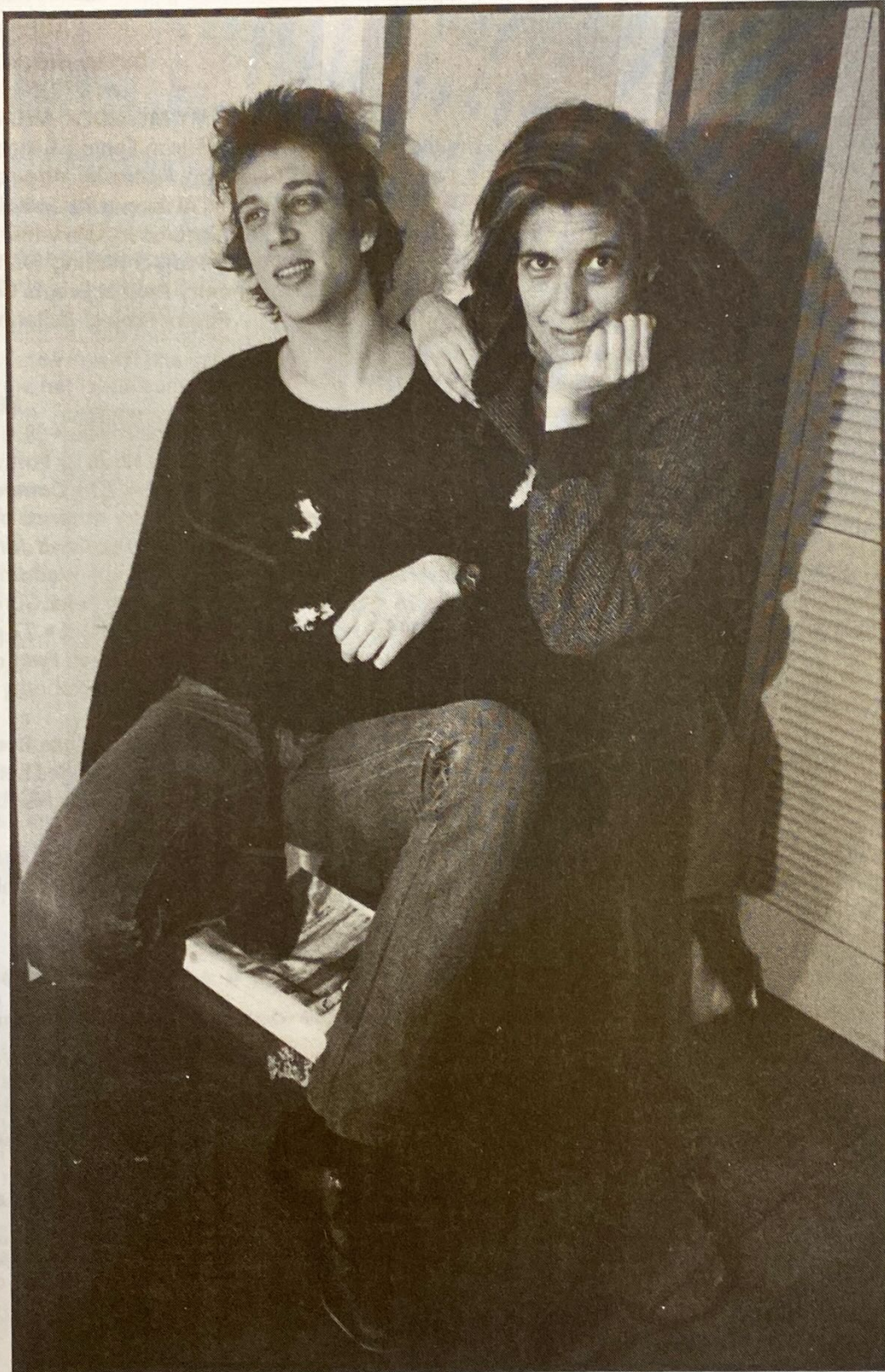


the poetry project

february / march 1995 • volume no. 156



Roberta Bayley

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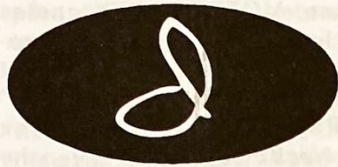
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g i l l i a n m e c c a i n

The 1995 New Year's Marathon was amazing and brilliant and as usual, the best day of the year. The highlight was **Patti Smith's & Lenny Kaye's** performance, their first performance together at the Poetry Project (correct me if I'm wrong) since 1973. Smith recited the lyrics to "People Have the Power" (the gorgeous song from her last album, co-written with her late husband Fred "Sonic" Smith) and then Kaye accompanied Smith on guitar with a performance of the beautiful "Ghost Dance," from The Patti Smith Group's 1978 album **Easter**. As far as I know, this was one of Smith's first live performances since her last album **Wave**, in 1979, and as far as I know, her first performance with Kaye since that time. This was the only time I've ever



Lenny Kaye and Patti Smith at the 1995 New Year's Marathon

seen the entire sanctuary of the church filled to capacity and the entire room giving a standing ovation ... **Other highlights:** **John Hall's** new band, **The Body Has a Head**, are even better than King Missile. More subtle musically and lyrically, but even funnier. The song "Just Keep Walking" was a hilarious monologue of conspiracy theories from a paranoid's point of view ... What would the world be like without **Todd Colby**? Dead, and as **The Stooges** sing, "No fun." His rant "Hippie Shit" was recited in Colby's white trash persona, with the "instant classic" lines "I'm gonna sneak in & rip em down/ tonight/ with my new star badge/ cuz I'm the law/ & I've come

to rip/ the hippie wind chimes down ..." **Paul Violi** read his wonderfully witty "**Rainy Day Woman**" poem ... **John Giorno's** raunchy and funny sexual farce starring himself, **Brion Gysin** and **Jane Bowles** ... **Taylor Mead's** self-proclaimed "Laryngitis Karaoke," a bittersweet love plea with Mead singing along to a walkman and then afterwards, holding his ghetto

blaster up to the mike blasting **Madonna** (was it "Justify my Love"? Correct me if I'm wrong) ... Also, Mead opening up his notebook and reading one phrase, "Fuck Microsoft" ... **Victor Bockris'** reading from his latest biography, an excerpt on Lou Reed's electro-shock therapy [Note: Bockris' **Lou Reed: The Biography** has already been published in England to rave reviews] ... The band **Happy Boy** and its sexy lead singer with his better-than-Ian-Curtis angsty stage presence ... **Stephen Hall's** band, soft & melodic 4AD-type pop music ... **Ron Padgett's** fortune cookie factory worker poem ... **Gary Indiana's** wonderfully catty and campy excerpt from his novel-in-progress complete with

the protagonist talking about movie stars ("**Blank** is fabulous!) with his agent at the Chateau Marmont, and then a rant about a fellow journalist "who has no thoughts" and has black-balled the protag by spreading around, "I have a *drinking* problem. I have a *drug* problem. I have a *substance abuse* problem." ... But was **Taylor Mead** even cattier than

Indiana's protagonist? When Gary called from the podium, "Happy New Year, Taylor!" he replied, "Happy New Year, Whoever You Are!" ... **Ann Rower's** touching piece on the late **Ron Vawter** ... **Homer Erotic** were the best I've ever seen them ... **Foamola**, New Year's afternoon delight, were their usual wacky selves, the hit being "The Many Loves of **Lawrence Fishberg**." And I

was touched by their birthday song to me ("Happy birthday to you, even though you're not a jew, **Fidel Castro** loves you) ... **Pen Pal** rocked my world when I heard "Fixin' to Die" coming through the loudspeakers of the parish hall. I ran into the sanctuary and there was about twenty people left in the audience watching **David Greenberg** singing & on electric guitar, and sweet **Mario Mezzacappa** on percussion: utensils, a three wheeler and a rubber ducky. The best cover of one of my favorite Dylan songs I've ever heard. Too bad it was about 1:30 in the morning so most people missed one of the Marathon's highlights. Check out their debut cassette with songs like

"Lithium Boy," "Wipe That Look" and "Via Del Corso" (A message from a ranting Gregory recorded off an answering machine with a feedback-y guitar behind it. **Gregory Corso** appears courtesy of no one). For info on buying their cassette call David Greenberg at (212) 979-5188 ... There were about 120 performances besides these (therefore too numerous to mention) so if you weren't there, call someone who was to get more details ...

Motorbooty has gone and done it again. Issue number seven, entitled **KILL TIME BEFORE IT KILLS YOU** is another act of critical brilliance. Motorbooty ("The Better Magazine") makes fun of all the things and people that you've been waiting patiently to be made fun of. They don't disappoint with their resident target, **Henry Rollins**.

The sidebar "The Wit & Wisdom of Rollins" pokes fun at the former Black Flag-frontman-turned-Details cover boy. *On Rollins*: "Whoever said that shit about no man is an island has never met me." *On his friends*: **King Sunny Ade** "I spoke to him briefly. Made my day." **Steve Albini** "He'll never know how close he came to getting his face fucked up in front of his friends." *On Places He's Played*: **Florence, Italy**

"Shit doesn't work." *On His Fans*: "I don't want to know about their drunk pathetic lives." "Fuck these people. Take them out and shoot them." "Sometimes I hate them." In a parody of a Mac Powerbook ad, under "What's on

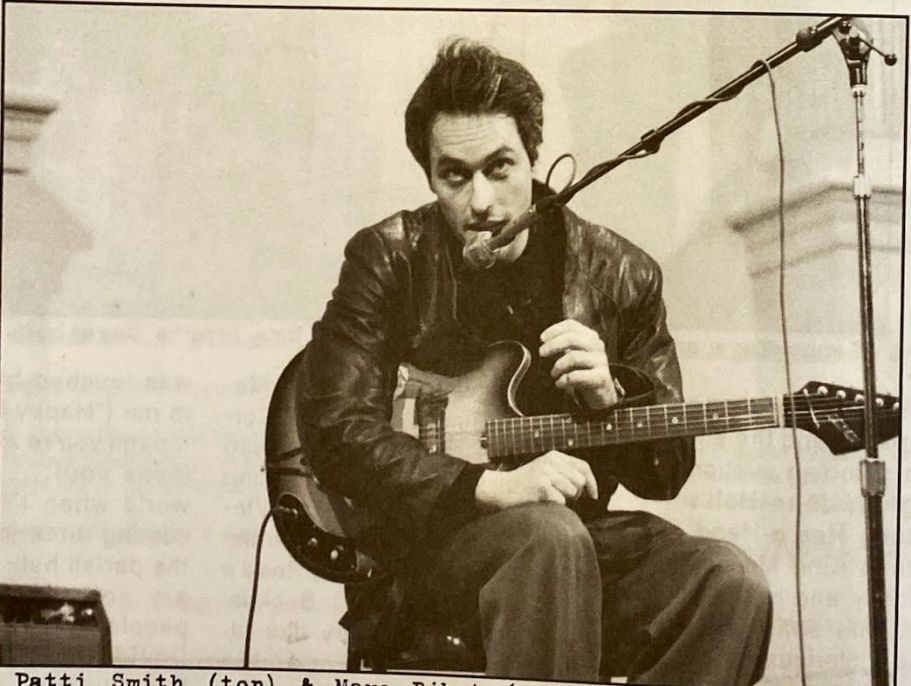
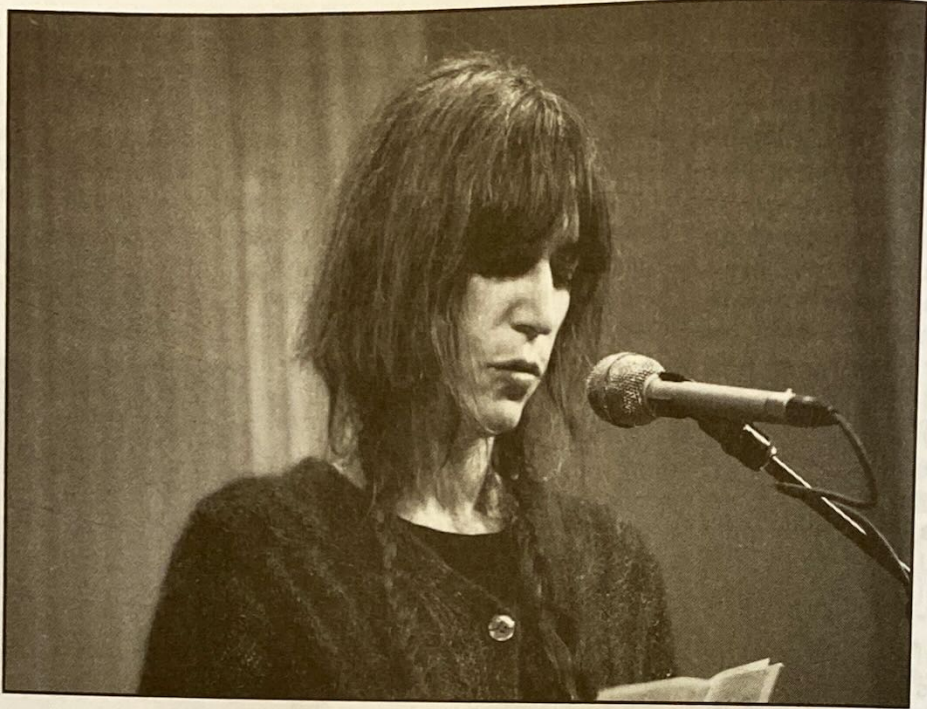
your laptop?" Rollins lists, 1) Marketing plans for **Eddie Vedder** novel 2) Letter to **Charles Manson** 3) Balance sheet of grosses from spoken word gigs 4) List of synonyms for "hate" 5) Short story about **Juliana Hatfield** 6) List of my similarities with **Travis Bickle** 7) Angry letter to **MOTORBOOTY** lawyers. Rollins is also one of the victims in the feature

musicians, **MOTORBOOTY** quotes Rollins' line "I wish there was something on my mind" as "**Quote Most Likely to End Up in Bartlett's**." From **Pete Townshend's** *Horse's Neck* they choose "Given the truth just once, I would hardly know what to do with it" as a sure Bartlett's winner. For **Bob Dylan's** legendary unreadable *Tarantula* Motorbooty

writes: **Self-proclaimed influence: James Joyce. Actual Influence: Publishing advance. Critical Response:** "A word-drunk undergraduate ... his only tradition the jumbled culture of the war baby (New York Times)." And for **Nick Cave's** *And the Ass Saw the Angel: Self-proclaimed Influence: The Bible. Actual Influence: Roget's Thesaurus. ...*

Reportedly heard at Kim Lyons poetry workshop: A newcomer asks, "What is Sparrow?" Kim replies, "Sparrow is a poet." Newcomer replies, "Oh, I thought Sparrow was a movement." But I say, "Sparrow is both! And give peace a chance!" Sparrow and the **Unbearables** protested **The New Yorker** again on December 7th, this time demanding a more reasonable

demand: Equal time. "For each poem **The New Yorker** publishes, directly to the right it will publish one of our poems." In "A Short Interview With Sparrow" the anonymous questioner asks, "Is it difficult to find poets for your protest?" whereas **Sparrow** re-



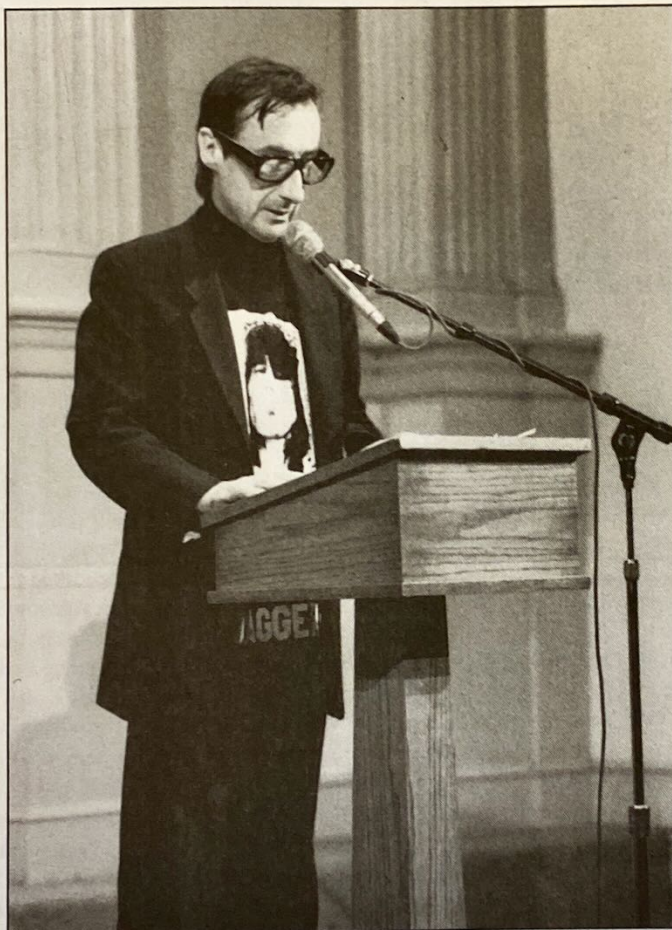
Patti Smith (top) & Marc Ribot (bottom) January 1, 1995

"Rock Lit: A MOTORBOOTY Survey" which features, according to the press release, "an in-depth study of the disturbing phenomenon of musicians turning their innermost creative demons into lucrative publishing deals." In a table of books written by

plies, "All American poets are united by their hatred of the poetry in **The New Yorker**. I suspect that even a majority of the poets published in **The New Yorker** believe that the rest of the poetry is terrible." A sample of the "non-negotiable demands" are the following 1) As **New Yorker** poems are generally worst at the end, the poems should never end. 3) Give **Alice Quinn** a raise.* 6) A one year simile hiatus. (* This is a ploy to get her support). Well, the protest proved a winner. **Alice Quinn** and **Sparrow** had lunch, along with **Bob Holman**. Details next issue ... Speaking of **The Unbearables**, they've taken over the latest issue of **Big Fish**, which is sub-titled **Brooklyn Bridge Temporary Autonomous Zone ... Jordan Davis'** first issue of **SKYLAB** is beautiful, the world's only three-poem lit-zine printed entirely in black and silver. A poem each by **David Shapiro**, **Kenneth Koch** & **Ron Padgett**. If you would like to order a copy, write to 46 East Seventh St., #10, NYC 10003 and enclose \$5. Speaking of **Jordan**, I got an anonymous postcard c/o **The Poetry Project**: "Will **Jordan Davis** quote **Jesse Helms** instead of **Mao** so he'll be a bum bastard (not "bombastic") &

what is this anti-**Olson B.S.**?" ... **Todd Colby** turned me on to the Tampa, Florida girl duo **Pee Shy**. **Cindy Wheeler** plays accordion, does vocals and occasionally plays one string on the electric guitar. **Jenny Juristo** sings, plays clarinet, guitar, and a bad-ass Yamaha PSR 12 keyboard. Both poets, **Wheeler** has curated the spoken word CD **BUTT CHAKRA**, comprised of works by Florida spoken word artists. My favorite song on the cassette is "Little Dudes," about relationships with teenage guys and not-so-young women, with the lines, "We keep our eyes open for the little dudes/ cause they never try to tell us what to do/

Where are you little dude?/ Don't you know I'm in love with you?/ Well you make me feel like a dirty lady/ Thinkin' 'bout Greg and Mrs. Brady ..." For more information on how to get their cassette and when they'll be playing in a town near you, write **Cindy Wheeler** at 1014 1/2 Powhatan Ave., Tampa, FL 33604... Check out **Monster Trucks** (produced by **David Lantow** & **Jordan**



Victor Bockris reads from his Lou Reed bio

Trachtenberg), which wins the latest award for most beautiful lit-rag around. Entirely handmade, it's comprised of work by sixteen poets and is coupled with visuals by sixteen artists, all who are living or have lived in NYC. The cover, with a black & white drawing of a monster truck with a creature's head coming out of the roof, is gorgeous, especially when it is surrounded with black & yellow bumble bee stripes and printed on heavy stock paper. Poems by **John Larson**, **Kimberly Lyons**, **Todd Colby**, **Bob Holman**, **Micki Siegel**, **Carl Watson**, **Cliff Fyman** and more. A co-**Shannon Ketch** production. For more info on upcoming projects or to

order a book, call **Jordan Trachtenberg** at (212) 456-3134 ... And **Soft Skull Press** wins an award for my favorite small press these days. Their latest release is **Cynthia Nelson's Raven Days**. **Cynthia** is in the band **Ruby Falls** (who **John Hall** told me does the best— and possibly the only— cover of **The Modern Lovers'** "Hospital," both of our favorite **Lovers** song). Thirty-nine poems about what it's like to be in your twenties

and hanging out in the bars of the lower east side, and staying out too late, and having trouble with boyfriends and girlfriends, with titles like "recipe for a clean mind during fast living" and lines like "the yucky knarled fingers of my youth." In the first poem, "excuse me my mind," the last four lines read, with wonderful cornball surrealism, "i am two things/ vegetarian and female/ and i'm stuck like spinach/ in the teeth of the night ..." In "one for erin p." the last four lines read, "how we'd now love some savior/ to bathe in us, in our lazy breath/ how lucky her glazed eyes seemed to me/ religious ..." My favorite poem in the book is probably "throat culture" with beautiful simple stanzas like, "put a poultice on my knee/ blue berries in bent june heat/ they look like figs/ feel like phantoms." Look out for upcoming books by **Mario Mezzacappa** (of **Pen Pal** fame and one of our favorite interns) and a photo book by **Michael Stipe**. Also, note to **Sonic Youth** fans, **Soft Skull #7** is **Road Movies: Poems** by **Lee Renaldo**. All selections are \$5

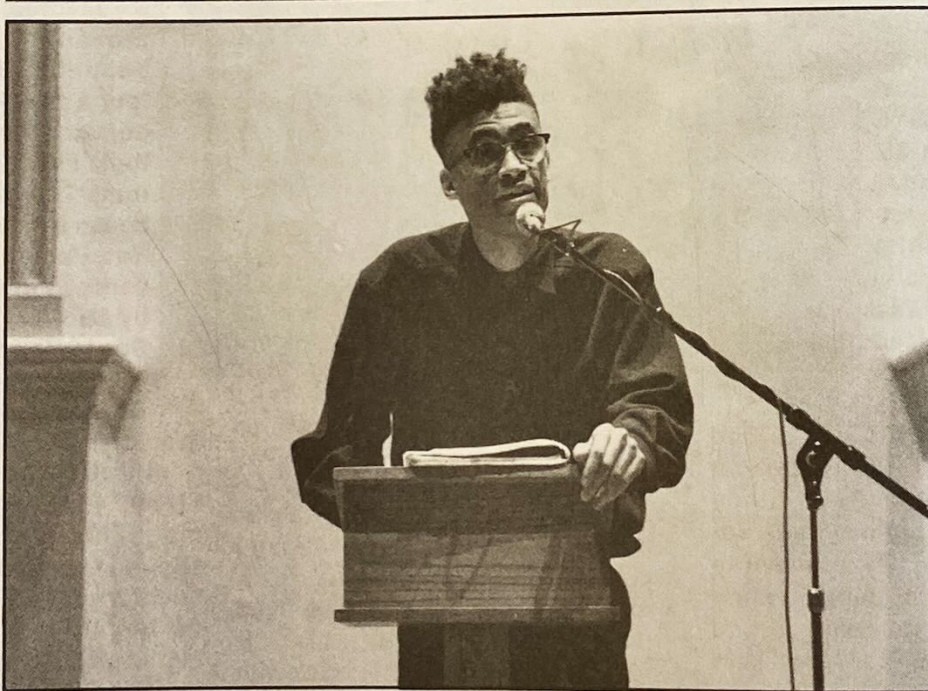
(postage paid), and are available from **Soft Skull press**, 50 East 3rd Street, #5A, NYC 10003 ... **STORY** magazine announces its 1995 "Seven Deadly Sins" writing competition. If you have a short story based on anger, avarice, lechery, envy, sloth, gluttony or pride and want a chance at \$1000, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to **STORY**, Dept. SPR, Att: Rachel Johnson, 1507 Dana Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45207 for rules and an entry form ... Special to newsletter readers: **United Artists Books** is offering a 50% deduction on all available titles, including the brilliantly witty **Cleaning Up New York** by **Bob Rosenthal**.

Titles by Collom, Kushner, Notley, Brodey, Savage, Weiner & many more. For info write: United Artists, Box 2616, Stuyvesant St., NYC 10009 ... **The Lesbian Writers Fund** will grant five awards of \$11 000 each to three lesbian fiction writers and two poets. The deadline for applications is March 8, 1995. For more information call Astraea at (212) 529-8021 ... **Rod Smith, Lee Ann Brown and Mark Wallace** invite you to write as prayer of five hundred words or less in honor of the **Honorable Newt Gingrich**. Deadline is February 28, 1995. Please send two copies of your prayer, one marked "Proposal for Prayer for the Schools" to the Honorable Newt Gingrich, House of Representatives, 2428 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515. Send your other copy with a S.A.S.E. to Aerial/Edge at P.O. Box 25642, Washington, DC 20007. The press release states, "No strictures on style or content. Writers may or may not wish to imagine delivery of their prayer in a classroom context. **You do not have to be a U.S. citizen to participate.** Also interested in visual materials. A selection of the prayers will be published in *The New Censorship*." ... Other interesting-looking music books which there wasn't room to review: Verso's **It's Not About Salary: Rap, Race + Resistance in Los Angeles** by Brian Cross (with additional texts by Raegan Kelly & T-Love) — lotts interviews, photographs and essays on the historical

roots of L.A. rap. And **Extended Play: Sounding Off From John Cage to Dr. Funkenstein** by John Corbett (Duke University Press). Twenty-five portraits, interviews and essays with subjects as diverse as **Sun Ra, George Clinton & Anthony Braxton... One-Liners: Maggie Dubris**, whose story "Give It Up" is

Megan O'Reilly have moved to Boulder (we will miss them) ... **Emily XYZ and Myers Bartlett** have a single coming out courtesy of Olympia, Washington's **Kill Rock Stars** label ("Jimmy Page Loves Laurie Maddox" "Sinatra Walks Out" on the B-side). For more information write 120 N.E. State Ave., #418, Olympia, WA 98501 ...

Maggie Estep and I Love Everybody just finished a tour opening for **Hole** ... **Fielding Dawson** reads convict's letters on WBAI (Bernard White & Amy Goodman's show) Thursday's at 6:45 am ... Saw **John Cale** at the Bottom Line in late September where he played an amazing show with a string quartet. Near the end of the performance, when an audience member yelled, "Dirty-assed rock & roll" John replied, "Ahh, the spirit is ready but the body is weak..." After that **Leonard Cohen** remark, he broke into a cover of Cohen's Hallelujah ... For Cohen fans, check out the new book **Take This Waltz**, edited by poets **Ken Norris** and **Mike Fournier**. Both are huge Cohen fans and



Penny Arcade (top) & Thomas Sayers Ellis (bottom) 1/ 1, 1995

in this issue, was the recipient of the 1994 Richard J. Margolas Award of the Blue Mountain Center, a writer and artist's colony in the Adirondacks ... Congratulations to **Kenneth Koch** who recently got married! ... **Former newsletter editor Lynn Crawford** had a capricorn baby boy in early january... **Michael Friedman** and

decided to do an Homage book for Cohen's sixtieth birthday. Work by **Kris Kristofferson, Joan Baez, Jennifer Warnes, Allen Ginsberg, Andrei Codrescu, Phil Spector,** & more. If you can't find it a bookstore near you, write: The Muses' Company, P.O. Box 214, Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec, H9X 3R9 Canada.

VICTOR BOCKRIS

PRESENTS

SUSAN SONTAG &

RICHARD HELL,

NEW YORK CITY, 1978

It was the evening of the fifteen foot snow blizzard and **SUSAN SONTAG** was due at my Greenwich Village apartment from her 107th Street penthouse at seven p.m. Feeling certain she wouldn't make it—or shouldn't be expected to struggle through it on her own—I had gamely offered to pick her up in a cab. Everyone laughed, but when I stepped out of my apartment, allowing ample time to scour the streets for any vehicle, a large empty Checker was idling at the curb. Consequently I arrived fifteen minutes early at Sontag's residence.

Fifteen minutes of cab-driver-talk later, Susan appeared looking ravishing, having completely recovered, after recent visits to Venice and Paris, from two investigatory operations. As we rode downtown she brought me up to date on her apartment hunting travails. "Basically," she reported, "there are no apartments available in New York."

Meanwhile, **RICHARD HELL** was struggling through the snowdrifts outside his Lower East Side apartment, trying to find a cab. I had insisted on keeping the interview dinner date since Hell is in the middle of making a movie with German director Ulli Lommel, and Susan is working on three books all to appear this year. It had been difficult enough to find an evening which they both had free.

However, in the cheery ambiance of my apartment, with a fire roaring in the grate and a chicken roasting in the oven, we thawed

out pretty quickly while Susan and Richard, who were meeting for the first time, found numerous common interests to chat about.

SUSAN SONTAG: Are you from New York?

RICHARD HELL: No, I'm from Kentucky. Where are you from?

SUSAN: I grew up in Arizona and Southern California, came to New York when I was twenty-five.

RICHARD: You look really great. I was expecting to see you sort of wasted looking, you know ...

SUSAN: No I feel okay. I don't know, I feel terrific.

VICTOR BOCKRIS: Did you see the story in the *Voice* about asexuality? Unless you have a full time live-in person, most people don't

SUSAN SONTAG: I did something inadvertently very clever, which is that I got married at seventeen and divorced at twenty-five, so I had all that behind me.

have the time to get sex.

RICHARD: I think it has to do with nature; it's the overpopulation. I think people want to have less and less children because it's an evolutionary step.

VICTOR: But John Waters (film director—"Pink Flamingoes"—ed.) said that it's a clas-

sical thing when societies break down that there's a separation of the sexes. I never heard that in history, have you?

SUSAN: No, I don't think it's true. I think on the contrary that the sexes have always been separate and that's one of the things that's wrong with the past. I think there's probably less separation now.

VICTOR: Isn't it possible for a man and a woman to have a relationship ...

SUSAN: I should hope so.

VICTOR: ... where they don't have to live together or get married, but where they can see each other naturally or something?

SUSAN: I like the way you say "naturally." Yes, sure it is.

RICHARD: That's the only way to live.

SUSAN: But there's something that happens to people when they get older, which is that they start accumulating things.

VICTOR: Accumulating what, people?

SUSAN: Accumulating things; accumulating their lives; accumulating their responsibilities; it's less and less easy to change.

VICTOR: You're twenty-eight, aren't you Richard?

RICHARD: Uuuuhhhaah ... I'm twenty-six.

VICTOR: Oh, yeah, I told Susan you were twenty-six. Do you remember what it was like Susan?

SUSAN: I was having a terrific time. I did something inadvertently very clever, which is that I got married at seventeen and divorced at twenty-five, so I had all that behind me. I had never had an adolescence, and at twenty-five my adolescence began and

H E Y H E Y

lasted until I was thirty-five. When did you come to New York, Richard?

RICHARD: When I was seventeen.

SUSAN: Do you still have folks back home in Kentucky?

RICHARD: They've since moved to Virginia. I have a sister who's moved to Mexico. She's a year and a half younger than me, pretty and she's a lesbian, which just last year got her completely cut off from my mother who regards herself a feminist and is leading all kinds of strikes and stuff on campus at the school where she teaches. My mother couldn't deal with it.

VICTOR BOCKRIS: I was talking to Chris Burden the other day and he was saying how he really hated his girlfriend, and I realized that I really hated my girlfriend.

VICTOR: I think it's really still harder to be a lesbian in America.

SUSAN: Well it's just harder to be a woman.

VICTOR: I was talking to Chris Burden (conceptual artist— ed.) the other day and he was

SUSAN SONTAG: What I remember as a kid, is that I wasn't interested in popular music. Pop music was something you played when people came over and they wanted to make out — purely background for making out. It was not something that had any real autonomy.

saying how he really hated his girlfriend, and I realized that I really hated my girlfriend.

SUSAN: Does she know?

VICTOR: Yeah, I told her.

SUSAN: You mean you broke up!

VICTOR: No, no, we still see each other all the time.

SUSAN: Why do you see somebody you hate?

VICTOR: It's more exciting.

RICHARD: Do you have a napkin or something?

VICTOR: Toilet paper.

SUSAN: Bring me some.

VICTOR: Sorry, this is so embarrassing. This is a cross between a punk dinner and a chic dinner. We have a fire, we have a reasonable apartment, it's okay, we have flowers and everything, but then we do have the punk sensibility as well.

(RICHARD goes into the bathroom, comes out with a roll of toilet paper, and passes around wads of it.)

RICHARD: ... anyway, the difference between popular art and elitist art is elitist art is too judgmental. Elitist art is satisfied with itself aesthetically only. Popular art is the kind of art where you want to effect your culture and to have some influence on the way people think. That's pretty clear, that distinction.

SUSAN: I don't know, I mean Dostoevski had an influence on people. Yet I'm sure that when he was writing he must have thought he was doing the best thing he could do, just satisfying himself in a room.

RICHARD: The distinction has to do with your own personality whether you're interested in affecting the culture, or whether you're just interested in creating something beautiful. You see, the way I feel is that the generation I belong to has more in common among its members than any other generation that ever existed because of television and public school systems. What I'm relying on is that if I go as far as I can being myself that it will arouse something in all those people, but the problem is that you then become merchandise — another essential difference between popular art and elitist.

SUSAN: You know if you would talk to most writers or most painters or most seri-

ous musicians, they would probably complain about the same thing. There are privileged moments when it all comes together. I mean you've written a book of poems. But you know that the lyrics of your songs will have an audience far beyond the poems that you might publish because they are carried by music. People will either take those words in, or they won't, but the music is something that people will relate to. It has a kind of energy or sexual feeling so you'll be giving them two for the price of one ...

RICHARD: But I wasn't complaining about it, I'm not complaining ...

SUSAN: Alright you were implying ...

RICHARD: Let me finish what I'm saying: You realize that as a commodity, who also has all the same intentions and attributes of somebody who's working in high art, the way to protect yourself is to regard celebrityhood

as being your real art form. It's just your personality that's the commodity and not your work. That's the only way to escape being packaged by the merchandisers. They then become your tool rather than you becoming theirs.

SUSAN: I didn't mean to say you were complaining about it. Most people who are involved in so-called high arts, if they have any degree of success, would describe very similar things. One way of being a celebrity is to make yourself totally inaccessible and never manifest yourself and never do anything and be as pure as the driven snow. Your purity will become a product, and it can be sold and it can make your reputation. It has to be consistent, it has to be of a certain volume. Let's say, your absence could have a certain weight, somebody like Salinger or Pynchon here, or Beckett in France.

RICHARD: No, no, no, I don't think so. Salinger, Pynchon, Beckett ... those names would mean nothing to the man in the street.

SUSAN: No that's not true, but they are within. There's an awful lot of writers who think they have to break their asses to go out on publicity tours and have interviews etc. In fact, it can be done in a smaller way.

RICHARD: But these are not popular artists, Pynchon and ...

SUSAN: But listen ...

RICHARD: Beckett does not affect in any way the way people feel.

VICTOR: No, Beckett has enormous influence. People don't walk around saying oh, this is because of Samuel Beckett, but they're picking up on things that Beckett has put into the culture without knowing it was Beckett.

RICHARD: I don't know.

SUSAN: I think Victor's right. It's true that it isn't direct in terms of names and recognition. Look at surrealism ...

RICHARD: I think Bob Dylan had an infinitely greater impact.

VICTOR: Bob Dylan stole most of his stuff from Jack Kerouac, there are many lines that come straight out of Kerouac.

RICHARD: Kerouac was pop.

VICTOR: But I mean the thing is that you get people like William Burroughs and Beckett whose language has infiltrated the culture to such an extent that people are quoting them without knowing they're quoting them. That's even more extreme than quoting a line from Bob Dylan.

RICHARD: We're talking about a scale, we're drawing a line between people who have impact and people who don't, and there's bound to be a no man's land in between. The difference between Beckett and the Beatles is so great there's no way they

could possibly be ...

SUSAN: It's certainly true the names aren't as well known, but I was thinking of an example of the surrealist artists of the Twenties and Thirties. Very few people could name the names of the famous surrealist artists, but you just have to look at the windows of any major department store and you will see their impact.

RICHARD: It took forty years to be assimilated and it's dead by then— completely superficial. The fact that it's in the store window is a symptom of how totally it's been absorbed. That is banal. Look how big an influence Kafka had. He was at a frontier in his period and thirty years later that frontier has arrived as the environment.

SUSAN: That's a very good example. Everybody else catches up. Somebody said that the artist is the early warning system. But do you think, Richard, that rock has really changed people? I know it has changed me, but then my whole being is interested in being changed by what I experience, I'm open to change.

RICHARD: O yeah, incredibly. By marijuana legalization, by Jimmy Carter getting elected, by hair lengths. The fact that on the radio every day during the Sixties there was this information coming across that affected what happened to the world ...

SUSAN: But I remember popular music when I was a kid. This is before rock and roll, when I really only got interested in popular music around the time of Johnny Ray ...

VICTOR: *He was the guy who cried all the time, right?*

SUSAN: Yeah I ...

RICHARD: His career was ruined when he was found in a motel room with a guy in some place.

VICTOR: *With a guy?*

SUSAN: Oh really, I didn't know that. Anyway, he was the first one that I paid any attention to. What I remember as a kid, is that I wasn't interested in popular music. Pop music was something you played when people came over and they wanted to make out— purely background for making out. It was not something that had any real autonomy.

RICHARD: There weren't teenagers then.

SUSAN: Well they weren't in the same sense, right. But then what happened in the Sixties was really interesting. People started buying records and listening to records the way they were buying and reading books. You'd play a record and listen to a record by yourself and talk about it. That did not exist before the Sixties.

RICHARD: There was an extraordinary number of teenagers in the Sixties. There became this thing where suddenly there was this specific period of life— teens. There was acknowledged a period between being a child and being a grown-up and this became power.

SUSAN: Then, it didn't occur to me that there was anything in between.

RICHARD: It is a very subtle consciousness, being a teenager ...

SUSAN SONTAG: No, no, I'm not writing about my experiences. I said if I were in a plane crash I'd be writing about airplanes, not about plane crashes.

SUSAN: Which can last to approximately thirty-five.

RICHARD: It's the most attractive consciousness to speak with. It's the most sensitive because it hasn't solidified yet.

SUSAN: It hasn't completely sold out. Essentially what's happening is that everybody's got ten more years, that's my idea. In other words, for a woman to be in her early forties now is just like to be in her early thirties a generation ago. It used to be when you were over thirty you were old, you were out of it, finished. Now people start to have that anxiety at forty, and even at forty they manage to stave it off and go on. Also it's terrific how people have a much longer time in their lives to be young and they look better.

VICTOR: *How old are you?*

SUSAN: I'm forty-five.

RICHARD: The way I feel, I want to en-

RICHARD HELL: The way I feel, I want to encourage in my songs and stuff, that feeling of being an adolescent throughout your whole life, of rejecting the whole idea of having a self, a personality.

courage in my songs and stuff, that feeling of being an adolescent throughout your whole life, of rejecting the whole idea of having a self, a personality.

VICTOR: *Are you writing a lot of songs during this period while you're making movies?*

RICHARD: I just wrote one last night: *The Kid With The Replacement Head*. No, I haven't actually written any since the album came out until last night because I have been working on this movie. What I usually do really as a policy is to do it at the absolute last

minute. I figure you know more at the last minute than you did at the next to last minute.

SUSAN: I always put everything off until the last minute too, but it's just that I'm so disorganized I can't get myself to do it. I'm supposed to turn in a book tomorrow, literally tomorrow morning. It's this essay on illness, it's going to be a little book, and I was supposed to make some changes in it. I'll do it when I get home ...

VICTOR: *Oh yeah, you'll do a lot of work tonight when you get home, sure.*

RICHARD: I was just thinking about that essay on illness today when I was thinking that I was going to come over here. And the fact that you had cancer means now ...

SUSAN: That I'm interested in illness ... exactly.

RICHARD: And that cancer is going to become ...

SUSAN: Well, it is a big subject, but people don't know how to talk about it.

RICHARD: It would not have happened if you had not gotten cancer.

SUSAN: Sure, if I were in a plane crash I'd probably be writing about planes now ... I mean that is the way I do it.

RICHARD: It's just ideas, like the way you ...

SUSAN: No, no, I'm not writing about my experiences. I said if I were in a plane crash I'd be writing about airplanes, not about plane crashes.

VICTOR: *I bet you'd write an article in relation to the possibility of their crashing.*

SUSAN: No, I don't think so because the fun of the essay is not to write about my experience, which is very banal, the fun is getting interested in the subject.

VICTOR: *I think the most interesting thing*

about you as a writer is the extent to which you prefer writing fiction to writing essays.

SUSAN: Oh I much prefer it, but I can't help getting interested in all these subjects.

RICHARD: Did you write anything outside *Death Kit*?

SUSAN: Yeah, I wrote a novel before that called *The Benefactor*, and then I've written some stories, which are going to come out this year as a book, and I'm working on another novel and a couple of stories.

RICHARD: How about movies, are you still ...

H E Y H E Y

SUSAN: Yeah, I'd love to make movies but I had a very discouraging experience with distribution. I had a very good experience making them. I'm not enough of a business-woman to know how to do this distribution thing. You know there aren't any theatres anymore; that's something you're going to discover with this movie you're in, Richard, and I hope it goes well. That's the most heartbreaking part of it. You have this thing, and then maybe it goes to some festivals, okay, and gets some reviews and where is it? It ends up in some colleges.

RICHARD HELL: The only kind of travel which is available now in space is not available to anyone but these astronauts, so it's really boring. Who cares about it if you can't go and the only thing is to watch it. My biggest ambition is to get out into space as soon as possible.

RICHARD: That's my base fear.

VICTOR: *College kids?*

SUSAN: A lot of theatres have been taken over by sex films. There just aren't the theatres where they can be shown. I mean even Fassbinder, how many people have actually seen a Fassbinder movie?

RICHARD: But you could say that about somebody like Godard. How many people have seen Godard movies?

SUSAN: More, a lot more, a lot. Godard was really a major event, he changed movies, single-handedly. You can say before Godard and after Godard. Fassbinder, all these people, would have been inconceivable without Godard. He changed the whole media. I mean you can't say Beckett or Burroughs changed writing.

RICHARD: That remains to be seen.

VICTOR: *Do you think anyone ever had an idea which was the happiest country?*

SUSAN: Well you know hundreds of millions of people have thought that America was the happiest country. And then I read one writer who said, "Happiness stops at Vienna." I thought that was a wonderful line, everything east of Vienna is just a continental tragedy for a thousand years.

RICHARD: I bet America is the happiest country.

VICTOR: *I bet it is, I would never live in England because everyone in England is so miserable.*

SUSAN: Yeah, but England is a particularly miserable country.

VICTOR: *Particularly miserable, and probably always has been.*

SUSAN: That's why they like it so much when there's a war. Everyone in England says

how great it was during The Blitz.

RICHARD: That's the only subject that arouses any interest in the whole country. Even the First World War still stirs their interest.

VICTOR: *It's because then they felt the pulse of English life. It was wonderful because the English love to be told what to do by a thundering person like Churchill; his speeches were just like Hitler's.*

SUSAN: Only if you don't have a politics. I think it makes a difference what the context of the speech is. I mean, Churchill was a bas-

tard and a terrible racist and an imperialist and everything but I mean those speeches were heard in a certain context and they inspired people to feel good and to behave well to each other and to carry on in a correct way. Hitler's speeches made people hate each other and aroused all kinds of ugly feelings. You can't be such an aesthete, Victor, that you really hear two people shouting and say they're shouting the same thing. I mean, God, I never thought if I lived for a hundred years I would defend Winston Churchill, but I must, you know, if you compare him to Hitler.

VICTOR: *A lot of people do.*

SUSAN: Well I think that's a really shallow attitude. You said this even before Richard came, because we were talking about England. You said that England wants a leader. I mean if you think the English were so hypnotized by Churchill and they had such a gas in the Second World War, how come they threw him out in 1945?

VICTOR: *They were bored and Churchill told them that the economic situation was very bad and that things would be horrible for a while and his opponent said it was alright, don't worry. It was very English, totally economic. The English are very economical people, they don't buy drugs ...*

SUSAN: And that's why they're in the ...

VICTOR: *They just buy cheap pills and things.*

SUSAN: If they're such an economical people, as you put it, and that word's very ambiguous, why are they in such a pickle now?

VICTOR: *Because they're too economical, you know, if you don't take any risks ...*

SUSAN: America may be the happiest

country, but I don't think Americans are happy. I guess there aren't any happy countries.

VICTOR: *Do you think that a person should have an opinion or an attitude towards something? I really don't.*

SUSAN: No, I'm not interested in opinions.

VICTOR: *Yes you are. You're saying if I don't have an opinion or an attitude ...*

SUSAN: I think you do have an attitude.

Listen, I hate opinions. I've begun to think that one of the reasons I write essays—and I really don't like to write essays—is to unload my opinions. If I can just write it down then I don't have to hold that opinion anymore.

RICHARD: Opinions as opposed to what?

SUSAN: As opposed to energy, as opposed to feeling, as opposed to sensations, as opposed to perceptions. Opinions are like some kind of crust that grows on things and you want to kind of peel them off.

RICHARD: I don't think you can just separate opinions from feeling for instance. I think you're saying you shouldn't have prejudices.

SUSAN: No, they could even be true opinions. Like we both agreed a while ago how terrific Godard was, that's an opinion. My impulse is if I like Godard that much and I think he's that interesting then I want to write an essay on him which is what I did. I want to keep on making space for other things. I think that's important.

VICTOR: *Do you think people are still fascinated by space, or do you think that fascination has been killed?*

SUSAN: I'm always amazed how unfascinated they are. I mean about the reality. In 1969 when people went to the moon it was amazing how unimpressed people were.


RICHARD: You'd think there would be the fascination of traveling. The only kind of travel which is available now in space is not available to anyone but these astronauts, so it's really boring. Who cares about it if you can't go and the only thing is to watch it. My biggest ambition is to get out into space as soon as possible.

VICTOR: *I know that Burroughs wants to leave as quickly as he can get off the planet.*

RICHARD: I've got this fantasy which says when I get to be forty they won't just be choosing guys who are astronauts to go. That's why I want to establish my reputation as a poet, so I can convince people in Congress that you gotta have a guy who can explain what it's like to be there ...

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G I V E . I T U P



b y m a g g i e d u b r i s

Four CDs. One dollar. No obligation to buy another. I was depressed. Thirty-five years old, out of work, trying to cheer myself up by reading a book on how to unleash my creativity. Accept the Bounty of the Universe was the lesson for week three. What the hell, I thought. These are good CDs. Not exactly CDs that I would buy, even if I was still working, but CDs I might be happy to hear if I was in a certain mood. ZZ Top's Greatest Hits. The Best of Foreigner. Judas Priest Live. Jethro Tull: Original Masters. I ripped out the application. It seemed like there must be a catch. I read the contract on the back. Four CDs and the option to buy one more at regular club prices at any point in the remainder of my life.

"Fuck," I said.

I stared at the little stamp for the ZZ Top CD. Tush. La Grange. All their really greatest hits. How much would I spend total if I mailed back the "no" cards every month for the remainder of my life? There had to be a better way. I picked up my pen.

Name: Joe Eternity. Address: 27 First Avenue #14, New York, N.Y. I put a little daisy over the "i" in Eternity, on the dotted line where Joe swore to buy another CD one day. I tossed it in the mailbox, put a label saying J. Eternity into my box, and waited for the CDs to roll in. And one afternoon, there they were. Neatly packed, with a bill for three dollars and fifty-two cents. Joe sent cash, as he didn't have a checking account. I spent a few hours drinking and singing along with Billy Gibbons, then put them at the bottom of my CD pile. I was already onto the next lesson, Recovering a Sense of Power. They sent a large color brochure with lots of little brochures that fell out when I opened it. I located the reply card, checked the "send nothing" box and mailed it.

The next month was the month with-

out reading. It was meant to wean me from the seemingly benign printed matter I used to shield myself from real creative feelings. I tossed all my mail into a shoebox, and missed the deadline. CDs started to arrive. The complete works of Yes. I opened it up by mistake, taped it back up, wrote, "Unordered merchandise. Return to sender," then tossed it in the mailbox. The next day I received ELO: Eternal Favorites, and threw the package back at the mailman still intact, with the message, "Cease and Desist. Unwanted and unordered. Return to sender." Two days later it was The Best of Bread. I burnt my address off, drew a skull where it had been, and left it on the steps in front of the Post Office. The hang-up calls started on my machine. They caught me on call interrupt.

"Hello. Can I speak to a Joe Eater-knitty?"

"Eternity," I said.

"Is this Mr. or Ms. Eater-knitty?"

"He's out."

"It's important that I reach him. When would be a good time to call?"

"Two, three in the morning. I'm a busy

sand dollars? "They would think The Eternitys are selling drugs," I scrawled on the envelope and sent it back. The phone stopped ringing. I grew complacent. At three a.m. on the first Monday I was trying to focus on Creating a Tribe of Artists when the phone rang.

"Mister Eater-Knitty?"

"Eternity."

"Mr. Eater-Knitty—"

"Eternity!"

"Mr. ... Eternity? We're beginning to believe you deliberately misled us."

"I'm not Mr. Eternity."

"Then put him on. I need to speak to him."

"He's out."

"Well, Mrs. Eternity, you assured us he would be home."

"I did no such thing."

"Look, we have it on computerized voice-print. Why are you trying to cover up for him? Whatever one Eternity does affects all the Eternitys. That's part of being a family."

I stared out my window at fireworks going off the roof across the alley.

"Joe's a bum," I said, "whatever trouble

The next day I received ELO: Eternal Favorites, and threw the package back at the mailman still intact, with the message, "Cease and Desist. Unwanted and unordered. Return to sender."

woman. Is there anything else?"

I wrote myself a note and pinned it to the refrigerator. Don't answer phone after midnight. Joe started to get other mail. Cart-sort Eternity. Would he like to join the Mystery Book Club? Would he fill out a survey on health care? How would the Eternity's neighbors feel if they saw a big black limo pull up in front of 27 First Avenue to deliver a check for a hundred thou-

he caused you, you just be glad you're not me. You only let him into your club. You didn't marry him."

I slammed the phone down. Was that really part of being a family? Thank God I wasn't in one. My neighbor banged on the door.

"Hey, number fourteen, heard you yelling and figured you were up. Want to toss back a few tinnies?"

He was an Australian photographer. What better time to form a tribe than three in the morning? I let him in.

"I have tequila," he said, waving a nearly empty quart bottle. "Do you have beer?"

The phone rang. He ran past me and dove for it.

"Eh? Slow down. Yes, this is he."

His hair was sticking straight out of his head. He looked as though he had been electrocuted.

"Are you off your nut, mate? Calling me at this hour, waking up the wife and kiddies, you're lucky I don't come down there and strangle you myself. And what did you say your name was?"

His eyes wandered drunkenly around the room. His face grew red.

"Well you just try it. Can't get blood from a stone, can you. And I suggest you stay off the phone with my bloody wife. Yank bastard."

He tossed the phone at the hook and missed. A small voice chattered irately from the earpiece. He staggered to the refrigerator, pulled it open, and fell face down onto the floor. I stuffed a pillow under his head and threw a blanket over him. He snored and muttered to himself as I lay trying to intuit what role he played in my tribe. In the morning he was gone, my door unlocked, a pool of spit on the floor where he had slept.

The mail brought a few new surprises for Joe. He received a vial of hair tonic, was invited to apply for a Visa card, and found himself the subject of an appeal by the world famous St. Jude Shrine in the heart of Baltimore. He sent them two dollars and a plaintive note: "To whom it may concern: Please pray for my deliverance from those who lurk in the shadows seeking to harm me. Sincerely, Joe Eternity."

The next day was Sunday. My phone didn't ring. The photographer slunk by me in the hallway wearing dark glasses.

"Hey, you have my blanket," I said.

He jerked as though someone had hit him and ran inside his apartment, locks falling into place behind him. I went to One World Africa and bought a candle.

"Someone has put a curse on me," I said to the woman behind the counter, "someone similar to a zombie. Do you have anything for that?"

"Do you want to rid yourself of the curse or the zombie?"

People filed past to buy pot at the back window. I was the only one at the counter for those saddled with curses and money problems.

"Both. Mostly the zombie."

She tapped her chin and plucked a candle from the shelf. "St. Ramon hates zombies. The only thing is, he is very ... private. Only call upon him at your hour of greatest peril. Do you want me to bless this for you?"

"Does it cost extra?"

She shook her head and turned away, cutting the candle then sprinkling it with oil and something from a shaker, finally sealing the top with foil.

"Two dollars."

"What happens if I light it too early?"

She clucked her teeth. "Instead of vanishing, the zombie will possess the power of the candle and own you. It happens sometimes. To the impatient."

I set the candle carefully onto my kitchen table. The wax was red, the glass around it clear, and pasted to the front was a sepia toned print of a monk, behind him what appeared to be St. Petersburg. The monk's eyes were closed, a yellow halo surrounded his head, and he hovered three feet from the ground. Beneath him was a broad brimmed hat, also hovering, a pile of gold coins, and a snake. He was surrounded by kneeling women. I patted the foil seal more tightly and turned his picture to the wall. The phone rang.

"Mister Eater-Knitty."

"Mrs. Eternity. What the hell is wrong with you people. Calling me on a Sunday, mispronouncing my name, hounding me like a bunch of godless fiends."

"Mrs. Eater-knitty, you don't have to get nasty. I have a job to do, and I do it. I guess that makes you feel like a real big person, yelling at someone who's just doing their job. Is that an Eater-knitty trait? Are you Eater-knitties a pack of bullies as well as a pack of thieves?"

"The Eternitys, it's pronounced Eternity, you cornpone," I yelled, and hung up.

I walked into the kitchen and looked at the candle, thought about lighting it, and ate a pop tart instead. It was meant to reacquaint me with my childhood, where my inner artist had been stifled initially. All I felt like doing anymore was painting sunbed. I had ten canvases hidden under my bed. I had to break out of this. I would be the laughing stock of the east village if anyone found out.

Bang bang bang.

"Who is it?"

"It's your neighbor. Care to join me for a few tinnies?"

I opened the door. He fell into me.

"Whose tinnies are we talking about?"

I said. This forming a tribe was a lot harder than they made it sound in the book.

"Tinnies don't belong to people. I mean, here they are, then there they go. Down the chute. What a beautiful sunset."

He staggered over to my painting and collapsed in front of it. I didn't have any more blankets. I took off his shoes and put them under his head. That was one thing my mother taught me. Don't let a man go to sleep with his shoes on, no matter how drunk he is. She never said what would happen. I gathered it was too awful to even speak aloud.

The next day I woke up with a hangover from inhaling tequila fumes. Joe had gotten an embossed card from the democratic party, a summons to appear at jury duty, and an offer to buy a book detailing the history of the Eternitys in America for only twenty-five dollars. I wrote "fuck off you'll never take me alive" on the summons and sent it back. A woman called and asked for Joe.

"I'm his wife, did he tell you he had a wife?" I said. She hung up abruptly.

I sat staring at my sunset. There had to be something I could do to make it less suburban. The phone rang again.

"Who is this?"

"Honey, what's the matter? It's Mama Eternity. I just wanted to invite you and Joe over for dinner next Sunday."

I threw the phone into the trash and lit the candle. The smell of cinnamon filled the room. Flames sputtered above the monks head. I spent the next hour reciting the prayer written on the back and concentrating on my desire. Nothing happened. It burned like an ordinary candle, smells of ordinary wax replacing the cinnamon. Downstairs my neighbor sang the chorus to Waltzing Matilda over and over, slow.

A key rattled in my door and a man walked in. He had a head shaped like an almond turned on its side. Foamy orange hair cascaded down his back. "What's for dinner?" he said. I fainted dead away.

I woke to the Best of Bread pounding from my speakers. Joe Eternity sat at the kitchen table sorting through a huge stack of mail. Behind him hung one of my sunsets.

"Here. These are for you."

He handed me a pile of letters. I flipped through them.

Mrs. Eternity. Mrs. Joe Eternity. Ms. Maggie Eternity. St. Ramon burned between us. Joe's eyes were a strange light blue. His almond shaped head seemed to have gotten wider. Whatever one Eternity does affects all the Eternitys. I took a deep breath and blew out the candle.

A I Aronowitz on Bob Dylan

Thirty years ago, I put Side A of "The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan" on the turntable. I got so hung on Side A that I didn't get around to turning the record over until three or four months later. I kept playing Side A over and over again, non-stop. When I did finally get around to turning the record over, Side B didn't disappoint me, either. By that time, Bob Dylan had become the greatest hero I had ever known.

I'd been assigned by the old *Saturday Evening Post* to profile Bob, but that assignment soon became nothing but an excuse for me to keep hanging out with him. I was sold, seduced, spellbound. Hanging out with Bob Dylan not only became much more important to me than writing about him but much more important to me than too many other important aspects of my life. For instance, I was already in the middle of writing an article about Paul Newman for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Paul also was one of the most interesting men I had ever met, but Bob stole me away from him. I never even got around to finishing the piece I was writing about Paul, either.

Dylan soon became the center of my universe. I was proud just to be allowed in his company, even if only often to be treated like his puppy dog. Here was a kid who, to me, was doing more to change the English language than anybody since Shakespeare and he was staying at my house. His lyrics certainly were as quotable as Shakespeare's plays. Here was a genius who was affecting contemporary thought and he was letting me chauffeur him around in my Chevy station wagon. Here was an Oracle who, in my opinion, was going to be, at the very least, a big item in the *Encyclopedia Britannica's* equivalent a few thousand years from now and he was barfing out the passenger's window as I drove him from New York back to my house in Jersey. To me, Bob Dylan was one of the greatest artists who ever lived. Even more than that, Bob made me feel as if I were part of the leadership of a crusade against universal ignorance. We were leading a revolt against that evil which has empowered charlatans to rule the world probably since humans evolved. Hanging out with Bob made me feel *important!*

Thirty years later, I have to laugh at myself. I went so crazy over Bob that I was willing to believe that Bob was the new Messiah, come to save us all. In fact, I've not been surprised to learn that more than a few other distinguished potheads thought so at the time, too.

It's not very reassuring to know how loony I've been because that also tells me how off-the-wall others can get. In a counterculture bonded into a brotherhood by marijuana, the Rock Revolution's battle flag was the skull and crossbones of drugs. As everybody knows, drugs have the amazing capability of sometimes enlightening the brain and sometimes softening it ... Unfortunately, as events have proved, people don't even need to soften their brains in order to let themselves get spooked out. Of course, I don't blame Bob for all the rest of the nuts like me getting crazy enough to believe Bob was Jesus Reincarnate, but I had more of a vested interest than anybody else in believing that such was the case. I can trace a lot of my lunacy to an interview Bob gave to Jack Goddard, published in the *Village Voice* many years ago. In that interview, Bob joked that I was the only man who could save the world. Drugs twisted a lot of brains and my brain got so twisted that I figured if Bob really *were* the new Messiah, I really *had* to be the only man who could save the world. Obviously that fantasy did wonders for my self-esteem.

Bob's not so important to me anymore. I've finally reconciled myself with the fact that although Bob is capable of charming the venom out of snakes and the birds out of trees, being one of the greatest artists who ever lived doesn't necessarily make a person one of the nicest guys ever born. Or one of the happiest. As if bemoaning the figurative loaf of bread he's carrying under his arm, Bob keeps complaining to friends that "fame is a curse." Of course, Bob isn't the first to bitch about his celebrity. Way back in the first century after Christ, Roman historian Tacitus found it necessary to squelch people who, like Bob, had a habit of bemoaning their glory.

"To despite fame," Tacitus said, "is to despite the virtues by which it is acquired."

Even before I started profiling celebrities for newspapers and magazines, I'd read

enough books and articles about the world's most gifted cultural heroes to know about the artistic temperament. Everybody recognized that artistic geniuses are usually "difficult." The temperament came with the territory. In Bob's case, I was willing to put up with whatever I put up with because that's how much I adored Bob's genius and I'd already been persuaded that you've got to make allowances for genius. But for as long as I've known Bob, one of his chief idiosyncrasies has been to take a perverse pleasure in confounding his audience.

These days, Bob's audience spends a lot of time mentioning how flabby Bob looks. His fans joke about how nobody can ever make out what he's singing any more.

"I call him Mumbles," a pretty blonde Dylan fan named Sally told me after Bob sang his first song at Columbia Records' 1992 Madison Square Garden concert honoring Bob's 30th year in music. They called it a "bobfest." George Harrison gave me a ticket and Sally had the seat next to mine. She shrugged affectionately when she said it:

"Mumbles! He always changes the lyrics." And then she added, with her bemused smile still showing the spell Bob kept over her:

"You can't tell what he's singing anyway."

In the end, I suppose, Sally and I represent an audience still so much in love with Bob's genius to be willing to put up with all his *schrick*.

For me to pour out the emotions and memories which overpower me as I now sit listening once again to "The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan," I would certainly need more space. The tunes remain as fresh, vital and clever as they sounded thirty years ago. I still get the uncontrollable giggles when, in "Bob Dylan's Blues," Bob sings "Well look't here, buddy, if y' wanna be like me, pull out yer six-shooter and rob evvy bank y'cn see and tell the judge I said it was all right!" And I still feel compelled to listen over and over again to that passionate harp blast at the end of "Girl From the North Country," a wail which always gives me tingles, reminding me of how exciting and inspiring was the Bob Dylan I once got to know. Can I ever again be as inspired as I was then?

Bruce Andrews: "Acoustica" by Mauricio Kagel. Magda Olivero verismo arias or earliest, tenderest, Bjorling & Gigli.

David Cameron: Usually, I find music too distracting, so I listen to nothing. Once wrote a poem to the song "Only Shallow" on My Bloody Valentine's "Loveless" LP. The singer's vocals are often difficult to comprehend, so I just wrote down what I thought she was singing. I also have poems that I've written after "Isabel's Table Dance" from Charles Mingus' "Tijuana Moods" and Marvin Gaye's "Distant Lover" (the live version) off of a Motown Classics compilation.

Jordan Davis: "Exile on Main Street" by The Rolling Stones. "Discreet Music" by Brian Eno. "Ghosts" by Albert Ayler.

Darius James: "Satanic Litanies" by Diamanda Galas. "Fresh Juice" by Blow Fly. "Bitches Brew" by Miles Davis.

Shannon Ketch: "Piece for John Cage" by Morton Feldman. "Ping!" by Stereolab. "Blues for Rampart Street" by Ida Cox with Coleman Hawkins.

Roger LaZoff: "The River" by Bruce Springsteen. Writing is rhythm, more or less, and this album is heavy on the beat. Plus the maudlin lyrics feed my lachrymose tendencies.

reader's survey: best records to spin while writing

"Bringing It All Back Home" by Bob Dylan. He's the Man, and this takes me back to the hills above old Duluth where I walked with my friends when I was young and the sap was rising. "Wave" by Patti Smith Group. She quotes Rilke on the liner notes, and the songs provoke.

Michele McDigan Somerville: "Fear of a Black Planet" by Public Enemy (for high-speed typing authority). "Horses" by Patti Smith (for dames with cojones). "Tosca" by Puccini (for tortured torch songs). Runners-up: "The Wild, The Innocent and The E Street Shuffle" by Bruce Springsteen (for Bronx greaser narrative set in the Seventies). "Blonde on Blonde" by Bob Dylan (for unofficial metrical awareness). "Rain Dogs" by Tom Waits (for general contemporary/poetical & cultural enrichment). "Rum, Sodomy and The Lash" by The Pogues (for Irish anguish). "The Best of Capitol Years" by Frank Sinatra (for romance).

Gillian McCain: "Whites off Earth Now" by the Cowboy Junkies. "Bringing It All Back Home" by Bob Dylan. "Trea-

sure" by the Cocteau Twins (verbal scattings perfect for "mishearings"). Soundtrack to "Let's Get Lost" by Chet Baker. "Piss Factory" by Patti Smith. Anything by the Stooges.

Douglas Roth Schild: "Ascension" by John Coltrane. "The Berlin Concerts" by Eric Dolphy. "The Platinum Album" by Foamola.

Lorenzo Thomas: "Ole!" John Coltrane & Eric Dolphy masquerading as George Layne. Ray Charles "Invites You to Listen." "One More for the Road" by Charles Brown.

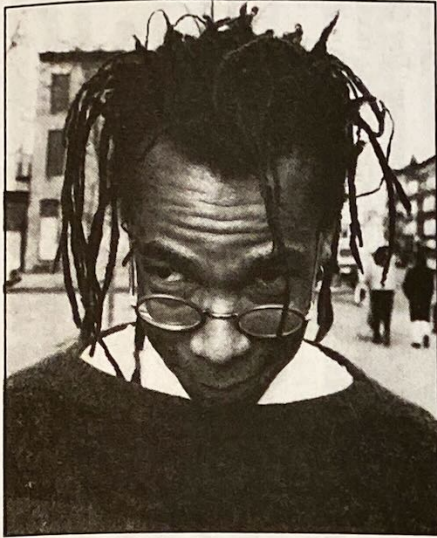
Christian X. Hunter: No music with lyrics. Lots of movie soundtracks, especially dark film noir stuff. Favorites: Mark Isham's movie music, the soundtrack from "Taxi Driver," "Paris, Texas" and Miles Davis' "Kind of Blue."

Emily XYZ: "Perotin" by The Hilliard Art Ensemble. "Highway 61 Revisited" by Bob Dylan. Vedic (ancient Indian) mantras.

Jo Ann Wasserman: "Pod" by the Breeders. "Last Flash" by the Breeders. "Grievous Angel" by Gram Parsons.

Poetry Project Writing Workshops

**DARIUS JAMES:
WRITING, HOW TO**



COME TO SESSIONS WITH SHORT STORIES AND NOVELS-IN-PROGRESS (WITH COPIES FOR EVERYONE TO READ). YOU WILL READ IT ALOUD. WE WILL TELL YOU IT SUCKS AND MAKE YOU GO HOME AND REVISE IT UNTIL WE THINK IT'S SUITABLE FOR HUMAN EYES. WILL INCLUDE LOTS OF BASIC WRITING EXERCISES AND GUEST LECTURERS (WHEN AVAILABLE).

**FRIDAYS AT 7
(FEBRUARY 17-MAY 12)**

DARIUS JAMES IS THE AUTHOR OF *NEGROPHOBIA* AND THE FORTHCOMING *THAT'S BLAXPLOITATION!: ROOTS OF THE BAAD ASSSS RATED X BY 'TUDE AN ALL-WHYTE JURY* (BOTH ST. MARTINS PRESS).

**ERICA HUNT:
EXCITING EXCESS/
THINKING WORDS**

THIS WORKSHOP WILL EXPLORE THE USE OF "EXCESS" IN POETRY, ALPHABETICAL FRENZY, HIGH IMPACT IMAGE, TWISTS OF FATE, AND SYNTACTICAL TACTICS, AS STRATEGIES FOR THINKING WITH AND THROUGH WORDS.

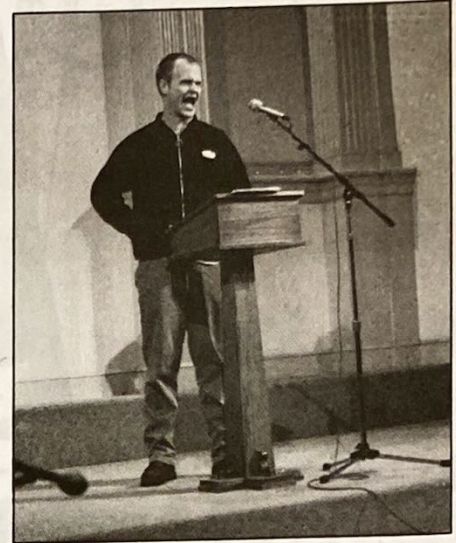
**TUESDAYS AT 7:30
(FEBRUARY 14TH THRU MAY 9TH)**

ERICA HUNT IS A POET AND ESSAYIST BASED IN THE LOWER EAST SIDE. SHE IS THE AUTHOR OF *LOCAL HISTORY*, A BOOK OF POEMS AND IS AT WORK ON A SECOND COLLECTION, *RKEOLOG*.



WORKSHOPS COST \$150 WHICH INCLUDES MEMBERSHIP TO THE POETRY PROJECT. THIS FEE IS GOOD FOR ONE YEAR, WHEREAS THE PARTICIPANT CAN TAKE AS MANY WORKSHOPS AS DESIRED DURING THAT PERIOD. CALL (212) 674-0910 FOR MORE INFO.

**TODD COLBY:
POETRY BLAST OFF**



THIS WORKSHOP WILL DRAW ON A VARIETY OF SOUND TEXTS INCLUDING GERTRUDE STEIN, ARNONIN ARTAUD, MINA LOY, ANDY KAUFMAN, VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY, KURT SCHWITTERS, CLARK COOLIDGE AND CAPTAIN BEEFHEART. WE'LL KEEP JOURNALS. WE'LL VIDEOTAPE EACH OTHER. WE'LL DISCUSS GUERRILLA PUBLISHING TACTICS. WE'LL MAKE CARTOONS. WE'LL WRITE SONGS. WE'LL WRITE SITE SPECIFIC POETRY. WE'LL BECOME SPIES. WE'LL FIND AS MANY NEW WAYS AS POSSIBLE TO WRITE AND PERFORM OUR WORK. MOST OF ALL WE'LL LEARN HOW TO KEEP OUR ANTENNAE UP AT ALL TIMES.

**SATURDAYS AT NOON
(FEBRUARY 18TH-MAY 13TH)**

TODD COLBY HAS PERFORMED HIS WORK ON MTV AND PBS. HIS LATEST BOOK IS ENTITLED *RIPSNORT* (SOFT SKULL PRESS).

THE Poetry Project

February

March

1 Murat Nemet-Nejat & Harryette Mullen

Murat Nemet-Nejat is the author of the poem "Turkish Voices" and is currently working on the long poem "lo's Song." Harryette Mullen is the author of *Trimmings* and *S*PeRM**K*T*. Her work appeared in *Best American Poetry 1994*. [8 pm]

6 Open Reading

Hosted by Marcella Harb & Merry Fortune. Sign-up at 7:30 pm. [8 pm]

8 Richard Hell & Susie Timmons

Poet, musician & editor Richard Hell is the author of *Artifact* and *Across the Years*. He has just completed a novel, tentatively titled *Go Now*. Susie Timmons is the author of works including, *Hogwild* and *Locked from the Outside*. She was a co-founder of the *New York City Poetry Calendar*. [8 pm]

13 Philip Lewis & Kevin O'Neil

Kevin O'Neil's works include *The Pope is a Pedophile*, *Alien Nation* and *Window Washer Charlie*. Philip Lewis is the publisher of *Cafe Noir* & the author of *The Cultural Mullatto Revisited* and a novel *Life of Death*. [8 pm]

17 Simon Black & Alicia Ostriker

Writer, playwright & director Simon Black is the author of the novels *Me and Kev* and *The Book of Frank*. Alicia Ostriker is the author seven books of poetry including *The Imaginary Lover*. She will present selections from her new work *The Nakedness of the Fathers: Biblical Visions and Revisions*. [10:30 pm]

1 Charles Bernstein & Tom Raworth

Charles Bernstein is the author of numerous books of poetry including *The Nude Formalism* and *Dark City*. His essays have been collected in two books: *A Poetics and Content's Dream: Essays 1975-1984*. Tom Raworth has published numerous books of poetry, prose & criticism including *Empty, Eternal and Frames*. His work has been anthologized in *Penguin Modern Poets 19*. [8 pm]

3 Brotherman Anthology Reading

A reading celebrating the publication of *Brotherman: The Odyssey of Black Men in America*. Herb Boyd, scholar & editor of the anthology, hosts this evening, which will feature readings by contributors Kenneth Meeks and Yusef Salaam. [10:30 pm]

6 Open Reading

Hosted by Marcella Harb & Merry Fortune. Sign-up at 7:30 pm. [8 pm]

8 Charlotte Carter & Quincy Troupe

Charlotte Carter's books include *Sheltered Life and Personal Effects*. Her work has appeared in the anthology *Ordinary Women*. Quincy Troupe has published four volumes of poetry including *Weather Reports: New and Collected Poems*. With Miles Davis, he co-authored *Miles: The Autobiography*, which earned him a second National Book Award. [8 pm]

20 Roberts Blossom & Grupo Picata Group

Poet, actor & video artist Roberts Blossom is the author of four books of poetry and the recipient of several awards, including an Obie. Grupo Picata Group is an experimental dance/theater company. Their most recent piece *Tragedy for Three and One Observer* is based on work by Argentinean writer & reporter Monica Volonteri. [8 pm]

22 Ray Bremser & Sharon Mesmer

Quintessential Beat poet Ray Bremser is the author of several books including *Poems of Madness, Angel and Blowing Mouth/The Jazz Poems, 1958-1970*. Sharon Mesmer recently completed her first novel entitled *Hush* and has work forthcoming in the anthology *Unbearables* (Autonomea). [8 pm]

24 LIVE, Friday Nite from the Poetry Project

Hosts Douglas Rothschild and Janice Earbaum team up to discuss hot topics in poetry. Music to set the stage by the house band Vole. [10:30 pm]

27 Robert Hale, Kathleen Large & Mario Mezzacappa

Robert Hale's poetry has appeared in *The World, Denver Quarterly* and *Long News*. Poet Kathleen Large is an editorial assistant at the magazine *Long News in a Short Century* as well as the editor of Long Island University's literary magazine *Downtown Brooklyn*. Mario Mezzacappa is the drummer for the band Pen Pal & has a book of poetry forthcoming from Soft Skull Press. [8 pm]

2nd Avenue & 10th Street at

St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery

Admission \$6 (contribution)

except where noted.

Program subject to change.

Call (212) 674-0910 for more info.

13 Cayenne & Jordan Garraway

Cayenne are a performance poetry group composed of Shelia Alson, Cheryl Boyce Taylor, Kathy Price, Clara Sala & Zephryn Conte. The performance duo of Sarah Garraway & Dennis Jordan challenge gender & cultural stereotypes. [8 pm]

15 The Jack Kerouac Reader Reading

A reading celebrating the Viking Penguin publication of *The Jack Kerouac Reader* with Ann Charters, editor of *The Portable Beat Reader*, Allen Ginsberg, author of thirty books of poetry and prose including *Cosmopolitan Greetings*. Other special guests. [8 pm] [\$10, \$8 for Poetry Project members]

20 Geoffrey Seelinger & A Mutaaridat Sha'riyah

Multimedia & video artist Geoffrey Seelinger's most recent performance incorporating seven turntables, video image, & a Cathode Ray display. This evening will also feature a Mutaaridat Sha'riyah, a traditional Arabic poetry competition. Contestants may enter by calling the office or sign-up at the door. [8 pm]

22 Summer Brenner & Vincent Katz

Summer Brenner is the author of several books of poetry & prose including *The Soft Room* & the forthcoming *One Minute Movies*. Vincent Katz is the author of many books including *Rooms, New York, Hello* & most recently, *Charm*. [8 pm]

24 LIVE, Friday Nite from the Poetry Project

Douglas Rothschild and Janice Earbaum once again brave the poetic frontier. Musical fortification provided by the house band Vole. [10:30 pm]

27 Sara Grosky, Michael Ladd & Prageeta Sharma

Sara Grosky is a poet & chanteuse whose work has appeared in the *Velvet Vampyre*. Poet Michael Ladd's work has been published in *ALoud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Cafe*. Prageeta Sharma's work addresses issues of post-colonialism as perceived through first generation American eyes. [8 pm]

29 Randall Kenan & Li-Young Lee

Randall Kenan is the author of *A Visitation of Spirits* and *Let the Dead Bury Their Dead*, which was termed "nothing short of a wonder book" by *The New York Times Book Review*. Li-Young Lee's first collection of poems, *Rose*, received wide critical acclaim. Lee's second book *The City in Which I Love You* was the 1990 Lamont Poetry Selection of The Academy of American Poets. [8 pm] [This reading is part of the National Literary Network's Writers Tour which is supported solely by a grant from the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund.]

bernadette mayer fund

Bernadette Mayer fund update:

Since Bernadette Mayer's October 11th surgery for intracerebral bleeding (equivalent to a stroke), she has been engaged in intensive physical rehabilitation therapy. In December, she moved from Saint Vincent's Hospital to the physical therapy facilities at New York University Hospital where she is slowly regaining the strength and abilities she lost as a result of her illness.

We wish to thank all of you who have contributed to The Bernadette Mayer Fund over the past few months. Your gifts have been instrumental in helping Bernadette pay her rent, phone bills, and utilities, as well as the costs for care of her three children. As Bernadette's recovery progresses she needs your help more than ever. At this point she is still unable to write, read or move about easily. When she is finally allowed to return home, her physical therapy will continue to result in additional expenses not covered by Medicaid. Bernadette's recovery will be a long and arduous process and the assistance she receives will permit her to concentrate more fully on getting well.

An important and respected poet, Bernadette has been involved in the New York City poetry community for many years. She served as director of the Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church from 1980-84 and since then she has lead numerous writing workshops at the Project and at The New School for Social Research. Bernadette has published fifteen books of poetry and prose, recently, *A Bernadette Mayer Reader* (New Directions 1992) and *The Desires of Mothers to Please Others in Letters* (Hard Press 1994).

Gift's to Bernadette's fund are tax-deductible. Please make contribution checks payable to: **Giorno Poetry Systems/The Bernadette Mayer Fund** and mail to **Giorno Poetry Systems, 222 Bowery, New York, NY, 10012.**

the pOetry project

letter to the e d i t o r

Dear Poetry Project,

In the October/November issue of the newsletter, Gillian McCain quotes John Yau that I am planning to sue him for libel for his article in *APR*. This is completely false. I am opposed to all forms of censorship, under any circumstances. Break his toes? Sure. Sue him? Never.

(It's also worth noting, given the ensuing events, that Yau's entire evidence in *APR* for what he calls my "degrading views of African-Americans" is my enthusiasm for the poetry of Amiri Baraka. Follow that one.)

Elsewhere in the issue, Douglas Rothschild writes that Jackson Mac Low is "living proof" against "Weinberger's claim that politically radical views & allegiances lead you to stop writing." Of course, I never said anything so ridiculous. I was talking (in one paragraph) about a specific historical instance: the U.S. in the 1930's, when the kind of issues floating around the Communist Party led a lot of young people to give up writing. Mac Low, as everyone knows, is a life-long anarchist who wouldn't be caught dead in the CP.

Rothschild also exaggerates my two or three sentences about the Internet. My point was that—regardless of any rhetoric about the "proletariat"—the ideas, initial implementation and leadership of nearly all (and all Marxist) revolutions have come from the educated middle-class. The next revolution—social, economic and environmental—must be global, based on the genuine Internationale that Marx dreamed of, not the nationalistic travesties that actually occurred in his name. One place for like-minded individuals around the world to begin to find each other, and to listen to each other, is the info superhighway. I mentioned it, in passing, as a starting-point, not as a solution.

Finally, I'm surprised my remarks caused such a scandal. It's plainly true that the 20th century revolutions (Marxist, Fascist, Islamic) have executed, imprisoned or exiled nearly all their best poets. (The only exceptions are those who were famous before the revolution, achieving a sort of Grand Old Man/Woman status afterwards.) It's also true that, beyond these exceptions, the major world poets (like Baraka) who remained life-long Communists all lived in countries that had not experienced a Communist revolution. (Baraka's tirade against pornography and homosexuality, and his defense of the elimination of "counter-revolutionaries"—unmentioned in either your issue or the *Poetry Flash* account—reveal exactly what kind of Minister of Culture he would make.) From the point of view of writers, we obviously need a new model for a revolutionary society: One that won't kill us, and where the Poetry Project newsletter will be the *Washington Post*, not published in exile in Copenhagen.

Yours, Eliot Weinberger

new years volunteers

We would like to thank the following New Year's Volunteers for their generous support: Betsy Andrews, Dominick Arbolay, Matt Basiliere, Liz Bonsal, Beth Borrus, Debby Branch, Bridget Brehen, Laynie Brown, Jeff Butler, David Cameron, Carol Szamatowicz, Donna Cartelli, Todd Colby, Brad Davidson, Donald Davis, Jordan Davis, Joe DiMattio, Alison Dorfman, Josie Foo, Merry Fortune, David Greenberg, Pamela Grossman, Robert Hale, Edith Harrit, Heather Higgins, Mitch Highfill, Christian X. Hunter, Nora Issacs, Ken Jordan, Eliot Katz, Lee Klein, Kris Kriker, Lori Landes, Kathleen Large, Rachael Levitsky, Brendan Lorber, Kimberly Lyons, Joe Mangini, Greg Masters, Sharon Matlin, Gillian McCain, Sharon Mesmer, Mario Mezzacappa, Elinor Nauen, Cynthia Nelson, Wanda Phipps, Jill Rapaport, Diana Rickard, Paul Roesch, Douglas Rothschild, Micki Siegel, Serena Siegfried, Rani Singh, Sparrow, Paul St. Amour, Sharon Strange, Spring Ulmer, David Vogen, Vanessa Weiman, Majja Wilder, Lee Williams, Margaret and Steve Wishnia.

THE WORLD #50

New writing from the Poetry Project

Juliana Spahr, Jackson MacLow
Peter Bushyeager, Bernadette Mayer
Dale Herd, Rachel Blau du Plessis
Paul Violi, Roberta Allen, Forrest Gander
Elinor Nauen, Barbara Henning
Fielding Dawson, Dennis Moritz
Vincent Katz, Sean Killian, Phyllis Wat
Jessica Grim, Barbara Einzig
Elio Schneeman, Wang Ping
Terence Winch, Wayne Beminger
Donna Cartelli, Morton Marcus
Tony Towle, Bill Kushner
Leonard Schwartz, Vyt Bakaitis
Lita Hornick, Greg Masters
Josie Sieuw-Phaik Foo, Lewis Warsh
Chris Tysh, Edmund Berrigan
Anselm Hollo, John Farris
Stephen Ratcliffe, Harris Schiff
Dick Gallup, Wanda Coleman
Jack Collom, Jordan Davis
cover by Rackstraw Downe

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New York, NY 10003

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Wallace Fowlie Rimbaud and Jim Morrison: The Rebel as Poet, A Memoir

Duke University Press,
1994, 131 pages, \$9.95

I find it difficult to believe that Wallace Fowlie even wrote this book. My first thought was that perhaps he had been replaced by an idiot body-double. I mean, what would possess a man of Fowlie's stature to write such a book? No slouch in academia, Fowlie is most widely known for his translation of Rimbaud's complete works from University of Chicago Press (you know, the baby blue book with the portrait of Rimbaud by Picasso on the cover), he's also the James B. Duke Professor Emeritus of French Literature at Duke University, and author of numerous, highly-acclaimed (in their time) critical studies. Well then, why did he do it?

We get the answer in the rambling introduction that takes up nearly a third of this tiny book. In it, Fowlie reveals that in 1991, after one of his classes at Duke, a student handed him a stack of Doors records and that cornball biography of Jim Morrison, *No One Here Gets Out Alive* by Danny Sugarman. The Professor took the booty home and immersed himself in the Doors (it's a great image to think of an eighty-three-year-old man ogling over the Lizard King). All this excitement must have jogged his memory, because he suddenly remembered a letter he received, way back in 1968, from Jim Morrison, who had this to say about Fowlie's translation: "Dear Wallace Fowlie, Just wanted to say thanks for doing the Rimbaud translation. I needed it because I don't read French that easily ... I am a rock singer and your book travels with me. That Picasso drawing on the cover is GREAT."

Keep in mind that all this was happening in 1991, the same year that Oliver Stone's silly little film "The Doors" came out. Plus a Doors revival of sorts was happening on College Campuses all over America due to the film's release. It wasn't long before Fowlie started receiving invitations from (gasp) Fraternity Houses to deliver lectures on Jim Morrison and Arthur Rimbaud. I might have understood Fowlie's willingness to deliver his Frat House Lectures if he had used the oppor-

tunity to expose these frat-boy Doorheads to the pleasures of reading the real grandpappy of punk: Rimbaud. But instead, Fowlie's fawns over Morrison like one of those cheesy biographers of the stars whose books you find in airports. Maybe somebody at the Doors record label, Elektra, bought him off. I can just see it, *Hey Wally, this is Elektra up here in New York, what's it worth to you to write a memoir about Rimbaud and Morrison? We gotta open new demographic vistas. If you don't want to do it, we could always have one of our stable of cheesy rock biographers ghost-write it for you, all you have to do is put your name on it.*" Much stranger things have happened in this world.

So lame is Fowlie in this book that he overlooks some people that came after Morrison that did a much better job of combining rock and poetry. Why is there no mention of Patti Smith, Jim Carroll, Exene Cervenka, Richard Hell, Lydia Lunch, Tom Verlaine or even that semi-literate Morrison of our time, Henry Rollins? It's major oversights like this that make me wonder who really wrote this book. I mean, why waste so much time on a humorless, self-absorbed, schlock-of-a-poet like Jim Morrison? Sure the Doors did one or two cool songs, but have you ever tried to sit down and read one of Morrison's books of poetry that have been popping up like nasty blemishes in bookstores lately? They're like reading an embarrassing journal somebody wrote when they were in the ninth grade. Here's an example: "Skin-divers float/ in the uterus .../ The sea is a vagina which/ may be penetrated at any point."

Ugh. Save your money on this book and see the movie, or if you want to really trace Rimbaud's influence on modern poetry and rock, hunt down some of the books by the authors listed above (minus the Rollins oeuvre). You'll thank me you did. Todd Colby

**Williams S.
Burroughs & Kurt
Cobain
The "Priest" They
Called Him
Produced by James
Grauerholz
Tim Kerr Records, 1994,
CD single**

rEviewS

During the brief span of his career, the late Kurt Cobain found himself sharing CD space with, among others, Beavis and Butt-head. In fact, the song he had with his band Nirvana on *The Beavis and Butt-Head Experience* collection, "I Hate Myself And I Want To Die," was one of his best ever. But on *The "Priest" They Called Him*, Cobain found himself in the presence of a much higher sort of being—William S. Burroughs. Which isn't to say that Beavis and Butt-head aren't highly evolved creatures themselves. It's just that their high comes not from an understanding of language and modern society but from a supplant the library as the fountain of all knowledge): the convenience store.

Indeed, Beavis and Butt-head are to Generation X what Burroughs is to thirtysomething geezers like me: a bellwether by which to judge any modern phenomenon. Though of course they have a closer affinity to Burroughs' characters than to Burroughs himself, and could easily have appeared in *Naked Lunch* as a sly take on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: *Berway takes a chocolate bar from his pocket, removes the wrapper and holds it in front of Beavis's nose. Beavis sniffs. His jaw begins to work. Meanwhile Butt-head makes snatching motions with his hands. Saliva drips from his mouth and hangs off his chin in long streamers ...* But let us not dwell on mere possibilities.

As it is, *The "Priest" They Called Him*, William Burroughs' "duet" with Kurt Cobain, is more a curio than anything else. If Burroughs hadn't already done *Dead City Radio* (with Hal Wilner directing the music), *Spare Ass Annie* (again with Wilner and with the additional input of the Disposable Heroes of Hipocrisy), and songs like "Millions of Images" with film director Gus Van Sant, this duet with Kurt Cobain might have seemed more interesting. But as those other records were done with painstaking care to match the music with Burroughs' words, this record seems more like a throwaway project.

Reading a chapter from *Exterminator!* with his usual engrossing delivery, Burroughs is accompanied by the sound of Kurt Cobain playing a feedback enhanced takeoff from "Silent Night." (Burroughs' narrative takes place on Christmas Eve.) It's good, but as a collaboration it's not all that com-

elling, giving one reason to think a meeting between Cobain and Burroughs as something that would have been better seen than heard. And in reality the two didn't actually meet for this record, as Burroughs recorded his voice in Lawrence, Kansas, with Cobain recording his guitar backgrounds in Seattle.

Still, one only wishes that James Grauerholz, the producer of *The "Priest" They Called Him*, had had the foresight to use some *Forest Gump* style technology to construct a video in which the two actually seem to perform together. It would have been a big hit on *The Beavis and Butt-Head Show*: "Hey, Beavis, it's that old guy from the Nike commercials singing with Kurt Cobain."

"Well, that old guy isn't much of a singer, but he sure knows how to write a song."

"Yeah, he rules!"

Jose Padua

Patti Smith Early Work

Norton, 1994
177 pages, \$18.95

.....

Sweet Nothings: An Anthology of Rock and Roll in American Poetry

Edited by Jim Elledge
Indiana University
Press, 1994
224 pages, \$14.95

What was it like to be a genius girl who wanted to be a genius boy? What was it like to travel the back roads of Europe, South America, New Jersey? What was it like to greatly desire artistic triumph and the best fuck ever? Read *Early Work* by Patti Smith. *Commes des garçons: Hendrix, Houdini, Morrison, Rimbaud*—Smith thrived on the idea of the escape art-

ist—someone who could literally remove the chains of polite society and reveal, well whatever he wanted. I use "he" because Smith's identification is so much with the guys. While the girls are "stinking of piety" or longing for "johnny bongo johnny cloud johnny guitar johnny o'clock," they appear as either torch singing divas or throwaway girlfriends: someone to kiss and forget. Well, that was the way of rock and roll circa the mid- Sixties to early Seventies, all guitar gods and drugs, sex and glitter. Smith's poetry revels and reveals the excesses of the era and a wild tenderness. From an early poem, "notebook," one hears the struggle between attitude and genuine sentiment: *I keep trying to figure out what it means/ to be american. When I look in myself/ I see arabia, venus, nineteenth-century/ french but I can't recognize what/ makes me american ... I think about a red, white and blue rag I wrap around/ my pillow. Maybe It's nothing material/ maybe it's just being free.*

Essential to Smith's oeuvre is the notion of liberation from the American Dream. Her very persona expressed a desperate urge to get as far away from those New Jersey roots as she possibly could. But what you get is a writer of extremes. Poems with startling and sustained power such as "rimbaud dead" share this beautifully designed book with "anna of the harbor" which reads like a very bad parody of Leonard Cohen's "Suzanne." Whether your interest in Smith's work comes from her pop music stardom or from a fascination with seventies glam and glitter, the mad language, rolling rhythms, cinematic asides, and relentless energy—even when seemingly opiated her language glistens—*Early Work* serves a powerful introduction to one of America's most charismatic figures.

I wish that *Sweet Nothings* could give readers a similar experience. What an opportunity lost. Jim Elledge's anthology pulls together what looks like a Who's Who of the AWP. While a few of these poets and their poems display an authentic connection to rock music, much of this work reads like middle-age, middle-class whining.

Elledge's introduction to the anthology contains more cliches than a bad *People* magazine article, especially as it focuses on the figure of Elvis Presley, forever after known as the "King." Second, with very few exceptions, most of the writers are white, male and somewhere between forty and sixty. Okay, I am not white, or male, and yes, I fit the age thing, but really, where is the fanzine energy of younger writers? Where are the wannabe rappers, where are

the folks who don't give a damn about "the King"? The few outstanding poems in this volume include David Rivard's "Consolation" in which Prince (before he became formerly Prince) figures in the background; "The Back Up Singer" by Dorothy Barressi which details the pain and healing emblematic of the working life of women musicians, and David Trinidad's loopily ironic "Monday, Monday" in which he asked the question always asked of songs of our youth: "Why is it I've always mistaken these lyrics for my true feelings?" Indeed, why?

The very definition of contemporary American mass culture—race, gender, and sexual preference—have been contested in rock and roll. Yet, few of these poems struggle with or go beyond a look back with ambivalence and occasional anger. It is as if Elledge shied away from the very energy and danger that marks the best of American popular music and its influences on artists of all kinds. The poetry in Patti Smith's *Early Work* shows her indebtedness to rock's role as a liberating force in American culture. Dorothy Barressi's poem expresses its power to unify disparate lives—to even heal. William Matthews' powerful poem about Janis Joplin focuses on female sexuality. Why then are so many of the poems in this volume emotionally narrow and focused on "the King?"

An editor of wider literary knowledge and greater intellectual rigor could have presented a truly impressive range of works in an anthology that could have started to answer Trinidad's significant question. As it is *Sweet Nothings* remains a traditional AWP anthology: something useful, but not particularly significant like a record that made the top ten but never went past number nine. Patricia Spears Jones

Michael Friedman Cameo

The Figures, 1994
26 pages, \$5

Cameo is a book of twenty-two paragraphs, or poems, each with a title one word long, by a New York writer I admire a good deal. Sure, it looks slight, but, as Friedman says here, "what of it?" Actually *Cameo* has a great deal to say about myth, history, and the dance of the protozoa, not to mention the invention of a new perfume, *Michael Friedman's Night of Magic*.

I recognize some of *Cameo's* images from Friedman's previous work, the "na-

tives restless in their trailer, waiting for their big take," who used to populate a village under a smoldering volcano, and "dance/ around boiling water," in *Special Capacity* (1992). Similarly, the "makeout party" in the new "Cloud" was featured in another poem from the same volume, lights dimming to announce its "time." I take these tropes as figures of extreme anxiety, the alterity of "natives," the overdetermined organization of pleasure a makeout party suggests. (*I think*. Is this the same event that here in San Francisco we call a "sex party"?) These twin anxieties form part of a larger, free-floating wish to abandon "knowledge" or what passes for it—to "remember nothing." The merciless text, however, allows no such relief. It remembers everything, flaunts its omnipotence. "My type," he writes, "could be summed up in a word: crummy."

Friedman's sentences are always exhibiting this anxiety, turning in on themselves reflexively, as though conscious of some numinous force a little out of reach. Sometimes, they're wryly funny, the way Woody Allen monologues would like to be. ("There are plenty of things we don't yet understand, take UFO's, or platform shoes.") Sometimes a naive romanticism bubbles up under the statement itself. Usually these modes are conflated to produce a line I really can't compare to anyone else's—I'd propose Mozart, but that's so portentous. Eartha Kitt? Bernice Stegers? In an earlier poem Friedman introduced the idea of a cameo, a radical if cheesy method of "zetting up" artistic production—Tony Curtis, say, in an "otherwise schlock horror flick." But while reading this little book we remember instead Jane Austen and her two square inches of ivory. "I would propose, then, a discourse that foregrounds and valorizes this instability." In *Cameo* members of a royal family, king, queen, princess, join monsters, gods, beatniks and Jesus to live the kinds of lives we'd like for ourselves, if we could but escape this damned restrictive prison of self. They come to America, where Friedman has staged a far-ranging critique of U.S. historicists from Fenimore Cooper to Springsteen, Wallace Stevens to Jay Ward.

I want also to mention a particular sentence that floats into many of these poems like dandelion fluff, a two-part construction that's a type of punctuation of the unsaid. "Riot act, pajama game." "Flotsam, zombie." "Nebula, pine needles." When I understand their function better I'll write to *The Poetry Project Newsletter* with my findings. "Ice, water."

Sometimes the poet is hobbled a bit, I think, by having to stick to this one-word

title business, but, as Chris Evert said on the infomercial, why play tennis without a net? "There are two sides to every story," Friedman reminds us, "one well done, one medium rare." I will remember *Cameo* for its wit, its brio, for its mysterious narrative tangle, for the natural melancholia that attaches itself, like a limpet, to the past tense. I've been reading Michael Friedman's poetry for ten years, since the eccentric, hilarious *Distinctive Belt*, and appreciating it more and more as the years grow shorter. He's one of the few writers I know who I wish had more books. Kevin Killian

Tricia Rose Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America

Wesleyan University
Press/University Press of
New England
1994, 237 pages, no price
listed

Tricia Rose is the freshest voice in the commentary and literature on rap music and hip hop culture of which there has been a great lack of serious writings to date. Although Rose's writing is academic in style and organization, *Black Noise* is more accessible than one might think. Rose writes well, her voice is compassionate and insightful in the ways of an educated black woman who knows the limits of her education and the value of her own experience. And luckily that experience has a lot to do with Rose having grown up with rap and hip hop and accepting it into her adult life as an important element of her musical/artistic/political tastes. Because of the lack of a solid literature on rap there has been a big gap in support of what is the most significant emergent art form of the Nineties. Therefore the general reader, and even the informed reader, lacks a basis, a way of understanding rap and hip hop's wealth of information. *Black Noise* is a strong step towards breaking down the barriers that separate rap from the larger art culture. Most of the popular writings on rap enforce an in-group dynamic by going for spontaneity and con-



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Memory Play, Carla Harryman,
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ISBN # 1-882022-21-1. Child's writ-
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figure they want" as contemplation
of lust touching a civilization. Bruce
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Collision Center, Randall Potts,
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Potts' poems, nature and language
collide, and then proceed, each
having been transformed. .on the
stark clarities of his lines."

comitant familiarity with the latest argot, than with research and consideration. Greg Tate, Nelson George and Harry Allen, three virtual deans of rap writing, have all broadened their horizons to the exclusion of their frequent sharp rap commentaries, criticisms and appreciations. *Black Noise* is right on time. There are educated adult consumers of rap who recognize the brilliance of its form and follow it as they do all happening music. This rap constituency is rarely addressed by rap merchandisers or recognized by New York's literary/critical establishment that includes most of what is often referred to as the mainstream press and publishers.

Black Noise deals with four areas within the broad terrain of hip hop: a history of rap set before the backdrop of New York City's post-industrial urban complex; the technological and supra-musical "interventions" of rap as form; the "racial politics, institutional critiques, and media and institutional responses"; and the sexual politics of rap with a heavy emphasis on female rapper's put-downs of b-men, black masculinity, and the feminist debate.

As a black woman Rose is emotionally involved in the black male-female thing as played out on the rap world stage, but she

is also a scholar who researched "hidden facets of the institutional policing of rappers and rap fans (e.g. large-venue insurance coverage)." As a scholar (she's a NYU assistant professor in African Studies), Rose is also expected to play to the Academy but she chooses her moments well, such as in her explorations of rap lyric transcript's "discursive and institutional territory": *Rap music is, in many ways, a hidden transcript. Among other things, it uses cloaked speech and disguised cultural codes to comment on and challenge aspects of current power inequalities ... a large and significant element in rap's discursive territory is engaged in symbolic and ideological warfare with institutions and groups that symbolically, ideologically, and materially oppress African Americans ... rapper's act out inversions of status hierarchies, tell alternative stories of contact with police and the educational process, and draw portraits of contact with dominant groups in which the hidden transcript inverts/subverts the public, dominant transcript, often rendering a nagging critique of various manifestations of power via jokes, stories, gestures and song, rap's social commentary enacts ideological insubordination.*

Rose quotes from the transcripts of

many raps and this is a strong reason to have *Black Noise* in hand. Paris, a San Francisco-based political rapper, is one reason why rap music is "policed" by the powers that be so as to prevent its exposure to the general public: *P-Dog commin' up, I' straight low/ Pro-black and it ain't no joke/ Commin' straight from the mob that broke shit last time/ Now I'm back with a brand new sick rhyme./ So, black, check time and*

Lynn Crawford Solow

House of Outside Press,
1995, 72 pages, \$8.95

In her acknowledgments Lynn Crawford describes the elements of her first book as "pieces." Deliberate or not, this is the precise term, for these fourteen pieces comprise the whole of an incessant self-reflecting mindscape, a mental map in an unsettling "form" that has as much to do with traditional genres of literature as an Escher or Rorschach has to do with drawings. That is, too much. Shifting be-

burning deck



Dichten = :

No. 1: FRIEDERIKE MAYRÖCKER: *Heiligenanstalt* (trans. Rosmarie Waldrop)

Four fictions around Chopin, Brahms and other Romantic composers, fictions that "look into the eye of the hurricane." Mayröcker is one of the most original and prominent Austrian writers, famous for the "hallucinatory" quality of her poetry and prose, winner of many prestigious literary prizes. She was born in 1924 in Vienna and part of the experimental "Vienna Group" in the 1960s. 96 pages, offset, Smyth-sewn paperback, \$8

Série d'écriture:

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Tacitus tells in his *Annals* how the Romans were defeated by "a simple woman," the Breton Queen Boudica. Keineg's poems, with their hammered rhythms, their echos of blows given and taken, raise a monument to Queen Boudica's courage and, by bold anachronisms, to the Bretons that have resisted forced assimilation through the centuries. Paol Keineg was born in 1944 in Finistere. He has published poetry in both Breton and French and now teaches at Duke University. 64 pages, offset, Smyth-sewn paperback \$6

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No. 5: JOSEPH GUGLIELMI: *Dawn* (trans. Rosmarie Waldrop). "Language shifting not only through thought, but through the movements of the sun"—Kristin Prevallet, *Taproot*. 64 pages, offset, saddlestitched

Burning Deck has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, the Fund for Poetry, and the Services Culturels of the French Embassy.

tween interior monologues and traditional narratives, with occasional nods to dialogue, these writings can be read as the obsessive compulsions of a singular ego, gnawing away its own fears, needs, and wants. At the same time *Solow* is linguistic game, a text as unafraid of metonyms and synecdoches as it is of allegory and metaphor, form being here a matter of polysemy and cross-reference: motifs and phrases play with meanings a la Lewis Carroll, Gertrude Stein, and reproduce one another across individual "narratives" a la Angela Carter and Leslie Scalapino.

So if these must be called "stories," they are stories in the way that the interrelated fables of Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* are "stories," the way Scalapino's *Way* is a novel. Except here the echoes and delayed rhymes can be startling, not the least because the narrators of these writings have been "composed" by self-conscious rules, into stammering (and near aphasic) automata: "Bubbling saliva between my lips draws your attention and we come back to the car where I break out a bag of chips I'd kept secret till this moment." Childish pout— or rabid foam? Wife and child, wives and kids, the narrators of "Brood" and "Rest Stops One" mouth aspirin in their cribs or, "Asking for aspirin ... get baby." In "Star #5," we read an elaborate description of a table setting: "Thirty-four books of matches form seven rows on a table. Each cover depicts this identical scene: a Queen and her young son the prince in woods. Inches from his face hisses a serpent. In the thirty-fifth empty space lie dice showing '1' and '1.'" The unpredictability signified in the missing or absent matchbox as isolated ("1") die is embedded in the public speaker's post-coitus pronouncement to the narrator of "Solow": "you only die once'."

The play of chance, the unpredictability of any system, any logic, including the privileged motif of snake-eyed(-bit) coupledom, echoed over and over in the chance encounters ("Rest Stops Two," "Four," "Sap"), the human-crossed romance ("Fritz Mann"), is linked to the burden of custom, tradition, ritual, rule; chance is figured here as an integral component of the game. Thus the "chance" meetings between men and women occur according to a specific systematic presumption on the part of both: the availability of any woman to any man. One body for a man in a moment— or once— of time if he so chooses. That so many of these women narrators seize control, or attempt to, also heralding the once of multiple lovers drives home in the thematic links between the more or less self-assured narra-

tor of "Solow," the last piece in the volume, and the waif-like narrator of "Rest Stops One," the opening piece.

And yet— or also—polygamy and promiscuity engages polysemy, dangerous in a world in which men presume to own, monogamy intersecting with private property and capitalism in a system skewed to men (e.g. the stud vs. the slut). Perhaps no piece sums up these crucial dilemmas more effectively than the "traditional" poem, or rather, the poem in traditional form: "Maneuver." I quote the poem in its first two stanzas: *It is a classical situation/ You on your knees, building, me up in a turret/ Outside my room I'm in fresh air; can see gardens,/ roofs, a town, the sea/ Clothes fit loosely to your body// You on your knees building me up in a turret/ You look up and do not spot me/ Clothes lie scattered near your body/ A ship steams in a dog is barking ...*

Solow is an important contribution to the literature that interrogates the relationship between control, rule, ritual and their unpredictable givens, open to the reader or observer of the other—lover, stranger, foe. Tyrone Williams

Live At The Ear

Edited by Charles Bernstein

Conceived & Produced by Richard Dillon

Elemenope Productions & Oracular Laboratory Recordings, 1994, \$15.95

As I sat down to begin typing this review, Ted Greenwald said: "From now on take my/ Word, my word!, for what/ I'm about to tell you." Well, this seemed an encouraging augury. Let me say right off, if "spoken word" is your thing, this is a good CD to have. If two or three of the poets on this CD are your favorite poets— you might want to buy this disc. If you like poetry readings but don't get to many this is an excellent recording to listen to. And finally, if you go to a lot of readings this CD is just like lots of stuff you've heard (surprisingly enough, EVEN IF YOU DON'T go to "Language" poetry readings.)

Although Mr. Greenwald is not the first reader on this recording, having begun with his few cautionary words, I will

continue. Mr. Greenwald is hard to hear. I like this poem, and Mr. Greenwald's presentation. He reads fast and furiously, but the sound is blurry. You need to either turn down the treble or listen to the recording several times before hearing with ease. However, if you turn the treble down, do not forget to turn it back up. Rosmarie Waldrop, Alan Davies, and Barrett Watten, who follow Mr. Greenwald, all give good readings which have been recorded well.

On Erica Hunt's piece, which will interest a lot of people outside the "Language" poetry rubric, a nice "live" highlight (one of the few) is the sound of the cash register ringing at the beginning of her poem. The next track is unfortunately substandard. Like Mr. Greenwald, Bruce Andrews, (and Ann Lauterbach and Charles Bernstein, whose poems come at the end of the CD) has unfortunately been recorded poorly. However, one quickly becomes accustomed to the various problems on these cuts, and the beauty of the recorded format is, if you've missed something, you can go back and hear it again. (Remember to improve the sound quality on these cuts: Turn down the tizzy and boost the base).

When Hannah Weiner comes on, be sure to have the levels back to normal because you don't want to miss any of this. It is a joy to hear Ms. Weiner's reading (from over ten years ago). Her voice is clear and lucid. Her poem, ironic and entertaining. Steve McCaffery, who reads next, gives us another gem. This, due in part to his accent, and in part to his interest in the way words sound. One listens with pleasure to phrases such as, "Negritic granite still a smite emits."

Unfortunately, there is no introduction to any of the readings. Each time I began listening to this CD I felt the need to restart, as I had just missed Susan Howe's first words. Her piece is fairly well recorded; however, she has a very soft voice, and one needs to listen to her poem a number of times to really hear it. Ron Silliman reads next. His piece is especially interesting because we can hear in this work a great similarity to other, less "coded" forms of writing. Mr. Silliman gives us short, "objectivist" images, which grow into a larger disjointed, yet very recognizable urban landscape. Perhaps both the "Language" and the "Nuyorican" poets would be surprised at how "familiar" their writings are. Similarly, Leslie Scalapino's poem "bum series" has an aural form which will appeal to many people who might at first dismiss her a little too casually as another one of those "Language" poets.

Finally, let me end with an odd caution-

ary note from the fine print on the back cover of the CD itself. "This definitive audio textual anthology is intended for libraries and collectors of rare literary material. Utmost techniques circa 1994 were employed by an eminent expert in the field to recover, restore and digitally remaster the former cassette recordings into a continuous audio experience through all thirteen selections." Overall, the work is good and the recording adequate. The more one listens, the easier it is to hear. Despite its limitations, this is a CD worth owning. For the poet who has everything, it makes a great gift. Tony Door

The Portable Paul and Jane Bowles Edited by Millicent Dillon Penguin, 1994 611 pages, \$13.95

I've been to many parties where, in the midst of pleasant mayhem and maddening flirtation, someone will drunkenly spin at the name of Paul Bowles and spit out, a little savagely, "Jane's the better writer. And Paul gets all the publicity, what with his movie, journal publications and all that, and a place in the Academy of Arts and Letters to boot — and what did *she* get?" Yes, after a flurry of popularity in the mid eighties with major reprints of her work, today even *Two Serious Ladies*, arguably her best writing (and some of the better around, period), is a difficult find at the Village bookstore, and again this former New York-salon fixture and *femme terrible* has largely fallen into critical and popular obscurity.

The 620-page *Portable Paul and Jane Bowles* attempts to address this issue, edited by no less than Jane's biographer Millicent Dillon, who breaks the Viking series traditional one-writer format to create, as she writes in her introduction, a "dialogue" between Jane and Paul that reveals the duo as "two parts of the same being."

The results are mixed. Let's first look at the business end of things: readers are always a bit of a massacre at the smorgasbord, and this volume is no exception. Only the first two-thirds of *Two Serious Ladies* appears, making Jane's novel into something of a beautiful, dangling and peculiar ornament, even more plotless and collagistic than the original in its entirety;

any resulting appreciation has to be from a stylistic perspective. Only a few paragraphs of *The Sheltering Sky* are included, and only the last seventy-odd, climactic pages of *Let It Come Down*. A diverse, chronological view of the writings *does* arise as short-story standards appear alongside travel writings by Paul and posthumously published notebook entries — as well as writings excised from the original manuscript of *Two Serious Ladies* — that read like hilarious, hyper-developed Marx Brothers skits by Jane. Nevertheless, while I hate this kind of criticism, personally, it is sometimes difficult to find a suitable rationale for these cut-and-paste editorial escapades, however necessary or appropriate for the reader genre, when the library with a complete selection is only a few subway stops away. So repeat after me: *Jane is being resuscitated. Jane is being resuscitated.* May this collection be a permanent literary mark on the fastidious modernist and commercial lapels that dare ignore her, college library purchases everywhere spreading the word that "Bowles" under the eyeglass of critical inquiry can be prefaced by either "P" or "J."

Business aside, Dillon's cohesive look at the two Bowles is, after all, an artwork unto itself. Regardless of artistic circles and bents, the couple followed very closely the American, Hemingway-biblical tenet, "Write what you know." They invested themselves — in personality and personal experience — wholly into their writings, and so the pairing creates portraits of lives and a lifestyle, demonstrating a particular American milieu's practice of the extension of reality into fiction: Paul's "The Frozen Fields" is obviously fashioned after the author's own wretched childhood; as he once asserted, "My father's philosophy was that you force the child to do what it doesn't want to do." His gorgeous description in "How Many Midnights" of a winter in New York as a woman awaits her lover's arrival during the lost hours of pre-dawn takes its cue from Paul's own nights waiting for Jane's invariably drunken and overdue return; and his love of silence, meditative sensibility, and wont for physical remoteness in his work stems from music. "I was a composer and lived day and night trying to escape noise," he said. Conversely, Jane's slapstick-in-the-wind style befits her own conversational knack: a friend once described her speech at parties as a series of non-sequiturs, as if she continuously hopped over links in the logical chain thought — to beautiful and humorous results. Together, the couple's work diagrams a relationship at times traumatic, at times sadistic, stuck together with the

brand of metaphysical glue peculiar to such bonds. The stories themselves are always at each other's necks with a tit-for-tat mentality of cutting remarks and condemnations of each author's lifelong companion. So it was in life as, for example, Jane said "He's my enemy" upon first meeting Paul and referred to him throughout life as "Gloompot" — Jane considered Paul the superior writer, and Paul still champions Jane's writing today. As Paul writes, "It made her sad to realize that in spite of their same feelings, they never would reach the same conclusions, because their respective aims in life were almost diametrically opposed." Or, as Jane writes, "I don't find it contradictory at all to love and hate the same person."

Such poignant, stultifyingly tragic contradictions literature makes, so this portable serves its purpose. Pack it away in a duffel bag with the extra pair of sneakers — the remarkable, sometimes brutal observations of the meditative mind in one, the insight and hornet-nest prose of the other, the sheer mass of humor and beauty should convince all skeptics (of whom I myself was one) that these are two American writers still to be discovered and investigated. Tim Griffin

Paul Krassner CONFESSIONS OF A RAVING UNCONFINED NUT

Touchstone, 1993 337 pages, \$12

I waited a year for this book to come out in paperback and it was worth the wait. In retrospect I wish now I had bought it a year ago; you don't have to make that mistake. Buy it now!

Paul Krassner is the kind of Sixties legend that can amaze merely by virtue of having survived himself. Despite years of being subjected to vehement criticism by the right wing press and sometimes the left, as well as surveillance by CIA, the FBI and SLA, he has continued to write and perform acts of inspired lunacy based on humanism and love, never becoming poisoned by the cynicism that has eaten or killed many of his peers and progenitors.

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class clown, Krassner claims to have had his first Zen awakening at the age of six during his solo performance of a Vivaldi concerto on the stage at Carnegie Hall. Krassner's story of his botched circumcision at the hands of a drunken *Moyle* seems a metaphorical allusion to the cross-eyed confusion of American politics in the Sixties and authority in general; on the other hand, it might just be a funny story that some jester-god knew would karmically reverberate throughout his life.

With a flare for stand-up-comic pacing and story structure, Krassner recounts his friendships with a genuine pantheon of counter-culture heroes and warrior farceurs: Lenny Bruce, Abbie Hoffman, Allen Ginsberg, Norman Mailer, Timothy Leary, John Lennon, Dick Gregory, William Burroughs, The Fugs, Ram Dass, Ken Kesey, Bobby Seale and more.

As the editor/publisher of *The Realist* Krassner was incapable of playing it safe. In the days before legal abortion, Krassner was a one-man abortion referral service risking serious jail time daily. With earnings from *The Realist* he funded Summerlane, the most radical school (and out-of-control. I should know; I went there) to ever exist in the Sixties or at any other time. When he moved to California and began chasing down multiple hierarchical conspiracies, his life became so immersed in LSD and speed-crazed political paranoia that he ended up closely resembling the distorted picture of himself being painted by authorities in hopes of discrediting him. Later, when writing about his eventual return to relative sanity and sobriety he avoids the obligatory apologist proselytizing about the evils of drugs.

As a catalyst for social and political change Krassner's methods were never more unexpected and unwelcome than when he was attempting to politicize *Hustler* during his tenure there as editor-in-chief and it is to his credit that he lasted as long as he did. No doubt many of his Yippie followers were

scratching their heads in bewilderment when he signed on at the nastiest porn rag in the USA. But in light of his previous efforts against censorship and his later collaborations with *Coyote* founder Margo St. James and the *Feminist Party Workshop's* Gloria Williams, it made perfect sense. It is a wonderful bit of irony that this high-profile sexual revolution provocateur should have been a sweet, acne-scarred Jewish kid who'd remained a virgin until the tender age of twenty-six. Christian X. Hunter

Charles Simic A Wedding in Hell Harcourt Brace, 1994 79 pages, \$19.95

Charles Simic's new volume of poems, *A Wedding in Hell*, is presented in three sections, loosely constructed as the trinity of life stages: childhood, adulthood and old age (resulting in death). In these poems, however, Man (and I do mean man) is not strutting and fretting across the limited territory of the theater, he has taken to the streets and found himself in the carnival side show. Still acting, he does not receive much compensation and the audience is constantly on their way to a louder, more interesting attraction or perhaps headed for the candy apples and foot-long hot dogs.

The first section is infused with images of youth, but not a youth of sweet smelling nurseries and innocence. "We were waiting for the monster," Simic writes in "Childhood at the Movies." Hansel and Gretel sit through a double feature with cartoons as "time passed slowly in the dark forest." In this mysterious wood the temptations are not apples and gingerbread: "The woman in a transparent nightgown looked at me." The poem continues, "How long ago it all was! / We were waiting for the monster, hunched in our seats / As if trying to deflect blows."

The writing reveals a childhood conducted in the Funhouse, the view often a reflection in the Hall of Mirrors. The book begins with the poem "Miracle Glass Co.," and the opening lines, "Heavy mirror carried / Across the street, / I bow to you / And to everything that appears in you, / Momentarily / And never again the same way." This is the beginning of a series of images running through *A Wedding in Hell* which create the sensation of a one-sided mirror: the eye that can be looked into but does not see. "The Dead in Photographs" describes the picture of a bride and groom on their wedding day, while presenting the image of a lens which though it records, cannot see. The TV screen is

another of these blind lenses in "Documentary," which presents images "of no interest to the camera" and in "Dark TV Screen" as the reflective nature of the surface creates a window into "The memory of this day's evil." The work focuses again on the tricky glass in "Evening Visitor" with the poet questioning what is emotional response versus what is the response to the picture of that emotion: "That couple screwing and watching / Themselves in the mirror / Do you approve of them / As they gasp and roll their eyes in ecstasy." In the shadows of refracted light and deceptive vision, the confusion of childhood is given an added perspective as it unfolds in the Fun House.

Through adult years, holding your attention in the carnival side show takes more than tricks of light and the promise of monsters. Sexuality, which made guest appearances in the earlier poems now moves to the head of the line. And an abundance of physical pleasures—sex, food and drink—are set forth in an appetizing banquet. "Crazy About Her Shrimp" describes "How good the wine tastes / That has run red / Out of a laughing mouth! / Down her chin / And onto her naked tits." The richness of these offerings is set against gray streets and abandoned buildings. Still also the organ grinder's music whines in the background as the barker turns your attention to the next attraction.

In section three the identity of the ringmaster is finally revealed. The poem "Little Prophet" says "God is a circus master." He directs the side show, perhaps for amusement, but his is amusement with an agenda. In the poem "Divine Collaborator" God is "...the silent partner of everything we write; the father of all language out of silence." The last poem in *A Wedding in Hell*, "The Secret," begins "I have my excuse, Mr. Death, / The old note my mother wrote / The day I missed school." In this poem, the adult narrator is protecting himself from arbitrary fate with an excuse of boyhood. In "The Secret," however, the child is faking illness in order to have a day off from school. The mother's note, although an effective excuse for miss-

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ing school, appears weak to the reader in the face of Mr. Death. It is a sentimental struggle to make the word behave reasonably in the absence of reason. God looks out from behind the one-way mirrors, watching and waiting to determine his final judgment. Jo Ann Wasserman

Lynn Crosbie VillainElle

CoachHouse Press, 1994
61 pages, \$12.95

I stare at a video of a 1983 Stevie Nicks concert and watch poor Stevie twirl on a stage, platform shoes and silk leg warmers, screeching out song after song. She breaks out in dance, kicking her legs up from side to side, much like Granny might on "The Beverly Hillbillies." The audience freaks out. A fan throws a stuffed Snoopy onto the stage. Stevie retrieves it and holds it up to the microphone, uses her index finger to wave, and says with pouted lips, "Snoopy says 'hi.'"

Just before I turn off the video, I think about those dedicated fans, about Stevie and how esoteric her grasp on reality must have been at that moment. I also think about Snoopy, his soul usurped by MetLife to push insurance policies to people who apparently don't ask the question, "Would recalcitrant Snoopy really capitulate his identity for fascist corporate America?"

I'd like to think the world was different in 1983, that we've somehow evolved as a people. As the video rewinds, I reach over and pick up Lynn Crosbie's *VillainElle*, and I realize why I've been glued to it everyday for weeks. The voice in Crosbie's poems is the voice of an ubiquitous sleek priestess, a warrior who is not afraid to enter into a world propped up by popular culture, sexuality, violence, a world that hinges on many moments like these— post-Stevie Nicks video viewing moments— which call into question the very existence of reality. And when I'd rather change the subject, think of something else, I remember lines from "The Chicken Baby," one of the more poignant poems in the book: "nothing is ever demolished by/ fire, or history."

It is out of these ashes and these dreams for amnesia, which fuel the editing process society has relied on to deal with the past, that Crosbie works her magic. With a whip in hand and a fiery

succinct barrage of images, she takes us on a journey, shows us things only a goddess in stilettos smoking a cigarette can.

The first poem in the collection, "All About Eve" (with its lead-in from *The Velvet Underground*), is a brilliant homage to sweet and vicious Eve, a heroine who demands our attention. The speaker, an amalgamation of Crosbie, Margo Channing, and Charles James (the clothing designer who took on Yves St. Laurent in a cat fight over Jackie O.'s pillbox hat), is in awe of Eve's wickedness. "I wish I was the poison in/ your heart, Eve." The images give this eerie subject matter a life of its own, and Eve is anything but mainstream. "She draws baby's breath on the hems of her/ dresses, she believes that Jesus is her/ couturier." I identify with Eve, as well as with the speaker. "My life is/ intolerable without her, she pieces my/ flesh into each of her designs." I, too, believe emphatically in Eve's power, in her conviction of truth. Eve is, as Camille Paglia once wrote about Barbara Streisand, "all woman and all man." And I love her. I understand Eve's reality the way I wish I could understand Stevie's as she spins around and wails in all of her bedraggled finery on the video.

After the next successful poem "Saturday Night Fever," the title poem, "VillainElle," tells the story of a fascinating lady killer— read, a lady who kills— who suffers as a child at the hands of men. The little darling grows up to put seven men out of their misery. "I would stand by the/ topless bar, by the highway and smile and say,/ hello handsome. hello baby, could I get a lift? And kiss them, empty their pockets/ and strip off their clothes. take it all off,/ I said, and shot them dead." The poem is dedicated to serial killer Aileen Wuornos. And the epigraph to this poem is a quote from victorious Medea. "VillainElle" takes the torch from this wild woman— who, by the by, I don't blame a bit for killing that kid— and ignites something new. Crosbie helps us understand a killer by giving us a peek into the psyche of someone who could very well be the girl next door. I think of my favorite mother-daughter killing team in "Carrie." I feel compassion for Piper Laurie as she warns her daughter before the prom in her shrill voice, "They're all going to laugh at you! They're all going to laugh at you!" I'm completely empathetic with her (the way I am with Medea) as she waits up for bloodied Carrie with a plan— a smile and a

butcher knife. Unfortunately, Piper is pinned to a wall and pelted by kitchen tools— a meat cleaver, a potato peeler, a carving fork— by her very own, my heroine (who I cheer on at the prom the way I'd cheer on Ms. Wuornos), the patron saint of the meek, Carrie.

The book continues with very strong poems, including my favorites, "Betty and Veronica," "I Eat Your Flesh," "Poems for Jack the Ripper," "Skirt, My Pretty Name," "Jesus the Low Rider," and "Nancy Drew's Theatre of Blood."

In all of her poems, Crosbie has a preternatural sense of the line, and she breaks her lines in such a way so that each one has some kind of "shimmer" (a concept Allen Ginsberg once explained to me as essential for the success of a line). Crosbie also has the image creating prowess of Sexton, and I'd like to see her use this power to move in a more confessional vein. The voice behind her poems is so unique, so full of presence, that I wish she would tell us more about Crosbie the poet. I suppose, though, I might then be, as James Schuyler would say, thinking of another Lynn Crosbie. Jeffery Conway

Peter Guralnick Last Train to Memphis Little, Brown & Company, 1994, 560 pages, \$24.95

Who is Elvis Presley? That primary question instantly raises a dozen others: what is music and what made rock and roll new music in the Fifties? What is sex appeal and how does music transmit it? Is rock and roll black music, white music, or a hybrid, and if a hybrid, how did the cross-fertilization occur in still segregated America?

In *Last Train to Memphis*, Peter Guralnick answers all these questions and many more, not by launching into theories on pop culture, but by focusing years of research, fine writing skills, and a sympathetic heart and mind on the first question: Who was the boy inside the sideburns and swiveling hips, the man with the limpid eyes, sexy smile and honey-dripping voice?

According to Guralnick, Elvis was a jumpy Southern kid with a weak father and

an adoring mother, who grew up in poor neighborhoods where blacks and white came as close as they ever did in mid-century Tupelo, Mississippi and Memphis, Tennessee. Moderately bright, he seemed from his early teens to be guided less by intelligence than by an inchoate but deeply personal dream that he knew somehow had to come true. The dream involved wearing pink and black duds he bought from a Jewish store on Beale Street, and singing, his hair falling over his upturned collar. He bought a guitar and began singing shyly at parties. One day he got up his nerve to walk into Sam Phillips' Memphis recording service at 706 Union Avenue and made a record for his mother.

A white southerner in love with black music, Sam Phillips had heard something in the electric blues of Howling Wolf and Muddy Waters that he thought everyone in the world would love. How could he get this bold, beautiful music beyond the black audience? He needed a white singer who had the black feel, and in walked this kid Elvis, cocky and gawky.

Last Train is a book replete with treasures, movie-like scenes that cross cut dozens of points of view, heartbreaking anecdotes of Elvis' fumbling innocence, and hilarious quotes like this one from a swooning female fan, "He's one big hunk of forbidden passion fruit." My favorite pages describe the sessions when Elvis, Phillips, guitarist Scotty Moore, and bassist Bill Black experiment in the studio, following their ears and noses into the wild freedom of the new sound. Hour after hour Elvis "flung himself" into the music as if "he wanted to put everything he had known or heard into one song." "What are you doing," Sam asked the three boys. "We don't know," they replied. These scenes get right to the heart of music's alchemy; in many such moments a new music was born, the tentative but lusty fusing of African rhythm, electric energy, and youthful spirit that we call rock and roll. Michael Lydon

Remembering Bop

to Ted Berrigan

The melted trumpet has
Become a lily
In the shimmering garden
Of the living dead.

Tom Weigel

Lawrence Ferlinghetti These Are My Rivers: New & Selected Poems 1955-1993

New Directions, 1994
320 pages, \$22.95

"We have seen the best minds of our generation destroyed by boredom at poetry readings."

Lawrence Ferlinghetti, *Populist Manifesto*, 1976

Long before the Nuyorican Poets Cafe and MTV were bringing poetry to the streets, Lawrence Ferlinghetti was attempting to liberate poetry from the ivory tower of academia. For almost forty-five years, Ferlinghetti has produced a steady stream of poetry, plays, novels, and political satire with the intent of expanding the audience for literature beyond the "few and educated." In an additional effort to realize this ambition, he co-founded City Lights four decades ago, the country's first all-paperback bookstore and publishing house. Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" was an early City Lights release, followed by offerings by William Carlos Williams, Kenneth Rexroth, Antonin Artaud, Kenneth Patchen, and others. Now seventy-five, age has not diminished Ferlinghetti's desire to subvert the "dominant paradigm." *These Are My Rivers: New & Selected Poems 1955-1993* is Ferlinghetti's eleventh volume of poetry, and serves as both a retrospective of his career and a reminder of the continuing vitality of his imagination.

The seeming contradictions in his work and life, along with his status of living legend, may tempt one to dismiss Ferlinghetti too easily. The dean of the San Francisco literary scene and poet of the people was born in Yonkers, New York, and holds a Ph.D. in modern poetry from the Sorbonne. His reputations rest on "A Coney Island of the Mind," first published in 1958. And then there is the issue of the writing, which frequently lapses into heavy-handed topicality and "solidified nostalgia"—on the one hand, a gargantuan exertion devoted to the revelation of the obvious, and on the other, the stench of a sludge-like residue of a past recalled in syrupy purple prose—a poetics fashioned from right thinking and good intentions.

In his own *Populist Manifesto*, Ferlinghetti asks: "Where are Whitman's wild children/ where the great voices speaking out/ with a sense of sweetness and sublimity ..." This great voice, however, is seldom heard in Ferlinghetti's own work. And in his tributes to other poets—Dylan Thomas, Jack Kerouac, Kenneth Patchen—Ferlinghetti's verses fall the heaviest and seem most labored. Their words, inserted into these eulogies, soar from the page in effortless flight, while Ferlinghetti remains hopelessly earthbound.

But just when it appears that Ferlinghetti's writing has irreparably hardened into a style (reverting to his inexhaustible supply of sea gull imagery, Eastern mysticism and art history references), he tosses a curve—a brilliant insight extracted from the quotidian dross of existence, an idea isolated from the nonessential with deceptive simplicity, a willingness to engage in unflinching self-examination with an emotional depth rarely plumbed: "All is intensely awake/ in the steady/ and atrocious clarity/ of his distant gaze..."

Perhaps it is this quality of "atrocious clarity" that inspired Ferlinghetti to select the poems which comprise *These Are My Rivers*. An overview in the truest sense, *These Are My Rivers* is an unvarnished introduction to a mind which has been quietly at play for forty-five years. Jon Mazur

John Lydon Rotten: No Irish No Blacks · No Dogs

Written with Keith &
Kent Zimmerman.
St. Martins Press, 1994
329 pages, \$22.95

Idol of my youth, Johnny Rotten has finally given his side of of a story that has more versions than Sid Vicious had track marks. That so much managed to happen—good and bad—to a band whose career barely lasted two years is an accomplishment in and of itself. Four "foul mouthed yobs" managed to change the way the world looked at rock and roll. The question that has been raised ever since is, Who deserves the credit?

In *The Great Rock and Roll Swindle* Malcolm McLaren proclaims himself the inventor of punk and then proceeds to narrate us through a movie so boring and con-

trived I doubt if even Green Day could sit through it. Malcolm was an opportunist and a businessman, two very unpunk attributes. He pushed the Pistols together, and it's hard to say whether it would have happened without him as his influence was immense, but to say he invented punk is like saying Edison invented light. More the Colonial Tom Parker of punk, the moment the Sex Pistols began to take off, he began thinking of ways to cheapen everything they stood for, and *Swindle*, Malcolm's baby, confirms this. What was only a year before a real, vital movement became a tired joke.

Johnny Rotten was the heart and soul behind the Sex Pistols. He legitimized them, and without him, Malcolm's Sex Pistols would have been harmless. Remember, Malcolm was the one who had the brilliant idea of revamping the New York Dolls' career by dressing them up in red patent leather and having them perform in front of communist flags— ideas he thought were dangerous always had a way of turning camp when executed. Above all the hype and fashion, the Sex Pistols were a band in the most classical rock and roll definition, and a damn good one at that. They made the music, and it's their story I tend to believe.

It comes as no surprise that much of the book is dedicated to vilifying Malcolm. I would be suspect of the thing if it didn't. For me the most interesting parts are the stories I haven't heard before—Johnny's childhood and early school days, his relationship with his wife and his regrets about leading Sid down that road to ruin. Johnny's wit is both acerbic and astute, and as he describes his early days in Finsbury Park, North London he sometimes sounds like Celine a la *Death On the Installment Plan*. He does not over-intellectualize the British punk movement the way *England's Dreaming* does. Punk for Johnny was a product of economical hardship and juvenile delinquency. Really, if you'd given Steve Jones a term like "Situationist," he'd probably thought it was a dildo.

Groups who are now topping the charts by regurgitating some of the British punk stereotypes (not to mention the accents) should read this book as one of its major points was that the Sex Pistols were a phenomena specific to a certain time and place. "Make your own culture and don't rip off others," Johnny advises in the end. All new music borrows from previous music, whether you're talking about rock and roll or classical, and though the Sex Pistols owe an incalculable debt to bands like the Stooges and the Ramones, they used those bands as a springboard rather than an end.

Gene Christian

Roberta Reader Anna Akhmatova: Poet and Prophet St. Martin's Press, 1994 619 pages, \$35

The idea of poetry as mere idle composing or willfully deliberated musing, an unnecessary activity performed and contrived to make an impression or pass the time—"writing writing," as it's sometimes called nowadays—was alien to the craft as Anna Akhmatova understood it. "Poetry is a catastrophe," she insisted.

That statement, reported in the later part of Roberta Reader's massive, monumental study of Akhmatova's life, helps us understand the double sense of Akhmatova's role as a poet.

On the one hand her poetry can be read as an expression of the conscience of Russia in this terrible century, whose historical catastrophes, as Reeder shows in careful detail, all too often forced their way into Akhmatova's personal life, snatching away lovers, husbands, artistic colleagues and friends as alleged perpetrators of crimes against the totalitarian state, and leaving her to survive the trauma and loss the best way she could: through her verses.

In a related but distinct way, though, Reeder helps us see that poetry as Akhmatova practiced it was also catastrophic in an even deeper sense: a subversive event, a great sudden disaster, the denouement of an inner drama— dictation from elsewhere, a blow from the beyond, something both gratuitous in its arrival and at depth so deeply necessary it could not be denied.

Reeder's moving account of the life leaves little doubt as to the importance that quiet and stealthy or thunderbolt-quick striking of poetic inspiration played in allowing Akhmatova to endure so many crises: "Without it," as she wrote succinctly in "Latest Poem" (written in 1959, at the age of seventy), "I will die."

Her particular passionate, prophetic muse visited Akhmatova early on, as Reeder recounts. Born in the Ukraine, daughter of an upper-class naval officer (she proudly claimed descent from Genghis Khan, relishing the idea of the royal blood of Tartars flowing in her veins), Akhmatova began writing verse in her eleventh year. Her first husband, the Acmeist poet Nikolay Gumilyov, introduced her into St. Petersburg's bohemian literary circles, where, with the publication in 1912

of her debut volume of poems, "Evening"— chronicle of an ill-fated love affair— she became an overnight icon in the cabaret avant-garde of the Russian intellectual capital.

These youthful pre-revolutionary lyrics employed a disarming frankness and sophistication in their direct "inside" account of emotional exchanges with others, capturing at psychologically and dramatically revealing moments. Later, with the losses, betrayals and separations of life under the Terror, it was isolation and non-exchange that became Akhmatova's subject.

Her heady early years in the arms of Eros and adulation serve as glamorous prelude to the harrowing tale of the poet's post-revolutionary misfortunes.

The official shifts in Stalin-era political correctness effectively silenced Akhmatova's sibylline voice. As Reeder reports, a first ominous warning note was sounded in 1922, when the flamboyant party-line poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, addressing a gathering devoted to "The Purge of Contemporary Poetry," declared "the chamber intimacy of Ann Akhmatova" had lost its relevance "for our harsh, iron age."

In 1935, after the arrests of both her son and the man she was living with, Akhmatova wrote— in her head— an extended poetic tribute to the victims of the Terror and the women (like herself) who waited in prison lines to get word to them. To preserve it on paper would have been to risk arrest herself. The poem, "Requiem," survived because friends to whom Akhmatova recited parts of the poetic cycle memorized and in later years helped her reassemble them.

In "Requiem," Akhmatova reconsidered her own girlish frivolity in the bleak, oppressive light of the present: "You should have been shown, you mocker/ Minion of all your friends,/ Gay little sinner of Tsarskoye Selo,/ What would happen in your life— / How three-hundredth in line, with a parcel,/ You would stand by the Kresty prison,/ Your tempestuous tears/ Burning through the New Year's ice ..."

The mid-Cold War years of Akhmatova's gradual politico-literary rehabilitation in her homeland and widespread recognition abroad inevitably read as something of an anti-climax after the horrific extremities of Reeder's chilling earlier chapters. It's here the factual density of the biographer's thoroughgoing method yields occasional slow passages. But there's no quibbling with the ultimate value of this solid, authoritative, long-needed work, testament to the shining final triumph of poetic truth over the imposed circumstances of administered terror. Tom Clark

B o o k s

Amriel Alcalay, *The Cairo Notebooks*, Singing Horse Press (P.O. Box 40034, Philadelphia, PA 19106, 1994). 73 pgs. \$9.50.

Gary Allen, *The Missionary Who Forgot His Name and other poems*, Selva Editions (1701 Bluebell Ave., Boulder, CO 80302, 1994). 152 pgs. \$8.

Philip Booth, *Pairs*, Penguin Poets (375 Hudson St., NYC 10014, 1994). 78 pgs. \$12.95.

Ruth Daigon, *Between One Future and the Next*, Papier-Mache (135 Aviation Way #14, Watsonville, CA 95076, 1995). 116 pgs. \$8.

Peter Davison, *The Fading Smile: Poets in Boston*, from Robert Frost to Robert Lowell to Sylvia Plath, 1955-1960, Knopf (201 E. 50th St., NYC 10022, 1994). 346 pgs. \$24.

Eliot Greenspan, *Map of You, Map of Me*, Selva Editions, 1994. 86 pgs. \$8.

Jack Kerouac, *The Scripture of the Golden Eternity*, City Lights Pocket Poets Series No. 51 (261 Columbus Ave., San Francisco, CA 94133, 1994). 61 pgs. \$5.95.

Paul Keineg, *Boudica, Burning Deck* (Distributed by SPD, 1814 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, CA 94702, 1994). Translated from the french by Keith Waldrop. 40 pgs. \$6.

Friederike Mayrocker, *Heiligenanstalt, Burning Deck*, 1994. Translated from the German by Rosmarie Waldrop. 90 pgs. \$8.

Eileen Myles, *Chelsea Girls, Black Sparrow* Press (24 Tenth St., Santa Rosa, CA 95401, 1994). 276 pgs. \$13.

Eve Packer, *Skulls Head Samba, Fly by Night* Press (Box 20693, Tompkins Square Station, NYC 10009, 1993). 65 pgs. \$8.

Ted Pearson, *Acoustic Masks*, Zasterle Press (Apdo 167, La Laguna, Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain, 1994). 54 pgs. No price listed.

Marilyn Recht, *She Must Have Been a Giant*, Tesseract Publications (Fairview, South Dakota, 1994). 41 pgs. No price listed.

William Carlos Williams, *Asphodel, That Greeny Flower & Other Love Poems, New Directions* (80 Eighth Ave., NYC 10011, 1994). 60 pgs. \$5.

c H a p B o o k s

Todd Colby, *A Story*, Evil Clown Books (275 Union St., Brooklyn, NY 11231, 1994). Drawings by David Lantow. 10 pgs. No price listed.

pUblIcAtIOns reCeIved

Edward Foster, *Code of the West: A Memoir of Ted Berrigan*, Rodent Press (Tel. #303-440-8125), 1994. 24 pgs. \$3.

Peter Ganick, *Cafe Unreal*, Writers Forum (89A Petherton Rd., London England N5 2QT, 1994). 28 pgs. No price listed.

Steve Luttrell, *The Wasp In The Wind, Yes*

Featuring "New European Writing" from Csoori, Damianov, Grunbein & Laederach.

Conjunctions #23 (Bradford Morrow, editor; Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504, 1994). 328 pgs. \$10. "New World Writing" issue with work by Coral Bracho, Yang Lian, Can Xue & more.

Drumvoices: A Confluence of Literary, Cultural & Vision Arts Volume 3, #1 & 2 (Darlene Roy, Associate Editor; Dept. of English, Box 1431, SIUE, Edwardsville, IL 62026-1431, Fall/Winter 1993-1994). 142 pgs. \$10. "Within These Circles: Literature of African Women Writers" issue.

Painted Bride Quarterly #53/54 (Kathy Volk Miller, co-editor; Painted Bride Art Center, 230 Vine St., Philadelphia, PA 19106, 1994). Special double issue. 113 pgs. \$8. Work by Lyn Lifshin, Charles Bukowski, Chou Ching Chuan & more.

Raddle Moon #13 (Susan Clark, Catriona Strang & Lisa Robertson, editors; 2239 Stephens St., Vancouver, B.C. V6K 3W5, Canada, 1994). Vol. 6, no. 2. 142 pgs. \$6. Beautifully designed issue with work by Chris Tysh, Jean Day, Stacy Doris & more.

Rant #4 (Alfred Vitale, editor; P.O. Box 6872, Yorkville Station, NYC 10128, 1994). 76 pgs. \$3.95. Onslaughts by Jill Rapaport, Jeffrey Loo, Jim Feast & more.

SITUATION #8 (Mark Wallace, editor; 10402 Ewell Ave., Kensington, MD 20895, 1994). Work by Stephen-Paul Martin, Connie Deanovich, Laura Feldman & more.

sub-TERRAIN magazine #14 (P.O. Box 1575, Bentall Centre, Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2P7, Canada, Fall 1994). Volume Two. 47 pgs. \$3.95. "New Fiction from West of the Lakehead" issue.

triangle shirtwaist fire #1 (small vinegar press, 675A West Mombasha Rd., Monroe, NY 10950, 1994). 50 pages. No price listed. Poems by Michael Gizzi, Philip Good, Cliff Fyman & more plus "The Workshop Papers (Bernadette Mayer)" — works by Mayer's students at the Poetry Project (Miriam Solan, Wayne Berninger & more).

Fine design and great name.

Washington Review #3 (Clarissa Wittenberg, editor; P.O. Box 50132, Washington, D.C. 20004, October/November 1994). Volume XX. 27 pgs. \$2 (\$3 by mail). Robert Frank cover. Reviews of Bruce Andrews & more.



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Books (20 Danforth St., Portland, ME 04101, 1994). 35 pgs. \$5.

M a g a z i n e s

Agni #40 (Askold Melnyczuk, editor; 236 Bay State Rd., Boston University Writing Program, Boston, MA 02215, 1994). 205 pgs. \$7. "Unsettling Narratives: Biography & Memoir" issue, with essays by William Corbett, Linda

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Simon, Honor Moore & more. Also Michael Gizzi's gorgeous prose poem, "TOO BIG CANADER: A Travelogue."

Another Chicago Magazine #28 (Barry Silesky, editor; Left Field Press, 3709 Kenmore, Chicago, IL 60613, 1994). 215 pgs. \$8.

Mao Tse Tung Wore Khakis

Who would have thought Paul McCartney would be
the Perry Como of the 1990s?

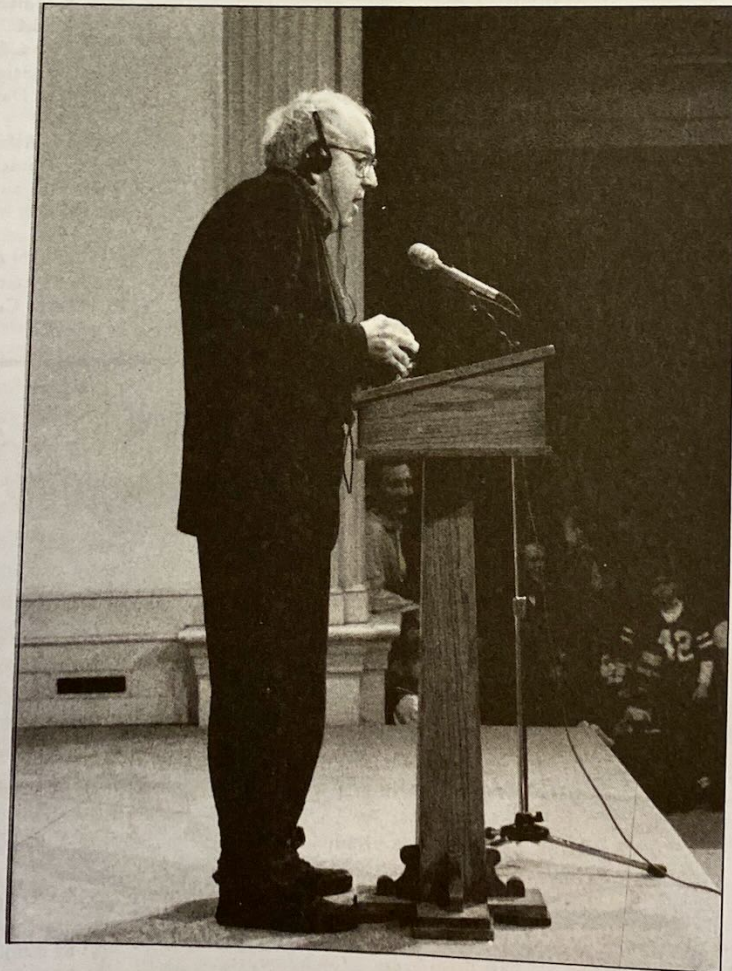
The Thunderbirds gleam end-to-end-to-end
in the studio backlot. The lions
have left their lair and are roaming just by
the subconscious. PP-warning: Illegal

received field on preceding line.

Bethel/ '94: I just don't want any
hippies come in here and steal
my computer. In my experience

I often misspell words. Evidently
Bob Dylan missed the exit and ended
up in Saugerties. You can sell some of
the people most of the time, but you can't

Charles Bernstein
Bethel, N.Y. 8/14/94



Taylor Mead performing his "laryngitis karaoke

'94 Beat by Harris Schiff

derivative rock n roll
5 generations removed from the blues source
inundates the ether
surfacing even as elevator muzak
thematically adopted even by
the Presidents of the United States
those grasping middle class toadies of the superrich
and all manner of exploited and
[expletive deleted]
exploiter

bible belt crowd warmers
12 stepped on victims
godsuckers, sex slaves, buckchasers and totstrollers
it's a mass movement
downward
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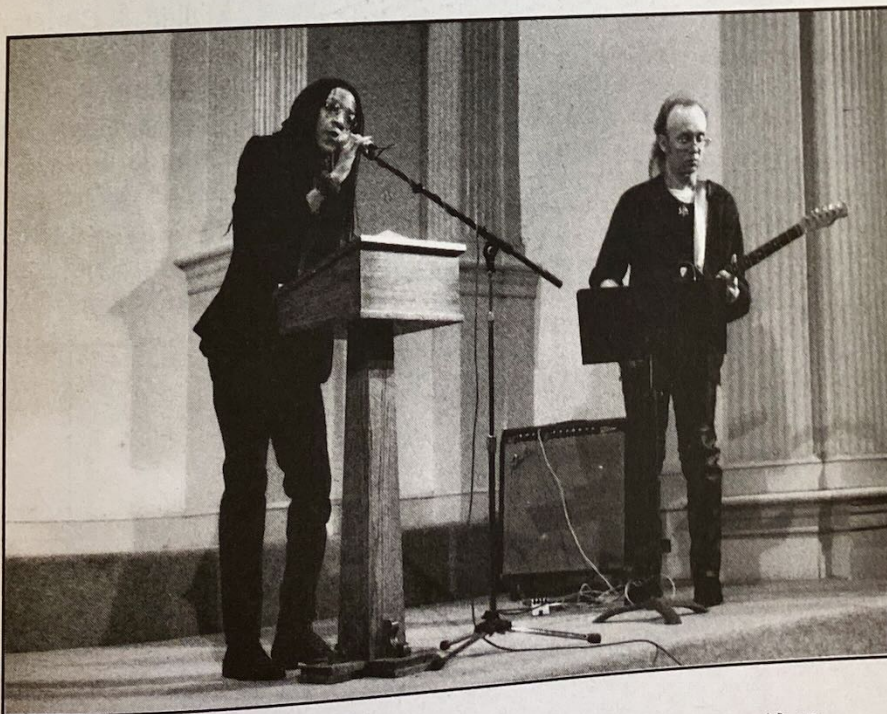
innovation

metamorphosis

officers!

beat the slaves!!

make them sing!!!



Wanda Phipps & Christian X. Hunter, New Years Marathon

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