

POETRY PROJECT

Excerpt from *Children of Light* by Robert Stone:

in which our protagonist Gordon Walker meets up once again with the ex-stunt man, Quinn.

(Reprinted with permission from the author. Originally published in hardcover by Knopf, *Children Of Light* will be issued in paperback this year by Ballantine.)

"S

HIT," QUINN SAID,

"Look at that."

"Does it make you paranoid?" Walker asked.

"Nah," Quinn said. "Makes me fucking cry, is what. Think that isn't kicks, man? That's the way to do your life, Gordo. Look the gray rat in the eye."

"I think we all do that anyway."

"We're little worms," Quinn said. "We piss and moan."

"So," Walker said, "I wonder if you can help me out."

Quinn crooned in a black-toned bass. "Got yo' weed, got yo' speed, got yo' everything."

"I'm on this fucking thing," Walker explained. "I'm doing a lot of blow and then I'm drinking. I have to dry out. I need downers."

Quinn screwed up his face and sounded a high-pitched comic cry.

"Ai, Gordo. I don't got them. I got blow. Speed. Sinsemilla. No downers. Except, you know, I could get horse but that's not for you in your frame of mind."

"Christ," Walker said. "I was hoping to break the cycle."

"Sorry, man."

"I'll have to wait until I get down there, then. I hope Siriwai's the doctor on this picture."

"Siriwai's got a Laetrile clinic now. I doubt he even works flicks anymore."

"Are you serious?"

"Absolutely. He's got this enormous spread in San Carlos Borromeo. He cures cancer."

Walker sat in silence, looking at the dun boards of the back porch.

"If you're gonna drive," Sam Quinn said, "it's not that much out of your way. I'm sure old man Siriwai could fix you up if he felt like it."

"I suppose," Walker said.

"Hate to send you away disappointed, Gord. Can I offer a drink? A fine line?"

"Oh sure," Walker said.

Quinn got up and went into the kitchen. Walker sat rocking, watching the hang gliders. When he looked down again, he saw a young red-haired woman coming from the barn, leading a little boy of about three by the hand. The young woman's eyes were fixed on Walker as though in recognition. As far as he knew, he had never seen her before. He rocked and watched the two of them approach.

"Hello," he said, when they had reached the porch, and directed a cordial smile at the child.

"You're Gordon Walker," the woman said.

Walker was not used to being recognized by name. The woman before him looked like a great many other women one saw in Los Angeles; she was attractive, youthful a bit beyond her years. She seemed like someone imperfectly recovered from a bad illness.

Her face broke into a sudden, quite marvelous smile.

"You don't remember me," she said. "I'm Lucy Brewer. I played the radical chick in *Stover*." The child, who had Lucy's auburn hair, shouted and pulled against her grip. "Woman, I should say. Of course, they cut a lot of me."

"Sure," Walker said. "Certainly I remember you." He had absolutely no recollection of Lucy Brewer and very little of the character. *Stover* had been the next thing to a doctoring job, done years before. "I have trouble with names," he assured her. "But I don't forget people."

"You had a cute little boy, I remember. You brought him out to the set."

"I have two," Walker said. "They aren't little anymore."

"Well, he was one cute little guy."

"He's an actor now," Walker told her.

"Another one of us, huh?" She was good-humoredly restraining her own little boy with both hands. The child broke away finally and ran off toward the corral.

"Speaking of cute kids," Walker said.

"We were having our nature walk. We saw the animals and the cemetery."



DAVID HUBBARD

1986-87 was the year of living dangerously for the Poetry Project. It's been raucous and bumpy, and we're 20 years young — still reinventing ourselves year after year. There are marvelous and even great things in store for April and May at the Poetry Project. Two of our major contemporary novelists, Robert Stone and Russell Banks, will give a joint reading on April 22... On an international scale, Chilean poet Nicanor Parra will grace St. Mark's Church with his presence on May 20, reading from his poems in Spanish while Allen Ginsberg reads the English translations. Maverick poet, publisher, and novelist Ishmael Reed completes this exciting bill. Last but not least, the Poetry Project will simultaneously combust the first week of May. Two hot events will be taking place: a fundraising benefit, *POET IN THE CITY: Actors in Support of the Poetry Project*, at The Public Theater scheduled for May 4, and the 20th Anniversary Symposium as a "gathering," a celebration of the Poetry Project's twenty years as a "community" of poets. The Symposium continues with four days of film, panels, readings, and more readings, culminating on Sunday afternoon, May 10. Enjoy our last issue for the season, and have a peaceful, lazy, wonderful, creative summer... Thanks again to all our friends, supporters, staff, and board members.

Jessica Hagedorn
Editor

Excerpts from *A Conversation with Robert Stone* by Charles Ruas:

from CONVERSATIONS WITH AMERICAN WRITERS by Charles Ruas; originally published in hardcover by Alfred Knopf, and in paperback by McGraw-Hill. Reprinted with permission of the author.

CR: Nabokov once said that he wrote for a small group of people, most of whom were friends. Who are your books written for?

RS: Somebody who is like me but obviously cannot be me. I have to trust the hypothetical reader. I am trying—in a good cause—to crowd people out of their own minds and occupy their space. This is an incantatory process. I want them to stop being themselves for the moment, I want them to stop thinking, and I want to occupy their heads. I want to use language and I want the language to reverberate and I want to use the white spaces between the lines. I want it to be the total experience that language can be. That's my ambition. I may not always do it, but that's what I'm trying for. If I didn't write for people, my proper business would be meditation. But my business is writing for people. To me, it's an act of affirmation.

CR: Faulkner once said that he owed his style to a fifth of bourbon.

RS: I cannot write intoxicated in any way. Somebody once asked Ken Kesey, "Well, you're a young man and you've written two major novels in a short period of time. How have you been able to do that?" He said, "Speed."

CR: Are the strange and frightening things you write about the things that you fear?

RS: It's a commonplace idea, isn't it, to be drawn to the things you fear. The reader and I will consider how strange and frightening things are and we will laugh about it, having no other alternative, and thus transcend it and assert the positive part of our humanity and perhaps make it less fearsome. If you read Beckett or see one of his plays, it seems as though he is pushing despair, but the strength of his insight leaves you feeling kind of elated and comforted by the fact that there is a sensibility that is aware and can go down to that depth and bring up pure art. I want to share that sense of the terrifying nature of things with my hypothetical reader and, as a result of our sharing it, produce a positive experience that gives rise to hope and transcendence. That's what I'm trying to do.

CHARLES RUAS is a writer and former arts director of radio station WBAI in New York City.

Poetry or Bust: Some Responses To Paul Schmidt's Manifesto on Performance

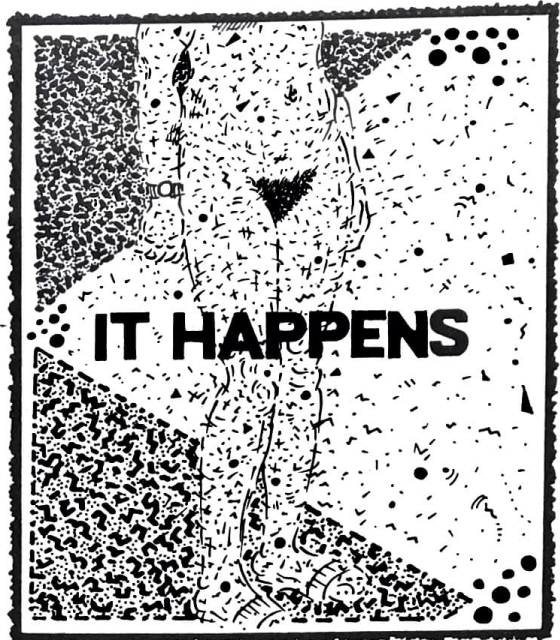
Dear Editor:

I read Paul Schmidt's "Manifesto" with interest. He seems to be responding to some real problems with some inadequate suggestions. It seems pointless to stop calling our performances "readings." Readings they are and shall probably remain. The rechristening of what used to be called "monologues" as "performance art" may have given monologists a temporary currency they might not otherwise have but it has only confused matters. Equally, it may be that certain poets who have only a few poems which they wish to perform time and again might benefit from memorizing those works. I suspect that Dylan Thomas performed this way. D.T. is also an example of the limitations of many of Paul's suggestions. The preponderance of rhythm and mellifluous speaking voice in poetry was used and abused by Dylan Thomas.

The idea of a whole workshop series devoted to learning how to use a mike seems ludicrous. We should all learn how to use this equipment. Still one session per poet or group of poets should suffice to do the trick. A full workshop in what used to be called "Interpretive Reading" might be quite useful. I took such a course in college with a very great teacher named Helen Roach. I too am bored by great poets who read their own poetry badly. These poets should have actors read their poetry for them. One of the most moving recitals of a poem I've ever seen or heard was in my teens when I saw Zero Mostel read Browning's poem "Fra Lippo Lippi" on TV. Although this event occurred almost twenty years ago, I still remember it vividly. It was the most effective combination of the skills of monologuing and poetry I have ever seen or heard. I suggest that only second-rate actors read poetry badly. I doubt that the narcissistic practice of reading to a mirror with a tape recorder on will help any of us acquire the skills of a Zero Mostel.

To be treated to the spectacle of a poet translator dramatist whose work I respect arguing against the publication of books is pathetic. Would he apply his own arguments to future publication of his own work? I doubt it. Books and magazines of poetry are as natural as performance. What's more, they allow a closer examination of the work being presented than will ever be possible at a performance. Could we have recordings of Blake, Donne, Shakespeare, and Browning but only if we sacrificed their books forever, I would never agree to such a deal. And commodity or non-commodity, neither would you, Paul, if you thought about it. Ultimately a poet must be judged by the words he writes, not by the skill he or she exhibits as a reader. Thus we have and shall continue to have books and magazines. If this caused MacLuhan and his intellectual offspring to roll over in their graves, then I welcome such an earthquake in Canada as long as I can hold onto my books and look forward to more books in the future both by living poets known to me and by those not yet known to me and still to emerge. If Schmidt is concerned about art as commodity, I suggest he direct his attention to the world of visual art. There the problems are much more pressing than with poetry. As for handwritten books, they would be mostly difficult, if not impossible to read, and thus useless. As a poet who has transcribed the notebooks of fellow poets, I can attest to this fact from personal experience. To have someone (Schmidt) argue that we should become acquainted with machines and comfortable with them at the beginning of his tract and then suggest that we give up the printing press as well is the kind of irrationality by which a thinker shoots him or herself in the foot.

To cite another example, judging from recordings William Carlos Williams was not a particularly good reader of his own work. He had a voice that was difficult to listen to. Still, few would argue that his poetic achievement was any the less



because of that. So much for "no voice, no poem." It's also a fact that James Schuyler, one of America's finest living poets, never gives readings. Is he any the less a poet for that? I would say, emphatically, no. The argument can just as easily be made that readings/performance are peripheral or tangential to the act/fact of poetry as that books and magazines of poetry are lifeless commodities. Still I would never argue for the abolition of readings or performances. They provide a useful forum for presentation of new work. I'd rather watch a great poet who reads well than listen to any rock singer. As recent rock music videos have proven, rock performances in and of themselves are pretty boring visually. There are other ways of setting poetry to music. I am sure that Paul Schmidt is aware of this also. To set up some kind of poetic inferiority complex to popular music is useless and absurd. Take two songs a day by Rorem and go on writing poetry. Still Schmidt's Manifesto is a response to real considerations and concerns which arise from the limitations of poetry as it exists today in our society. If his conclusions and suggestions are often wrong, still it is good to see them IN PRINT.

—Tom Savage
New York, NY

formance series in the city, & most diversely exciting too. Take pride, Poets! & perform.

—Bob Holman
New York, NY

Dear Editor:

Whether in a reading or in print, a REAL poet, an HONEST poet, a PURE poet should never resort to faddist presentations of her work like using microphones, practicing articulate/interesting renderings of the spoken word, etc. Otherwise, the reader/audience has no "work" to do.

And why would any editor worth her salt wish to make the newsletter more pleasurable for the eye to digest by resorting to typesetting and handsome layout & design, when the good old mimeo—with its inconsistent inkings that rub off on hands, wrinkled pages, smudged words, missing sentences, ugly typefaces and crowded layout—is still available? The farther away from the poet's brain cavity, from the privacy of the poet's own typewriter and inner mind, the words get, the more corrupt and distorted the words become. At least anemic vocalizations of poetry don't call so much attention to the fact that the poet is actually letting her words out into the world. And a mimeoed publication reassures the poet that only a small coterie of pals will be privy to her work, while simultaneously letting the world know that some things do indeed never change. It's a vote for stability in life. And, it's best to avoid the humiliation of publishing one's work through the same technology as used for classifieds and advertisements.

Also, it's immoral to change anything about poetry as it is handed down to us from the sixties (I'm talking about the 1860s of course). If an editor really cares about poetry, she will WANT to type stencils and run off and collate 5,000 copies by hand (or try and round up volunteers to help). It would give her a real sense of accomplishment and dedication to the craft.

In fact, I think it was a terrible mistake to ever reproduce the Ten Commandments on anything other than stone tablets in Hebrew, because now "God's" Word is accessible to any slob who can read. Pathetic! It was meant for us Chosen People alone. I pray the same fate will not befall my beloved poetry.

—Barbara Barg
Serious Artists Association
"This ain't no disco"

Dear Editor:

About Paul Schmidt's "Letter about Performance" Manifesto A-go-go: says it/like it/is! Learning poems by heart kicks up the energy, makes for walking poems, frees the eyes for visions/textual revisions, and answers the age-old "If the work is so important, why don't they take the time to learn it?"

But there are other answers: because of being too busy writing! is one. True, nobody on tv carries a script, but poets aren't actors and poems aren't situations. The text on paper must not become a barrier between the poet and audience, but the rooted shape that is transferred by voice to the ear's eye. Hopefully this is contradictory, because I agree with Paul that ways must be found to liberate the words, simple as black & white, and learning by heart does that. Use that paper! and attending Shelley Kraut's performance workshop to find out how. By heart, take heart! The influence of poetry and Project on performance is rarely mentioned, but when Ed Friedman began the Monday Night Poetry Performance Series in 1974, it was one of the first, and continues as the longest-running per-

Poetry Project, Inc. Staff:

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Jessica Hagedorn, Program Coordinator; Richard Elovich, Monday Night Series Coordinator; Elinor Nauen, The Poetry Project Play Series Coordinator; Deborah Artman, Program Assistant; Lori Carson & Robin Weintraub, Ace Volunteers; Sharon Shively & Fran MacManus, Interns

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The Poetry Project Newsletter is published bi-monthly, four times a year. Subscription rates are \$7/year for individuals and \$12/year for institutions. Checks should be made payable to The Poetry Project, Inc. All unsolicited materials will not be returned without a SASE. Address correspondence to: Poetry Project Newsletter, St. Mark's Church, 2nd Ave. & 10th St., NYC, 10003.

Interested advertisers contact Jessica, Deborah or Tim at 874-0810.

The Poetry Project receives generous support from these public and private agencies: The New York State Council on the Arts, New York Council for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, City of New York's Department of Cultural Affairs, The Jerome Foundation, Film/Video Arts, Inc. for Film Screenings, the Lila Acheson Wallace Fund, the Foundation for Contemporary Performance, the Mobil Foundation, Morgan Guaranty Trust Company, Bydale Foundation, Gramercy Park Foundation, New Hope, Inc., Apple Computer, Inc., Community Affairs Grant of Equipment for National Literary Network. Also, the members of the Poetry Project and individual contributors.

Friends Committee: Rudy Burckhardt, Paul Cummings, Peggy DeCoursey, Kenward Elmslie, Morris Golde, Ted Greenwald, Yvonne Jacqueline, Paul Schmidt.

Board of Directors: Bobbie Bristol, Thulani Davis, Tim Dlugos, Laurie Harris, Vicki Hudspeth, Greg Masters, Bob Rosenthal.

CELEBRATE OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY!

Yes, I want to be a member of the Poetry Project, Inc.

____\$50: Full Member, 1 Year ____\$75: 2 Year Membership ____\$150: Sponsor ____\$300: Benefactor
____\$500: Patron ____\$1000: Lifetime Member ____\$25: Supporting Member

No, I do not wish to be a member at this time, but here is my gift of \$_____.

Name _____

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All contributions are tax-deductible. Please make all checks payable to the Poetry Project, Inc.

One Year Membership (\$50): A season pass to all Poetry Project events—including the 20th Anniversary Symposium, all readings and performances, "talks" on poetics, writing workshops, and the New Year's Day Marathon Reading. Plus, a year's subscription to the Poetry Project Newsletter!

Two Year Membership (\$75): All of the above for two full years...at a savings of \$25.

Sponsor (\$150): Two passes to all Poetry Project events, a one-year subscription to the Poetry Project Newsletter, and a free copy of *The World Record*, an amazing two-record set of historic readings at The Poetry Project from 1969 to 1980.

Benefactor (\$300): Four passes to all Poetry Project events, a subscription to the Poetry Project Newsletter, a copy of *The World Record*, and grateful public acknowledgement.

Patron (\$500): Four passes to all Poetry Project events, a subscription to the Poetry Project Newsletter, a copy of *The World Record*, grateful public acknowledgement, and for this year only, a signed copy of Allen Ginsberg's *Collected Poems*.

Lifetime Membership (\$1000): All of the above benefits and gifts, and grateful public acknowledgement.

Special Supporting Membership (\$25): A subscription to the Poetry Project Newsletter and free admission to the New Year's Day Marathon Reading celebrating 20 years of poetry at St. Mark's Church.

Look Hear

MANUSCRIPTS WANTED... Theme: **THIRD WORLD...** *Pig Iron Magazine* wants Poetry, fiction, photos, and graphics about or derived from the

Third World experience. Translations accepted include original text. Deadline: Dec. 31, 1987. Payment: 2 copies and \$2. per published page. Submit to: *Pig Iron Press*, Box 237, Youngstown, Ohio 44501.

The semi-annual magazine *Notebook: A Little Magazine* of which one issue per year is devoted to Chicano and Latin American writing is soliciting manuscripts from Chicano writers. Submission deadline open. Send to: Yoly Zentella, Editor, *ESOTERICA*, Box 28B43, Los Angeles, CA 90026. (Include S.A.S.E.)

Poets will be allowed to enter three poems each in the American Poetry Association's major poetry contest starting in 1987... Grand prize is \$1000. Deadline: June 30 and December 31. Prizes awarded Aug. 31 and Feb. 28. Send poems to: American Poetry Association, Dept. CN-87, 250-A Potrero Street, Box 8403, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-8403.

NATIONAL POETRY WEEK is happening in the Bay Area, reports chairman Herman Berlant. From April 11-19 in San Francisco, events include readings by Robert Bly, Gary Snyder, Etheridge Knight, Judy Grahn, Philip Whalen, plus "the best talent of the Bay Area." Festivities are scheduled at the Fort Mason Center in San Francisco. For more info, call (415) 6213073.

The First Annual \$3000. PEN/ Jerard Fund Award is established; the prize honors "gifted American women writers of nonfiction." Deadline for submissions: May 15, 1987. For more info, contact John Morrone at (212) 334-1660.

From the New York Post, Dec. 31, 1986, a reader sent us this clipping: The City Council of Lowell, Mass. voted to erect a memorial to native son Jack Kerouac, "despite concerns that the project would idolize the late author's 'Beat Generation' lifestyle..."

Oswaldo Gomaraz has notified us that he is now proprietor and poetry series producer at *The Gas Station*, corner of Avenue B and 2nd Street. Readings will be held on Thursday evenings at 10pm in March and April... For more info and list of readers, call (212) 243-8302 or 874-1907.

Also, Paul Cummings sent a clipping from *Publisher's Weekly* (Jan. 30 issue) regarding a campaign to promote contemporary international poetry in Britain, including the "world's largest poetry readings on the concourse of the Waterloo Railway Station" scheduled for May 4-15.

Come help your local newspaper! The new *East Villager* is seeking writers. Especially needed are writers well-versed in issues affecting the various ethnic/political/cultural communities of our neighborhood. Please contact Editor Steven Vincent, 598-4993, or write the *East Villager*, 200 E. 3rd, NYC 10009.

PPINK EYE



(TOP L TO R) JOHN GIORNO, PEDRO PIETRI, ALLEN GINSBERG. (CENTER) NINA MARTIN & DANCERS, KENWARD ELMSLIE. (BOTTOM) CHAZZ DEAN AND JAMES SIENA.

Ask Jose Memories Are Made of This: The 13th Annual New Year's Day Benefit Photos by Alan Kikuchi

It was a dreary, stormy night, wet and wild...I didn't think anyone would bother showing up. All day long, caterer Irvi Sulit stirred her pots of chili in the Church's roomy kitchen, while a crew of four plus a three year-old named Paloma chopped vegetables, grated cheese, and generally kicked ass to have the food hot and ready by 7 p.m....

Larry Rivers & his swingin' 13th Street Band played while the audience filed in...and Chazz Dean & James Siena followed with some stunning footwork and witty wordplay. Performance artist followed poet followed performance artist followed musician followed dancer accompanied poet accompanied by Lounge Lizard followed by poet and 10 p.m. rolled around with Anne Waldman singing her lyrical rage and Allen Ginsberg direct, amiable, and relaxed...John Giorno howling, John Ash in a chair, those Downtown Divas acapella all over the stage...Bob Holman plain white rapping with Vito Ricci, and Pedro Pietri undoubtedly the hit of the evening, leading the audience in a singalong about his cheap shoes & blues...To my shock and glee, the evening ended at exactly 12:05 a.m., with actor/writer/cabaret artiste extraordinaire Nicky Paraiso posed at the grand piano, singing bittersweet lullabies and wishing us all goodnight...

Some folks whined: "Too much performance. Not enough poetry." Others wailed: "Seemed like one long nightclub act...Not enough poetry." Good golly, Miss Molly, it all seemed like one long poem to me: dissonant, visual, comic, compelling, silent, verbose...And how about that energetic, spunky crew of volunteers who pitched in with all their hearts and souls: Elizabeth, Charlie, Gregg S., Greg M., Marc, Ed, Robert, Robin, Vangie, Leslie, Lori, David & Patty, Howie, Sharon, Brian, Richard, Robbie, Michael Stiller's friend John, Gary, Tim, Deborah, and of course all the others who came through at the last minute. On a desolate, chilly night The Poetry Project managed to celebrate its New Year IN THE TRADITION, thanks to emcees, performers, AND poets alike who came through generously for the Project. NO HEART FEELINGS, everybody!!! HAPPY NEW YEAR, it's been fun while it lasted—ADIOS, AMIGOS y AMIGAS, from JOSE...

JOBS AT THE POETRY PROJECT

The Board of Directors of the St. Mark's Poetry Project will be receiving applications for the following positions:

Artistic Director

Monday Night Series Coordinator

Job descriptions and application procedures will be available at the Poetry Project office after Mar. 1. Applications are due April 15, 1987.

Sneak Preview!!! Plans are under way for the Poetry Project's special 20th anniversary fundraising benefit, *POET IN THE CITY: Actors in Support of the Poetry Project*, an evening of provocative poetry performance by some of today's most compelling actors... May 4th at the Public Theater...price and participants to be announced.

"Whole Intellectuals
Disgorge in Total Recall."
Allen Ginsberg Unscrews
the Locks on HOWL
Original draft facsimile,
transcript & variant versions,
fully annotated by author,
with contemporaneous
correspondence, account of
first public reading, legal
skirmishes, precursor texts &
bibliography
by Allen Ginsberg,
edited by Barry Miles

(Harper & Row, 1986)

Joel Lewis

I had not seen Allen in a few weeks & I had not heard Howl—it was new to me. Allen began in a small & intensely lucid voice. At some point, Jack Kerouac began shouting "GO" in cadence as Allen read it. In all of our memories no one had been so outspoken in poetry before—we had gone beyond a point of no return—and we were ready for it, for a point of no return.

Michael McClure

The public reading & subsequent publication of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* was the landmark literary event of the Fifties. No single work of the period generated as much simultaneous enthusiasm & loathing as did poet Ginsberg's initial offering to the general reading public. That *Howl* was on the winning end of a landmark obscenity trial didn't seem to hurt the work's popularity. It was parodied by Steve Allen & Louis Simpson, and *MAD* magazine's archetype beatnik always had a copy of the familiar black & white *City Lights* edition of *Howl* & *Other Poems* stuck in his back pocket.

By the beginning of the Vietnam War, *Howl* was recognized as one of the great social documents of Dissenting America. Cultural historians commonly read the work as a sort of Blakean apocalyptic manifesto, an indictment of the fake gods & petty money changers that ravage the world. And, for better or worse, *Howl* has become seen as the spiritual handbook for the beatniks, hippies, punks & related tribes of disaffected youth.

Despite *Howl*'s 'notoriety' & 'fame' it has, in the thirty years since its initial publication, been largely ignored by the critical & academic communities. Ginsberg has won a National Book Award & is a member of the American Academy of Arts & Letters, but his accomplishments are begrudgingly treated as an isolated occurrence, with little influence on the contemporary poetic canon. Although thousands of pages have been written about him, little of it is the serious textual exegesis that has been extensively performed on the works of contemporaries such as Robert Creeley & John Ashbery. And the most famous literary theorist of our period, Harold Bloom, has written Ginsberg off entirely, declaring him to be "beyond the reach of criticism."

The publication of Harper & Row's annotated *Howl* seems an attempt by Ginsberg to gain the serious consideration of the academy by providing a documentation of that landmark work. Contained within this volume are the following: the 'final' text of *Howl*, facsimiles of all extant drafts of the poem, an extensive section of the author's annotations, selected correspondence, documentation of the obscenity trial, a selection of the fullest possible reading of the text.

Such thorough presentations are usually associated with a poet's post-humous career; recent examples being the publication of the *Wasteland* manuscript & the ongoing publication of the Charles Olson Archives. Allen Ginsberg, no doubt foreseeing criticism of the volume, notes in his introduction that both Whitman & Wordsworth provided critiques of their own respective works. However, both of these authors wrote their clarifications concurrent with the publication of their texts. After thirty years of popular attention, the effect of an annotated *Howl*, whether intentional or not, is to fix a particular reading of the text by the author. Ginsberg, in this matter, may have benefited from the words of another of his men-



Michael McClure kissing his own mask being worn by Gregory Corso. Amsterdam, Holland, One World Poetry Festival, October '79.

BEAT REHEAT

tors, Ezra Pound, who introduced a volume of selected *Cantos* by stating: "I have made these selections to indicate the main elements in the *Cantos*. To the specialist the task of explaining them."

In this edition of *Howl*, Ginsberg has assumed the task of the specialist. The many draft versions of *Howl* offer an insight in the composition of the text. We follow Ginsberg as he begins *Howl* employing William Carlos Williams's triadic steps as a frame, then slowly shapes the poem into his revolutionary extension of Whitman's long strophes. These many drafts also point out that, despite Ginsberg's current prosodic stance of 'First Thought/Best Thought,' *Howl* is a deliberately plotted & crafted text—not the rant-spew that less discerning critics take the poem to be.

However, Ginsberg confuses matters by dividing the original draft into lines of verse marked either "A," "B," "C," or "D,"—the "A" lines concerning Columbia U. & Lower East Side days, the "B" lines relating to "the break of life between the womb of college days & the shock & alienation of entering the world..." & etc., etc. This sort of literalist approach to the text reduces the creative process to a nuts & bolts production line. As with the chariot in the Pali Buddhist text, *The Questions of Milanda*, it is not the combination of the wheel, axle & frame that make a chariot, it is the chariot as a concept. To place such roadmarks on the text limits the reader's ability to 'create' the text. Roland Barthes has noted: "We know that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend & clash." To refuse to recognize the text as a zone of 'play,' where the reader is free to pursue his or her own pleasure in the slippage between words & the multiplicity of meaning that a magisterial text like *Howl* can produce, is akin to taking a prized butterfly, formaldehydeing it, & pasting it into a display frame.

The weighty presence of authorship is nowhere as present in this book as it is in the section of "Author's Annotations." Ginsberg's predecessor in this venture, T.S. Eliot, was forced by his publisher to add footnotes to his *Wasteland*, after it had appeared without such emendations in two previous magazine appearances. Eliot was to later regret the decision, as his notes began to take on a life of their own. Ginsberg, given a free hand by his publishing house, takes the opportunity to provide prosaic, anecdotal glosses on some of the most vivid images in contemporary poetry. Although Wallace Stevens once said: "In the long run truth does not

matter," Ginsberg seems obligated to provide a material base for *Howl*. Phrases such as "hydrogen jukebox," "accusing the radio of hypnotism" & "teahed joyride" lose their integrity as poetic utterance & become stand-ins for fragments of a personal history. Do we, as readers, understand the text any better now that we have been given this comprehensive gloss? Ginsberg employed a mere trio of footnotes in his *Collected Poems* version of *Howl*, compared to the many notes that accompanied that book's version of *America*, indicating the author's own recognition of the poem being 'understood' by future generations of readers who will use that volume as the definitive text of Ginsberg's oeuvre. And, to further argue against the use of extensive annotation, can a poem, or any literary text, be fully understood? Critic Geoffrey Hartman: "Partial knowledge is the normal condition...of living in the context of words." In the long run, our greatest gain in 'reaping the text' is thru the interpretation of words, not in the excavation of the author's biography.

The most disturbing section of the annotated *Howl* is Appendix IV: *Model Texts: Inspirations Precursors to HOWL*. This mini-anthology contains the usual suspects that Ginsberg has often cited as model for *Howl* & his poetic output (Christopher Smart, Shelley, Lorca, Mayakovsky, Crane, etc.) along with a few, heretofore uncited models (Schwitters & Artaud). It is, of course, a questionable venture to cite a handful of poems out of a network of potential influences; but some glaring omissions on Ginsberg's part brings up the question of an attempt to rearrange literary history. Kenneth Rexroth's *Thou Shall Not Kill*, a long poem with many thematic & structural parallels to *Howl* written in 1953 & published by a California small press in 1955, has long been cited by critics as a direct precursor to *Howl*. Yet, no mention of this work is found in Ginsberg's commentaries. Equally invisible is the poetry of Kenneth Fearing, a now-forgotten once-famous poet whose Whitmanic lines & proletarian-socialist verse was undoubtedly read by a young, socialist Ginsberg. Indeed, the poets of *New Masses* magazine, a 30's/40's Marxist literary journal which Fearing & a young Kenneth Patchen first published, seems to provide the foregrounding for the political rage of *Howl*. And the expansive poetry of Robinson Jeffers & Saint-John Perse could, arguably, have provided a potential model for Ginsberg's visionary-apocalyptic content. All the above noted poets were contemporaries or near-contemporaries of Ginsberg at the time of *Howl*'s composition; this is in opposition to the hall of elders we are given. The

list such as Ginsberg has proposed should definitely be left to the 'specialist,' who will lack an author's concerns with claims of originality & a place in the literary canon.

Happily, the text of *Howl* is safely beyond the deigns of its author. Although this book will no doubt be welcome by those fans most interested in literary gossip (& keep in mind that the Beats are the last popular literary movement to emerge), I doubt the background information we are presented with will do much to change the way the poem is read. Although much of the material provided attempts to place *Howl* in its historical context, it is the transcendence of its historical specificity that makes it a living text & not a Beatnik souvenir.

After all the homage offered up to *Howl* as a social artifact, it is time that we begin to respect the work as a text & not as a document. The publication of *Howl* signaled the beginning of a new American poetry & not only marked a break with the high Modernism of Eliot & Auden, but also with the imagist-oriented tradition of the Williams/Pound school of Modernism. The post-WWII world was too much a 'hydrogen jukebox' to be described within the bounds of earlier poetic practice. *Howl* created a radically new prosody &, in the process, created a new audience for poetry. Although there were other 'strugglers in the desert' trying to create a new poetry in the Fifties, Ginsberg was the one figure who was able to clear the grounds for the new poetic discourse that was to explode by the early Sixties. The annotated *Howl* was, no doubt, a well-intentioned product of Ginsberg's great attention to detail & accuracy; yet, the result of such meticulous documentation is a near-burial of the text in its sources. What Louis Zukofsky said thirty-seven years ago still holds true: "The best way to find out about poetry is to read the poems. That way the reader becomes something of a poet himself: not because he 'contributes' to the poetry, but because he finds himself subject of its energy."

JOEL LEWIS is a writer and poetry scholar. He is the former coordinator of the reading series at the BEATEN PATH in North Bergen, NJ, and edited the magazine ANNOY.

**Beats and Company—
A Portrait of a Literary
Generation**
by Ann Charters,
Introduction by John
Clellon Holmes

(Doubleday, 1986)
\$29.95

Lewis MacAdams

It has to be said first that these photos and their accompanying reminiscences are ever those of an intelligent, sympathetic and talented photographer-friend. These are the most virtile photos of Michael McClure and Gary Snyder and Robert Creeley and Peter Orlovsky in the public record. Ken Kesey on his tractor in the mist, Olson sucking on a cigarette, Ed Sanders with his naked daughter, Paul Blackburn standing outside of a bar on a Sunday afternoon drinking a quiet beer, Ginsberg in a field at Cherry Valley surrounded by dogs—these are photographs anyone would turn to for portraits of the male poetic nature. A photo of Ann Charters with Ginsberg taken in 1967 shows her to be a handsome confident woman, an artist among artists. She is almost off-hand in her introductions, discussing her technique (she likes Rolleis because Rolleis lenses "registered the way I saw my subjects most truthfully"). Before she began shooting the poets, her photography was primarily documentary work with her husband, ethnomusicologist, Sam Charters. More revealing is the photo also included here of Charters out for a stroll with Charles Olson in Gloucester. Even at a twenty year distance the intensity of their conversation is evident as are her youthful thighs below a short summer skirt.

Charters's photographs are built on an unusual degree of intimacy; but also on an immense amount of study of her subject's work. She has, as she mentions in her notes, been reading the writers she photographs for thirty years. Charters was at Ginsberg's first Berkeley reading of "Howl" in 1956 (on a date with Peter Orlovsky). In *Beats and Company*, Charters writes of seeing Kerouac that night for the first

NOTEWORTHY PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- Michael Brownstein *Country Cousins* \$11.95 (paper) *Sun & Moon Press*
 Terry McMillan *Mama* \$16.95 (cloth) *Houghton Mifflin*
 Bill Kushner *Head United Artists Books* (No price indicated)
 Liam O'Gallagher *Fool Consciousness* \$5.00 (paper) *United Artists Books*
 Jemake Highwater *Shadow Show: An Autobiographical Insinuation* \$17.95 (cloth)
Alfred van der Marck Editions
 Faye Kicknaway *All These Voices: New & Selected Poems* \$9.95 (paper)
Coffee House Press
 Stephen Yeuser *The Consuming Myth, The Work of James Merrill* \$27.50 (cloth)
Harvard University Press
 Rosmarie Waldrop *The Hanky of Pippin's Daughter* \$14.95 (cloth) *Station Hill Press*
 Anselm Hollo *Pick Up the House* \$8.95 (paper) *Coffee House Press*
 Gertrude Stein *Operas & Plays, Foreword by James R. Mellow* \$29.95 (cloth)
Station Hill Press
 Lewis Warsh *The Corset* \$3.95 (paper) *In Camera*
Selected Poems and Three Plays of William Butler Yeats edited by M.L. Rosenthal
 \$10.95 (paper) *Macmillan*
 Stephen Ratcliffe *Distance* \$6.00 (paper) *Avenue B*
 Angus MacLise *The Map of Duak* \$10.00 (paper) *SZ/Press*
 Ira Cohen *On Feet of Gold* \$7.95 (paper) *Synergetic Press*
 Marjorie Perloff *The Futurist Moment* \$24.95 (cloth) *U. of Chicago Press*
 Philippe Moby-Marcelin & Pierre Marcelin *The Beast of the Haitian Hills* \$6.95 (paper)
City Lights Books

Magazines Received:

- What editors: Kevin Connolly & Jason Sherman (\$6/year) *Postal Station J, Toronto, Ontario, M4J 4A8*
 Contact/II editors: Maurice Kenny, J.G. Gosciak (\$6.00) *P.O. Box 451, Bowling Green, New York, NY 10004*
 The Portable *Lower East Side* Vol. 3 Nos. 1 & 2, editor: Kurt Hollander (\$8/2 issues) 463 West St. #344, New York, NY 10014.
 Shatter Sheet editor: April Burns (\$18/12 issues) *Shatterproof Press, 9337 Chaparral Rd., Canoga Park, CA 91304*
 Conditions: Thirteen (\$18/3 issues) *P.O. Box 56, Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215*
 Belles Lettres editors: Janet Palmer Mullaney & Deanna D'Errico (\$15/6 issues) *P.O. Box 987, Awlington, VA 22216*
 Third Rail issues 7 & 8 editor: Uri Hertz (\$24/4 issues) *P.O. Box 46127 Los Angeles, CA 90046*

S M A L L P R E S S A D D R E S S :

- Avenue B, P.O. Box 542, Bolinas, CA 94924
 In Camera, c/o George Tysh 2371 Pulaski, Hamtramck, MI 48212
 Sun & Moon Press, 6323 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 115, Los Angeles, CA 90048
 Station Hill Press Barrytown, NY 12507
 Coffeehouse Press, P.O. Box 10870, Minneapolis, MN 55440
 Alfred van der Marck Editions, 1133 Broadway, Suite 1301, New York, NY 10010
 SZ/Press, P.O. Box 20075, Cathedral Finance Station, New York, NY 10025
 Synergetic Press, Inc., P.O. Box 689, Oracle, AZ 85623
 U. of Chicago Press, 5801 South Ellis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637
 City Lights Books, 261 Columbus Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94133
 United Artists Books, Box 2616, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009

time—"He was impossible to miss...a dark-haired, extremely handsome man." Twelve years later, doesn't that remembered tenderness inform her portraits of Kerouac, fat and battered, kneeling in the shadow of his mom? And the later shots of Kerouac's casket in its grave? It is as if Charters has a million portraits of each of these poets in her mind's eye and she waited for the most loving and heroic one to surface for her camera to keep.

That being said, one has to note that in *Beats & Company* Charters has taken on a larger task. Several generations are in fact represented in this "portrait of a literary generation." To claim poets like Alice Notley or Anne Waldman for a Literary Generation that flowered—from Kerouac's estimation at least—before they had entered elementary school seems a literary land grab, doesn't it? Kenneth Rexroth is no doubt raging in his grave against being corralled for *Beats & Company*. One can almost feel Don Allen's patrician nose twitch, an ironic smile play across his lips at his inclusion here. And Louis Zukofsky? Give me a break.

In her introduction, Charters says she was drawn to the Beat writers because of their moral commitment. In that sense I see the lines of this particular family tree to have been drawn on moral rather than literary lines. In that sense Ted Berrigan and JoAnne Kyger and Larry Eigner seem to be in this book because they share certain values. But what values? Are they Bohemians? (and in that sense hasn't "beat" replaced "bohemian" as the generic term?) Is there amongst these writers some radical commitment to community? It's clear—to me at least—that the poetic lineage being perpetrated here is based less on literary techniques than on a shared communal vision of the world. This, I think, is why Charters includes pictures of all those gathering spots—City Lights and the Cafe Trieste in San Francisco, The Gem Spa and the Peace-Bye Bookshop in New York.

But then, with this said, one has to ask, where are the rest of those among the beats who, though they might have shared the vision, the commitment and the work like, for instance Bob Kaufman or Amiri Baraka, happened to not be—like everyone included in this book—white? It's only within the context of portraying a literary generation is their exclusion racist.

It would be better and more honest to call *Beats & Company*, not a "portrait of a literary generation"; but a book of friends, friends who are among the greatest writers of their time, friends who have never been photographed so lovingly, so intelligently or so well.

With eleven books of poems and stories to his credit, Lewis MacAdams most recent book is *AFRICA AND THE MARRIAGE OF WALT WHITMAN AND MARILYN MONROE*, published by Little Caesar Press. He co-produced and co-directed the film, "What Happened to Kerouac?" He lives in Los Angeles.

Walking Around In The American Tree: Language Realism Poetry

National Poetry Foundation \$19.95 (paper)

Andrew Levy

My hesitation to sit down to it—It's a BIG book. So look around, note excuses—The right hour equals When you know you have the time it feels light—time & the book. Then I look at it and its trees—"Realism," "Language," "Poetry," edited by Ron Silliman & over the attractive (my girlfriend says, "it feels good,") but dull pea-green cover, the title, *In The American Tree*. How big is it? It's plural—a forest, and it seems right looking inside to see the dedication to the poet Larry Eigner, who wrote:

Well, how does (some of) the forest go together with the trees. How might it, maybe. Forest of possibilities (in language anyway)—ways in and ways out. Near and far—wide and narrow (circles). Your neighborhood and how much of the world otherwise. Beginning, ending and continuing. As they come, what can things mean? Why expect a permanent meaning? What weights, imports?...A poem can't be too long, anything like an equatorial highway girdling the thick rotund earth, but is all right and can extend itself an additional bit if you're willing enough to stop anywhere...

(from "Approaching things," in *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book*, ed. Andrews & Bernstein).

"In the American Tree" is the title of a poem by Kit Robinson—and that poem appears just following the dedication & before Silliman's introduction, "Language, Realism, Poetry." Perhaps these are not 3 different trees. Let's look at Kit Robinson's poem.... But, the book opens to page 85 and Jean Day's poem, "Paradise and lunch." Jumping in the final 4 lines catch me:

Why can't we be rock forever. No end but I'm going nuts thinking what can't be last. Luster, was it for you last night? Fueling the ruins of seduction, there's an insistent objectivity to will or won't, make it or not, live or die.

Hesitation is important in the sense of the slow process of discovery, that double work of dismantling & recovery Eigner alludes to above—conserving the erotic, a sensual body of language (and her L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E makes felt sense—Charles Bernstein's & Bruce Andrew's emphasis on the eye and tongue feeling those eight letters (to which you can witness the person, reader & writer Day, attain the consciousness to think of new things: "Why can't we be rock forever," hard things like "nuts/ thinking," leads to "luster" of transformation—"Fueling the ruins," the insistent seduction of a Paradise in which bodies and souls "lunch"—and that's, live it or now, "objectivity.")

Entering any forest can be dangerous, a matter of life and death to read, to re-lode in. To sit with

and move. All reflective thinking is poetic, and all poetry in turn is a kind of thinking. The path keeps you busy but gives you time to think of other things, somewhat like riding a bike. Then, because it involves a metamorphosis from imperfect material to imagination (invisible), and from this again to "Language"—an ambiguous and fascinating condition that goes very far.

In *The American Tree* places poetry first. To realize that one needn't read Silliman's introductory essay, or the critical section of texts (of approx. 130 pages) which round out the anthology. The poetry is a generous collection of 477 pages worth of 38 poets whom Silliman divides between "West" and "East." I found that once I began reading around in the book, the title of Silliman's essay, "Language, Realism, Poetry," began to appear not as delineating separate categories of some literary project, but as properly weighted branches of the same American tree. But why the continental divide? What lies in the middle? the reader? Does this anthology present the work of exploratory scouts—agents for the real estate of language? I don't think so. There is sincere engagement with the ground stood on & how its use conditions, at this moment in history, the existence of a greater part of the world. The English language, & especially the American citizens use of it, or can be an ideological weapon—whether addressed overseas, or in our own backyard to our neighbor's children. Today, the usual & standardized "invisible" formal nature of language no longer stands innocently behind phenomena, or content—nor should it. What lies between East

and West coasts is an equatorial highway. To realize its reality, the material & referential nature of language must be foregrounded in the "realism" of the object-poem challenging the reader to reflect & share both the poems and his/her own total sense of human experience—from war torn, to being lulled by "peace." It's accurate to the time we live in that Silliman begins his Introduction "obsessed with speech"—critical of the lazy assumptions equating speech with directness and sincerity, the detrimental effects of which can be seen, for example, in Reagan's media-speech. Only when the poem & the person associate with collective humanity in the form of a conscious and responsible use of American language can

Painting paint. Chairing chairs. Words words. Relax into the activity, & in the acceptance of limits, thrive.

(Robert Greizer, "Notes on Coolidge, Objectives, Zukofsky, Romanticism, And &," p. 538, *In The American Tree*.)

ANDREW LEVY's first book, *BETWEEN POEMS* was published by Inaver Kiang in 1985. His work will be appearing in the magazines *PESSIMISTIC LABOR 2* and *CENTRAL PARK*.

The Emotion of Words examining the works of Jeanne Lance

- Nothing (Her Era Press, 1979) \$3.00
 Mass Psychosis (Jungle Garden Press, 1983) \$7.50
 Loose Arrangement (Smithereens Press, 1983) \$2.00
 Water Burial (e.g., 1985) \$3.00

Julia Blumenreich

Jeanne Lance has published four chapbooks; all are immediately forceful through their agile language and sophisticated concepts, and all are separately worthy of discussion because they are unique and honest.

Nothing is a remarkable first book. It is both eloquent and strong—even shocking. The use of spare language accentuates the details and rhythms of the fourteen poems:

X
 There is nothing to save
 nothing to give
 I am the refinement
 in a series of clashed words

A drowning feeling is inferred within the short poems, as if what the speaker needs to say gets cut off when she tries. The tension relies on these quick stops and the sense of the speaker "going under":

XIII
 A shroud of trees
 a hovering angel
 envelops me
 it says "you destroy"
 the crowd of trees
 bends over a casket
 on a dusty road

In this first book, Lance's care with language is already evident, and her rhythmic concerns seem to frame each poem in a perfectly centered beat or moment. She adds to these accomplishments another—an overarching allusion to Apocalypse. The book begins with: "The slide of a snake through grass/ then nothing." It ends with: "I am bad natured/ smile into Apocalypse." In between, the poetry lives up to this large disaster; she writes of personal devastation in a defiant and believable fashion.

The book, *Mass Psychosis* is a prose story about youth, specifically, east coast hippie-types, traveling to Berkeley for the summer. The work opens at a travelogue pace, "It started when Amy Harris and I hitchhiked to Princeton one May afternoon." This forward motion remains consistent throughout.

As is often the case with poets who also write prose, Lance's sentences are well-crafted and make poetic leaps through metonymy into meaning. For instance: "It was night in Wheeling but day in Hannibal," and "I'd never felt so wide open. Amy was carrying her iron."

WEDNESDAY NIGHT READING & LECTURE SERIES

APR

1 Peter Cameron & Terry McMillan
 PETER CAMERON's fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Mademoiselle*, *The Kenyon Review*, and *Rolling Stone*. His first collection, *One Way or Another* was published by Harper & Row in 1986 to great critical acclaim. He is the recipient of a 1986-87 NEA Fellowship in fiction-writing. TERRY McMILLAN's earthy and bittersweet first novel, *Mama*, has just been published by Houghton Mifflin. She was awarded a NYFA Fellowship for fiction in 1988.

4 & 5 Rimbaud in Abyssinia by Paul Hoover

8 George Robert Haas & Catherine Texier
 GEORGE ROBERT HAAS' play, *Doris & Inez Speak the Truth*, was staged at the Squat Theater in New York in 1984. His photographs have been exhibited in a one-man show at the Art Institute of Chicago, and his film, *Romance*, is currently airing on European television. He will be reading from a new fiction work, *My Mother is a Butterfly*. LOVE ME TENDER is CATHERINE TEXIER's hot, urgent first English language novel about life, sex and death on the wild cultural frontier of Manhattan and will be published by Viking-Penguin in June. With her husband, Joel Rose, she edits the influential computer print-out periodical, *Between B & C*.

15 Lydia Davis & Ted Greenwald
 LYDIA DAVIS' most recent collection of stories, *Break It Down* was recently published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. She is also a translator of numerous works in French by Sartre, Simoneon, Blanchot and Leiris. TED GREENWALD's recent collections of poems include *Word of Mouth* (Sun & Moon, 1987), *Exit the Face* (Museum of Modern Art, w/ Richard Bosman, 1982), and *Licorice Chronicles* (Kulchur, 1979). He is director of the Ted Greenwald Gallery, now in its fourth season.

22 Russell Banks & Robert Stone
 Two major voices in American fiction are reading together for the first time at the Poetry Project. RUSSELL BANKS' latest book is *Success Stories* from Harper & Row. *Continental Drift* (H&R, 1985) has been hailed as one of the great American novels. ROBERT STONE's novels include the recent *Children of Light*, *A Flag for Sunrise*, *Hall of Mirrors* (which was made into the movie *WUSA*) and *Dog Soldiers* (which was made into the movie *Who'll Stop the Rain*).

29 The Talk Series presents: Chris & George Tysh on "Eros and Text."
 POET, translator, critic and editor CHRIS TYSH is currently Instructor of English at the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit. Her books of poems include *Porne* (In Camera, Detroit, 1984) and *Secrets of Elegance* (Detroit River Press, 1981). GEORGE TYSH is the Program Coordinator of *Lines: New Writing*, Detroit's premier reading series. His most recent books of poetry are *Ovals* (In Camera, 1985) and *Tea* (Burning Deck, 1979). In addition to their lecture, the Tysh's will also give a short reading.

26 Special Event: The Committee for International Poetry presents
 An Evening Of African Poetry. 8 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

MAY

6-10 THE POETRY PROJECT'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM
 Readings, workshops, discussions and parties, celebrating our 20 years as a community of poets. Invited participants include Robert Creeley, Allen Ginsberg, Bernadette Mayer, Maureen Owen, Ron Padgett, Anne Waldman and many more.

6 Opening Night: Robert Creeley & Allen Ginsberg
 Originator with Charles Olson of Projective Verse, ROBERT CREELEY was the editor of the historic *Black Mountain Review*. Recent books include *Memory Gardens*, *Mirrors*, *Collected Prose*, and *Collected Poems: 1945-1973*. Creeley's poems, stories, and criticism continue to define, illuminate and invigorate the progress of American letters. For over 30 years, ALLEN GINSBERG has effectively championed a modern vernacular poetry based in the traditions of Whitman, Williams, Pound & Crane and inspired readers/audiences everywhere. *White Shroud: Poems 1980-1985* and *Howl: Original Draft Facsimile...* have been published this year by Harper & Row. Ginsberg is a recipient of an 1986-87 NEA Fellowship in Poetry.

13 Charlotte Carter & Fielding Dawson
 CHARLOTTE CARTER is the author of *Sheltered Life* (Angel Hair, 1976). She was awarded a CAPS grant for her novel *Lady Lie* in 1981. FIELDING DAWSON's books include *Krazy Kat & 76 More* (1982) and *Three Penny Lane* (1981), both from Black Sparrow Press. Creeley has said of him, "No writer moves more aptly, quickly, closely, in the tracking of human dimensions of feeling and relation."

20 Nicanor Parra & Ishmael Reed
 New Directions has just published NICANOR PARRA's *Anti-Poems: New & Selected* which is an expanded version of the celebrated Chilean poet's 1967 collection. Frank MacShane writes of Parra that he "is unquestionably one of the most influential and accomplished (writers) in Latin America today, heir to the position long held by his countryman, Pablo Neruda." The English translations of Parra's poems will be read by Allen Ginsberg. ISHMAEL REED's books of poetry include *Confuge*, *Chattanooga*, and *A Secretary to the Spirits*. His most recent novel is *Reckless Eyeballing* from St. Martin's Press. He is a driving force behind the multicultural literary collective, the Before Columbus Foundation.

27 Richard Elovich and Harry Mathews
 RICHARD ELOVICH's most recent performance work, *Bobby's Birthday Like That* was presented at Danpace this past January. *Faking House*, a new wave work in collaboration with Pat Oleszko and Jesse Hultberg will be presented at P.S. 122 in May. For the last two years, Elovich has been coordinator of the Poetry Project's Monday Night Performance Series. Publisher and editor (with John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, and James Schuyler) of the review *Locus Solus* in the early 60's, HARRY MATHEWS is the author of remarkable novels: *Tooth* (Random House); *The Sinking of the Odradek Stadium and other novels* (Harper & Row); and *Cigarettes* (forthcoming from Weidenfeld & Nicholson). His most recent collection of poetry, *Armenian Papers: Poems 1954-1984* has just been published by Princeton University Press.

30, 31 & 1 3 days of short plays! works by Alice Notley, Paul Metcalf, Vicky Raab, Rochelle Kraut, Ed Friedman & more

All events begin 8 PM.
 Admission: \$5.
 Programs subject to change.
 For more information, call 674-0910.

MOND

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LECTURE SERIES

...elle, *The Kenyon Review*, and *Rolling Stone* and *Row* in 1986 to great critical acclaim. TERRY McMILLAN's earthy and biting. She was awarded a NYFA Fellowship

Hoover

...ier
...nd at the Squat Theater in New York in Art Institute of Chicago, and his film, from a new fiction work, *My Mother is an English language novel* about life, sex and Viking-Penguin in June. With her husband *Between B & C*.

...ntly published by Farrar, Straus & Simonon, Blanchot and Leiris. TED & Moon, 1987). *Exit the Face* (Kulchur, 1979). He is director of

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...English at the Center for Creative Studies and *Secrets of Elegance* (Detroit River Writing, Detroit's premier reading and *Tea* (Burning Deck, 1979). In addition

...ational Poetry presents
...in the Parish Hall.

ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM

20 years as a community of poets.
Bernadette Mayer, Maureen Owen, Ron

Allen Ginsberg

...was the editor of the historic *Black Mountain* and *Collected Poems*.
...e, illuminate and invigorate the progress
...vely championed a modern vernacular
...nd inspired readers/audiences everywhere.
... have been published this year by
... in Poetry.

...8). She was awarded a CAPS grant for her
...t & 76 More (1982) and *Three Penny Lane*
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...Row); and *Cigarettes* (forthcoming
...menian Papers: *Poems 1954-1984* has

...! works by Alice
... Vicky Raab, Rochelle
... & more

MONDAY NIGHT PERFORMANCE SERIES

6 Open Reading

13 Roberta Levine

...brings her bikini-brain to confartfulated performance studies.

13 Mike Sheehan

Post/singer/songwriter, Mike Sheehan's recent book is entitled *Radical Truth*.

Erin Cramer

...in an excerpt from her experimental performance *The Exhibit B, C, & A* based on Alfred Stieglitz's photos of Georgia O'Keefe's hands.

20 Jennifer Monson

...presents a new work based on an unusual cast of characters fighting during the Mexican Revolution.

Deborah Artman

A Downtown Diva at the Project's New Year's Benefit, poet Deborah Artman performs *Catch Her Mid-Swing*, a work-in-progress...directed by Laurie Carlos.

Elizabeth Willis

An exciting young poet based in Buffalo, Elizabeth Willis is touring NY state as part of winning the WNY Writers-in-Residence Competition from Just Buffalo Literary Center.

27 Mary Mary

...performers James Adlesic and Theresa Haney.

John Bernd

...performs text and movement improvisations.

4 Greatest Hits From The Open Readings

10 poets

11 Reno

...a comic spritzer

Jonathan Walker

Poet Jonathan Walker recently acted in Arrabal's *The Architect and The Emperor of Assyria* at LaMama.

Chuck Coggins

...will perform excerpts from playwright Nicky Silver's new work.

18 Sarah Schulman

Playwright and novelist Sarah Schulman's third novel, *After Dolores*, will be published by E.P. Dutton in 1988.

Abigail Child

Filmmaker and writer Abigail Child will show Part 6 of a feature-length film, *Is This What You Were Born For?*

25 A Special Evening With Reinaldo Poved

plus other SURPRISE GUESTS! Poet Reinaldo Poved is the young author of the sizzling play *Cuba & His Teddy Bear*, which premiered at The Public Theater in 1986. His new play, *La Pute Vida Trilogy*, opens at The Public Theater in September, 1987.

WORKSHOPS

Susie Timmons
"Advanced Poetry" Workshop,
Tuesday eves. 7 PM (ends May 26)

Susie Timmons' book of poems, *Hog Wild* was published by Frontward Books...With Bob Holman & Sara Miles, she was a founder of the New York Poetry Calendar.

Study the greats to learn their tricks! Enlightening class discussion - invigorating assignments - experiments with attitude development and dislocation!

(This workshop is made possible by Poets & Writers, Inc. through funds which it has received from the NYSCLA literature program.)

Rochelle Kraut
Poetry Performance/Performance Poetry
Sat. noon to 2 PM (ends Apr. 4)

This workshop will concentrate on the value of good interesting terrific writing as basic to any kind of literary performance. Included will be experiments in writing, exercises in performance, improvisation, collaboration, dialogue, sound and music, as it all relates to mystery and beauty. We will read texts by writers and perform text by workshop participants.

Rochelle Kraut is a poet, performer, artist and filmmaker. She was a past coordinator of the Monday Night Reading/Performance Series at the Poetry Project. She has been published in numerous magazines including the Poetry Project Newsletter, Little Light, Mag City. She has read and performed at the Poetry Project, Ear Inn, Charas, MOMA, The Kitchen, Eye & Ear Theater.

Kimiko Hahn
History & Memory: Reading & Writing
Narrative Poetry

Saturdays, noon to 2 PM (begins April 11)

Expanding on forms explored in a successful workshop taught last year at the Poetry Project, Kimiko Hahn will again use the narrative form as a basis for discussion and writing. In the first hour, participants will discuss what makes a narrative poem, reading from such diverse writers as Al, Etheridge Knight, Jana Harris, Adrienne Rich, Cheryl Clarke, Robert Browning, and excerpts from *Beowulf*. Hahn will construct assignments from these readings and the second hour will be used to discuss our own narrative poetry.

The recipient of numerous grants and awards and a recent NEA fellowship for poetry, KIMIKO HAHN's work has been published in *Breaking Silence* (Greenfield Review Press) and the anthology *Art Against Apartheid* (Ikona). She is presently coordinating the Basement Workshop Reading Series at the Chatham Square Library, and editing an anthology of Asian American women writers.

Bernadette Mayer
The Reading Workshop
Fridays 7 PM (May 1, 15, & 29)

Three intensive lecture/discussion/experiments on the art of talking about the act and history of reading poetry out loud, ceremonially, quietly to oneself with no end but the illumination of both the reader and the most semantically enticing sublimely syntactic pragmatic texts; perhaps including Shakespeare, Dante, Koch, Stein, Wittgenstein, Einstein, Notley, Hawthorne, Coolidge, Myles, Artaud, Kupferberg, Lenhart, Emsalie, Padgett, Shelley, Creeley, Fuller, Kushner, Schuyler, Chaucer, Corso, and Godfrey...including some not-poetry. Co-taught by Bernadette Mayer and members of Poetry Project Workshops.

Former Artistic Director of the Poetry Project, Bernadette Mayer is the author of numerous books of poetry, including: *Mutual Aid* (Mademoiselle de la Mole Press, 1985), *Utopia* (United Artists, 1983), and *Midwinter Day* (Turtle Island Foundation, 1982). She is the recipient of several grants and awards, and is a prolific and active editor, teacher, publisher, and performer as well.

All workshops run at least 8 weeks. \$50 registration fee includes membership privileges and admission to Poetry Project events and all workshops for the year. Schedule subject to change. For more information, call 674-0910.

ACTING DIRECTOR: ED FRIEDMAN
Program Coordinator: Jessica Hagedorn
Monday Night Performance Series Coordinator: Richard Elovich
Theater Series Coordinator: Elinor Nauen

The writing's captivating velocity serves to emphasize the vividness of the information. Lance seems to approach the work with a non-hierarchical slant. Not one of the speaker's summer experiences seems more or less profound than the next. Even her frightening description of an acid trip is undercut by the bizarre anecdote following it: a nude photo session between the speaker and a photographer whose studio in the Berkeley hills "had a spectacular view of the bay."

Beyond the previously praised strengths of this prose, Lance conveys the enigma of telling stories: They are our own until we deliver them equally, by the very act of telling, to the audience; after that, the events become weighted in varying and specialized degrees by the reader. Perhaps some will be annoyed by the sense of non-plot and lack of resolution in this work; consider though, that stories, by their very telling, are never over.

Loose Arrangement, unlike the unified **Mass Psychosis**, is a collection of poetry and prose with an eclectic feel to it; although, by the end of the book, Lance's concerns with language thread the pieces together.

In the first poem, "Jenner," language's ability to factualize intuition is immediately explored; this is the action of bringing intuition from the abstract/interior plane onto the concrete/interior (sense) level:

Is there a place
where familiarity is so thick
you can cut it?
You enter a German restaurant
are you from Vienna?

These opening lines of the poem seem to immediately answer their own question; feeling becomes concrete; it becomes tangible/factual. The poem ends with the words: "flat & rolling." We may apply these words to language and encounter a dichotomy: Language is both flat (referential/factual) and rolling (intuitive, magical, transcendent); both these levels inform our communication and perception.

The longest piece in **Loose Arrangement** is "Gambling in Normandy;" on the surface this four-page tale has the same travelogue air as **Mass Psychosis**. The story certainly works on more than one level, ambitiously, though subtly, exploring what the word *close* means. The writing, through the speaker's experiences, displays the different connotations of the word *close*: proximity, likeness, timing, and family. Lance's use of an aphoristic tone at the piece's end—"It seemed a classic example of how we all behave, trying to have a pleasant Sunday outing and things go wrong, so we take it out on those closest to us"—encourages us to read the language closely, pushing our perceptions. As readers, what we draw from any given situation depends on our closeness or distance from it.

There appears to be completion of a cycle in one of the book's last works: "Visualization of the Hanged Man and Empress." We have moved from the "flat & rolling" statement of "Jenner" to "Transitoriness, acid clarity"—the last three words of this later prose poem. Here we have stasis and movement becoming the unifying elements delivered and displayed through the language of **Loose Arrangement**.

Lance's most recent book, **Water Burial**, contains thirteen prose poems that serve to highlight a mutable voice and fascinating mind. The book seems a balanced combination of the three preceding it.

In the prose poems "Persistence of Memory" and "Marin Folk Tale," the short story/instinct in history style is reminiscent of **Mass Psychosis** and also of pieces from **Loose Arrangement**: "Vignette" and "Gambling in Normandy."

From **Loose Arrangement**, the idea of language's duality resurfaces in the poem "Teleology": "A globe when stationary encompasses what is moving" and "flowing as wave."

Although all the poetry in **Water Burial** is prose, the fine, rhythmic control Lance had in **Nothing** can be heard once again. In the piece "How Light Is Matter," we read: "But if we joined the perfect mass, water in a jar, we would cohere. Cut water with a knife." In the first, title piece, "Water Burial," there are lines vivid in poetic imagery: "This is where I dive from high and touch aquamarine," and "The lawn strewn with corpses touching."

What is often noticed in this latest book is an ability to use descriptive language, coupled with her awareness of doing so; a human gesture: "That is a negligent body & this disorder much less. I hate the object."

Other concerns of this book include Lance's consciousness of the "other," her pointing out to the reader the commodification of language, and how difficult it becomes to write under such a premise—but she does. She writes narratives

that aren't really: "Silence on Saturday" uses a narrative thread as a teaser to get to the real idea: "I thought, 'stay with me,' but I couldn't say it." This line ends the poem, provoking the fear of otherness we all experience.

Beyond the aforementioned preoccupations with language, another theme runs through her work: the boundaries, or lack thereof, between people. In the piece "Love & Desire," the specific roles we play with one another are mocked and upheld: "When we're not in love, we're dead, & when we are, others are scorched by our radiance."

Often the lack of "self" in recent experimental writing can be disturbing, although the emphasis created as a consequence—the writer's ability to manipulate the reader through language, is valuable. In her latest book, there is a combining, rather than an abandoning, of traditional and experimental approaches to poetry; this proves to be a sharp, honest, approach to awareness.

Finally, I would agree with Lance who writes in "Teleology": "Those who block against the emotions of words are misusing them," and would say from "Adrift," the last poem in **Water Burial**, that she does not belong to that class of writers, but belongs to this class of writers: "They needed to be writing, those special persons adrift."

JULIA BLUMENREICH teaches in the English Department of West Chester University.

Food For Thought: The Joy of Cooking, an Irish Cookbook by Alison Armstrong

(Station Hill)
\$18.95, (cloth)

Jeff Weinstein

When the tourist imagination turns to Ireland, cuisine rarely springs to mind; emerald is not a color one associates with food. The political imagination considers the island's frightening unemployment and sorrowful troubles. The literary imagination, on the other hand, in the case of Alison Armstrong and her new cookbook, **The Joy of Cooking**, finds food wherever it looks. It happens here to be looking only at James Joyce.

Few Irish cookbooks are available in this country, which has led some to think that there is no such thing as Irish cooking. Not every culture possesses the nerve to propose a cuisine, but every land, like it or not, has its own cooking. Just for the record, Ireland still delights itself with brown (really tweed to almost black) breads and true-crumbed cakes; rich bacon; plentiful trout; golden turnips; unexpected oysters; supple beef; breathtaking butters, cheeses, creams; and that minky cream from another cow named Guinness. Of course, these are ingredients or basics, not "cooking." The genius of Ireland's cooking has stayed mostly in country kitchens and pubs. It takes a nifty hand to pull it away from home.

Authors of cookbooks must get their recipes somewhere. A few writers invent them, it is true, but most "appropriate" them—steal them—from previous cookbooks or somebody's grandma. Armstrong, obsessed with Joyce's oral texts, has sifted every bit of word-food out of them, along with the corresponding appetites, and reconstructed recipes that actualize the reference. Some of these recipes would do well in a simple "what to serve your Irish boss for dinner" manual, such as those for potato scones and thick gible soup, but others go easily off into the realm of the true original, which means unusually Irish (Widgeon with Crisp Hog's Bacon) or unusually independent of the text at hand (Bloomusalem Artichoke Soup). The recipes seem cookable, read well, and are framed with passionate, serious notes about the importance of the gustatory imagination and a possible theory of gastronomy, to "establish Irish food use as a system of signs."

I await the publication of **Roadfood: The Kerouac Cookbook**, **The Pedigree of Honey: Emily's Amherst Baking Contest Winners**, **Fowl: Ginsberg's Best Chicken Soups**, and **Naked Lunches: A Naughty Book of Sandwiches**.

JEFF WEINSTEIN is the art editor and restaurant writer for **THE VILLAGE VOICE**. His collected food writing, **LEARNING TO EAT**, will be published by Sun & Moon Press this fall. He has read at the Poetry Project.

► STONE

Walker chuckled agreeably. Sam Quinn came out with two drinks on a tray. Beside them was a tiny glass bottle of cocaine with a miniature chain attached to its cap. Seeing Sam, the little boy turned around and came running back toward the porch.

"Sam Sam Sam," the infant shouted.
"What cemetery?" Walker asked. Quinn handed him a drink.
"Ah," Sam Quinn said, "we bury the animals. We have a ceremony."

"And we buried Hexter," the little boy cried.
Quinn sighed. "We gotta talk about this," he said to Lucy. "I mean really."

"We buried our dog," Lucy said merrily. "Hexter."
"Oh," Walker said. A few years before he had known an aspiring screenwriter, a fellow Kentuckian, by the name of Hexter. Hexter had left for New Mexico some time before.

Lucy gathered the child to her loins. She seemed oppressed by Quinn's even stare.

"Well," she said to Walker, "best of luck."
"The same to you, Lucy," Walker said. He wagged his fingers at the little boy. Lucy took the boy by the hand and led him off.

Sam Quinn turned his back on an imaginary breeze, dipped the cap-spoon device into the vial of cocaine and had himself a snort. Done, he screwed the cap on and passed the works to Walker.
"I'm a murderer," Quinn explained. "I murder my enemies. I bury them under my barn and then I drink champagne from their skulls."

"We were talking about a dog," Walker said.
"We were friends," Quinn said. "We were close. He got into fucking nitrous oxide and he was not getting it from me. One time he comes up here from Taos and his pickup is loaded with tanks. We gave parties, it's great, except he won't stop doing it." Quinn sniffed and wiped his nose with his wrist. "So one morning I go into the john and Hexter's in the tub. He's underwater and he's stone fucking dead and the tank's on the floor next to him. So what am I supposed to do, send for Noguchi? I don't want the damn cops up here. I loved that man, Gordon. He was like a brother."

Walker took a hit off Quinn's coke. It was very fine, better than his own. It dispelled his anxiety and his sorrow about his sons. He watched Quinn with a tolerant smile.

"I welded him into an oil drum and we brought out the Bible and we laid him to rest. He was divorced, didn't have no kids. He's home, man, he's in Abraham's bosom." Quinn shrugged.
"All right—it sounds kind of sordid."

"I see," Walker said, and did another tiny spoon.

ROBERT STONE's novels include **DOG SOLDIERS** (which was made into the movie "Who'll Stop the Rain?"), **HALL OF MIRRORS**, and **A FLAG FOR SUNRISE**. Popularly and critically acclaimed as one of our finest contemporary American writers, he will be reading for the first time at the Poetry Project with Russell Banks on April 22.

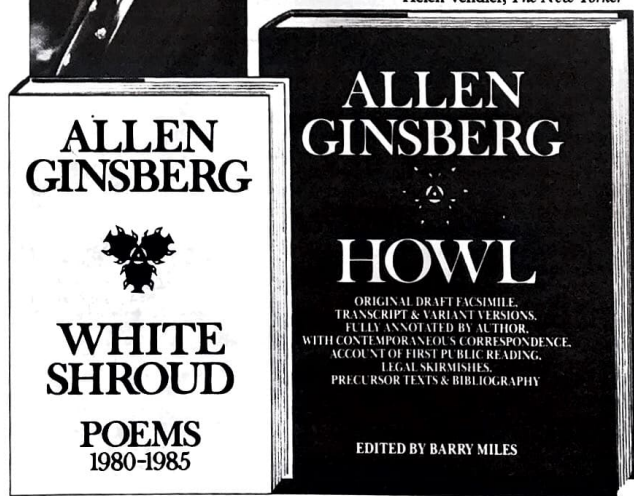


"Ginsberg is both tragic and dynamic, a lyrical genius, con man extraordinaire and probably the single greatest influence on American poetical voice since Whitman."

—Bob Dylan

"His powerful mixture of Blake, Whitman, Pound and Williams, to which he added his own volatile, grotesque, and tender humor, has assured him a memorable place in modern poetry."

—Helen Vendler, *The New Yorker*



Ginsberg's first new volume of poetry since *Plutonian Ode* includes a magical epilogue to his masterpiece, "Kaddish." Dream visions run like a thread through much of this book, including an encounter with William Carlos Williams. Haunting and original, *White Shroud* is distinguished by the poet's daring erotic humor and autumnal tenderness.

On the thirtieth anniversary edition of its controversial publication, Ginsberg's early masterpiece appears with the author's copious annotations, original hand and typescript facsimiles, author's letters, an anthology of works by earlier poets that influenced *Howl's* form. Index and bibliography.

Harper & Row
publishers of Allen Ginsberg's
Collected Poems 1947-1980

Signed, limited editions available.

The Arctic Archipelago Luis Francia

I.
Even at brightest noon it's always
Full moon in my country. In these streets of
Tropic stone and Malay blood, daylight is
Moonlight mugging me on every corner
Where human shadows loll in an atmosphere
Both lunar and lunatic.

And while from either pole we're
Half a world and seas away, this
Might as well be
An arctic archipelago, where as
The sun burns the colder it gets.
This might as well be
Equatorial Antarctica, where the hungry
Dogs that lope across the steaming landscape
Are polar bears gone rabid and miniature,
Where the summer winds are winter's breath
Making people shiver in heat:
Everywhere the dark chill of poverty.
But though in disrepair the poor
Are full of vigilance keener than
Their disrepair, their limbs deceptively limp,
Except for those of the pig-eyed pimps
Who, moving one hand towards the mouth,
Move the other to barter someone's daughter.
All for old rice.

Bloodlust has been sown. From the
Ruling houses of the land, werewolves
Howl, from Maguindanao to Mindoro,
Cutting prey, tearing them from farmland,
Village and school. And still we smile.
Once born of the light, now our
Smiles are signs of gentle bloods readying
Knives and Armatites. Upon this the foreigner
Remarks, rebuking us. Restructure
Your souls, he says, and we'll
Reimburse your costs.

No.
Speak no more, foreigner, or
You will speak no more. Pardon us
If we smile, but if ruins be our

Architecture, and dying a way of living,
If speech has become dumb, and the
Seasons always out of season,
Then we smile the smile elegiac,
The smile of an arctic night
Before the kiss and knife that sings
Its way into the heart. Here,
In the arctic archipelago,
It's always full moon
Even at brightest noon.

LUIS FRANCIA is a poet, translator, journalist and film scholar born and raised in the Philippines. His first book of poems was entitled *HER BEAUTY LIKES ME WELL*. He has written numerous articles for *THE VILLAGE VOICE* and *CINEVUE* on Asian American culture and the cinema.

#42

Catullus,

translated by Bernadette Mayer & Don Yorty

"Adeste, hendecasyllabi, quot estis"

C'mere, all of you, my hendecasyllables
all of you, help! how many of you are there?
some ugly whore thinks she'll make an ass of me
she stole my notebook if you can believe it
let's put a tail on her and get our book back
who the hell is she? she's the one you might see
with the deformed legs, what a joke, she's a bitch
her mean mouth grins like a puppy from the south
let's surround her and demand our notebook back:
"you fucking whore, you give me back my notebook,
give it back, you whore, you fuck, I want my book."
don't you give a shit? you animal, you filth
I wish there was something worse I could call you
nevertheless I think this is not enough
maybe if nothing else can do it a blush
could be forced from the rigid face of that bitch
we've gotta shout at her again much louder:
"you fucking whore, you give me back my notebook,
give it back, you whore, you fuck, I want my book."
but we make no progress, nothing, she's not moved
we've gotta change our way of talking and reason
if you can get the advantage more that way:
"virtuous and chaste one, give me back my notebook."

Slaveship, German Model Ishmael Reed

A pout is a thing with scales
Even when gliding across a marble
floor and tailored by Adolfo
I am in a room of pouts
the clothes they wear would set me
back three months rent
Off camera, he displays a mink ring
On camera, he talks about his
"disenfranchisement
his oppression"; a word that once
had its hand out has gone and gotten
a manicurist

II

He said that he bought a Mercedes
because the holes on the side
reminded him of a slaveship

At the entrance to J.F.K.
there should be a sign:
"Welcome to New York
a rhetoric delicatessen
Get your processed, vegetarian,
and deep-fried rhetoric
Take Out!"

ISHMAEL REED's books of poems include *CONJURE, CHATTANOOGA, AND A SECRETARY TO THE SPIRITS*. His most recent novel is *RECKLESS EYEBALLING*, from St. Martin's Press. He will be reading at the Poetry Project May 20.

Excerpt from Winter Heat, 1987 Lenora Champagne

He: She sewed a new coat.
She lined it with calf skin.
She trimmed it with Heifer's hooves
She looked at it with a bull's eye.
It looked okay.
Because it was black,
she could wear it in the city
and not be seen.
In this garment,



Copper Canyon

■ Carolyn Kizer

THE NEARNESS OF YOU

The Nearness of You, Carolyn Kizer's "poems for men," is a companion volume to her *Mermaids in the Basement*, and her first book since receiving the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1985. These poems are alternately funny, serious, grieving, and always colored by the poet's renowned *joie de vivre*. Cloth, \$15.00 Paper, \$9.00

■ Pablo Neruda

WINTER GARDEN

Translated by William O'Daly

Near the end of his long, prolific career, the late Nobel Poet embraced solitude as a major positive force, and nature as an undeniable regeneration. In this, one of his last suites, Neruda saw humanity struggling vainly against great natural forces and addressed his responsibilities as a poet concluding a life's work. [Bilingual] Cloth, \$15.00 Paper, \$8.00

■ Maurya Simon

THE ENCHANTED ROOM

Maurya Simon's first book of poems is a remarkably cohesive yet wide-ranging suite that displays a finely tuned sense of craft and a mind alert to many traditions. Her poems are structurally and thematically diverse, yet she remains rooted in this world — accessible, limpid, vibrant. Paper, \$9.00

POST OFFICE BOX 271, PORT TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON 98368

"MAMA is some Mama."

—Grace Paley



Terry McMillan makes her stunning debut with the story of an extraordinary black woman who struggles with poverty, a jealous and unfaithful husband, and the problems of raising five children on her own. Mildred Peacock survives it all, with passion and vigor. Funny, unsentimental, and vibrant with life, *MAMA* is a testimony to the indomitability of the spirit, of the family, and of the strength of love.

"The surprise of this accomplished first novel is its zest and its extraordinarily positive portrayal of an impoverished family's struggle to overcome its problems. The book will be compared with Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*."

—Publishers Weekly

"When it comes to portraying the authentic style of marginal Americans, Terry McMillan has few peers. Her prose is brilliant and exhilarating."

—Ishmael Reed



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she slipped through closed doors,
wandered through winding hallways,
overheard conversations.
Until someone noticed
the animal smell.

She: I wove the maze we walked in.
I stitched the sheets we slept in.
I fastened the frog to his leather coat.
Big as a cow.
The needle pierced skin.
Blood flowed—or maybe it rushed.

From a distance I felt the heat
I smelled smoke.
He breathed fire.
I saw red.
His coat was warm.
I slit the skin and climbed in.
I tasted the fire beneath the black fur.
I warmed my hands over the simmering heart.
I ate the eyes to satisfy desire.

Originally from Louisiana, Lenora Champagne is a writer, performer and director who now makes her home in N.Y.C. She is presently artist-in-residence at Trinity College in Hartford, CT and is developing a new piece based on Sarah Bernhardt.

The Commercial Break Keith Abbott

When Pete was first dating Cheri Evers, they often sat with her mother in the living room and watched television. Mrs. Evers would only talk every twelve minutes during the commercials. Usually she gave advice on sex.

"If you kids want to make out on the couch," she'd say, "go ahead. I've always said I would rather have you do it here. Cheri will tell you that."

One of her mother's favorite comments on sex was, "You wouldn't buy a pair of shoes without trying them on first, would you?"

She said that over and over. "You can ask Cheri. I've always said that, haven't I?"

Cheri could not wait to leave home. "I've got to get out of that house," she told Pete.

Pete thought Mrs. Evers was cool. He laughed when she said some of the things she did. She was always threatening to tell him about "the airplane," but Pete never did find out what the airplane was. Mrs. Evers was the only mother Pete knew who talked about sex.

Cheri did leave her mother during her senior year. She stayed with her father across town. He was living with a woman in a big house with a swimming pool. He gave Cheri the guesthouse to stay in. Her dad left her alone and let her live her own life. Cheri had told her father that she was tired of acting as the go-between for her mother. Whenever her mother had a fight with her part-time lover or Cheri's younger sister, Cheri would step in and settle it.

"Sometimes I feel like I'm the only adult in that house," she complained. And Cheri was tired of her mother always saying those things to Pete during the commercials.

After graduation, Cheri got a good job, so she moved out of her father's place and rented a house just two blocks away from her mother. This was just temporary until she found a good apartment, closer to her work. From the parking strip behind Cheri's house, there was a clear view of her mom's front porch.

On Friday night, Pete returned from his summer job in Seattle, and he ended up staying the night with Cheri. Pete's mother was gone somewhere and he had her car, so he didn't bother to drive home. He left it parked outside of Cheri's house.

About a month later, Pete drove to Mrs. Evers' house one Monday night to pick up Cheri. They stopped going over there after Cheri had her own place, but because Cheri's oven didn't work right, that evening Cheri was baking a chocolate cake at her mother's house for an office party the next day. Afterward Pete and Cheri were going out on a date.

When Cheri let him in, Mrs. Evers was sitting in the living room, and Pete noticed that the television wasn't on. Pete and Cheri went in the kitchen to mix the cake. After they got the cake in the oven, Pete went back to the living room while Cheri cleaned up. He sat down in a chair opposite her mother, and he looked over at the television again, thinking it odd that the set wasn't on.

Mrs. Evers sat on the couch, looking at the evening light through the picture window. Pete glanced over his shoulder out the window but nothing was going on outside. It was only getting dark.

"You know you don't have to worry."

"Why's that?" Pete said.

"It's real easy to keep tabs on things from over here," her mother said. "Got a good view from here."

"Then you can keep an eye on Cheri for me while I'm working in Seattle."

"Well, maybe I can," she said. "You'd like that too, huh?"

Pete turned away from her, so he was talking toward the kitchen door. "Sure," Pete joked. "I always like to know what's going on."

"Oh, so you'd like to know what's going on," she said. "I hope

you do know what's going on."

Her mother had a look in her eye that Pete had never seen before. It was almost crazy. Pete got a little scared, everything happened so fast. One minute her mother was joking, and the next she was staring like crazy at him.

"Yeah, sure," he said.

"Sure, huh?" Her mother said. "That's okay with you, huh? You're sure, huh? You better be sure."

She waited for him to say something. She wasn't joking anymore. Pete had the feeling that she was about to jump all over him. He didn't know what to say to her.

Cheri came out of the kitchen then. As she walked in, she looked down at her mother on the couch, and then she cut between her and Pete and turned on the television. A commercial was on. Her mother kept staring at Pete. For a second, she glanced at the commercial but quickly turned back to Pete.

Pete thought that Mrs. Evers was about to cry. Cheri stood next to the television, but she didn't say anything. Cheri's mother looked down at the television, and then she brought her head back up and stared at Cheri.

Cheri put her hand on top of the television set, as if she were pushing her mother's gaze back down to the screen.

Her mother slowly lowered her head, and then she watched as a program started.

She didn't look up at Cheri again until Cheri and Pete stopped at the front door to say goodbye before they left with the chocolate cake and went on their date.

KEITH ABBOTT is a writer from the Bay Area. His next book of stories entitled THE FIRST THING COMING is forthcoming this Spring from Coffee House Press.

The Man He Imagined Nicanor Parra

Translated by Edith Grossman

The man he imagined
lives in a mansion he imagined
in the middle of trees he imagined
on the banks of river he imagined

on the walls he imagined
hang old paintings he imagined
unmendable cracks he imagined
pictures of worlds he imagined
in times and places he imagined

every afternoon—afternoons he imagined
he climbs the stairs he imagined
and goes out to the balcony he imagined
the valley he imagined
surrounded by hills he imagined

ghosts he imagined
come down the road he imagined
singing songs he imagined
to the setting sun he imagined
and on the nights when there's a moon he imagined
he dreams about the woman he imagined
who gave him the love he imagined
he feels the old pain
the same pleasure he imagined
and his heart begins beating again
the heart of the man imagined

El hombre imaginario Nicanor Parra

El hombre imaginario
vive en una mansion imaginaria
rodeado de arboles imaginarios
a la orilla de un rio imaginario

de los muros que son imaginarios
penden antiguos cuadros imaginarios
irreparables grietas imaginarias
que representan hechos imaginarios
ocurridos en mundos imaginarios
en lugares y tiempos imaginarios

todas las tardes—tardes imaginarias
sube las escaleras imaginarias
y se asoma al balcon imaginario
a mirar el paisaje imaginario
circundado de cerros imaginarios

sombras imaginarias
vienen por el camino imaginario
entonando canciones imaginarias
a la muerte del sol imaginario

Considered "one of the most influential and accomplished writers in Latin America today, heir to the position long held by his countryman, Pablo Neruda," NICANOR PARRA is the author of ANTI-POEMS: NEW & SELECTED (New Directions), an expanded version of the celebrated Chilean poet's 1967 collection. He will be reading for the first time at The Poetry Project on May 20 with Ishmael Reed. Allen Ginsberg will be reading English translations of Parra's work (translations by EDITH GROSSMAN).

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PAMELA WHITE HADAS

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JOSEPH BRODSKY and ADAM ZAGAJEWSKI*
introduced by Richard Howard

April 27
ROBERT HASS and JORIE GRAHAM
introduced by Sharon Olds

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A CELEBRATION OF LATIN AMERICAN POETRY*
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Zoe Anglesey, Carmen Naranzo and Margarita Carrera

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AN EVENING OF NEW FICTION:
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STEPHANIE VAUGHN and CHRIS SPAIN*
introduced by Russell Banks

June 1
MELISSA GREEN and JAMAICA KINCAID

June 8
LANDSCAPE AND INSCAPE:
BARRY LOPEZ and RICHARD SELZER

*Please join us for a reception following these readings.

All readings will be held at the Manhattan Theatre Club at City Center,
131 W. 55th Street between 6th & 7th Avenues

For tickets call (212) 645-5848 or send check made payable to the Manhattan Theatre Club to: Writers in Performance, Manhattan Theatre Club,
453 W. 16th St., New York, N.Y. 10011

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Yevgeni Yevtushenko

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Renowned Soviet Poet

Reading from his newly released book of poetry

Almost at the End

In his native tongue (Some in English)

Albert C. Todd

Professor of Slavic Languages, Queens College
Reading English Translations

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Carl Rakosi
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Steven Taylor
Peter Rowan
Susan Edwards
Jack Collom
& others

*In residence the entire month.

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Ted Berrigan Scholarship deadline is April 15, 1987.

The Naropa Institute is fully accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

For further information and update for summer or year-round curriculum, contact Anne Waldman, Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, Naropa Institute, 2130 Arapahoe, Dept. APR, Boulder, CO 80302. 303-444-0202.

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Tuesdays

David Leavitt
Barry Yourgrau

March 31 at 8 p.m.

James Purdy
Janice Eidus

April 28 at 8 p.m.

This event made possible with support from Poets and Writers, Inc., which is funded by the Literature Program of NYSCA.

DTW's Bessie Schönberg Theater
219 West 19th Street, New York City
Admission: \$4 TDF Vouchers not accepted
Reservations: (212) 924-0077 Voice/TDD

The Poetry Center of the 92nd Street Y

Readings and Events March, April and May 1987

MAR. 23 SALMAN RUSHDIE

6 PM Interviewed Live in *The Paris Review* Writers-At-Work Series. India's preeminent novelist Salman Rushdie will be interviewed by Shusha Guppy, London Editor of *The Paris Review*. Tickets: \$7

8:30 PM Reads From His Work. Indian author Salman Rushdie's acclaimed novels include *Grimus*, *Shame*, and *Midnight's Children*. His latest book is *The Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey*. Tickets: \$8

MAR. 26 TWO LYRICISTS: JOHN GUARE AND STEPHEN SONDHEIM

8 PM John Guare wrote the lyrics for *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, as well as for his own plays, including *The House of Blue Leaves*. Stephen Sondheim's *Follies*, *A Little Night Music*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *Sunday in the Park with George* have all become landmarks of the American musical theatre. Tickets: \$10

MAR. 30 PARKER HUANG

8:15 PM Chants traditional Chinese poems in an art form now vanishing from China. Tickets: \$6

APR. 5 BIOGRAPHERS AND BRUNCH: PHYLLIS ROSE ON FIVE VICTORIAN MARRIAGES

11 AM-1 PM Phyllis Rose lectures on the personalities involved in five Victorian marriages dealt with in her book *Parallel Lives*. Ms. Rose has also written *Woman of Letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf*. Informal conversation with the biographer over a light brunch following the lecture. Tickets: \$13

APR. 6 CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

8 PM The innovative British playwright, poet and author performs from *War Music*, his new transliteration of Books XVI-XIX of Homer's *Iliad*. Tickets: \$8

APR. 27 "DISCOVERY"/ THE NATION 1987

8:15 PM Readings by the four winners of the thirteenth annual poetry contest sponsored jointly by The Poetry Center and *The Nation* magazine. Tickets: \$6

MAY 4 KERI HULME

8 PM Keri Hulme's first novel *The Bone People*, about her native New Zealand, won both the Pegasus Prize for Literature and the prestigious Booker Prize. *Te Kaihau/The Windeater* is her new book of stories. Tickets: \$8

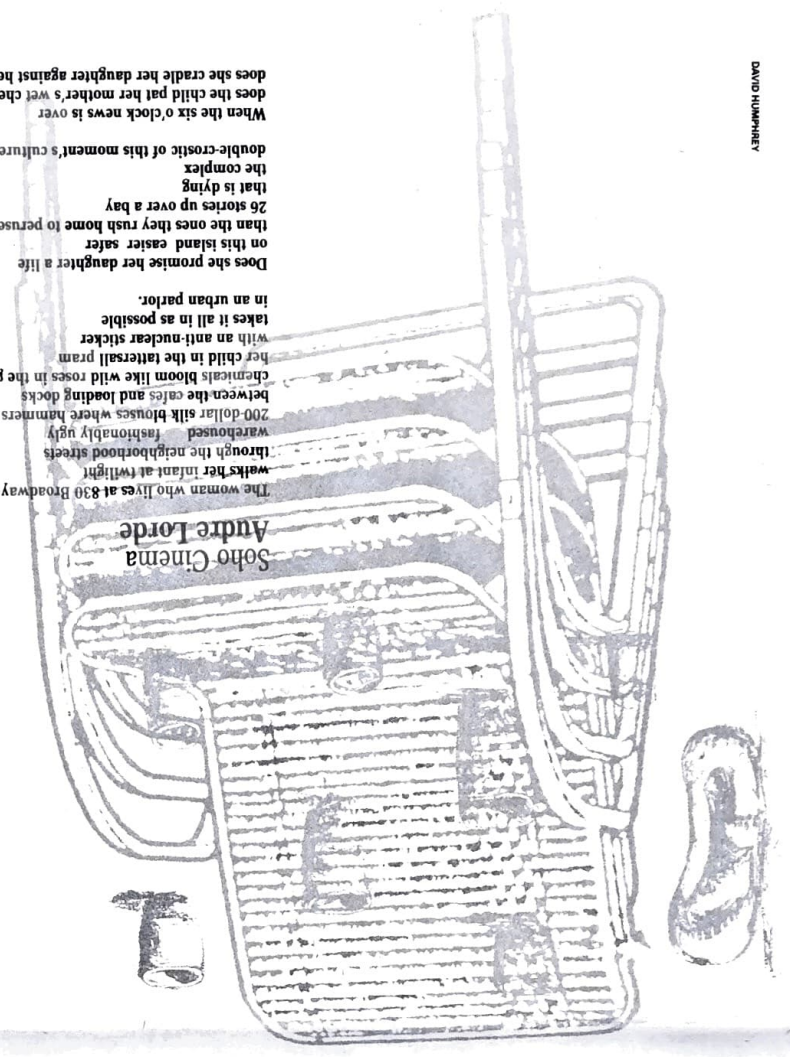
MAY 11 MAY SWENSON AND HENRI COLE

8 PM May Swenson is the author of ten books of poems, among them *New and Selected Things Taking Place*. Henri Cole's first book of poems, *The Marble Queen*, appeared in 1986. Tickets: \$8

Tickets available at the 92nd Street Y Box Office, 1395 Lexington Ave. Or call Y-CHARGE at (212) 996-1100.

The 92nd Street YM-YWHA is an agency of UJA-Federation.





When the six o'clock news is over
 does the child pat her mother's wet cheeks
 does she cradle her daughter against her

Does she promise her daughter a life
 on this island easier safer
 than the ones they rush home to peruse
 26 stories up over a bay
 that is dying
 the complex
 double-crossed of this moment's culture?

The woman who lives at 830 Broadway
 walks her infant at twilight
 through the neighborhood streets
 warhoused fashionably ugly
 200-dollar silk blouses where hammers once hung
 between the cafes and loading docks
 chemicals bloom like wild roses in the gutter
 her child in the latticework tram
 with an anti-nuclear sticker
 takes it all in as possible
 in an urban parlor.

Soho Cinema
 Audre Lorde

and weep for what she has seen
 beside the bed under which they are lying
 dearstink in the mattress
 her son bayoneted to the door in Santiago de Chile
 a corolla of iscise flies crusting her daughter's nose
 army hippos fire into the mourners
 across Bleeker Street
 blood on her Escorffier knives

blood welling in her garbage disposal
 her baby's blood obscuring the screen
 their next decade in living color
 wired from pole to pole
 when the six o'clock news is over
 does she weep for what she has seen?

Or does she will her orange rebozo
 with the Soho magenta fringe
 to a Viques campesina
 six children and no land left
 after the mortars
 and the Navy
 sailing into the sunset.

A self-described "troublemaker black lesbian feminist," AUDRE LORDE
 is also professor of English at Hunter College. This poem is reprinted with
 permission from her most recent book, OUR DEAD BEHIND US.
 published by W.W. Norton.

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 Joel Lewis re-examines
 Ginsberg's HOWL, Lewis
 MacAdams salutes BEATS &
 COMPANY, Bernadette Mayer &

Don Yorty translate
 Catullus... Plus! Lenora
 Champagne sizzles! Juicy tidbits
 from Robert Stone! Jeff
 Weinstein on Joycean cuisine!
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 Visuals by David Humphrey,
 Calvin Reid & Ira Cohen!

Responses to Paul Schmidt's
 Performance Manifesto!
 Luis Francia on tropical
 terrorism! Once again, your very
 essential pull-out calendar for April
 & May & of course, much
 more...