

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

No. 20

1 Dec. 1974

Bill Mac Kay, editor
St. Mark's Church, 2nd Avenue
& Tenth St., New York 10003.

John Ashbery will read at St. Mark's the evening of Wednesday, December 4. Other poets sprinkling a little stardust along the Alpine Way include Jackson Mac Low & Charlotte Carter (December 11), Tom Meyer & Jonathan Williams (December 18) and jolly old St. Nicolas (December 25). Things begin at 8:30. A dollar contribution.

* * * * *

January 1, New Year's Day, the Church will host a mammoth blockbuster group Benefit Reading for The Poetry Project. Among those sharing the podium (although not simultaneously) will be Allen Ginsberg, John Giorno, Bernadette Mayer, Anne Waldman, Ron Padgett, Larry Fagin, Michael Brownstein, Peter Stamos, Regina Beck, Rochelle Kraut, Helen Adam, Patti Smith, David Amram, Tony Towle, Lewis Warsh, Michael Lally, Joel Oppenheimer, and dozens of others. A two dollar contribution for poetry's answer to Ben-Hur. Check The Voice for starting time.

* * * * *

An exhibition of Glen Baxter's "Recent Paintings & Drawings" opens December 2 at the Gotham Bookmart Gallery, 41 W. 47 St., and runs until January 4. The show coincides with the publication of three books of his drawings, all of which are available at Gotham: Drawings (Adventures in Poetry, \$1.50), A Handy Guide to Interesting People (Gotham Bookmart, \$1.00) and Fruits of the World in Danger (Gotham Bookmart, \$1.00). The Baxter Exhibition is perhaps the most important event in America since the Mississippi freeze-over of '53.

* * * * *

Recommended by Duncan Hines: Dog Soldiers by Robert Stone; Reznikoff's By the Well of Living and Seeing; Glass Architecture by Paul Scheerbarth; Steve Gianakos at The Clocktower (Broadway & Leonard); Jess at MOMA; Hugo Wolf's Spanisches Liederbuch (Jan DeGaetani on Nonesuch); films of Rainer Werner Fassbinder; "Murder on the Orient Express"; Novus B-45 staplers (1/2 '); Ballato's.

* * * * *

Aram Saroyan tells how he kicked pot, and why, in a New York Times Op-Ed article (November 23).

* * * * *

Fire Exit 4, the latest installment of Bill Corbett's Boston-based magazine, is indeed a tiny banquet. Poems by Susan Howe, Lewis Warsh, Kenward Elmslie, James Tate, Lee Harwood. Stories by Bobbie Louise Hawkins, Russell Banks, Fanny Howe. Clark Coolidge on Jack Kerouac. Paul Hannigan on Arthur Bremer. Paul Metcalf on Wisconsin Death Trip. Worth two dollars. Editor Corbett resides at 9 Columbus Sq., Boston, Mass. 02116.

* * * * *

"Ominous Land Series", Philip Guston's striking show at David Mc Kee Inc. (140 E. 63 St.) runs until December 18. Telephone 688-5951.

* * * * *

Newly released from the void by New Directions are Gary Snyder's long-awaited Turtle Island (\$1.95); Poland/1931 (\$3.25), the last word in ethnopoesy, by Jerome Rothenberg; and welcome reissues of two modern classics, Ezra Pound's quirky Gaudier-Brzeska (\$3.25) and Helen in Egypt (\$3.25) by H.D.

* * * * *

They gave nine readings, most of them together; gallivanted through Wisconsin, slept in Chicago; communed with Ted Berrigan & Alice Notley, visited John Koethe, interviewed Oscar Robertson for 3 hours in Milwaukee for their possible basketball article in Oui (suggested title: "Two Big-Breasted White Girls Watch Black Boys Bounce Balls"). Then they stopped in at the CCLM convention where Kenneth Koch gave a delightful, almost midnight rendition of his poem "Some Instructions". Finally, exhausted but inspired, Anne Waldman & Bernadette Mayer returned home. "This is Oscar's handkerchief", Bernadette muttered, sniffing.

* * * * *

Hide your copy of Dirty Laundry in a dark closet to protect your lover/roommate/sister/son from its bawdy pictures, outrageous blurbs. Adult comic collaborators R. Crumb & Aline Kominsky certainly have earned adjoining cells in a small Southern town for this one. Available for 75 cents from streetcorner mutants & in sleazy cigar stores everywhere.

* * * * *

Monday night performances continue this month at the Church with an open reading (Dec. 2); Bob Rosenthal & Joan LaBarbara (Dec. 9); Ed Bowes, Bob Kushner, & Garrett List (Dec. 16); Tom Bowes, Michael Cooper, & Melvyn Freilicher (Dec. 23); and Peter Seaton, Nick Piombino, & Virginia Terris (Dec. 30). Ed Friedman tends shop, keeps the peace, starting 8:15 p.m. weekly, in the parish hall.

* * * * *

Watergate bugs can paddle all day long in the murky green water uncovered by editor Steve Weissman in Big Brother and the Holding Company: The World Behind Watergate (Ramparts, \$3.45).

* * * * *

Jim
ing Jimmy
The Gulag
200 pages
Unseen

Jim Brodey recommends The Onion Field by Joseph Wambaugh (especially the chilling Jimmy Lee Smith section "in which you get right into a black killer's head"), The Gulag Archipelago by one Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn ("I had to stop reading it after 200 pages because of seriously impairing jail nightmares"), and Life in The World Unseen and its sequel, More About Life in The World Unseen, by Anthony Borgia.

* * * * *

Latest from Charlie Plymell's Cherry Valley Editions (Box 303, Cherry Valley, N.Y. 13320) are Janine Vega's Journal of a Hermit, Rope of Bells by Bob Arnold, and The Coldspring Journal No.3. The latter spotlights works by Howard McCord, Neil Hackman, Harris Schiff, Paul Violi, Anna Hartmann, Sotere Torregian, David Ball, Magie Dominic, and others. Not a bad batch. Each book a dollar.

* * * * *

Poet Bob Rosenthal cleans house, makes anything immaculate. Available for hire; call 477-2487.

* * * * *

For those who missed Richard Goldstein's "Why We Need The New York School" (The Village Voice, Nov. 14), it populates a poetry jungle with bohemian macho-men, the purveyors of "chic racism", academic cowboys "gnawing and clawing after prestige in the most ethereal hierarchy outside the Vatican". Poor Richard, where do you live? Here, it's a lot less bizarre, but kinder. (P.S. We did enjoy Gerard's pictures.)

* * * * *

Regina Beck suggests visiting the Poetry Project's newest neighbor, The Third Street Music School Settlement, now located on 11th St. and 2nd Ave., directly across from St. Mark's Church. Poets and others can mosey over & learn to play their favorite instrument. This renovated & brightly decorated facility also houses an auditorium-in-the-round. Upcoming features are Lucy Shelton, soprano (Dec. 2, 8 p.m.), The Woodwind Quintet featuring Betty Corpier, flautist (Dec. 6, 8 p.m) and weekly music hours with students & guest artists (Saturdays, 12:30 p.m.). All concerts are free and open to the public at 235 E. 11 St., N.Y.C. Telephone 777-3240.

* * * * *

Harry by John Perreault, with handsome visuals by Ira Joel Haber, deserved mention here months ago. Four dollars at the usual places, or from Coach House Press 401 Huron Street (rear), Toronto 181, Ontario, Canada.

* * * * *

Out-of-towners might not know that Michael Brownstein's Country Cousins (Brazilier, \$7.95) earned raves in the November 17 New York Times Book Review.

* * * * *

Joanna McClure's Wolf Eyes (Bearthm Press, \$2.50) is slender & clear; harp-sichord music. At some bookstores or from 264 Downey, San Francisco, California 94117.

* * * * *

New T
Daily Rites
from dimpled

Milk Quarterly 7 sports poems by Tony Towle, Joel Oppenheimer, Ed Sanders, Neil Hackman, Tom Raworth, and Simon Schuchat; stories by Robert Creeley and Rochelle Kraut; and a "quote" by Ted Berrigan. A dollar fifty & stamps from 6313 N. Kenmore Chicago, Illinois 60660.

* * * * *

Ed Dorn is responsible for Recollections of Gran Apacheria, published by Turtle Island Foundation (2907 Bush Street, San Francisco, California 94115). It says "twenty dimes", but give your mail man a break.

* * * * *

Just out from Blue Wind Press is Merrill Gilfillan's attractive & interesting Skyliner. Three dollars from Box 1189, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

* * * * *

Dammit, send some reviews.

* * * * *

Maureen Owen's suggested winter reading list includes Honey by the Water by Ian Hamilton Finlay, Rutherford Platt's Great American Forest, and The Humorous Verse of Lewis Carroll.

* * * * *

The voice of Robert Duncan dominates Maps 6; over sixty pages of his poems, essays, letters, being supplemented by photographs & critical responses. Three dollars from specialized bookshops or from editor John Taggart, 311 E. Garfield, Shippensburg, Pa. 17257.

* * * * *

Duncan enthusiasts will also enjoy his Dante, a fascicle in "A Curriculum of the Soul" series. Priced at two dollars from The Institute of Further Studies, Box 482, Canton, New York 13617. Ask for a catalogue.

* * * * *

Charles Reznikoff's By The Well of Living & Seeing: New & Selected Poems 1918-1973 tops Black Sparrow's new offerings. Not to be neglected either are Gerard Malanga's Incarnations: Poems 1965-1971, The Joe 82 Creation Poems of Rochelle Owens, and The Circular Gates by Michael Palmer. Each, \$4.00. Sparrow, a sixteen page monthly, allows us indigents to experience the wonders of Black Sparrow printing for a mere 50 cents; #26, Fielding Dawson's Tiger Lilies is the most recent addition to the series. The address is P.O. Box 25603, Los Angeles, Ca. 90025.

* * * * *

Out There 5 embraces the work of many fine fellows; Peter Schjeldahl, Tony Towle, Kenneth Rexroth, Lewis MacAdams, Robert Creeley, Tom Raworth, Bob Rosenthal, even editor Neil Hackman. A couple of bucks from 6711 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, Ill. 60626.

* * * * *

es, Neil
elle
more

New Telephone Books include Looking at the Sun by Regina Beck, Sandy Berrigan's Daily Rites, Hinge Picture by Susan Howe and Pool by Joshua Norton. Each a dollar from dimpled editor Maureen Owen, Apt. 42, 412 W. 110th Street, New York, N.Y. 10025.

* * * * *

Workshoppers congregate three times weekly at St. Mark's: on Mondays at 8 p.m., under the direction of Charles North; on Tuesdays at 8:30, p.m., led by a varied cast of characters; and on Thursdays, also at 8:30, with the able tutelage of Lewis Warsh. The workshop room is immediately to the left of the main entrance to the Church.

* * * * *

New books in town: Today by Lewis Warsh, cover drawings by Alan Saret; and Charles North's Elizabethan and Nova Scotian Music, with cover & drawings by Jane Freilicher. Both bear the Adventures in Poetry imprint, and are available @ \$2.00 from 437 E. 12 St., New York, N.Y. 10009.

* * * * *

City Lights Anthology (City Lights, \$5.95) leads off with Allen Ginsberg's journal notes of his "Encounters with Ezra Pound", skips through Huey P. Newton, Ericka Huggins, and Herbert Marcuse, then touches all the bases with Genet, Bukowski, McClure, Creeley, Kerouac, Norse, DiPrima, Snyder, Brautigan, and more, and more, and more.

* * * * *

Theatre Genesis will present The Silver Bee by Walter Hadler, directed by Daffi. Opening December 19, the play will run four weeks, Thursdays through Sundays, in St. Mark's Theatre. For more information, call 533-4650.

* * * * *

Kenward Elmslie reads at Barnard Hall (117 St. & Broadway) Thursday, December 5. Appearing one week later will be Robert Kelly & Nathaniel Tarn. Curtains rise at 8 p.m., a dollar contribution.

* * * * *

And finally, for all you mimeo freaks, Phil Silva's Inca Press (P.O. Box 769, La Jolla, California 92037) announces the printing of Skinta and Mimic Trees by Jack Hirshman, and Irving Stettner's Stone-Crazy in a limited edition of 25 copies, hand-bound in hand-cut & hand-tooled maroon latigo leather; each autographed copy, only \$100.

* * * * *

Jesus, it's been a good year. Merry Christmas, every one!

* * * * *

(Parenthetically, the Poetry Project is going broke, desperately needs money to replace vanishing grants, disappearing endowments. Really.)

Crime Supplement: East Side, West Side

As nine-o'clock was chiming on the evening of Thursday, October 17th, I was sauntering up the well-lit, oft trod by yrs truly Charles Street (between Hudson and Bleecker) after an early dinner, determined for once to catch up on lapsed snoozing, when my silent reverie was cut short by the patter of tiny gumshoes advancing from the rear. It's a sound of no significance in dear old Blighty, so I nere batted an eyelid. Then a youth of around 14 or 15 appeared in front of me and said, rather excitedly, "Be quiet. Give us your money." And somehow I was pushed down onto a car bonnet, with my legs dangling, both my arms held down, and somebody from behind pulling my head back. Another quite odious runt who was fat in a muscular way and looked like he'd been chosen to portray Evil Personified shoved a long, slim knife into my ribs and said, "Where's your money?" He really was prodding the knife way in, deeper and deeper. I already had \$8 clutched in my palm, so I gave it to the snot who had first accosted me. He let go my arm to count it, and, somewhat peeved, informed his nasty chum, "Only \$8!" And then, to me, "Where's the rest?" I was saying something like, "Nothing, I haven't got it, I can't search myself, you're holding my arms," when the rest of the troop (circa one dozen post-pubescents of Caucasian extraction) started bashing me around the head with bricks and staves. In the process they used a lot of dirty language, which I thought was most uncalled for, and then they pummelled me in the face a lot with their mitts, the horrifying vision of a gigantic dental bill flashing through my brain, as well as undue concern for the safety of my reading glasses in the pocket of my snood. Then their antics stopped and they said \$8 wasn't enough (I suppose the poor mites figured they'd only gross around 70 cents each after the loot had been divided). I was about to offer them my watch when my principal assailant snarled, "Eight dollars aint enough. We're gonna kill you." I thought, surely you jest? I mean, I felt so very relaxed, as though I were watching all this happen to someone else, and moreover it all seemed silly, not to say inconvenient, and I just wanted to be allowed to get up and continue my journey home. Then he raised his knife very, very high above him à la Anthony Perkins in Psycho (my prone position adding drama to the perspective) and as I perceived it glint in the moonlight and begin its terrifying swoop towards my heart (I seem to recollect he was pushing very hard on the right side of my chest with his other hand, no doubt to ensure a good skewer) his comparatively nice accomplice shrieked, "No, don't!" Well, it was at that microsecond in Time I realized this was happening to me, and not, say, Janet Leigh. So, quick as the proverbial flash I managed to yank my head up (the knife in its descent nicking my brow) and, again "somehow", lunge a hefty kick at my would-be assassin's marriage licence (balls to you Yanks), and then, forcing my rigid arm up I socked the fourteen year old thug still holding it in his kisser really hard. He fell away, sputtering I believe, and as my other arm was mysteriously free, I rolled off the car bonnet onto the ground, picked myself up thinking, "Oh dear, I hope I haven't dirtied my pants," and scurried off into Bleecker Street, followed by a stone projectile which mercifully glanced off the shoulder of my bedraggled snood. I heard the little perishers scamper away in the opposite direction, eight dollars the richer. There were plenty of people promenading along Bleecker Street so I knew I was safe and slowed down. But, as passers-by kept staring at me I thought, "Are the bruises showing already?" -- it didn't seem possible, the entire escapade being of only forty seconds duration. Nonetheless, having poo-pooed the idea of police assistance (sic) I stopped off on my way home at Ron Padgett's to check what damage, if any, had been rendered my mug. He very kindly made me a nice cup of tea and seemed quite impressed when the teacup didn't rattle in my hands. Patty sponged the little bit of blood off my brow, and I found another wee knife cut on my right thumb, the sole stigmatas of my brush with The Dark Lady. I must say I got a vicarious thrill telling Ron, Patty and Dick Gallup my story, and seeing them more scared than I was. I really wasn't affected by it in the least. Then I went home, tired but alive, hopped into bed with Jane Austen and giggled myself to sleep. When I woke up next morning I found my head stuck to the pillow with dried blood so I had to go to the laundry.

Mugging

Tonite I walked out of my red apartment door on East tenth street's dusk --
Walked out of my home ten years, walked out in my honking neighborhood
Tonite at seven walked out past garbage cans chained to concrete anchors
Walked under black painted fire escapes, giant castiron plate covering hole
in ground
-- Crossed the street, traffic lite red, thirteen bus roaring by liquor store,
past corner pharmacy iron grated, past Coca Cola & My-Lai posters fading
scraped on brick
Past Chinese Laundry wood door'd, & the broken cement of stoop steps to
For Rent hall door painted green & purple Puerto Rican style
Along E. 10th's glass splattered pavement, kid blacks & Spanish oiled hair
adolescents' crowded house fronts --
Should I have brought a harmonium chant N.Y. blues at Ramsey Clark Poetry
Rally? --
Ah, tonite I walked out on my block NY City under humid summer sky Halloween,
thinking what happened Timothy Leary joining brain police for a season
thinking what's all this Weathermen, secrecy & selfrighteousness beyond
reason --
Walked past a taxicab controlling the bottle strewn curb --
past the young fellows with their umbrella handles & canes leaning against
the ravaged Buick
-- and as I looked at the crowd of kids on the stoop -- a boy tepped up, put
his arm round my neck
tenderly as I thought for a moment, squeezed harder, his umbrella handle
against my skull,
and his friends took my arm, and a young Puerto Rican companion tripped his
foot 'gainst my ankle --
and as I went down shouting Om Ah Hum to gangs of lovers on the stoop watching
slowly appreciating, why this is a raid, these strangers mean strange business
with what -- my pockets, bald head, broken-healed-bone leg, my softshoes, my
heart --
Have they knives? Om Ah Hum -- Have they sharp metal wood to shove in eye ear
ass? Om Ah Hum
& slowly reclined on the pavement, struggling to keep my woolen bag of poetry
address calendar & Leary-lawyer notes hung from my shoulder
dragged in my neat orlon shirt over the crossbar of a broken metal door,
dragged slowly onto the fire-soiled floor an abandoned store, laundry candy
counter 1929 --
now a mess of papers & pillows & plastic covers cracked cockroach-corpsed
ground --
my wallet back pocket passed over the iron foot step guard
and fell out, lost void, taken by fingers, stole by God Muggers -- Strange --
Couldn't tell -- snakeskin wallet actually plastic, 70 dollars inside my last
bank money for season,

Mugging - 2

old broken wallet -- and dreary plastic contents -- Amex card & Manf. Hanover Trust Credit too -- and business card from Mr. Spears British Home Minister Drug Squad -- my draft card -- my membership in ACLU & Naropa Institute Instructor's identification

Om Ah Hum I continued chanting Om, Ah Hum

Putting my palm on the neck of an 18 year old boy fingering my back pocket crying "Where's the money"

"Om Ah Hum there isn't any"

My card Chief Boo Hoo Neo American Church New Jersey & Lower East Side

Om Ah Hum -- what not forgotten crowded wallet -- Mobil Credit, Shell? old lovers addresses on cardboard pieces, booksellers calling cards & all -- -- "Shut up or we'll murder you" -- "Om Ah Hum take it easy"

Lying on the floor shall I shout more loud? -- the metal door closed on blackness

one boy felt my broken healed ankle, looking for hundred dollar bills behind my stocking weren't even there - a third boy untied my Seiko Hong Kong watch rought from right wrist leaving a clasp-prick skin tiny bruise

"Shut up and we'll get out of here" -- and so they left,

as I rose from the cardboard mattress thinking Om Ah Hum didn't stop em enough,

the tone of voice too loud -- my shoulder bag with 10,000 dollars full of poetry left on the broken floor --

Nov 2, 1974

Allen Ginsberg

THE POETRY PROJECT
St. Mark's Church
Second Ave. & Tenth St.
NY, NY 10003



TO

Philip Whalen

Zen Center

300 Page Street

SAN FRANCISCO

First Class Mail

CALIF