
as the first. I wonder if Dalton
smoked cigars, these sweet Nicaraguan cigars,
and the earth-dark cigars of Cuba
where he lived in exile for a time.
As I have been in exile.
From the people I seem powerless to know
or help, or sometimes even feel compassion towards,
in their violence, in their sadness,
in the strangeness they must feel
as I walk their streets, smoking
my big cigar, trying to pass them by
invisibly, like this smoke from my mouth
drifting into the air.

6. Coda

The poem should have ended there.
That last dramatic image as the smoke

of language eddies from my cigar.

On a note

of liberal despair, informed by concern.
Leaving in your mind the image
of a man, intelligent, sincere
if a bit naive, struggling to find
the truth.

The truth—three months later—
looks like this:

Confusion! Confusion
over who “the people” are. Confusion
bred by the satisfaction of thinking,
even for a moment, that those I see
in the streets *are* “the people.”

I am no subway vigilante. Inside me

there is love—and so much anger!

What do I know of these faces in the street,
the ones I fear, the ones I see my face in?
The faces of color, or speaking another language,
hurrying their way to work, terrified also,
all of us faces turned down or turning away in fear.
What do I know except these confused ideas
I spout in the purity of my hopelessness,
wondering in my heart if anything can be done.
We can't take up the cross,
it's too slippery with blood.
Roque, do we take up the gun
the way you did?
And once we learn to use it
can it ever be put down?

—Bill Zavatsky

Book Reviews

Ed Smith, **FANTASYWORLD** (Cold Calm Press, 1173 N. Ardmore (#4), Hollywood, CA 90029; \$8.00)

Jack Skelley, from **FEAR OF KATHY ACKER** (Illuminati, 8812 Pico Blvd., Suite 203, Los Angeles, CA 90035; \$1.50)

Amy Gerstler, **EARLY HEAVEN** (Ouija Madness Press, P.O. Box 42212, San Francisco, CA 94142; \$4.95)

James Krusoe, **ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPOQRSTUVWXYZ** (Illuminati, 8812 Pico Blvd., Suite 203, Los Angeles, CA 90035; \$4.95)

David Trinidad, **MONDAY MONDAY** (Cold Calm Press, 1173 N. Ardmore (#4), Hollywood, CA 90029; \$5.00)

If you think being a poet in New York is tough, imagine the plight of Los Angeleans. For, unlike Manhattan, L.A. is a city without a literary history. Writers of note tend to pass through town, toss off a screenplay or two, then head for chillier pastures (i.e. the East Coast). There's never been a Los Angeles School of Poetry and, thus, no Ashbery, O'Hara, Elmslie, Koch or Schuyler for younger poets to mass around. Los Angeles writers tend to feel particularly isolated, unread, ignored. The area's few poetry “gurus” are self-styled entrepreneurs whose powers rarely extend beyond city limits.

At best young poets create factions, usually based around a particular magazine. Todd Baron's *Issue*, Clayton Eshleman's *Sulfur*, Beyond Baroque's *MAGAZINE*, Paul Vangelisti's *Boxcar* and Peter Schneider's *Illuminati* spring to mind. But just try to find copies west of the Rockies. Only *Sulfur* is widely distributed and its artistic focus is hardly what I'd call representative. Besides, five of the city's best poets have never and most likely *will* never grace *Sulfur*'s pages, not that they're banging down Eshleman's door. *Au contraire*.

Perhaps the least likely to find his name on the Contents page is Ed Smith. His work won't fit neatly into a standard poetic tradition. It is literally unschooled. No traces of Ashbery, Bly, Rimbaud or Neruda here. I'm tempted to term Smith a folk artist (folk poet?), but that doesn't say how accomplished his poetry's beauty is. The poems in his first book *FANTASYWORLD* are blunt (“punk” to you

label freaks) yet reach lyrical heights worthy of young Wieners or mature Schuyler. They're biting, off-handedly funny and wracked with incredible mood swings—alternately glib and intensely sad, and so resigned to their what-the-fuck tone that they achieve a kind of mastery. My personal favorite is one of his briefest: “Tonight I aspire to drunkenness / And to a long swim straight out from the shore / And tonight I'll sleep / In the same fetal position / that I'm standing in now.”

Not content with having written one of the great love poems of the decade (“Disco Paradiso”), nor with having edited the spunky, controversial, late-great *BARNEY: A Modern Stone-Age Magazine*, Jack Skelley recently embarked on a novel he calls *Fear of Kathy Acker*. It's a work of crazed energy, recalling both William Blake's visionary stylistic regenerations and Acker's inexhaustible sex drive. The rhythms are part electro-funk, part punk overdrive, part political speak-ease, part symphonic. In Skelley's world everything and everyone is volcanic. Cities become movie backlots (“Life is terminally insincere. A TV docudrama is more realistic than this Nation run by Networks.”) Celebrities become saviors (“Get out of my way because I AM BILLY IDOL! . . . I'm bigger than King Kong and I died on the twin towers of the World Trade Center . . . and now I stand upon the globe, surround it, cradle and suckle the earth with my purplish glow of post-nuclear paranoia.”) Women are usually objectified, which would be a serious infraction were not Skelley continually admitting to and explicating his emotional shortcomings at the same time he lionizes his fantasies. This is a sharp, often spectacular piece limited only by an unfortunate title. It does the work a disservice no matter how many sets of quotation marks Skelley intends us to imagine are surrounding it.

Amy Gerstler is one of the most extravagantly talented young poets in the country. Her fourth collection *Early Heaven* is so good that the adjective “promising” can safely be put to sleep. This is mature, original work which holds its own with the best of contemporary verse. Gerstler has forged an impeccable voice whose hesitancy is so clearly central to her concerns that it approaches the holy. Her poems tend to be monologues spoken either by a figmen-

tary, androgynous "I" or by a specific character (Joan of Arc, Thomas Edison and Madame Curie make guest appearances). These "speeches" are generally soft-spoken and shy but inlaid by the poet with exquisite turns of language which refract the poems' emotional content, revealing to the reader areas of feeling and intelligence their "speakers" cannot or will not expose. It's a fascinating *modus operandi* and the effect is richer than could be expected from poems so cool to the ear.

James Krusoe's fifth book represents yet another turn in this remarkably flexible poet's career. Though largely unknown outside Los Angeles, Krusoe is one of Southern California's most revered and influential figures. His work has left its mark on an array of younger writers including the four discussed here. Krusoe, who's forty-ish, writes in a becalmed voice seemingly influenced in equal parts by Eastern European poetry, Japanese haiku and New York School. His humor, which has grown increasingly dark over the years, gracefully undercuts a rich emotional subtext, beveling his poetry's tendency toward direct expression. *ABCDEFGH* . . . is his most playful work to date. Using the alphabet as a point of departure, he's built a sequence of twenty-six prose poems, each of whose first word begins with a different letter. It's interesting to compare the work with Kenward Elmslie's similar *Alphabet Work*. Whereas Elmslie's pieces achieve their power through a boisterous, hyper-active vocabulary, Krusoe's various effects are imbedded in a rangy, soft-shoe of a speech pattern which is alternately silly, soothing, sparkly, melancholy and, unfortunately, unexcerptable. But, on my word of honor, this is a lovely, stirring book.

Finally, David Trinidad's second book *MONDAY MONDAY* finds him abandoning the mythical undertones which informed his earlier poems for a more clearly stated style. This is lyric poetry at its deceptively plainest. Gone are the heady, thick-and-fast metaphors he once leaned heavily on. In their place are columns of attuned conversation which evoke the poet's characteristic mixture of high romanticism and acute disappointment with far more expertise. Trinidad has developed a non-glare technique which deftly displays his emotional turbulence while leaving the formal hows and whys omnipresent. The result is a true contemporary beauty. ("That vast dance floor was the empty universe / I presumed mine alone when I was merely eighteen / and utterly inaccessible to almost any one of many / made handsome only amidst those rotating lights.")

—Dennis Cooper

NEW FACES OF 1952 by Maxine Chernoff. Ithaca House, 108 North Plain Street, Ithaca, New York, 14850. \$6.00.

An evening with *New Faces* promises a night on the town filled with high satire lampoons of contemporary expectations; moments of tenderness (not cloyingly so) and warmth; double-edged encounters with the jolt of an occasional exquisite curse; all held together by Maxine Chernoff's elegant, masterful and musical productions of words.

"Lost and Found" kicks off the collection with the trademark with which readers of Chernoff's previous collections *A Vegetable Emergency* (Beyond Baroque, 1978) and *Utopia TV Store* (Yellow Press, 1979) have come to expect from the poet: "I am looking for the photo that would make all the / difference in my life. It's very small and subject to fits of / amnesia. . ."

Later, a stunning segment of "Machinery" explores relationships between children, parents, death, birthplaces and transportation and concludes: "No / greater honor could come to a child of the 20th century / than to arrive in a 747, 39,000 feet above the earth."

Sometimes responses to confrontations with everyday absurdity lead to indictments—the exquisite curse—like an old friend's grandmother so adroit at verbal dismemberment of conspicuous indulgence in human folly we would forego an afternoon's hanging out at Dairy Queen just to hear her cut people down around the kitchen table. That grandmother would have appreciated lines like: "'Inventing the enemy,' you said in the / mirror. An optimist, she labelled you artistic. The other / choice was worse." (from "Biographia Literaria") and, "If your ideas had / form like a milk bottle left on the porch, you'd take / them in a closet and caress them. You wouldn't be / discreet. You'd understand the implications but finally / wouldn't care. After all, this is a poem about love." (from "Spring").

Happily, several numbers here also lead to affectionate moments and irresistibly so, as in "Lost and Found"'s "Come home / to me, you little fool, before I find I can live without / you."; or "For Daily Use"'s "Short hours in which to learn / the discreet balance of breath, / what lies beyond it, / and what whispers 'hemisphere' / always in autumn."

It is love of language that serves as common thread throughout *New Faces*. When Maxine Chernoff says, "Words are the finest toys," in "Sotto Voce" she does so within her own context of ample evidence; when she asks "Who needs an alphabet with three O's, a tangled birth, a troika of woes?" she does so convincingly; and when she implores "Please world, / no kibosh today. Allow me / my tattle, my xyxter, my *libeccio*" she makes a motion that cannot be overruled.

The volume itself is exquisitely rendered. Glen Baxter's cover drawing tickles appropriately; and as Kenward Elmslie suggests in back cover endorsement, *New Faces of 1952* is rare work, worthy of mention in same breath with Kenneth Koch's classic *Thank You*—a book to be missed only under penalty of acute sense of loss.

—Richard Huttel

NARCISSISM AND DEATH by Mariarosa Sciauzero. An Open Book, Station Hill Press. \$8.50 (paper).

This book bears its tendencies like a goddess. This book bares its tendencies like a vamp. We are talking about posture, and then about pose. We would acknowledge that they are indistinguishable in this book. It has become increasingly difficult to separate the posture from the pose as we have come to this century and as it has increasingly gotten away from us.

We have the tradition of the poet maudit. This is the writer who already proudly wears patches of her death. Her rages are always therefore in excess of life, in excess of what it demands and in excess of what it permits. It is an old tradition that would not much matter if there were not always new youths. It takes a stiff clear mind to actually grow up.

There were books before this book: Breton's *Nadja*, Rimbaud, Denton Welch's account of his illness, Blanchot and Bataille, Kathy Acker. There is on the back of this book a face which does not resemble the faces of the authors of

those other books as much as the writing sometimes resembles the writing in those and other books. There is, though, a freshness at work behind the resemblances, behind the writing's efforts to resemble itself, and the writing is always clear. The deceptions are evident.

We might wish to ask why fiction so assembles its efforts to resemble something true. We applaud it when it acknowledges its failures or admits the absurdity of that quest. But we do not want fiction to laugh at or with itself, because that takes the quickness out of life.

Only a feeling for brooding intensities that are passionate creates the varieties of approach within this book. The approaches are seductive and without reasoning. Such passion is a function of taking life forcefully with the outer portions of one's self, and quietly, almost timidly, with those inner. In the area between these two regions the imagination strains out of proportions. Naturally it would.

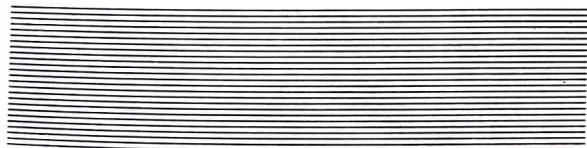
The book is written with simplicity. It is the engaging simplicity with which a child invents a story. A distinction between persons is made only to advance the narrative, and not because the author has invented more than one of them. It is an opaque simplicity. Nothing is seen beyond it and yet through it the eye sees that it is seeing things manifest. At times it is the simplicity of a natural event and at times the simplicity of one supernatural. It is the simplicity of the telling that washes these two of all differences and produces the precisely fantastic.

The approach to the material in this book, where approach and material are identifiable but inseparable, is broadly loose, slightly playful. We could not with seriousness say that this book is involved with truth, but it exhibits nonetheless and throughout a refreshing veracity. It is as if we were to judge each sentence in the light of reason and find them verifiable in our dreams. Sue Coe's illustrations in this book share that quality. "I cannot sleep at night."

We are impotent in the face of this book if we ask about it the easy questions. Is it a novel? Is it a collection of stories? Is it autobiography? Is it pornography? Is it literature? Is it sincere? Is it a hoax? Does the author exist? Who are these people? Why are we reading this? And it is our habitual impotence, our longing for impotence, against which it mitigates.

And we are impotent if we ask of it the usual questions. It is something we realize we were capable of not quite thinking, here in the modern West.

—Alan Davies

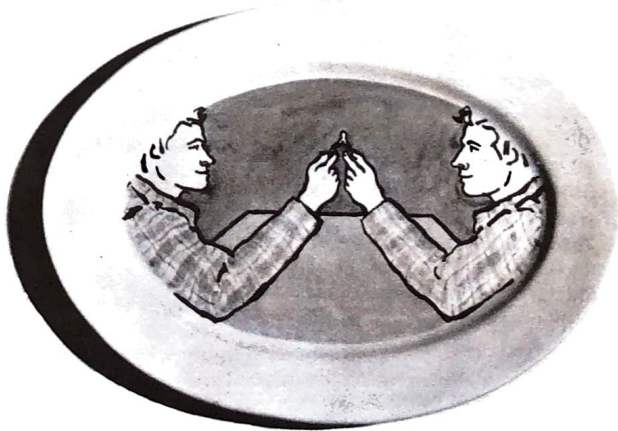


HOME PLATE. An exhibition by George Schneeman. The Red Studio, 301 Church Street, New York. Closed.

George Schneeman's show at the Red Studio is beautifully arranged, with diverse works in many mediums: ceramics, collages, frescoes, furniture and drawings routed into wood and then painted. The work includes platters, vases, bowls, lamps, planters, flower pots, cups, tiles, towel racks, clocks, mirrors, cabinets and tables.

Facing out toward the rest of the store is the garden wall on which two curtains are routed in wood. These curtains paraphrase the motif of curtains found in the 6th Century Ravenna mosaics of the palace of Theodoric. They don't hang as actual curtains would drape, but are instantly recognizable as nothing other than curtains; they borrow flavor and symbol from the Byzantine and employ a striking use of flat color. On either side of the church along the whole extension of the nave is a procession of male saints headed by the Emperor Justinian, and the Empress Theodora with her retinue, all in lavish dress and full ornamentation. They are bold, these people of the mosaics; they have great dignity and simplicity. Mr. Schneeman suggests they would make superior murals on the Lower East Side. Like the artist's own portraits, they are monumental and dwell in another dimension outside the world which is immediately seen around us. At first they seem stiff and rigid with their frozen faces. A vase featuring Peter Schjeldahl as Hamlet shows him in an uplifting light in which we do not know him.

Inside the garden wall, the repeated use of certain objects again suggests symbols, but ones loved for their domestic familiarity: the checkered shirts, the stockings hung up on a wire hanger to dry with a thin colored thread running through the mesh of the nylon; things loved for their shape. On the napkin rings and some of the bowls and lamps are words belonging to Shakespeare, Leopardi, Auden, Pavese, Dante and Ted Berrigan. These words are like memories, and lie here like riddles. They are described by the artist as "random thoughts," words written as if blown by the winds of fate.



There is the tremendous energy to the many naked, amorous, playful figures who came cascading through the space on bowls and clocks or cavorting along the shelf frieze. They are primitive in a way which adds to their vitality, their sense of frolic and fun. With too many people packed into it, the tiny room can appear claustrophobic, but actually a great deal of the pleasure it affords is derived from its coziness, its intimacy with the individual. These works are made for use and not just sale. The addition of flowers to the vases or plants to the pots is a natural and welcomed extension to their vibrancy and resonance.

The collages look a little nostalgic; they are derived from drawings in comics, magazines and dust jackets, some dating back to the 20's. However, they are not sentimental. They are emotional like poems, only written in a secret language. Often it is hard to distinguish the various parts which

make up the whole. There is the by-now-familiar raised arm and baton of the Dutch Cleanser girl; then a mess of legs, some belonging to the cow, one coming from a green fringed skirt, above perhaps a holster. Everything is cut into by a large spoked wooden wheel and the right side of the work, which is a fresco, looks like an old, ripped, brown photograph with a brick wall and a chest of drawers in the corner.

Then there is the alphabet series, whose letters seem as if they might offer a clue to the mystery of each conundrum. D is for dead drunk on the railway tracks, N for a yard full of Dutch tulips(?), L for a pack of Lucky Strikes and X is missing altogether.

Giotto was a friend of Dante, Simone Martini of Petrarch. George Schneeman, who lived for eight years in Italy, is in this tradition, a friend and collaborator of New York poets.

The Tuscany landscapes in the frescoes are exact and particular memories of places, painted out in the sun Cezanne style. The colors used are very pale; "often everything is very pale when you go outside." They make no play to capture our sense of the dramatic through coloring or techniques. The ceramics of the shirts are beautiful in their bulk as if some Greek god lingered inside them. George Schneeman's work celebrates the innate life of all individual things: joy.

—Helena Hughes

Tell Me About It for George Schneeman

Anything suffused with light
soft brown hair & eyes, soft
yet unflinching in a hundred portraits
Anything sitting, walking, musing in light blue
or sturdy in plaids, anything with lips
You are a winner of fantasies in paint,
they come to you in pretty detail
ordinary spending, essential things
A spool of thread, anything . . .
Anything is possible with an eye
to poetry, Dante spilling across
a platter, rain of blood, of tears
manifesting the Heartbroken-You
I hear you say "It's so beautiful"
puff on a cigar and make a sudden
gesture in the guest's direction
an articulation of generosity
or argumentation, it's this
way, no it's *this* way, George
Are you kidding me?
Yes, and it's not the first, final,
middle, between, over & above,
outside the head, inside the studio,
behind the eyes time you or I mean
Why don't you drop by more often?
There's no time not to be on
the job, abrasive, I tell myself
as if I'm you, you the terrifying
example of discipline, stubbornness
workmanship, to be a maker of

something, would I were as productive
as you. I made a baby!

I made dinner I made a motion
I made a book But I didn't
paint anyone's eyes or put animals
on delicate cups or libertines
on vases I didn't show my whole
sex *ever* like *that!*

I didn't grow up in Minnesota
or live in Siena under a lush
sun, close to the ground
but came organically out of a city,
another hybrid, home-grown
Our mothers die & we are suddenly
finite as if everything that
extended beyond us, in front of us
is now a dream. This is a dream
of great spaces, endless dimensions
& empty frescoes & canvases
& pages & a big sore swelling, —
Here come the tears again —, heart
The mothers were so spunky!
I am a naughty girl again &
you are the cantankerous son
of the-woman-at-rest
Unease to plunk it down,
embarrassed by richness
how to say anything like Heh
I just found out something
Ok so Tell me about it
Anything that in paint speaks
around a situation, all the circles
Anything is didactic if I speak
this way, seeming to be casual
as if I just wandered over myself
to pick something up, drop off
a book, someone's birthday,
a dinner, rare footage on TV,
I slept in your same room
between hospital visitings
You were right there, there
you are, I don't have to ask
Help me lug something large
up the stairs, help me be
practical, I don't have to ask
do I? I watch you pedal
down St. Mark's Place
Anything tense between
a double image, you & me,
is going on, split so we
can touch noses, forefingers
tease & go away again
I am the messenger
& you are the little god
You make the world happen,
make the small people dance,
ride bicycles, kiss & fuck forever
circumambulating a clock,
a vase, anything . . .
like angels in the gorgeous sky
or denizens of hell
You do this you have to

—Anne Waldman

Books Received

The Mama Poems by Maurice Kenny (\$5.00) and *Poems at the Edge of Day* by John Brandi (\$4.50). White Pine Press, 73 Putnam St., Buffalo NY 14213.

Pomegranates by Bobby Byrd. Tamarisk Press, 319 S. Juniper St., Philadelphia PA 19107. \$5.00.

Aegean Doorway by Miriam Sagan. Zephyr Press, 13 Robinson St., Somerville MA 02145. \$3.95.

Fontana's Mirror by David Matlin. Boss Books, Box 370, Madison Square Station, New York NY 10159. \$6.00 (institutions \$9.00).

I Brake for Delmore Schwartz by Richard Grayson. Zephyr Press, \$4.95. (I brake for Richard Grayson; this collection of short fiction is terrific.—T.D.)

Penetrating Laughter: Hakuin's Zen and Art by Kazuaki Tanahashi. The Overlook Press, \$16.95.

A Bunch of Keys by Mutsuo Takahashi, translated by Hiroaki Sato. The Crossing Press, Trumansburg NY 14886. \$6.95.

The Map of Dusk by Angus MacLise. SZ Press, 321 W. 94th St., New York NY 10025.

All The News by Mark Pawlak. Hanging Loose Press, 231 Wyckoff Street, Brooklyn NY 11217. \$4.00.

Inside the Volcano: Artists Tour of Nicaragua 1984 (Artists Tour Publications, 551 63rd Street, Oakland CA 94609. n.p.i.)

Night-ride by Lee J. Richmond. HPC, New York NY. n.p.i.

New Directions 48. New Directions, \$9.95. (Codrescu, McClure, Michaux, Paul Hoover, others)

Harum Scarum by Keith Abbott (\$8.95) and *How to Be Modern Art* by Trevor Winkfield and Ron Padgett. The Coffee House Press, c/o Book-slinger, 213 East Fourth St., St. Paul MN 55101.

What Shall We Do Without Us? The Voice and Vision of Kenneth Patchen. Afterword by James Laughlin. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco. \$12.95.

The Reagan Psalms by A. D. Winans. Integrity Times Press, 118 Laidley Street, San Francisco CA 94131. \$6.95.

Singular Voices: American Poetry Today. Edited by Stephen Berg. Avon Books, \$9.95. (*American Poetry Review's* fave-raves contribute a poem each, then an essay about the poem. I think that may be all you need to know.—T.D.)

Wild History. Compiled by Richard Prince. Tanam Press, 40 White St., New York NY 10013. \$10.95. (New writing from the downtown gang: Tillman, Acker, DeJong, Mueller, G. Indiana, etc.)

Deep Within the Ravine by Philip Schultz. Viking Press, \$14.95. (Lamont Poetry Selection for 1984.)

Blast 3. Edited by Seamus Cooney; co-edited by Bradford Morrow, Bernard Lafourcade and Hugh Kenner. Black Sparrow, \$20 paper, \$30 cloth. (Massive compendium in honor of Wyndham Lewis, to which has been appended uneven work by Black Sparrow's list of writers. The Lewis portion is dynamite; great color plates.)

13½ Poems for the Ideal Woman by Charles Haseloff. Pocketbook Press, P.O. Box 459, New York NY 10013. \$3.00.

Raygun and the Hostages by Jeff Poniewaz. Inland Ocean Press, 4540 S. 1st St., Milwaukee WI 53207.

The Casting of Bells by Jaroslav Siefert. Trans. by Paul Jagasich and Tom O'Grady. The Spirit That Moves Us Press, P.O. Box 1585, Iowa City IA 52244. \$7.00. (The only English translation of the poems of the 1984 Nobel laureate from Czechoslovakia.)

War All The Time: Poems 1981-1984 by Charles Bukowski. Black Sparrow Press, \$8.50.

Redo by Lyn Hejinian. Salt-Works Press, RFD 1 Box 141, Grenada MS 38901. \$4.50.

A Life in Common by Mitchell Goodman. Dog Ear Press, Box 143, S. Harpswell ME 04079. \$5.95.

Of China and of Greece by Greg Kuzma (\$7.00); *A Man Jumps Out of an Airplane* by Barry Yourgrau (\$7.00); *The German Friend* by Serge Gavronsky (\$7.); and *Selected Poems and Reflections on the Art of Poetry* by Jules Supervielle (\$7.00). All from Sun Press, 347 West 39th Street, New York NY 10018.

Four by Keith Waldrop: *The Space of Half an Hour*, Burning Deck, 71 Elm Grove, Providence RI 02906, \$4.00; *The Quest for Mount Misery and Other Studies*, Turkey Press, 6746 Sueno Road, Isla Vista CA 93117, n.p.i.; *A Ceremony Somewhere Else (passage work)*, Awede, Brita Bergland, Box 376, Windsor VT 05089; *The Ruins of Providence*, Copper Beech Press, Box 1852 Brown University, Providence RI 02912.

A Voice in Three Mirrors by Mary Low. Surrealist Editions, Black Swan Press, 1726 West Jarvis Avenue, Chicago IL 60626. \$4.95. (Mary Low has been a practicing Surrealist for 52 years and an associate of Breton, Peret, and Tanguy. Her volume of reportage from the Spanish Civil War was praised by Orwell; later she helped overthrow the Batista regime in Cuba. She's been living stateside for 21 years; it's nice to see her back in print.—T.D.)

The Writing Workshop, Volume 2 by Alan Ziegler (\$9.95) and *Personal Fiction Writing* by Meredith Sue Willis (\$9.95); both from Teachers and Writers Collaborative, 5 Union Square West, New York NY 10003.

Over All the Obscene Boundaries: European Poems and Translations by Lawrence Ferlinghetti (\$5.95) and *Selected Poems* by Kenneth Rexroth, edited by Bradford Morrow (\$7.95); both from New Directions.

Magazines Received

HUBRIS #3 (Box 1543, Concord NH 03301). Ernest Robson, Will Inman, Richard Kostalanetz, others. n.p.i.

RIVER STYX 15. Big River Association, 7420 Cornell, St. Louis MO 63130. \$3.50. (Interviews with Margaret Atwood and Carolyn Forché; work by A. Rich, A. Clampitt, H. Frankenthaler, Atwood, others. A Women's Issue.)

KALEIDOSCOPE 8. UCPSH, 326 Locust St., Akron OH 44302. \$5.50/yr (2 issues). ("A literary art magazine by persons with disabilities.")

OPEN 24 HOURS. C/o Chris Toll, 702 Homestead St., Baltimore MD 21218. \$3.00. (Baltimore lit-scene-makers and friends: Toll, Nasdor, Codrescu, others)

RAMBUNCTIOUS REVIEW 1. 1221 West Pratt, Chicago IL 60626. \$2.50.

BC MONTHLY. November 1984. (Opla L. Nations, others). No address, n.p.i.

FIVE PLUS FIVE. Low-Tech Press, 30-73 47th Street, Long Island City NY 11103. \$5.00. (Visuals and words: Ken Tisa, Peter Cherches, Jennifer Nostrand, Tom Ahern.)

AHNOI 2:1. C/o Cheryl Fish, 201 W. 21st St., New York NY 10011. n.p.i. (Alice Notley, Jeff Wright, Lewis Warsh, James Ruggia, others. Nice work.)

MISSISSIPPI REVIEW 37-38. Center for Writers, Southern Station Box 5144, Hattiesburg MS 39406. \$5.50. (A play by Octavio Paz based on Hawthorne's *Rappacini's Daughter*, Yves Bonnefoy, an interview with Max Apple.)

PARNASSUS: POETRY IN REVIEW. Fall/Winter 1983, Spring/Summer 1984. \$7.00. (Paul Schmidt translations of Mayakovsky and Khlebnikov, David McDuff on Akhmatova, Di Piero on Breyten Breytenbach, more.)

THE PARIS REVIEW. 92 (\$5.00) and 93 (\$7.00). 45-39 171 Place, Flushing NY 11358. (Issue 93 has an Anne Waldman Canzone in memory of Ted Berrigan.)

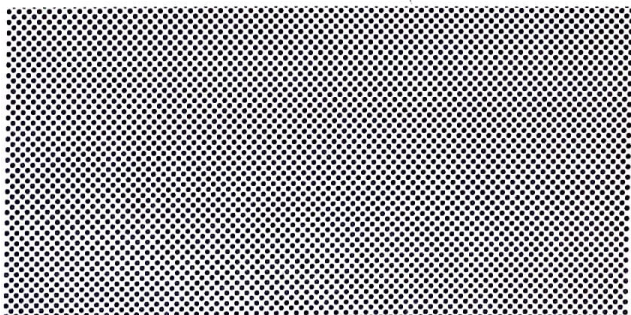
CRAZYHORSE 27. \$4.00. Dept. of English, U. of Arkansas at Little Rock, Little Rock AR 72204.

MISSISSIPPI MUD 30. 1336 S.E. Marion St., Portland OR 97202. \$2.75.

NEW LEAVES REVIEW 12. 41-50 48th St., Sunnyside NY 11104. \$2.00. (Nathan Whiting, Barbara Holland, Tuli Kupferberg, Bru Dye, others.)

I WANT A WIFE

A staged reading of Jane DeLynn's play "I Want a Wife" will be presented at Club Chandelier, 120 Avenue C (at East 8th Street), on Sunday, March 10 at 5 p.m.



This Month's Readers

Your poetry hosts and hostesses: Eileen Myles and Patricia Jones on Wednesdays, Chris Kraus and Marc Nasdor on Mondays.

Monday, March 4: **Rodger Kamenetz** and **Nina Fonoroff**. Rodger Kamenetz's latest collection is *Nympholepsy*. His work has appeared in *Shenandoah*, *Grand Street*, *Antioch Review*, and elsewhere. Nina Ponoroff is a filmmaker. Her most recent works, *Big Story* and *Some Phases of an Empire*, explore found speech and music and found images.

Monday, March 11: **Jaime Manrique** and **Gerrit Henry**. Jaime Manrique is the author of *Colombian Gold* and the forthcoming *Soledad*, both novels. A native of Colombia, he is also a poet, translator and film critic. Gerrit Henry's poems have appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *Poetry*, *Z*, and elsewhere. His art criticism has been published in *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, *Art News*, and other leading journals.

Monday, March 18: *Celebration and Book Party for Heresies #17*. Lenora Champagne and Patricia Jones host an evening of reading and performance to celebrate the latest issue of this leading feminist magazine.

Monday, March 25: **Carla Liss** and **The Beatoes**. Carla Liss writes short fiction; she is also a visual artist. Her work has appeared in *Benzene*, *Beauty and Critique*, and elsewhere. **The Beatoes** (formerly the Casio Cats) are Mark Harp and Chris Dennstaedt. They're "redneck rap" artists. Mr. Harp also has the highest pompadour in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

Wednesday, March 6: **Eileen Myles**, **Susie Timmons** and **Benjamin Weissman**. Eileen Myles is the Artistic Director of The Poetry Project, and author of three books of poems, including *Sappho's Boat*. Susie Timmons is the author of *Hog Wild!*, as well as one of the most entertaining readers in New York. Benjamin Weissman is a fiction writer and visual artist from L.A., where he co-directs the reading series at the Beyond Baroque Foundation.

Wednesday, March 13: **Bruce Andrews** and **Peter Schjeldahl**. Bruce Andrews is a poet and performance artist, as well as an influential critic of American poetics. He was co-editor of *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* magazine. His new book *Give Em Enough Rope* will appear from Sun & Moon Press this fall. Peter Schjeldahl is the author of five books of poems, most recently *The Brute*. A leading art critic, he has written regularly for the *New York Sunday Times*, *The Village Voice*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Art in America*, of which he is contributing editor.

Wednesday, March 20: **Steve Katz** and **Ann Rower**. Steve Katz has written ten books of prose and poetry, including the recent *Stolen Stories*. He lives, teaches and writes in Colorado. Ann Rower writes stories, songs and plays. Her stories have appeared in *BOMB* and *United Artists*; she collaborated with the Wooster Group on their play *LSD*; and her own first play *Arcadia General* will be produced this season by the Women's Interart Theater.

Wednesday, March 27: **Melvin Dixon** and **Luisa Valenzuela**. Melvin Dixon has brought a sense of the New to Afro-

American Literature. He is the author of *Change of Territory*. Luisa Valenzuela, a native of Argentina, is the author of *The Lizard's Tale*, and two other collections of short stories.

OTHER EVENTS THIS MONTH:

Saturday, March 3: **WORDS/MUSIC/WORDS**, a concert of works by composers working in collaboration with poets. Poets Tom Savage, Norman Macafee, Roland Legiardi-Laura, Simone Davis and Gina Maria Caruso join composers Russell Currie, Charles Porter, Monroe Cooper, Mark Di Palma and Arthur Maisel. Admission \$6. Time: 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 16: the **SECOND ANNUAL NEW YORK CITY POETRY CALENDAR BENEFIT**, for the monthly listing of poetry and literary events that is distributed free throughout the city. M.C.: Bob Holman; poets Alice Notley, Philip Schultz, Pedro Pietri, Grace Schulman and Simon Pettet will read. 8 p.m.; \$5.

Sunday, March 31: **ST. MARK'S TALKS** featuring Lyn Hejinian on "Language and Paradise."

All readings begin at 8 p.m. Admission \$3. Our Tuesday Night Writing Workshop led by Alice Notley and Friday Night Workshop led by Dennis Cooper continue; they're free, and begin at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

St. Mark's Church In-The-Bowery
THE POETRY PROJECT
10th St. & 2nd Ave.
NYC, NY 10003
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