

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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

Giorno Poetry Systems Institute, Inc. has invited former President Richard M. Nixon to give a poetry reading at St. Mark's Church this Spring. He will be introduced by William S. Burroughs, Vice President of the Institute, who says, "Nixon is the great folk hero of this decade. He has debunked the whole concept of the Presidency, and the whole concept of authority. Like all great folk heroes, he's been subjected to contempt and contumely. He has had his liver eaten out by so-called liberals. He is a great man. If Nixon were here with me right now, I would embrace him and say, 'Show biz, Richard, show biz. You're one of our own.'"

Less problematic are the Wednesday evening readings scheduled for the Church. On March 5, Robert Bly will read Neruda translations. Then, appearing in rapid succession, Russell Edson & Grace Paley (March 12); Walter Abish & David Rosenberg (March 19); Andrei Codrescu & Harry Mathews (March 26); and Clayton Eshleman & Galway Kinnell (April 2). A dollar contribution. At exactly 8:30 p.m.

"No good gossip here," Jim Gustafson writes from Bolinas. "Everyone is too bored to break down and too contented to run away from home." Jim himself is planning an April escape to New York, and needs a modest artist's hovel to sublet or borrow "for a month or two months or six weeks or whatever might turn up." Urban samaritans might contact Jim at his home in Box 272, Bolinas, California 94924, where he answers telephone #415-868-1925.

Avon offers original paperback novels this month from Fanny Howe (First Marriage) and Russell Banks (Family Life).

Allen Ginsberg & Daniel Ellsberg recommend The Twisted Dream: Capitalist Development in the United States Since 1776 (Winthrop, \$5.95) by Douglas F. Dowd, a text, available at Barnes & Noble (105 Fifth Avenue, New York 10003) & almost nowhere else.

Monday night sorties into the unknown continue under the direction of Ed Friedman & his mysterious female proxy. Slated for 8:15 rendezvous are Beth Anderson & transplant Peter Gordon (March 12); Bob Heman, Harry Greenberg, & Hadley Haden-Guest (March 17); troublemakers Peter Stamos, Bernadette Mayer, & Charlotte Carter presenting an "Evening of Crime" (March 24); and a talented Latvian folk dance company (March 31). The March 3 open reading will make New York streets safe for people for at least one evening.

If, as George Quasha says, an anthology is "not a Hall of Fame, but an instrument of investigation," his Active Anthology (Sumac, \$4.95) is a mallet hammering home the voices of Charles Olson & his brood. Others (e.g. Padgett, Oppenheimer, MacLow, Sanders, Waldman, Helen Adam, Blackburn) make appearances, but the dominant presences are Olson & his right-ful heirs (e.g. Kelly, Rothenberg, Economou, Charles Stein, Grossinger, Quasha himself).

Boston Blackie perfers Emperor of China; Foster's Lager Beer; The Union piano music of Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Leonard Pennario on piano (Angel) and Gottschalk's book Notes of a Pianist (Knopf); Yvonne Ranier's Work 1964-1973; and the Celtics next time at Madison Square Garden.

"Cleve Backster of the Backster Research Foundation in San Diego said that when milk was added to commercially made yogurt in one laboratory beaker, another beaker of yogurt across the lab gave off electrical impulses.

'There was even a dramatic reaction to our intent to pour milk,' claimed Backster, a lie detector expert for 27 years who said he used to work for the Central Intelligence Agency." (Courtesy, Washington Post, Jan. 30)

Clearly, these people have no sense of privacy.

Gregory Corso's Way Out, "a poem in discord," has just appeared from Bardo Matrix of Nepal, printed on delicate paper seemingly made of mosquito wings, with a cover resembling elephant hide. Handstitched, three fifty at The Phoenix (22 Jones Street, New York 10014) & other bookshops of distinction.

New, pretty Letterpress Poetry pamphlets from Burning Deck (71 Elm-grove, Providence, R.I. 02906) are Charles Hine's Wild Indians, The Rape of Saint Emad by Nancy Condee, and proprietors Rosemarie & Keith Waldrop's Since Volume One. Each, two fifty. Distributed by Bookpeople, 2940 Seventh Street, Berkeley, California 94710.

Jack Spicer & Robert Duncan gift us with An Ode and Arcadia (Ark Press, \$4.00).

And may all his Excellency's erections be little ones:
"CONCORD, N.H., Feb. 8 (AP)--Gov. Meldrim Thomson Jr. has rejected a \$3500 Federal grant that would have financed poetry readings in New Hampshire because, he said, there were no safeguards against the poems being obscene."

The End Over End is a magazine hosted by Andrei Codrescu & Pat Nolan, particularizing achievements of Gary Snyder, Michael Brownstein, Aram Saroyan, Scott Cohen, Tom Veitch, Ray di Palma, Kenward Elmslie, Kathy Acker, Lewis MacAdams, Lewis Warsh, thousands more. Two dollars from Box 798, Monte Rio, California 95462.

Our compulsive underground gallery-goer reports back that Jane Freilicher's show at the Fischbach is "simply marvelous." Sexy, lush still lifes with cat & fish on platter, Long Island landscapes, an intriguing self-portrait and a delightful watercolor, "Red Curtains," stick in the mind's eye.

Jesus, Jeeves, P.G. Wodehouse, we'll miss you.

Original works by Ezra Pound and Bill Zavatsky shimmer in the winter issue of Some. Other contributors include Gerard Malanga, Bill Knott, James Tate, Colette Inez, David Ignatow, Jack Anderson. A buck fifty at bookstalls, from 311 W. 91 St., New York 10024.

Keith Abbott will be the guest poet on the March 11 installment of "Calling All Poets: The Open Magazine of the Air" on Berkeley's KPFA (94.5 f.m. 9 p.m.) Participation is as close as a telephone: 415-848-4425.

To keep poet Rebecca Brown from deprivation, even the devil's doer-step, friends, bargain-hunters should consider acquiring her Sony TC-45 cassette tape recorder with accessories for eighty dollars, or purchasing her old IBM typewriter Model B (uses cloth & carbon tape ribbons; needs work) for a mere forty. Dial 966-6641.

Daisy Aldan stands behind Verses for the Zodiac, four ninety five from Folder Editions, 325 East 57 Street, New York 10022.

A copy of the Poets & Writers Directory of American Poets has been ordered by the C.I.A. Mail Room Library.

Ray Kass, who did the latest Boston Eagle cover, had a February show at Boston's Sunne Savage Gallery (398 A Beacon Street) called "Rocks, Waves and Horizons".

Retracing trajectories of assassins' bullets leaves many speechless, amazed at the operations of the synchro-cyclotron into which we've all been thrown. Brains explode like pudding, even misfires leave Southern governors fit only for wheelchair races while others waltz to the Presidency. Elements that conspire against us were examined at length in January at the Boston assassination convention, an orgy of crazy expertise. People who missed that gathering, its replays on WBAI, should write The A.I.B. at 63 Inman Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02139, for blow-ups & slow-motions.

Richard Grossinger was never one to mince verbs. His Vermont, Io/21, doesn't, covers all the ground, "Geology & Mineral Industries", "Flora, Fauna & Conditions of Sky", "A Survey of Towns & Habitation", "A Report on Migration", "A Morphology of Landscape", "The Progress of the Soul", 350 pages of kindling wood for mental fires. Eight dollars. Chief distributor, Book People.

Foreign correspondent Glen Baxter reports that the Working Council met to discuss a name for their new indoor swimming pool. Finally, they hit on the idea "WOMENS INDOOR POOL".

The editor suggests Frank Merriwell's Search (Zebra, \$1.50) by Burt L. Standish; Paul Metcalf's Patagoni (Jargon, \$8.50); the McDuff

translation of Osip Mandelstam's Selected Poems (Noonday, \$3.95); The Poetry of Surrealism: An Anthology (Little Brown, \$5.95), edited by Michael Benedikt; Richard Huelsenbeck's Memoirs of a Dada Drummer (Viking, \$16.50); and Pigmy Kitabu (Fawcett, \$1.95) by Jean-Pierre Hallet.

Thrice weekly, workshops occur at St. Mark's; nominally under the control of Charles North (Mondays, 8 p.m.), Lewis Warsh (Thursday, 8:30 p.m.), and a crew of degenerate Rosicrucian-Futurists (Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m.). The workshop room is in the front of the Church, at the extreme left.

Would-be callers should memorize Project office hours: Mondays, 10 a.m. -2 p.m.; Tuesdays, 2-8 p.m.; Wednesdays, 2-5 p.m.; and Thursdays, 10 a.m. -2 p.m. and 4:30-6 p.m. The number is OR 4-0910.

Qui sports reporters Anne Waldman & Bernadette Mayer were on hand among twelve thousand screaming fans last Saturday as the Mighty Macs of Immaculata, Pa., outlasted a stubborn Queens team, to romp 65-61, in the first women's basketball game ever held in Madison Square Garden. From Anne & Bernadette's description, the Immaculata cheering section was equidistant between the Rose Bowl & Rosemary's Baby: "a loud band, giant black Scottie dog mascot, hundreds of blue and white pompons and religion: close to fifty nuns beating on metal washbuckets with wooden sticks." By all accounts, the Immaculata team (averaging one loss a season) was a holy terror; intense, persistent full court press, good fast break, aggressive defense, well-coached, deep in reserves. Even lithe, 5-5 Debbie Mason ("petite" in a less sane age) could not stem the Immaculata tide with her thirteen points, ten assists.

More basketball news: Every Friday, in the schoolyard of the Asher Levy P.S., on 11th Street between 2nd & 1st Aves., Poetry Project basketball. In the inaugural game, Warsh & Mayer outpointed Hurst & Edson (not Russell, Richard). Everyone welcome (3 p.m.).

Duncan Hines challenges Boston Blackie (piano wire at 10 paces) re Pennario ("old Brillifingers")'s Gottschalk, insisting on Mandel's set (Desto). Further, our enchilada-at-large recommends: The Ridge (poems) by John Temple (Ferry Press, 177 Green Lane, London SE9); Jon Cott on Henry Miller (Rolling Stone, Feb. 27); Beethoven's 6th by Boehm (DG); Bach's "Wedding Cantata" by Bogard (Cambridge); Dinah Washington with Clifford Brown (Trip 5500); Edward Weston at MOMA; Catherine Murphy at Fourcade-Droll (through 3/15); Rockefeller collection at Asia House (through 3/23); Dave Mathews band at 5 Spot (Mondays); Helen Humes/Ellis Larkins at Cookery; The Natural History of the American Dancer; "Young Frankenstein"; Asia DeCuba (food, 190 Eighth Ave.); Hermes 3000 portable typewriter; 1" X 1/2" beach gravel from Exner Corp. (Bronx).

Ready from Adventures In Poetry is Ready, a first collection of poems by Curtis Faville, with a cover by Hugh Kepets. Forthcoming poetry titles are Lines for the New Year (Poems 1963-65) by Tony Towle; For the 82nd Airborne by Rebecca Brown; We Are Integrated and Wonderfully Made by (Mrs.) Thazarbell Biggs. Each \$2 trade, \$4 signed, from 437 East 12th St., New York, N.Y. 10009. New catalog, by request.

A new catalog is available from Angel Hair Books, Box 257, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, N.Y. 10009.

QUICK RUBY-SLIPPERS FOR ALFRED STARR HAMILTON

Once upon a time I used to know an honest, yet humble, advertising executive in Buckhead, Georgia by the name of James Dickey. He was surely the only man in the Peach State who could talk about F.S. Flint, R.E.F. Larsson, Mina Loy -- I mean poets, whether they were minor ones or major ones and all that. He would get that wild good light in his eyes. Well, that was 17 years ago. Mr. Dickey, having run through the Poetry World like green corn through a cow, now masquerades as Sheriff Super-Jock, of Deliverance County, Jawa. He scandalizes faculty wives in Boone, North Carolina (and everywhere else) by asking them in crowded elevators if they've ever been you know what by a Genuine American Poet. (O Dylan, where is they sting?) The Legend is depressing and I wish he would stop it. But, the Ineffable Public loves it. Mr. Dickey doesn't think I can write a lick; and I don't trust a thing he says anymore (which is not a happy state to exist between two poets who once seemed to be friends). I bring him up, unkindly, because the uses of fame allow James Dickey to demand \$3500 for a poetry reading. Even a remote institution of the higher learning like Catawba College, Salisbury, North Carolina, thinks it's getting a bargain if they secure him for a grudging one grand.

I would like to suggest to Mr. Dickey (and all poets who swing & sway before the Public at the moment for appreciable amounts of cash -- whether they be Holy Men or Migrained Academics) that they give a benefit reading for a poet they have never heard of, who never goes anywhere, who has never read any poetry since Edwin Markham. I'm talking about Alfred Starr Hamilton: 41 South Willow St., Montclair, New Jersey 07042.

Mr. Hamilton is 61 years old. He pays \$40 a month for a linoleumed cell in a rooming house. He goes to the A&P on Saturday night for the bargain chicken pieces, picks up cigarette butts, smokes a little Prince Albert, gets clothes from the Salvation Army, and asks for a pint of Four Roses when anyone comes to visit him (which is about twice a year). In 1964 his mother left him \$7000. He has been surviving, somehow, ever since -- in his oddly calm, disembodied, happy, desperate way. But, in the last letter of his I've had the heart to open, he was saying: "I have received a subpoena from a Newark court, for vagrancy. But I understand these subpoenas are not to be answered. I hope so."

The Jargon Society published THE POEMS OF ALFRED STARR HAMILTON in 1970, because he is an ignored caitiff; an 'original' poet, tuned in like Blake or Dickinson, very occasionally, to a singular and moving world of words that he offers to one and all. The poems record and elate, as Mr. Zukofsky insist poems must. Nobody reviewed the book. Not one foundation or arts agency I have written to has made the slightest response to his plight. William Cole, the editor, is the only person in the United States who has bothered himself, and he secured a small emergency grant of \$250 from P.E.N., which is used up. One of these days we'll pay no attention to a snippet at the bottom of a column in the Montclair Clarion, to the effect that Mr. A. S. Hamilton, self-styled poet, has been declared redundant by the State of New Jersey and

put away in some bin. The older I get the less able I am to be charitable to charitable institutions like the Ford Foundation and the Guggenheim Foundation and the New Jersey Arts Council. Cyril Connolly had the mentality pegged long ago: "Everything for the milk bar, and nothing for the cow." You'll not find them hopping on the train and going to 41 South Willow Street to find out with their own eyes. They stick to the five poets a year that Time magazine knows the names of. Poetry in the agora is no different from any other hard-sell item. The gents with fingers in all pies are the gents who pull out what withered plums there are.

If I lose sleep over all this, Alfred Starr Hamilton doesn't. His indifference to scorn and neglect makes Mr. Blake seem more worldly than he was. But, Mr. Blake had his engraver's job, his Kate, and his disciples. Mr. Hamilton has nothing but the ten poems a day that seem to emerge from under his pillow to get typed out by lunchtime -- when there's any lunch -- before he takes his walk to the Public Library to read the paper he cannot afford to buy. This could be the story of any of three million sad old men, but it isn't. It is the condition of one poet who deserves just the modicum of dignity in a Deaf-Ear Society. Montclair! -- what a town for this to be happening in: Republican Montclair. He wrote: "Well, I lost a hand abroad, but that was a hand for punching a typewriter and they thought that would do. They didn't like me at all. They were full of swaggadocio. They wanted more swag instead of culture."

We have a man looking out of a window, making poems up -- thousands of them, year after year, putting them into shoe-boxes. He simply needs about \$2000 to scrape along on for this year, 1975. Assuming the worst -- that poets, arts councils, critics, universities, foundations will not do the job they are there to do -- is it asking too much for a few of the private persons reading this newsletter to do the simple human thing? viz., put a money-order in an envelope and send it to New Jersey. Charles Olson, one of my masters, used to like to think: He who controls rhythm/controls! Not in this kind of country, Charles. We ought to know by now the uses of power, and the lengths to which some (most) will go to get it, and keep it. I wonder if even Orpheus, who could move those trees and melt those rocks in the days when poetry had alleged clout, could melt the ice-floes in the contemporary heart? Again, Hamilton: "There are more than enough forest brambles and underbrush and real entanglements of all kinds. I guess they think I am immune? I'm not immune, I'm just out in the open. There aren't as many bees as there used to be."

Jonathan Williams
Highlands, North Carolina

An Apple, Organizationally

An ache in back of the eyeballs some,
and how that was never to have befriended an object

And objects came to be justified
that they had no life or meaning

Except to be judged daynight and tomorrow

And little by little these came to be objects everywhere
and counted clouds, and objects came to be clouds

Alfred Starr Hamilton

MOVE OVER DICK GALLUP

Dignified poverty is an exciting condition
About like falling off a log
Into a tarpit of euthanasia
But it has its bright side, too--at least
We won't have to be screwing people to the wall
From nine to five, collecting alimony from a blind pig.
And it lets us use our energies for other things
If we will.
Driving a cab, for instance.
How exhilarating it is for me
On this, the night before I take the final step
Toward obtaining my hack license,
How fabulous it is for me to anticipate
Driving up and down these legendary streets
Hunched forward, like the rest, behind the wheel
But with a plastic fever shield between me and them
Protecting me from their mad quarantine
As they lead the way from the rear.

Michael Brownstein

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



TO PHIL WHALEN
c/o Zen Center
300 Page St
S.F. Ca.

First Class Mail