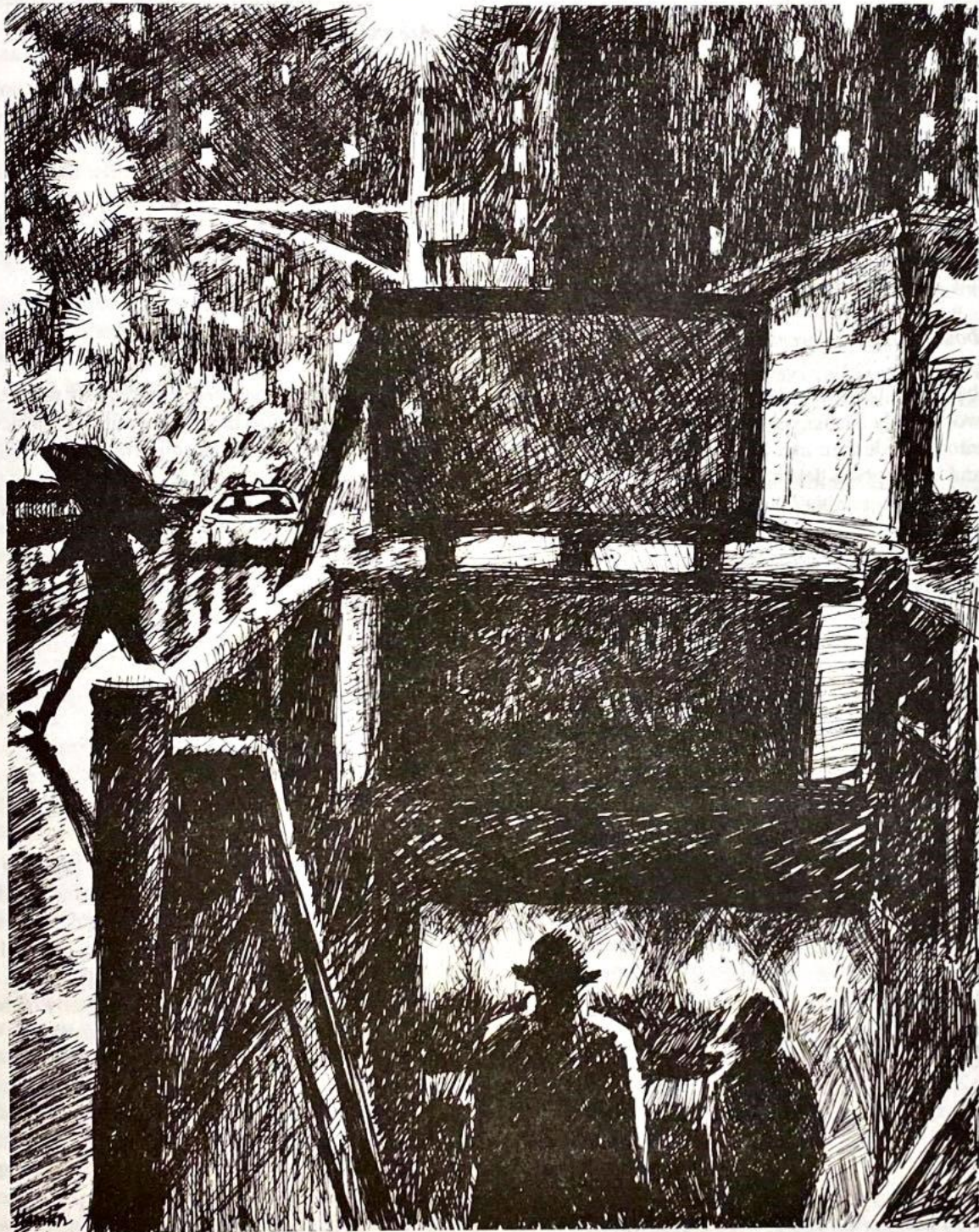


The Poetry Project

The Newsletter of The Poetry Project Ltd, at St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery #128 Apr/May 1988



INTERVIEW: CHARLES BERNSTEIN

by Ted Greenwald

What does it feel like to be a poet in the "postmodern" era?

(laughs) What does it feel like to be anybody in the postmodern era? Is one anybody in the postmodern era? As far as poetry goes, for most people modernism never arrived, so postmodernism seems premature.

Does language have a future?

Language only has a future. And we can find it only in the present. It's too bad many people find the present in language something that makes no sense to them, because if we can't make sense of/with the present then prospects for the future are none too good. And our ability to understand and respond to the past is numbed, if not obliterated.

What about the future of words?

What about the future of words! In a sense there are no words, only languages. And languages have no meaning outside their use. So the future of words and languages is dependent on our doing something with them rather than their doing something with us. We are given the words that we use, but we don't have to pronounce them the way we've been taught, or order them as we have been ordered.

Can poetry develop an economy?

Poetry is always involved with economy at many different levels. The question really is, can poetry evade economy, as Romantic ideology seems to suggest. As one level there's the semantic economy of poetry: accumulation and loss, absorption and repulsion, excess and limitation. At another level, there's the economy of distribution and dissemination: production, context of publication, readings, distribution, response. This second level of poetic economy contributes to the meanings of a poem as much as the first.

What does love got to do with it?

They don't know what love is. I know what love is.

You do?

Love is *only* doing. And acts of love are not the same as talking about them.

What's your sense of the direction poetry's taking as we move into the 21st century?

I think that there's a greater understanding that poetry even within a single language like English cannot be understood as a unitary practice. The differences among poetries are incommensurable. And this radical decentralization of expression opens up the potential for communication of a different sort than we've grown accustomed to. You might call this a revolution in democracy. At the same time, one can expect enormous resistance to the developments.

Are you suggesting that art is democratic?

The kind of democracy I'm talking about is not the majority dictating to and restricting the licenses of the minority, but rather a democracy in which the rights of minorities and the particular individuation of their perspectives are not only protected but fostered. The "English First" movement is perhaps the most visible symbol of opposition to this sort of radical democracy I am talking about.

Sort of like endangered species?

Our species is endangered. Not only by physical annihilation but also mental annihilation, which means greater and greater uniformity of thought, expression and conduct. And uniformity is engendered not limited by the sorts of "either/or choices" which are a product of our consumer society.

What's your favorite movie of the 80s?

Everybody's already answered that question.

Does poetry require inspiration to be produced?

Yes.

How important is boredom to "modernism"?

I think that boredom is often a way of pointing to the inexplicable and the unknown as much as the mundane. The value of putting forward boredom as a positive feature of a work seems strained at this point, but readers will often find it difficult to involve themselves in that which is totally enthralling. If paradise were put on the market there wouldn't necessarily be that many buyers.

What's your favorite weather?

I don't have a favorite weather. And for that reason I don't like it to stay the same too long. This is also an answer to your last question.

Who gets the horse?

Not the horse trader. And not the rider. Maybe nobody should get the horse. Maybe the horse can just go home.

Who does the dishes?

We alternate.

Who gets the girl?

Not the girl trader. And not the rider. Maybe she can go home too. Maybe.

But you can't go home again?

You could if you found the address.

Any advice to young poets?

Look for the address.

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* * *

Cum ipse plectrum maribilis factotum
Grandio decorum ludicare plenus est
Amo digitalis flagrantia moribund
Ammo ipse luminati finitudo
Regio masturboris terminus reglutino
Habitatio potentia paternitus mea
Quod perpetuo obduro nunc nobilis
Causam Excrucio belle fugit veritas
Quisquam fortunatus modo pumex
Ave mediocris grammiticus
Opera circumsilliens modo quamquam
Proximus nostrum ignorare arbitraris

[This fragment has been reconstructed from documents recently discovered near Rome. It is believed to be derived from a poem by Caudio Amberian, who was an advisor to Nero, although little else is known about him. Many lexical and grammatical irregularities characterize this no doubt debased text; the translation provided tries to remain as literal as possible, providing in English an experience close to what it might have been like for the first Latin auditors of this self-cannibalizing work. — Charles Bernstein]

With itself plucked marble, factotum
Grand with ludicrous decoration, is full
I love 'finger stimulation' without shame, deadly
Ammunition itself enfused with final light
The king handles himself terminally, comes unglued
My fatherhood enhouses my potency
On the grounds that perpetual obdurance is now
To conduct torture a pretty flight to truth
Anyone blessed just pumice
Farewell grammatical ordinariness
Works wobbling with only little qualms
Near our arbitrary ignorance

THE FIRING OF DAN REED

Yesterday, Dan Reed, a proofreader at work, went to Clint, the supervisor, and asked about his year-end raise. He didn't like what he was getting and insisted on more. He was fired. Later in the day, he had to be forcibly escorted from Sally Spink's office — she's the personnel director — for refusing to leave until they'd give him his job back.

Today, the word processing room phone would ring one or two times and then it would stop. Sometimes it would ring and by the time someone would answer the caller would hang up. Everyone thinks it was Dan Reed calling to harass us.

Laurie told me Dan Reed once threatened Julie McBee by saying he knew where she lived and would come after her if she left him anymore notes about how he should clean up his mess before he left at 5:30. Julie McBee reported him to the supervisor for that. She said he once asked her: "Do you ever think about going out in a blaze of glory?" Laurie told me this morning, "If you see anyone coming in who looks like Dan Reed, you better hide under the desk."

Nelva and Shirley always call Dan Reed "Norman Bates" behind his back. I said to them, "You two were right about that guy."

"Are you kidding," said Shirley, "I know a crazy man when I see one," while the phone's ringing in the background and Nelva's passing around a piece of legal-size paper headed, "Pun Of The Day," numbered one to ten; the first one I can't remember, but the second was "Revenge of the Nerd," and the third was, "The Proofreader Always Rings Twice."

Some people didn't want to add anything to the list because they felt sorry Dan was fired.

* * *

Later, at dinner, Peggy told me Dan Reed was the real name of the Lone Ranger. I wish that somehow fit into the story of Dan Reed's firing but it doesn't. Dan Reed was not a hero of mine. Even though I thought Nelva and Shirley might be exaggerating his creepiness by calling him Norman Bates, I suspected they were right that he wasn't completely balanced.

When I went into work on the weekend, Building Security had his picture at the front desk. He had told Clint that he would get him one day when he was leaving work.

For the next two weeks, sometimes Dan Reed would stand around in the lobby of the building throughout the whole afternoon and into the evening. Although

we giggled about it and wondered what could possibly be going on in his mind, it made us all feel a little afraid of him. Delise, a friend of Dan's, said he was just doing it because he knew it was scaring us.

"Well, that sounds like psychotic behavior to me," I said, to which she had no retort. She could see my point but didn't want to respond. She still thinks of Dan as a friend, though her phone rings at home, just like at work, and when she answers, the caller hangs up.

* * *

My father, the master of this particular kind of mind fuck, loved to discipline us by instilling this spooky fear of his omniscient power. He would come home from work in the middle of the day to check and make sure we weren't out of the house or speaking to anyone but him to convince us that we would be caught and killed if we tried to sneak out. And the one time we did — all it takes is one time — he caught us and beat the shit out of me in the front seat of the car as we drove around looking for my sister saying, "Where is that whore? She's probably with that boy again. Wait until I get my hands on her." I can remember that feeling of wanting to run away when the car stopped for a red light. I can remember how much I hated myself for not being able to do it.

When we finally found my sister, the ride home was very short and she didn't get beat the way I did. I was so pissed at her for talking me into going out that day so that she could see her boyfriend but I had felt sorry for her. I knew my father was being unreasonable but I couldn't account for how far he would go. I was always afraid for her. I ended up feeling guilty for those few slaps she got.

I stood over the bathroom sink with my shirt off scrubbing the blood out of it. I didn't know where else to go in the house or where to be. I thought if my father saw me washing the blood out of my clothes and staring at my swollen lip in the bathroom mirror he'd come to his senses and realize what he'd done and not beat me anymore.

My brother came home and looked in at me through the bathroom door. He looked as if he were angry at me. He said, "Put a shirt on," like the sight of me was repulsive to him. I tried to win him over by saying I wanted to run away when we were in the car and run to where he was working to get him to stop Daddy before he got to Patricia but I was too afraid to run and I didn't know for sure if he would be there and that Daddy would beat me worse if he caught me and my brother practically spit out, "Of course I was there. Why didn't you come and get me? Look at what he's done to Patty."

We were sent to my Aunt Lucy's house where there was serious discussion of my sister living there forever and when I said, "What about me?" my aunt looked at me guiltily and said, "We'll see, Susie."

My sister, who was, of course, terrified, got to sleep with my cousin Carmella that night, and I, who everyone thought was in really no danger from my father because I was his favorite child, got to sleep on the living room floor.

That night, I woke up to find my father peering through the living room window. He went away when he saw I was awake. I went to my aunt's bedroom and told her my father was looking in the window and she told me to go back to bed, he can't get in. "Anyway, you were probably just dreaming you saw him."

For the next few days, or maybe it was a week, my father sat outside my Aunt Lucy's house in the car. He had tied up our dog to a tree in front of the house as a conciliatory gesture to me. That just made my aunt mad at me. The dog was barking because it was unhappy being tied up all day. So I sat with it, on the lawn, my father maybe thirty feet away from me, whining from the front seat of the car that he was sorry he'd hurt me.

Inside my brain was numb. I didn't know what I was feeling and nobody asked me. I've spent my whole life trying not to feel those things and they are my engineer but I remember this story like a movie I've seen a hundred times and I remember their words like they were just said to me this morning. I remember the cotton plaid shirt I washed the blood out of was pink and yellow with green stripes in it and it had white ribbed cotton sewn into the collar and the sleeves.

*

ALL THAT IS UNRESOLVED

(to the Survivor)

Long ago I threw a rose into my mother's grave; my Aunt Lucy leaned over and whispered into my ear to do it. It was a clear, crisp October day. My sister threw herself over the coffin and wept and screamed she wanted to be buried with my mother. My aunts tore her away from the casket covered with roses and petals fell from between her fingers; the evidence of how tightly she had clung to death lay on the ground at my feet.

My brother must have thought I was a heartless bitch because I didn't cry at my sister's funeral. I guess I'd been expecting her to die since my mother's funeral. She'd tried to kill herself five times and she'd finally succeeded. I understood that my father's sexual and physical abuse was 100

humiliating to live with and I think that one of the reasons my brother and I can't talk to each other is because we both fight off the same impulse to commit suicide; to end the story; to show everyone that some kinds of hurt won't heal, and some kinds of people hate themselves for being strong enough to bear it.

— Susan Cataldo

* * *

SOCIETE ANONYME

Ruffled by the French
I left Paris in a huff
Not much in the mood to take in
The sights of Amsterdam

But I went to the Rijksmuseum first thing
Marveled at the Rembrandts and Vermeers
Tipped my hat to Frans Hals
And ogled the van Goghs

A boat ride through the canals
Found me blowing my nose
For an hour and a half
Noting gorgeous gables and facades

(I thought of *The House of the Seven Gables*)
Burst into tears at Anne Frank's
And listened to American jazz
In some dark dank club

And I suppose I was happy
But really I couldn't breathe
Until I wandered half-heartedly
(a little sick of art by this time)

Into the Stedelijk when I stumbled across
5 or 6 early de Koonings
—suddenly recalling his Dutch heritage
And rooms of Johns Oldenburg Warhol Rosenquist
Lichtenstein

Let the French have their Impressionists
(I was breathing at last
Window seat on a 747 6pm flight home
The sun, a perfect line across the horizon

Vertical, could be a Barnett Newman
Kelly Albers Pollock Marden Frankenthaler
Colored line changing shape and form
Rothko Rothko Reinhardt into night

— Rachelle Bijou

REVIEWS

THE GRAIN OF VOICES: *American Poetry Since 1970: Up Late*, selected and introduced by Andrei Codrescu; Four Walls Eight Windows, New York, 1987. 591 pages. \$12.95 paper.

The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics informs us that the word *anthology* is derived from the Greek words "anthos" (flower) and "legein" (to gather, or pick up) — hence, a bouquet or a gathering of flowers. When, in around 90 B.C., Meleager of Gadra collected his *Garland* — consisting of mostly elegiac epigrams by about fifty poets — the bouquet of flowers became a bouquet of the "flowers" of verse and the sense of the word changed to its present usage.

The *Greek Anthology* was the standard model of anthology-making for generations of Europeans. It was translated into Latin and, later, into European vernaculars and had a profound influence on poets, from Ben Jonson to Bertoldt Brecht. In the thirteen volumes of the unexpurgated edition (1794-1814), its contents ranged from homoerotic verse to epigrams of Christian pieties, riddles to temple inscriptions.

The earliest English poetry anthology was *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557). Other volumes that followed included *A Handfull of Pleasant Delites* (1566), *The Paradyse of Daynty Devises* (1576), and *A Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578). An anthology, if well-edited and distributed, has the ability to shape an entire generation's taste; a prime example being Palgrave's *Golden Treasury of English Poets* (1861), (commonly known as *Palgrave's Golden Treasury*), which had tremendous influence on Victorian-era poetry.

The popularity of the English-language poetry anthology in the 20th century reflects the introduction of printing technologies that reduced the cost of books, the "self-education" movement that began in England in the Twenties, and spread to America and its rising middle class that was able to send its children to college in larger numbers. Anthologists such as Louis Untermeyer and Oscar Williams produced dozens of anthologies, ranging from standard collections of contemporary poets to volumes intended for children. It is with these collections edited by Untermeyer and Williams that the concept of the "anthology piece" solidifies. As the anthology takes a greater legitimizing function in determining the major and minor poets of a period, the poem becomes viewed as an autonomous, fetishized object — a palatable commodity that can easily fit in a massive anthology without disturbing the editor's sense of "balance". Thus

William Carlos Williams is more often represented by his *The Yachts* and *The Widow's Lament in Springtime* (his most atypically "conventional" poems) than by anything else, as these poems seem to fit most editors' notions of what a poem should "look" like. Likewise, both Wallace Stevens and H.D. are more often represented by their earlier work than by the complex poetry of their later years.

In addition to outlets for "official" poetry, the anthology offered a means to disseminate the new poetry that began emerging in the years just before World War I. Amy Lowell's *Some Imagist Poets* (1915, 1916, 1917) and Harriet Monroe & Alice C. Henderson's *The New Poetry* (1917) were many readers' introduction to Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams and the other poets who would eventually create the Modernist canon. Although a number of alternative collections appeared in the wake of Lowell's volumes, none had the impact of Donald M. Allen's *New American Poetry 1945-1960*. Collecting poets of the various underground communities — the Beats, the Black Mountain Poets, and the New York School among them — Allen's book created a new audience of poets and readers who had tired of the dominant *New Critic*-inspired poets and had founded a counter-poetry that manifested itself in the myriad styles of the book's 454 pages. Having gone through some two dozen printings until superceded by the disastrous *Post-Moderns* anthology (1982), the dream of recreating the impact and influence of Allen's timely effort has been many an anthologist's ambition.

The latest entry into this competition is Andrei Codrescu's *American Poetry Since 1970: Up Late*. Clocking in at 591 pages, it is nearly 150 pages longer than *The New American Poetry* and represents the largest gathering of alternative poetries since the massive Something Else Press's *Open Poetry* anthology of the early Seventies (Ron Silliman's *In The American Tree*, though slightly larger than *Up Late*, is specific to Language-Centered writing). Will this make some people happy? Yes. And will some people be upset at Codrescu's editing efforts? No doubt. Next to writing, poets love to bicker amongst themselves more than anything else, and the publication of a new anthology is always sure proof of this theory.

Codrescu firmly plants his anthology within the field staked out by *The New American Poetry*. His is a partisan anthology, documenting the "radical mainstream" of American poetry — the "raw" of that old vaudeville team managed by Robert Lowell: "the Raw and the Cooked" — while avoiding (and decrying) the pitfalls of the "one big happy family" of poetry that is most evidenced in

anthologies such as the Kelly/Leary *A Controversy of Poets* (1965) and Paul Carroll's *Young American Poets* (1969). The majority of the 103 poets collected here are, in the main, products of the last great surge in poetry: the Viet-Nam War era. In that period, it seemed *de rigueur* to have poets reading at demonstrations and teach-ins, while the aspirations of Blacks, women, gays, Hispanics, and, even hippies, found their way into poetry. Simultaneously, creative writing programs took hold at many college campuses and government monies earmarked for art made operations such as the Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church possible. It is also worth noting that the early Seventies represents the last period in which it was possible to survive in the margins of American society and devote most of one's energies to the muses rather than making the month's rent.

Given the preponderance of Ted Berrigan's friends, peers, students and disciples in *Up Late*, it seems appropriate to start off the anthology with his work, as acknowledgement to his enormous influence on American poetry since the mid-60's. A great innovator as well as the supreme documenter of the magic that permeates daily life, he was, in addition, a great proselytizer of poetry that mattered to him. Through him, the poetry of the New York School, as well as that of Philip Whalen and others was spread among the poets of North America and England much in the manner of a Johnny Appleseed, poetry division.

What we have presented to us is a collection of poets united by an anti-formalist/formulaic stance, yet about as distinctive in approach as any gathering in recent years. This is certainly a refreshing break from such heavy loads as Daniel Halpern's *American Poetry Anthology* and its recent successor the Morrow *Anthology of Younger American Poets*. In these and other similarly dreary collections we are given interchangeable groups of poets who seem dedicated to a singular strategy: "mewling melodramas of the singular self" (to use Michael Palmer's apt description). Most of the poetry in these collections seems made from *Mad Libs* books with the operative sentiment seeming to be "I look out on / my backyard / & I am / important." As Codrescu points out in his introductory notes, this poetry fills the lists of virtually all university presses and major publishing houses, while its practitioners make up the faculties of nearly all creative writing programs.

With the exception of about twelve poets usually associated with Language-Centered writing, the work in *Up Late* represents the vast middle ground between careerist MFA-style poetry and the astringencies of experimental poetries. But within this middle, permutations and variations occur.

Eileen Myles, in "On The Death Of Robert Lowell", refutes the arguments for open forms made by Olson and Blackburn, proving that poetic closure is not just for sissies:

*The famous, as we know, are nuts.
Take Robert Lowell.
The old white haired coot.
Fucking dead.*

(p.345)

Terence Winch, of Washington, D.C. (and a member of the terrific Irish band Celtic Thunder), writes funny/sad lyrics of daily victory and defeat, observing the obvious that seems to slip by most of us:

*I stand in the middle of the bright day
posing next to the mailbox,
a glum expression on my face.
I wonder what Pete Rose is doing right now.*

*All I do is drink coffee and smoke.
I want to soak in a tub of ink
& become a masterpiece.
I am tired of the way cab drivers
whine in this city. I love the zone system.*

(from "The Them Decade", p.488)

Although mainstream poetry is often associated with formalism, a leaf-through of *Up Late* reveals that it is always the outsider who is most concerned with structure, rhyme and form. Alice Notley's "After Tsang Chih" is from *When I was Alive* (1980), a volume of poems in mostly traditional forms:

*I was brought up in a small town in the Mohave
Desert.
The boys wouldn't touch me who was dying to be
touched,
because I was too quote
Smart. Which the truck-drivers didn't think as they
looked & waved
On the way through town, on the way to my World.*

(p.43)

Despite the many bright moments of *Up Late*, there is much to be troubled by in the volume. Although selection is, of course, the editor's prerogative, there are too many poets absent that deserve some sort of representation. Where is Michael Lally, certainly a key figure in this poetic community? Or Larry Fagin, Harris Schiff, Yuki Hartman and Ted Greenwald? There is no representation of a number of poets who attended Naropa (Trungpa Rinpoche notwithstanding, certainly a significant dissemination point for an alternate poetics), their numbers

including Denyse (King) DuRoi, David Cope, and Jim Cohn. Equally ignored are the younger poets emerging from the Black Mountain and Objectivist traditions, such as August Kleinzahler and Gustaf Sobin.

Certainly, things are different from twenty-eight years past. It's hard to think of many poets that were left out of *The New American Poetry* that deserved inclusion. But thanks to a population bulge and the increase of college education among the middle class, *Up Late* can hope to give only a sampling of what's going on with the many practicing poets across America. Unfortunately, the large selection in this anthology overwhelms the reader, often giving one or two poem-hits that leave no definite impression. Although Codrescu avoids the temptation to divide poets in sections based along regional or stylistic tendencies (the weakest point of the Allen anthology), the mixed quality of the poetry gives the anthology the effect of a gargantuan magazine, à la Maureen Owen's *Telephone* or an expanded edition of Codrescu's publication, *Exquisite Corpse*. Codrescu's effort to avoid becoming that fearsome redactor *cum* "assistant professor of jargon" (a term he used at the Poetry Project's 20th-anniversary-celebration panel on Post-Modernism) makes the selection in *Up Late* a seemingly slapdash effort, undercutting the editor's desire to document the progress of anti-academic poetry over the last eighteen years.

This indecisiveness spills over into not only the choice of poets, but in the selection of the poetry. If this volume is to document the best works of an era, where is Berrigan's "Red Shift", Notley's "The Prophet", or Anne Waldman's "Baby Pantoum"? And why couldn't more room be made for John Godfrey, Ron Padgett, and Lewis Warsh, whose slim selections certainly do not reflect their significance and influence on the poetry that Codrescu attempts to make a case for.

No doubt fitting 103 poets in 600 pages is more difficult than it seems. And maybe, if the money gods are listening, what is needed are multiple *Up Lates* — by region, school or generation. As anyone affiliated with the schools of non-official poetry knows, the past few years have not been particularly easy. The savaging of the NEA and other grants organizations have put to rest many small presses and magazines. Institutions such as Beyond Baroque and the Poetry Project have faced severe losses of funding. And as for the "official poetry" of the university presses and writing programs, they have long given up the pretense of pluralism, preferring to keep much of the small pie that is American poetry to themselves. Although the effect of so many poets in so much space can be akin to literary "white noise", Codrescu seemed

to have been motivated by making the most of an opportunity not often given to the poets he chose to be in his collection.

Up Late still meets the literal definition of an anthology, it's a bouquet all right — but more like the one you grab from the local Korean grocery late into Valentine's Day, the alstroemerias near-dead but the carnations look okay and it's enough to pass muster to all but the most discerning. *Up Late* is more like Anne Waldman's *World* anthologies than the *New American Poetry* for our time, a chunk of reading more reflecting the editor's eye than an edifice being put up for future generations of readers. And as I read it with alternate doses of pleasure and frustration, it's still a certain relief from much that is passed off as the writing of our age. And although this may not be the normal criterion for judging an anthology, I was pleased to find work by poets such as Janet Hamill and Bill Kushner, individuals who have written much fine work with little critical recognition. Maybe one *New American Poetry* was enough. Or, perhaps, a volume will finally emerge that will carefully document and evaluate the groups of poets that have emerged in its wake. In any case, *Up Late* offers enough of the real to suit the many different types of human receiving sets.

— Joel Lewis

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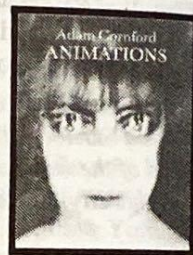
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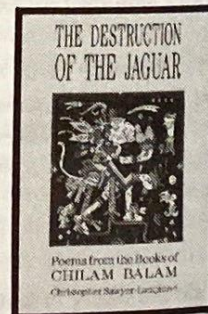
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FACTS OF THE HEART: *Living By Design*, Fleming Meeks; COPE, 1987. \$10, hardcover. (Distributed by SUN, 347 W. 39th St. 7n, New York, NY 10018.)

Imaginative range, depth, style — in fact, every aspect of *Living By Design* belies both its size and occasion: a first book of twenty-seven pages.

It's a beautifully designed book as well. And one way or another, the poems seem to play off the title: "design" as pattern, plan, diagram, theory, that Meeks seeks out or discards amid romantic and social predicaments, or the overwhelming randomness of city life.

Many of the pieces are love poems set against an abstract backdrop (topographical maps, Manhattan gridlock, nautical charts, galactic exploration) in which the author, on his allegorical voyages, often finds himself at sea. What comes to his rescue are "Facts of the Heart" and events that reveal what Whitman called "the glory of the commonplace."

The author's approach is shifty. Take his word for it:

*...and I think poetry is, for the most part, magic
and sleight of hand, but I also think of Philip
Marlowe
and Fast Eddie Felson and the entire American
tradition
of fast talkers to whom I owe my survival.*

(from "Two Mornings")

He likes to adapt a scientist's authoritative, objective tone to describe his own observations and insights. The opening stanza of "Emotional Cartography," which reappears in altered form, "proven", as a coda, is a brief mock-empirical list of conclusions. The entire poem conveys a familiar scene: an individual's delight and consternation in the face of scientific advances.

*I feel lost and the careful diagramming
of the solar system makes me feel even more lost.
Waiting for the subway I read that Saturn's rings
are made of dust particles and ice.
'By 1990 Voyager is expected to leave the solar
system,
becoming a silent wanderer in interstellar space.'
I shiver and wait.*

(from section 2, "Emotional Cartography")

To historic as well as scientific speculation Meeks prefers his own discoveries (*Love speaks with an ordinary voice*) and the certainties of the imagination, as in the poignant elegy "Hart Crane by

Edward Hopper". "Still Life With Apples," a subtle turn on Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," ends with a celebration of the actual (*Two victorious apples.*). He quotes Einstein (*Direct observation of facts / has always had for me a kind of magical attraction.*) and invokes Mayakovsky as he argues for *a true marriage / of romanticism and the literal world*. More than one poem begins with a *film noir* narrator: *She was a thin brunette with quick eyes / and a slightly crooked smile, and / I was about to duck into the laundry for my shirts / when I caught her eye in the rush-hour crowd.*

Historian, reporter, detective, poet, scientist: all fact-finders, alternate personae that Meeks presents in a clear, engaging style; at times a mix of mischief and sincerity — and undeniable lyricism, as is evident in the title poem.

— Paul Violi

LIVING BY DESIGN

*The avenue is rife with intricacies
of the beauty of women. The bright sky
of midafternoon provokes a quiet drama
in the shadows, bold and delicate,
in harmony with the widening eye.
The sky is as blue as a deep breath,
as unblemished and alive as the click of heels
across the sidewalk. A steady chorus
of sympathetic vibration is rising,
as deep and as blue and as timeless as the breath.*

*

*

POEM

Times Square, then Penn Station
Or the other way
Where you are going
With brochure and suitcase
Sitting on a bench, reading.
Going, gone.

Binoculars, please.
What are we looking at?

MUSEUM PIECE

I'll be your mascara.
You be my whip.
When it comes to that
To allow no exclusion
For the parts we must play.
I am your photograph.
You are my museum.
Second floor, please.

— Yuki Hartman

Announcements

The Newspaper, a Brooklyn bi-weekly with 28,000 circulation, seeks high-quality poetry pertaining to Brooklyn, or by Brooklyn authors, for its new (ongoing) poetry section. Send 5 to 7 poems (with SASE), plus a short bio, to: Wyatt Townley, Poetry Editor, *The Newspaper*, 211 Smith St., Brooklyn, NY 11201.

CALL FOR POETS' THEATER SCRIPTS for The Poetry Project Theater Festival, to be held May 7-9 at the Upstairs Theater (above the Parish Hall). You are invited to include production ideas, including possible directors and cast members. Send to Bob Holman at the Poetry Project Office, St. Marks Church, 2nd Ave at 10th St., New York, NY 10003.

Bernadette Mayer and Tom Savage will be conducting poetry workshops at the Zen Mountain Monastery, Mt. Tremper, New York from May 10th to 15th. For further information, contact Denise Murphy at 914-688-2228.

Publisher urgently needs stories for grades 7 through 10 (2400 words) with contemporary, multicultural settings and strong female protagonists. Aboriginal settings are welcome. No history or poetry. Contact Alan Simpson, Senior Editor of Language Arts, Addison-Wesley Publishers Ltd, 26 Prince Andrew Pl., Don Mills, Ontario, M3C 2H4, Canada.

\$1000 in prizes in the 7th Annual National Literary Contest sponsored by the Arizona Authors' Association. "Since 1980, AAA's literary contest has been a stepping stone for thousands of writers throughout the United States," observes Executive Director Mary Westheimer. For contest rules, send SASE to AAA National Literary Contest, 3509 E. Shea Blvd, Ste 117P, Phoenix, AZ 85028. Deadline July 29, 1988.

The International Women's Writing Guild will hold its annual summer writing conference (for the 11th year) at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. July 29 - August 5, 1988. Open to any woman interested in using writing for personal and/or professional growth, the conference will offer close to 40 workshops. For further information, contact: The IWWG, PO Box 810, Gracie Sta., New York, NY 10028 (212-737-7536).

The Rockland Center for the Arts sponsors Writers-in-Residence opportunities for published writers of fiction or poetry for four- to six-month residencies. To apply, send cover letter, bio, publishing history, samples of published writing and a proposal for workshops, readings or other community activity to: Rockland Center for the Arts, Writers-in-Residence

Program, 27 S. Greenbush Rd., West Nyack, NY 10994. Deadline is November 1, 1988. (Maximum grant is \$3,500 for a 4- to 6-month residency. Forty percent of time is generally allocated for the community portion and 60% for writing pursuits. Residency does not include room and board.)

For further information about the Dog Museum of America, call (212) 696-8350.

The magazine *The Reaper* will award \$500 to the author of the best essay on the subject "Fiction After Minimalism" and will print the essay in issue number 19. Maximum length is 6,500 words, and there is no minimum length (which, considering the subject, makes a certain sense). Send essay and a SASE to: Barbara Haas, 422 Hayward, Ames, Iowa 50010. Deadline is May 15.

The National Endowment for the Arts is conducting a search for candidates to fill the position of Assistant Director of the Literature Program. Inquiries concerning the position's responsibilities may be directed to Stephen Goodwin at 202-682-5451.

IN DIRIAMBA

Holding green leaves in Diriamba
Designer jeans at the "hípica" in Diriamba
We picked our wife in Diriamba
Brass blazing sounds of Spain in Diriamba
Children throwing coal at us in Diriamba
Wish you were here, taking pictures of me in
Diriamba

Rushing for a half-naked dip in Poneloya
Home run into the banana trees in Masatepe
Yellow and white Vatican flags in Masaya,
"por las fiestas de San Sebastián."
Quick through San Marcos
into Niquinihomo, Sandino's town -
a stop in the square
where laundry and martyrs meet.

Back to Managua
for the 5:15 mass at candlelight -
Barrio Rigüero, Santa María de los Angeles Church,
Italian muralists, Dominican monks from Vermont--
All of us praying hope
under the dark beam
of Managuan nights.

— Félix Tejada, Tim Pratt
25 January, 15 February 88
Managua, Nicaragua; New York, New York

4 Open Reading

7 **5 LECTURES: POETRY OF EVERYDAY LIFE.** BERNADETTE MAYER's newest book is the forthcoming *Sonnets*. She is a former Director of The Poetry Project, where she is currently teaching a writing workshop. ALICE NOTLEY has published over a dozen collections of poetry, most recently *At Night the States*, from Yellow Press. RON PADGETT co-edited the historic *Anthology of New York Poets*. A recent Guggenheim recipient, his *Among the Blacks* is forthcoming from Avenue B Press. RON SILLIMAN is a well-known theorist on contemporary American poetics. Widely published in *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* and elsewhere, his books include *The New Sentence* and *ABC*. LORENZO THOMAS has done much to make visible the work of Black and experimental writers. He teaches at the University of Houston and his books include *The Bathers*, and *Chances Are Few*.

8 **PANEL: THE POETICS OF LIBERATION.** CHARLES BERNSTEIN's recent books include *The Sophist*, and *Artifice of Absorption*. He co-edited *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E*. RACHEL BLAU DUPLESSIS is a scholar of modernist women writers and contemporary poetics, and is the author of *Tabula Rose*, *Wells*, and *Gypsy Moth*. GARY LENHART is the editor of a new literary magazine, *Transfer*, and has written, among other books, *Bulb in Socket*, and *Drunkard's Dream*. KOFI NATAMBU's books of poetry include *Intervals*, and the forthcoming *The Melody Never Stops*. He is the editor of *Solid Ground*, an interdisciplinary journal of the arts. CARMEN VALLE's forthcoming book of poems is titled *Vivir No Es Sinónimo de Maroma*. She is included in the *Anthology of Contemporary Latin American Literature 1960-1984*. ROBERTO ECHAVARREN has translated John Ashbery and other American poets into Spanish. His own books include *Animaccio*, and *Aura Amara*.

READING. KENWARD ELMSLIE is a prolific librettist, playwright, poet and performer, whose most recent books are *City Junket* and *26 Bars*. JOHN GODFREY's latest books are *Midnight on Your Left*, and *Where the Weather Suits My Clothes*. BARBARA GUEST is a distinguished poet and scholar and an early member of the New York School of poetry. Her books include *The Blue Stairs*, *Seeking Art*, and the recent *H.D. Herself Defined*. CHARLOTTE CARTER is one of the best-kept secrets of the Lower East Side. She is teaching a writing workshop at The Poetry Project, and has written *A Sheltered Life*, a novel.

9 **PANEL: THE NEW YORK SCHOOL.** DORE ASHTON is a renowned art critic and scholar, whose books include *Out of the Whirlwind*, and *The New York School: A Cultural Reckoning*. JANE FREILICHER's paintings grace the permanent collections of major museums including the Metropolitan, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Whitney. CHARLES NORTH's latest book of poems is *Leap Year*. He has written critical essays of John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, and James Schuyler, and presently teaches at Pace University. TONY TOWLE's books include *New and Selected Poems 1963-1983*, and *Autobiography*, and is an NEA and Frank O'Hara Award winner. ANNE WALDMAN melts the divisions between poetry, drama and song with her fiery, lyrical work. Her most recent book is *The Romance Thing*. She directs the writing program at the Naropa Institute. JOHN YAU is a poet and art critic and author of *Corpse and Mirror*.

PANEL: **NEW FORMS/NEW FUNCTIONS.** MEI-MEI BERSSENBRUGGE's collections of poetry include *Heat Bird*, and

Random Possession. *Empathy* is forthcoming. She teaches at Brown University and Naropa. JOEL OPPENHEIMER is a renowned Black Mountain poet and author, most recently of *New Spaces*, from Black Sparrow Press. CARL RAKOSI is a central figure in the Objectivist movement, author of *Ere Voice* and *Collected Poems*. LORENZO THOMAS (see above). PAUL VIOLI's books include *Splurge*, *Harmatan*, and, most recently, *Likewise*. REBECCA WRIGHT is the author of *Elusive Continent*, and *Brief Lives*.

10 **READING: ALLEN GINSBERG's** historic poem *Howl* became the symbol of the Beat movement. Today he is Distinguished Professor of English at Brooklyn College. His *Collected Poems 1947-1980*, *The Annotated Howl*, and *White Shroud: Poems 1980-1985* have been published by Harper & Row. CARL RAKOSI (see above). LESLIE SCALAPINO is the publisher of O Books, the author of *Considering How Exaggerated the Music Is*, and *that they were at the beach*. MICHAEL SCHOLNICK has won an NEA grant, is the author of *Beyond Venus*, and *Perfume*, co-edited *Mag City*, and writes art reviews for *Cover* and elsewhere.

11 DANIEL GARRETT, a contributing editor to the male feminist magazine, *Changing Men*, grew up in Louisiana and has lived in New York since 1979. Law student SHEILLA DESERT was born in Haiti and grew up in Queens. DAVID MEANS is a graduate of Columbia's MFA writing program. He comes from Michigan and now lives in Manhattan. T. OBATALA is a psychotherapist who lives in New Jersey and has studied with Amiri Baraka.

13 LORENZO THOMAS (see above). REBECCA WRIGHT (see above).

17 See notes on LECTURE SERIES on page after Calendar.

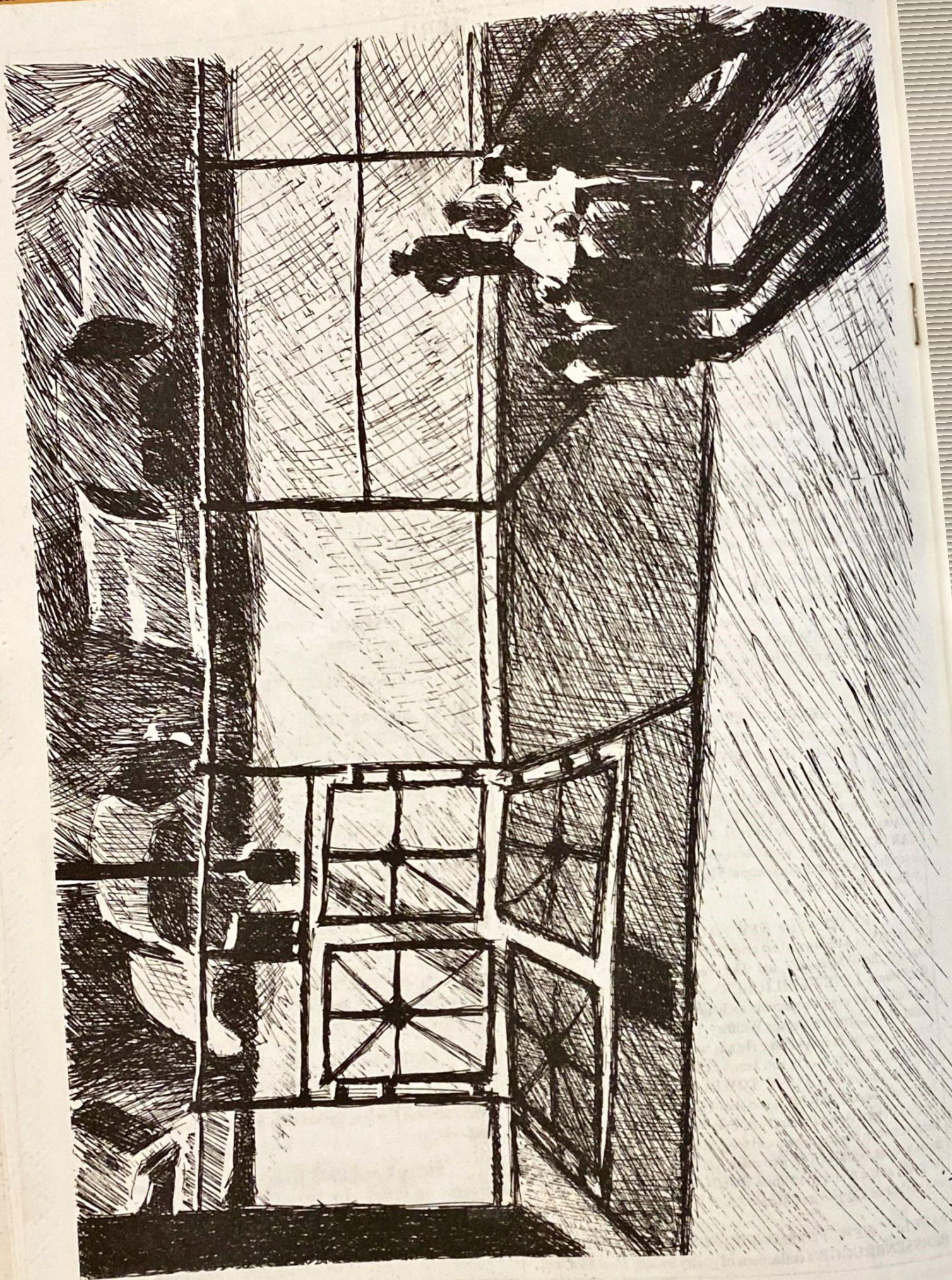
18 GERARD RIZZA ("dear tenderheart, im here at the terminal again"), HELEN DECKER ("three, he discovered japan"), C.F. BORGMAN ("the fourth of O"), and GARY GULLO ("bunch of frigin poets"), all live in Staten Island and are associated with the magazine *Harbor Scenes*.

20 LOIS ELAINE GRIFFITH's plays include *Coconut Lounge*, *Dancehall Snapshots*, and *Hoodlum Hearts*; *White Sirens* was produced by Joseph Papp at The Public Theater. Her stories have appeared in *Heresies* and elsewhere. HARRIS SCHIFF won the Open Voice Award in 1987. He has also won an NEA Fellowship in poetry and was a 1987 NYFA Fellow. His books include *In the Heart of the Empire*.

24 SIMON PETTET's *Lyrical Poetry* collects ten years of work, including poems from two earlier, out-of-print books, *An Engima*, and *Other Lyrics*.

25 PENNY ARCADE, former teenage superstar for Andy Warhol, has worked extensively with John Vaccaro and Ellen Stewart. MARGO HOWARD-HOWARD is the author of *I Was a White Slave in Harlem*, forthcoming from Four Walls Eight Windows.

27 VICTOR BOCKRIS' books include *With William Burroughs* and *Uptight: The Velvet Underground Story*. GERARD MALANGA is the photo-archivist for the NYC Parks Dept. His books include *This Will Kill That* and the forthcoming *In Public, In Private: Pictures 1969-89*.



The Poetry Project

St. Mark's Church
New York, New York 10003

Second Ave. & Tenth St.
(212) 674-0910

APRIL

- 4 Open Reading
Daniel Garrett, T. Obatala, David Means
& Sheilla Desert
- 11 Lorenzo Thomas & Rebecca Wright
- 13 Gary Gullo, Helen Decker, C.F. Borgman
& Gerard Rizza
- 18 Lois Elaine Griffith & Harris Schiff
- 20 Penny Arcade & Margo Howard-Howard
- 27 Victor Bockris & Gerard Malanga

1988 Symposium

- 7-10 **Poetry of Everyday Life.** four days of readings, performances, lectures, discussions and parties with Allen Ginsberg, Carl Rakosi, Ed Sanders, Anne Waldman, Barbara Guest, Bernadette Mayer, Joel Oppenheimer, Paul Vioni, Mel-Mel Berssenbrugge, Alice Nottley, Ron Padgett, Ron Sillman, Lorenzo Thomas, Charles Bernstein, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Gary Lenhart, Kofi Natambu, Carmen Valle, Roberto Echavarren, John Godfrey, Charlotte Carter, Dare Ashtan, Jane Freilicher, Charles North, Tony Towle, John Yau, Leslie Scalapino, and Michael Schainick.
All events \$10, \$7 for Poetry Project members. Symposium passes: \$50 & \$100. Call the Project office for detailed schedule.

17

Lecture Series

Editing Literary Magazines, with Bradford Morrow, Jennifer Moyer, Kurt Hollander, Susan Sherman, Catherine Texier & Michael Amnasin

24

Book Party

Simon Pettet's Lyrical Poetry (Archipelago Books). 4 pm, admission free.

MAY

- 2 Open Reading
- 4 Screening: Films by Rudy Burckhardt, Abigail Child, Peter Hutton & Holly Fischer
- 9 Rochelle Kraut and Ann Rower
- 11 Steve Levine & Amy Gersfiter
- 16 Karen Minzer & Sparrow
- 18 Ron Padgett & Ed Friedman
- 23 Ethie Stearns, Todd Pinney, & Lee Ann Brown
- 25 Students from The Poetry Project workshops
- 30 Maggie Dubris & Diane Burns

1

Lecture Series

Diane Di Prima on The Ode to the West Wind as a Magical Invocation

6-8

Poets Theater Festival

Three days of plays written, directed and performed by poets, including new works by Pedro Pietri, Stephen Paul Miller, Taylor Mead and the members of the Poets Theater Workshop. Produced by Bob Holman.

All events begin at 8 pm, with admission by contribution of \$5 (unless otherwise noted). Programs subject to change.

MAY

- 1 **DIANE DI PRIMA** (see notes in LECTURE SERIES).
- 2 **Open Reading**
- 4 **RUDY BURCKHARDT** is a longtime avant-garde film maker. Last year MOMA had a retrospective of his work. **ABIGAIL CHILD** wrote *From Solids*, and *Climate/Plus*; her film *Mayhem* was featured in the 1987 Black Maria film festival. A solo-show of **HOLLY FISCHER's** films took place at The Arsenal, in Berlin, in March. **PETER HUTTON** teaches film at Bard College, and won the Dutch Film Critics Prize in 1984.
- 6 **BOB HOLMAN** (see notes in WORKSHOPS).
- 9 **ROCHELLE KRAUT** coordinated the Monday Night Series at The Poetry Project from 1980 to 1983. She has written *Circus Babies*, and the forthcoming *Art in America*. **ANN ROWER's** book of stories, *If You're A Girl* will soon appear; she has also co-written a screenplay, *Sadness at Leaving*, with poet Chris Kraus.
- 11 **STEVE LEVINE's** books include *Three Numbers*, and *The Cycles of Heaven*. **AMY GERSTLER** is a poet and fiction writer from Los Angeles, and co-editor of *Snap*. Her books include, most recently, *The True Bride*.
- 16 **KAREN ("X") MINZER's** most recent book is *Space Company*. She lives in Dallas, where she runs a weekly cable-TV poetry program. **SPARROW** is the editor of *Big Fish*, a magazine published in Denver, London, New York, Paris, Jerusalem, and Calcutta.
- 18 **RON PADGETT** (see April 7). **ED FRIEDMAN** is the Artistic Director of The Poetry Project and founder of the Project's Monday Night Series. His multi-media performances have taken place at The Kitchen, MOMA, etc.; his books include *La Frontera*, and *The New York Hat Line*. Forthcoming is *Humans Work*.
- 23 **ETHIE STEARNS** and **TODD PINNEY** live in San Francisco and edit the magazine *Human Means*. Both are Naropa graduates. **LEE ANN BROWN** is recently graduated from Brown University. Her film will be shown at The Collective, and her work has been published in *Southern Poetry Review* and *Black Mountain II Review*.
- 25 Students from The Poetry Project's 1987-1988 workshops.
- 30 **MAGGIE DUBRIS** was born in Augusta, Georgia and has lived for the last ten years in New York. She writes and publishes poetry, plays guitar and bass, and writes songs for the *Lulu Review*. **DIANE BURNS** sings, and wrote *Riding the One-Eyed Ford*.

NEWSLETTER

The Poetry Project Newsletter, edited by Tony Towle, will be published bi-monthly, November through June, with news of Project events, essays, reviews, poems, prose, vital information, letters, etcetera. The Newsletter will be sent free to all members of the Poetry Project. Subscriptions available only to institutions @\$20 per year. (See full membership information on back cover.)

Drawings for cover and calendar for April/May issue by Louise Hamlin. Layout by Jean Holabird.

LECTURE SERIES

Sunday, April 17 at 8 pm: *Editing Literary Magazines*. **BRADFORD MORROW**, editor of *Conjunctions*, which will be published by Macmillan starting with issue #12; **KURT HOLLANDER**, editor of the *Portable Lower East Side*, which will feature Latin American Poets of New York in its next issue; **CATHERINE TEXIER**, co-editor of *Between B & C*, an anthology due from Penguin in April; **SUSAN SHERMAN**, editor of *IKON*; and **MICHAEL AMNASIN**, editor of *Ottotole*. **JENNIFER MOYER**, co-publisher of Moyer & Bell and former director of CCLM, will moderate.

Sunday, May 1 at 8 pm: *Ode to the West Wind as Magical Invocation*. This lecture by **DIANE DI PRIMA** will be based on a chapter of her forthcoming book on Shelley. She will discuss her theory that Shelley was working as a magician and will demonstrate how this poem followed a specific magical invocation.

DIANE DI PRIMA's Shelley: A Personal View will be published by *Here Books*. Her 22 volumes of poetry include the recently published *Wyoming Series*; she has founded the *Poets Press* and co-founded *The New York Poets Theater*; she teaches at the *Naropa Institute*.

WORKSHOPS

"Poetry and Prose" taught by **Bernadette Mayer**, Tuesdays at 7 pm (ongoing through May). A study of etymologies, subjects, objects, long forms, eloquence, mythologies, field guides, dream-work, schools and hermetism. General training for the perception and communication of the whole and its parts. Athletic Aesthetics.

BERNADETTE MAYER is a former Director of the Poetry Project. Her books include *Mutual Aid*, *Utopia* (United Artists) and *Midwinter Day* (Turtle Island Foundation).

"Prose Fiction and Poetry" taught by **Charlotte Carter**. Fridays at 7 pm (ongoing through May). A prose workshop encompassing straight-ahead narrative as well as other forms of writing not confined by traditionals of "the story." An ongoing focus on the larger work, novels in progress, collections, etc.

CHARLOTTE CARTER is the author of *Sheltered Life* (Angel Hair). She has studied with **Paul Bowles** in Morocco. A CAPS grant recipient, she is presently at work on a novel.

"Poet's Theater Workshop" taught by **Bob Holman**, (Saturdays at noon) April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. First, an introduction to the history, from Greek antiquity to Jane Bowles/Frank O'Hara/Kenneth Koch, with special emphasis on Futurism/Dada/Artaud. Then it's off to the races as theory becomes rehearsal: workshop members' writings become dares to directors and actors (who are likewise workshopers) and take shape as performances at the Poets Theater Festival, Friday through Sunday, May 6, 7, and 8, at the St. Mark's Church in the upstairs theater.

BOB HOLMAN is a poet, performer, and director. He recently directed the epic *Stop at Nothing* (Zhonzinsky-Rupel) at the Kitchen, and is adapting *Mayakovsky's Mystery (History) Bouffe (Goof)* for the Shaliko Theater Company. His latest book is *Panic DJ*: Performance Text*, a collection of poems, raps and songs, published by VRI Theater Library.

Below are some of the responses to the first four (due to limitations of space) questions of the *Questionnaire* which appeared in the last (February/March) issue of the Newsletter. Selected answers to the remaining questions will be printed in our next issue:

Describe where you write:

- In a thatched cottage. (Ron Padgett)
On paper. (Charles Bernstein)
In the basement (Richard Elman)
...almost anywhere... (Daisy Aldan)
At my desk, which faces a brick wall perfectly suitable for repeatedly bashing one's head against.
(Reagan Upshaw)
In bed / In my office / In the kitchen (Dick Higgins)
I don't understand "where"? In my mind? In my notebook? In my house? In Central New York? In the 1980s? With "loss" on my mind? From my center? With God on my mind? (Robert E. Kimm)
Usually in bed... (Annabel Levitt)
In the light. / In Outlying Districts. (Anselm Hollo)
Where I find myself - at present, usually my apartment in Chelsea. (James Schuyler)
Here (Steve Toth)
Describe my mind. (Steve Levine)
In my bedroom on an 8ft x 2 1/2-3ft white board supported by 2 black 2-drawer filing cabinets.
(Victor Bockris)
Everywhere (Paulette Licitra)
My typewriter sits in a corner of our front room, by a window that overlooks Broadway. I've always had my typewriter by a window, even when that window looked out on an airshaft or the exit ramp of the Williamsburg Bridge. (Gary Lenhart)
In your mind (Charles Haseloff)

Describe your audience/readers:

- My mother is 5 foot 4, 118 lbs... (Ron Padgett)
Born after 1900; average build. (Charles Bernstein)
Aside from fellow-poets and a few painters, I don't know who reads poetry. (Tom Savage)
The happy few; and some who are not. (Richard Elman)
I used to imagine millions... (Reagan Upshaw)
They have excellent taste. / Few teach. (Dick Higgins)
I wish I could. My dog? (Robert E. Kimm)
There is only one reader of my recent work. His life is part of mine. (Annabel Levitt)
My readers? Hello? hello...? (Anselm Hollo)
Informed, cultivated, personable. (James Schuyler)
International, young, hip. (Victor Bockris)
Whoever I can get (Paulette Licitra)
Someone from the Sanctuary (bar), Iowa City, may remember me. (Sheila Toth)
I like to think more people would be interested if I were on tv occasionally or published in the *New York Times* about once a month. (Gary Lenhart)
Good friends, aliens & ghosts (Steve Toth)
Nice (Charles Haseloff)
They're totally like me and yet we're wholly not alike. They're anxious to read my poems and yet could care less. They eschew the notion of truth because living with the Truth is their lot. The truth is, they've got a lot of cash and won't give me a penny! They're also flat busted and imagine me wealthy. (Steve Levine)

Do you think there is such a thing as "regional" poetry?:

- No. I mean, yes. (Ron Padgett)
I occasionally write poems that would require explanation outside NYC. (Tom Savage)
No. (Daisy Aldan)
Nope (Richard Elman)

I was included in a magazine from Amherst, Mass. a couple of years back... There was one other New Yorker, and I didn't have to look in the contributors' notes to find that he was [a] *paisano*.
(Reagan Upshaw)

Yes: it reflects points of taste which have developed, often almost arbitrarily, in geographical areas...
(Dick Higgins)

Sort of. Why not. Let her move in with him if she wants. See how she likes it. (Robert E. Kimm)

I do, in a manner of speaking... (Annabel Levitt)

All poetry is regional and temporal and politico-cultural and inexpensive. Then, there's dialect jokes too.
(Anselm Hollo)

Yes. (James Schuyler)

Yes. (Victor Bockris)

I'd rather find ways to disregard it. (Paulette Licitra)

California poets a couple of years ago (all 10-20 of them) tended toward punk. California is notorious for guard stations at the borders where traditionally all books are confiscated from travelers and there is one bookstore per million people. Palm trees turn up in most Calif. poetry but those could be in Texas or Florida. (Sheila Toth)

When I sent the first issue of *Transfer* to a West Coast distributor, I received a polite reply informing me that they decided not to distribute it, "the primary reason being we have difficulty selling predominantly East Coast magazines." And from what I hear from a friend who attended the "Cowboy Poetry Festival" in Salmon, Idaho last fall, you could pair any one of those guys with the editor of the PP Newsletter and it would be quickly evident to any reader or listener which one hailed from west of New Jersey. (Gary Lenhart)

Of course. You've heard of the poetry of the Lower Lumber? Or of the Oral Tradition which arises from the Tongue, detouring the Brain? (Steve Levine)

What does the term "school" imply, when used for a group of writers?:

Not much. (James Schuyler)

Leisure. (Ron Padgett)

That the person using it hasn't read much of what he or she is talking about. Or: Schools are made to be broken. (Charles Bernstein)

A number of writers surface at the same time or place and find themselves lumped together under some moniker. (Tom Savage)

Something fishy. (Steve Levine)

People who work in a similar style - or who imitate a good poet who introduces a new vision.

(Daisy Aldan)

Uptight. (Victor Bockris)

It's usually an oversimplification. (Annabel Levitt)

Places they like to hang out in, in their minds. Or places people such as reviewers and critics *think* the writers like to hang out in. (Anselm Hollo)

Similar to a school of fish or a grade school. If fish - individuals who all swim in the same direction when startled, such as by seeing a shadow/shark. If a grade school - immature individuals who amuse themselves by annoying one another and pulling each others' hair. (Sheila Toth)

They share the same teachers. (Gary Lenhart)

"Schools" in the sense of people who think alike & write alike rarely last more than a few days.

(Steve Toth)

*

Raising Poetic Capital (Letter Received)

Dear Sir:

I am giving myself the pleasure of sending you the enclosed poems. Although I like writing poems I have not had the opportunity to introduce myself openly to international poets. Please, I need only \$100 travellers checks to buy more materials, and send more copies to you people.

Kindest regards,

THE NAROPA INSTITUTE

SUMMER WRITING PROGRAM 1988

JUNE 26 - JULY 23



Anne Waldman (Director), Allen Ginsberg (Director Emeritus), Diane di Prima, William S. Burroughs, Marianne Faithfull, Bobbie Louise Hawkins, Stan Brakhage, Harry Smith, Fielding Dawson, Andrei Codrescu, Anselm Hollo, Kenward Elmslie, Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, Jack Collom, Steven Taylor, Reed Bye, Jane Augustine, Susan Edwards, Peter Lamborn Wilson, Susan Noel, Jonathan Robbins, Mary Kean, Marni Grant.

The Naropa Institute Summer Writing Program is an intensive month-long program of writing workshops, lectures, faculty-student interviews, readings, colloquiums.

WEEK I June 27 - July 3 CONTEMPLATIVE WEEK

WEEK II July 4 - 10 SURREALIST CONFERENCE

WEEKS III & IV July 11 - July 23:

MUSIC & LYRIC COLLABORATIONS/PERFORMANCE WEEKS

The Summer Writing Program is designed for students willing to take a close look at the process and act of writing, whether prose, poetry, or experimental forms, and to generate an atmosphere of exploration and discovery where participants study and write in dialogue with some of the most interesting and provocative writers of our time.

The program is designed for participants of all ages and backgrounds whose relation to their writing practice is based on growth rather than solely on achievement. Beginners and experienced writers are equally welcome. Students from other institutions or degree programs may elect to attend the month-long intensive program with a 9-credit option. Although we encourage participation for the full month, enrollment on a week-by-week basis is available.

Tuition for the full four-week Summer Writing Program is \$1,200.

For more information on The Summer Writing Program, or the fully accredited year-round Master of Fine Arts, and Bachelor of Fine Arts Writing and Poetics Programs, please contact The Departments of Writing and Poetics, Dept. PP, The Naropa Institute, 2130 Arapahoe Avenue, Boulder, CO 80302/303-444-0202.

Review of Selected Magazines

As I read through a selection of American literary magazines at the Poetry Project, I looked for qualities that distinguished one from another — any publication in your hand makes a statement, holds a life of sorts, within. What particular aesthetics did it have, and was a sense of unity of purpose apparent? Editors say you should become familiar with their magazines, *then* send a manuscript. But how many writers really bother to check out a journal before licking the stamps? How many read or subscribe to the publications they hope to appear in? I certainly don't know, but from the looks of these little magazines, they are managing to survive, and even thrive, by publishing work that represents many styles and formats in the American idiom.

One genre of publication that's fun to read (often for the advertisements, too), is the literary "house organ": these newsprint-style periodicals tend to focus on a particular community. The best of these is *Poetry Flash* (PO Box 4172, Berkeley, CA 94704, \$8 a year), "The Bay Area's Poetry Review & Literary Calendar." While news and events basically pertain to the Bay Area, reviews of small press books and opinion pieces are likely to spur broader exchanges and discourse (In the January issue, Richard Silberg brings up the notion of "in-groups," and "what writing has been and can be" in his review of Ron Silliman's *The New Sentence*).

A View From The Loft is "a forum for the exchange of information and opinions" from The Loft, a literary center for the "Upper Midwest" in Minneapolis (2301 E. Franklin, Minneapolis, MN 55406, \$1 per issue). It prints articles on the writing process, such as "Myth-Watching from an Upstairs Window," and "Throwing Language: Craft and Artifact in Journal Writing," in addition to running lists of Loft readings and calls for manuscripts.

Both *Bellowing Ark* (bimonthly, PO Box 45637, Seattle, WA 98145, \$12 a year) and *Anemone* (quarterly, PO Box 369, Chester, VT 05143, \$8 a year) have newspaper formats, and both publish a proliferation of writers from across the country. In the Nov./Dec. 1987 issue of *Ark*, a full-length "epic" by Marjorie Sweeney is being serialized — (to me it reads like a memoir, or childhood recollection), and much space is allotted to Book Ten of a long poem by Nelson Bentley called "Tracking the Transcendental Moose." Otherwise, there are many poems and some short fiction. *Anemone* publishes poetry and lists contributors' hometowns on the back page — despite the geographical range, the publication seems unified by its contents.

In New York City, Martha King proves that computers and desktop publishing have the ability to spring potential editors loose. Issue #17 of *Giants Play Well in the Drizzle* (published irregularly, 326-A Fourth St., Brooklyn, NY 11215. No price mentioned, it is "sent to readers.") is a neat, two-column two-page computer-generated newsletter containing mostly imagistic poems (Basil King, Connie Deanovich, etc.).

Of the many mimeoed literary magazines that have come and gone on the Lower East Side, Tom Savage's *Gandhabba* (published irregularly, 622 E. 11th St., New York, NY 10009, \$3.50 per issue) continues to appear and carry on the New York School/experimentalist tradition of *The World* and *United Artists*. Issue #5, "Words-Music-Words," contains poems — by Bernadette Mayer, Alan Davies, Lyn Hejinian, Charles North, Paul Violi, Allen Ginsberg, and many others — that Savage hopes will be set to music.

Two new journals — both in bound paperback format with glossy covers — are *Transfer* and *Oblek*. The editor introduces *Transfer* (248 W. 105th St., New York, NY 10025, \$8; twice a year) by saying that New York writers are the focal point here, but that "getting out of town is nice too." Because most contributors are represented by several works, you really get the occasional treat — like Terence Winch's "Arousal: 10 Sonnets"; some entries, however, seemed extravagantly long. Stand-out features of #1 are excerpts from an interview that Tom Savage conducted with Ted Berrigan in the winter of 1980; and some terrific art.

Oblek (c/o Gizzi, Box 526, Stockbridge, MA 01262. Twice a year, \$10; \$7 per issue) offers a dictionary definition of "oblique" [a long mark appears over the "e" in the magazine's title] on the title page: "neither perpendicular nor parallel; not straightforward." The focus of issue #1 might be considered as such, or "language" centered — from the short prose works of Rosemary and Keith Waldrop, to Clark Coolidge's numbered poems, "Dialogues"; and Emmanuel Hocquard's "Of Foliage, Grammar, A Love," there is a flow from one work to the next, and much that is fresh and curious. Occasionally, though, I longed for a bit of straightforwardness.

I'll conclude by mentioning three journals that have been around for a while, and based on the issues I've looked at, seem committed to publishing quality work that transcends any particular type of school or poetry, without becoming a mish-mash.

River Styx (14 S. Euclid, St. Louis, MO 63108. \$14 for three issues) features interviews (in #23, with Grace Paley and W.S. Merwin), poetry, fiction and art. Writers as diverse as Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, Howard Nemerov, Mona Van Duyn and Joseph Bruchac are represented, along with lesser-known writers. And as "A Journal of Art and Literature by Women," *Calyx* (PO Box B, Corvallis, OR 97339) may be labelled as specialized, but Vol. 10, Nos. 2 & 3: *Florilegia*, includes a range of work by 96 writers and artists who have appeared in the journal from 1976 to 1986, including Margaret Randall, Olga Broumas, Joan Larkin, Marilyn Hacker, and Ursula K. Le Guin.

Much of the work that appears in *Another Chicago Magazine* (Another Chicago Press, Box 11223, Chicago, IL 60611, \$9 a year) might be called political — but otherwise it would be hard to classify. Issue #17 contains some strange and striking drawings by Cynthia Kane, an interview with Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes, poetry from Elaine Equi, Sharon Doubiago, Simon Perchik, and others; several short stories, an excerpt from a novel, pages of book reviews and publications that have been received and/or recommended. That one journal can bring so much together and do it so well is a tribute to the vitality of the form.

— Cheryl Fish

Other Magazines Received

Agni Review, #24-25, 280 pp. (Creative Writing Dept., Boston Univ., 236 Bay State Rd, Boston, MA 02115) Biannual, \$10 a year. This issue contains poetry and fiction.

Alternative Press (The Alternative Press, 3090 Copeland Rd., Grindstone City, MI 48467) 2 issues for \$15. This is not really a magazine, but a "publication", or, rather, a lot of them. Opening an Alternative Press envelope is to release a cornucopia of poems, photographs, poems as postcards, bookmarks, etc., even a bumpersticker — done in various sizes, shapes, colors and media, and by a wide variety of writers. Each "issue" is a delightful surprise.

Conjunctions, #11, (33 W. 9th St., New York, NY 10011) \$8.95 per issue, published bi-annually at \$16 per year. At 290 pages a mini-anthology of poetry and prose by, among others, Robert Creeley, Theodore Enslin (on Marsden Hartley and Robert Duncan), Jackson Mac Low, Susan Howe, Ann Lauterbach; an interview with Carl Rakosi, and an excerpt from an autobiographical novel by Keith Waldrop.

Cover, March issue (PO Box 1215 Cooper Sta., NYC 10276) \$1. Lively coverage of what's going on on the New York scene; plus reviews and poetry.

Crazyhorse, winter 1987 (Dept. of English, Univ. of Arkansas, Little Rock, AR 72204) Biannually, spring and winter, \$8 for one year. Most of the contributors seem to be professors, but from as far away as South Dakota and Massachusetts.

CUZ (available from The Poetry Project at \$2.95). Work by David Wojnarowicz, John Godfrey, Richard Hell (the editor), Cookie Mueller, and Nick Zedd.

Hawaii Review (Dept. of English, Univ. of Hawaii, 1733 Donaghho Rd, Honolulu, HI 96822) Biannually at \$6 a year. \$4 for single issue. Does not seem to be restricted to Hawaiians.

Heresies, #22 (PO Box 1306 Canal St. Sta., New York, NY 10013) \$5.50. The theme of this latest issue (the magazine has been in print since 1977) is "Art In Unestablished Channels".

Letter eX, Jan/Feb 1988, No. 35. "A Poetry Newsletter, Chicago" (PO Box 476917, Chicago, IL 60647. \$12 for twelve issues or, logically, \$6 for six. This issue contains a review of Andrei Codrescu's *American Poetry Since 1970: Up Late*, which observes, in part: "St. Marks, a cynosure, casts its strong voodoo vibes over Codrescu." Nothing provincial here: they lifted the illustration for the Codrescu piece from the Book Review of the *New York Times*.

Panhandler, Summer 1987 (English Dept., Univ. of West Florida, Pensacola, FL 32514) \$5 for two issues. Billed as "A Regional Literary Magazine", they have no doubt that there's such a thing as regional poetry.

Teachers & Writers, Vol. 19, No. 3 (5 Union Sq. W., New York, NY 10003) One year, six issues: \$15. As the title intimates, not just for teachers but for writers, too.

Third Rail, No. 9 (PO Box 46127, Los Angeles, CA 90046) \$7.95 (Four issues \$30). "International Arts & Literature." This issue includes Michael McClure and Robert Duncan on Wallace Berman.

Washington Review, Feb/March (PO Box 50132, Wash. DC 20004) \$2. Includes theater, art, and performance reviews as well as poetry.

What, 11/12 (Box 338 Station J, Toronto, M4J4Y8, Ont. Canada) \$2 per copy. Includes interview with Robert Bly.

I refuse to donate to the Poetry Project anymore because they make it very clear they wouldn't read my poetry if it were posted on their bathroom walls.

— Anonymous, or, rather, name illegible.

For B.T. (after Yuan Mei)

It would be nice to spend a summer month or two
praising your daughters.

I could hope to have my heart
broken by newly-learned tennis serves,
iced tea they could make.

I also think your girls should go to Paris soon.
On the broad avenues the wind would catch their hair
and spin curves in their souls they could take back to
San Jose.

At Victor Hugo's house in the Place des Vosges
I could whisper to them of how he loved his daughter,
her sad fate not long after he gave her to her husband.

I imagine the three of you seated in my tiny parlor,
sipping egg nog like ancient idols,
warming my house for a thousand years.

— As above

POETRY CLASS

A harbor of possibilities
a ship of words sails into
Eyes shine a light
—of search? warning?
Beware the shore, the jagged edge
of convention...too late,
dashed against the rocks
of perception, shattered
on impact
—ship too light? rocks jaded?
Ah, we lost that one, and such
a young crew, such crushed promise
Look! Another steers in
Eyes shine a light!

— Daniel Garrett

AIRPLANE TRAVEL

Suddenly their ears popped, and the plane
started to go down. "My cap flew away." "How
soon do we get to Brazil?" "Which Brazil?"

— Mike Topp



The Fish is back!



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ON WRITING THE ROMANCE THING

A recorded "particular" encountered a year or 10 or 20 years after the fact, in a journal, on a scrap of paper, flashing up in the mind as you're trying to get to sleep one late October evening can trigger an entire, pulsating, vivid re-run. "Huevos revueltos" ... "Pasto" ... "little boys with bilharzia eyes" "The Reich lives in the dark heart of my country" Fatima strolls arm in arm with tall Black Beatrice and "blows a raspberry into the air" that resounds in the balmy Colombian night. They walk gaily along the quai in Santa Marta looking for men. Years later, Fatima observed goes into a "dialogue" entitled "Or Something" itself recorded in part from the same trip. And so on. The name of that brand of cigarette - "INCA" in Peru, "ALAS" in Nicaragua can bring back the way one was proffered on a long train ride to Macchu Picchu, or lit at a dinner with the Australian ambassador in Los Ranchos restaurant in Managua.

My father always said as I began keeping a diary at a tender age, "Who, What, Where, When, Why (he taught Journalism). Don't just tell the emotion. The details, the facts will bring the pictures back later, the self-expression won't." Proust's cookie....

I might jot down the conversation as it occurs, sit quietly and visualize the face of that person dead now these thirteen years. I work the letters my grandfather wrote to his fiancée in 1904 into a long collage piece: IOVIS OMNIA PLENA (All Is Full Of Love), a salute to Male Energy. Constant sources are travel notes, dreams, autobiography. In the moments of synchronizing the material the resonances abound. That skinny girl saying "Oh rarely!" on NYC's Second Avenue in an English accent resembles Amanda, of lovely gait and wit who rode bareback with us to the ruins of Los Idolos in South America.

— Anne Waldman

[*The Romance Thing*, 1987, Bamberger Books, PO Box 1126, Flint, MI 48501. \$8.50]

*

So tired, the back aches.
The wind whips around
the trees talking
in a different frequency of
languages.

Now the wind tries
to convert the telephone poles
to Catholicism. The Sun breaks
out of her holding pattern in
the clouds to join the fun.

— Ed Smith

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WHAT BEING RESPONSIBLE MEANS TO ME Booklist praised her *Notes on Space/Time* as "personally, politically and culturally significant and true." New poems. \$7 paper, \$15 hardcover.

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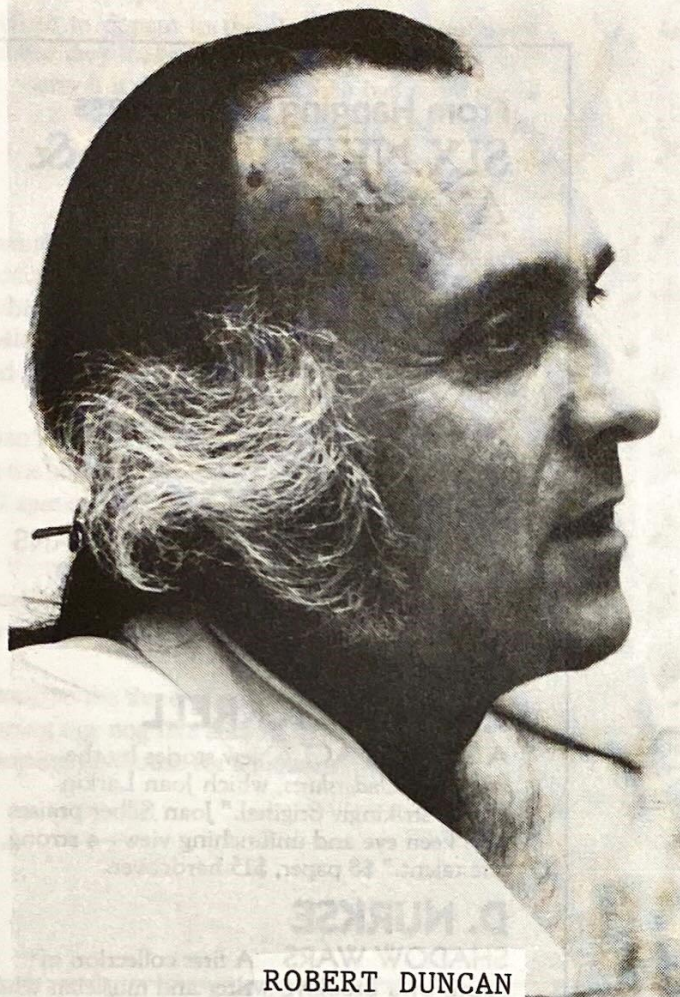
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* * * *

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ROBERT DUNCAN

1919 - 1988

Books Received

When She Was The Good Time Girl, Katharyn Machan Aal; The Signpost Press (412 N. State St., Bellingham, WA 98225) \$2.

American Talk, The Words and Ways of American Dialects, Robert Hendrickson; Penguin Books, 1987. \$7.95. An invaluable, informative and entertaining survey of the ways we 'Mericans talk, from Gullah to Brooklynese.

Disbelief, John Ash; Carcanet, 1987. \$9.95. "...resonant with gorgeous imagery that distracts one from the super-lucid, rational argument that quietly continues to assert itself." -- John Ashbery

Sumerian Vistas, A. R. Ammons; W.W. Norton, 1987. \$15.95 cloth; \$7.95 paper.

ROBERT DUNCAN Photo by Matthew Foley.
Courtesy New Directions Publishing Corp.

Characters, Lynn Behrendt; Prospect Books (500 E. 11th St., NYC 10009) \$4. With drawings by Anne Finkelstein.

Between C & D, New Writing from the Lower East Side Fiction Magazine, edited by Joel Rose and Catherine Texier; Penguin Books, \$7.95. 189 pages.

What Being Responsible Means To Me, Donna Brook; Hanging Loose Press, 1988. \$7. paper.

Free Rein, Laura Chester; Burning Deck, 1988. \$7 paper.

High Blood Pressure, Michèle T. Clinton; West End Press (PO Box 291477, Los Angeles, CA 90029) \$4.95 paper.

Signage, Alan Davies; Roof Books, 1987. \$11 paper. "I, a private and concrete individual, hate structures, and if I reveal Form in my way, it is in order to defend myself."

Bone Poems (Mini-Cantos), Pat Donegan; Chinook Press (2141 14th St., Boulder, CO 80302) \$5.95.

Ground Work II: In The Dark, Robert Duncan; New Directions, 1988. \$19.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper.

Midnight On Your Left, John Godfrey; The Figures, 1988. \$6. paper.

In a time when most poems
seem overlit as sit-coms,
John Godfrey stirs up
the necessary darkness.

— Clark Coolidge

Selected Poems, Tony Harrison; Random House, 1987. \$15.95.

Outlying Districts, Anselm Hollo; Smithereens Press, 1987 (PO Box 1036, Bolinas, CA 94924). No price mentioned.

Darling Clementine, Andrew Klavan; Permanent Press, 1988 (RD2 Noyac Rd., Sag Harbor, NY 11963) \$18.95 cloth.

Head, Bill Kushner; United Artist Books, 1986. "Bill Kushner's streetwise joie de vivre observations charm the hardest of macho hearts." - Anne Waldman

How Long? Mphela Makgoba; Librado Press (11223 Leatherwood Dr., Reston, VA 22091) \$10, plus \$2 shipping. A collection of poetry from exiled South African poet and actor.

1988 *Poet's Market*, by Judson Jerome; *Writer's Digest Books*. \$17.95 hardcover. Stephen Coker of Pasadena, Texas says: "I never send a poem anywhere without consulting *Poet's Market* first."

homegirls & handgrenades, Sonia Sanchez; *Thunder's Mouth Press*, New York. \$5.95 paper.

Selected Poems 1957-87, W. D. Snodgrass, *Soho Press*, 1987. \$19.95.

The Music of What Happens - Poems, Poets, Critics, Helen Vendler; *Harvard University Press*, 1988. \$29.50 cloth.

The Computer is Down, Evangelina Vigil-Piñón; *Arte Publico Press*, 1987 (Univ. of Houston, Univ. Park, Houston, TX 77004) \$7 paper.

Likewise, Paul Violi; *Hanging Loose Press*, 1988. \$15 cloth, \$7 paper.

The Arkansas Testament, Derek Walcott; *Farrar Straus & Giroux*, 1987. \$14.95.

Zone Journals, Charles Wright; *Farrar Straus & Giroux*, 1988. \$14.95.

S-NN-T

We found at first not much to talk about,
The tied,
She pout.
But ride.
That kind
Which felt.
At mind
We melt.
Between jam
We tatters.
The spam,
All matters.
Never dares.
I got some glue to fix the broken chairs.

— Joshua Galef

* * *

The editor would like to see short poems which make use of the devices *hyperbaton* and/or *zeugma* and which incorporate the following words:

maffle
aidle
skinker
swelth
thrumble
kittle.

The Poetry Project would like to thank the following for their recent gifts:

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* *

LOST CHANCES

On route 22
before the road rises
into Vermont
there was a restaurant
(I never stopped there)
that promised
"CLAMS DANCING."
On its Vermont side,
"DANCING CLAMS."

The past we most remember
is lost chances —
the unseen clams
that danced.

— Frank Lennon

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