

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER
No. 52 February 1978
Frances LeFevre, editor
St. Mark's Church, 2nd Avenue
and Tenth St New York 10003

EVENTS AT ST. MARK'S CHURCH: Wednesday night readings at 8:30 (contribution)
Feb 1 Rudy Burckhardt film premiere: "Good Evening Everybody"...Feb 8 Phyllis
Rosenzweig & Ron Padgett...Feb 15 David Anderson & Paul Auster...Feb 22 John
Giorno/John Giorno...Monday Night Performance Series at 8:15 (free) Feb 6
Open Reading...Feb 13 Gary Lenhart & Michael Scholnick with Miguel Algarin/video...
Feb 20 KOFF Magazine benefit, featuring Ted Berrigan, Joel Oppenheimer, Paul
Violi & others...Feb 27 Video performance by James Dalglish & Steve McCaffery...Free
Writing Workshops weekly at 7:30 PM: Tuesdays Johnny Stanton (prose)...Thursdays
starting Feb 9 Bob Holman (poets' theatre)...Fridays Mary Ferrari (poetry)...
Danspace at 8:30 PM (contribution \$3) Feb 21 & 23 Bill Dunas.

READINGS ELSEWHERE: Academy of American Poets, Donnell Library Center, 20 W.
53 St 6:30 PM (free) Feb 23 Philip Levine & Shirley Williams...Dr. Generosity's
2nd Ave at 73 St Saturdays 2:30 PM (contribution) Feb 4 Ed Sanders...Feb 11
In memory of Marguerite Harris, who died on January 1st of this year, many,
many poets/friends will read from her works and their own...Closed for renova-
tion the rest of pbruary...West End Cafe 2911 B'way (nr 113 St) Sundays 2PM
Feb 5 Alice Notley & Annabel Levitt...Feb 12 Jackson MacLow & Hannah Weiner...
Feb 19 Rosemary Mayer & ?...Feb 26 Catherine Murray & Charlotte Carter...YMHA
Poetry Center Lexington Ave at 92 St 8 PM Feb 6 Michael Harper & Etheridge
Knight...Feb 27 John Hollander & W.D. Snodgrass..."Teething," a poetry/per-
formance by Sharon Mattlin (with the Bowery Bum-ettes Repertory Ensemble) at
The Kitchen, 484 Broome St NYC Feb 14 & 15 8:30 PM (\$2/\$1 for members).

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AROUND THE EDGES

Tony Towle's piece entitled "Poetic Income," which first appeared in this
newsletter in December, 1975 and later in a shorter version in CODA, is now
available, slightly revised, in pamphlet form at some local bookstores or from
the author at 100 Sullivan St., NYC 10012, for a dollar and a half. It is one
of the best statements to date on the peculiar financial plight of poets, these
stubborn people with special skills they love to use but can't seem to make a
living by. When they do support themselves through poetry it's more often in
poetry-related activities--teaching, editing, giving readings, writing about
poetry, than by their craft itself. And the returns are always modest to the
point of outrage. Whoever heard of the film or paperback rights to poetry
fetching a 6-figure sum? Yet novels do, including some occasional ones by poets,
to be sure--but that is something else.

Mr. Towle's figures show the amounts he received from his poetry alone in
detail. Over a 13-year period, during which he was awarded three substantial
(substantial for a poet, that is) grants, including a fellowship from CAPS,
published two books and many poems in magazines, and was given very favorable
reviews, his annual income from his craft averaged out to \$796.08, or a weekly
rate of \$15.31--not even enough to take his wife out to a decent dinner Satur-
days. He does not compute his labor time, but he is a serious poet and ser-
ious poets are working most of the time, no matter what else they happen to
be doing. It is rather well-known that the true poetic process sometimes goes
on even during sleep, which is one of those mysteries of the unconscious mind.

The hard fact, which is not news, is that the majority of the public does not seem to need poetry. If poets were to organize themselves and go on strike there would be no ripples, they'd not even be noticed. But they need poetry-- they have to have the time and opportunity to write it, places to try their work out among other poets, the means to publish and circulate it. In the last decade poetry has expanded outside the academies and become more accepted in the world, but it still is not viable generally unless money comes from somewhere else. The grants and funding by state and federal programs have been a great help, though only a beginning. Now, with this shaky economy, many of these are threatened with cuts. The results of Governor Carey's proposal to reduce the New York State budget for the arts are not known as we go to press, but please, dear readers, do what you can to protest it and watch out for similar proposals in whatever state you live in and in the country at large.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Suggestions and ideas concerning The Poetry Project and its activities will be welcomed by members of its Board of Advisors, whose names and addresses are as follows: Steve Facey, c/o St. Mark's Church, 2nd Ave. and E. 10 St., NYC 10003; Larry Fagin, Apt. 18, 437 E. 12 St, NYC 10009; Ed Friedman, 87 Leonard St., NYC 10013; Ted Greenwald, 15 Laight St., NYC 10013; Maureen Owen, 109 Dunk Rock Rd., Guilford, CT 06437; Ron Padgett, 342 E. 13 St., NYC 10003; Paul Violi, R.D. 2, Cedar Ledges, Putnam Valley, NY 10579; Anne Waldman, 47 Macdougall St., NYC 10012. Your interest is encouraged... Bob Holman will conduct a free writing workshop in poets' theatre at the Poetry Project every Thursday evening at 7:30, starting February 9th. He intends to give the class a backstage look at the poetry play and show them how to get their lines to go all the way to the end of the page. Practical play production will also be explored. Plays by Mayakovsky and Apollinaire, Italian Futurist scenarios, an O'Hara spectacular, and contemporary Polish mini-plays will be studied. The class will be encouraged to write their own plays and read them, perhaps even stage them... Saturday Morning, a magazine under British auspices, is planning a "New York Poets" issue as its fifth one and welcomes contributions. SASE must accompany all manuscripts, please. Deadline is the end of February. Back issues at \$1.50 each and further information may be had from Simon Pettet, Apt. 6, 437 E. 12th St., NYC 10009... Prose pieces (thoughtful experiments in the form) are invited for a probably one-time magazine: essays critical and metaphysical, and/or narrative. Please, no reviews qua reviews. Send submissions with SASE to Michael Slater, 200 W. 83rd St., NYC 10024. Deadline is March 1st... The Limekiln Press, 15A North Aggie Village, Fort Collins, CO 80521, is assembling a "Broken English Anthology" that will explore the many dialects and idioms of broken English and their expression in poetry and short fiction. Deadline for manuscripts with SASE, April 1, 1978... The deadline for Editors' Choice/An anthology of literature & graphics from the U.S. Small Press 1965-1977 has been extended to April 30, 1978. For information write or call Morty Sklar, Box 1585, Iowa City, Iowa 52240 (319/338-5569... Call Michael Hill at 1 The Crescent, Montclair, NJ 07042 (201/746-0868) if interested in attending a writers' group that meets there every Monday... The exhibition of stunning photographs by Rudy Burckhardt will continue through February 11th at Brooke Alexander, Inc., 20 W. 57th St., NYC. Subjects include cityscapes and portraits of artists... Note: there is no accent over the final e in the first name of Rene Ricard although it is pronounced as though there were. For this error and others in past issues of the Newsletter, apologies to all readers everywhere... To be listed here, announcements should be received by the 15th of the month preceding publication... To poets under 30: Only a month remains till the deadline (March 1st) for THE WORLD #31. Send your works with SASE to the Poetry Project here at St. Mark's Church, but hurry!

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POETRY ON CASSETTES

Catalogues and order forms for cassettes of poetry readings from The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics may be obtained by writing to Recordings, 1345 Spruce St., Boulder, CO 80302. Prices are reasonable. Four listings that may be of interest to Newsletter readers are POTPOURRI OF POETRY, by John Ashbery, Ron Padgett, William Burroughs, Ted Berrigan and others; TWO TOUGHS, by Michael Brownstein & Ed Sanders; BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, by Anne Waldman & Allen Ginsberg; and BARD AND MUSE, by the same two poets. Also, a number of cassettes of readings are produced and distributed by Michael Kohler, Zieblandstrasse 10, D-8 Munchen 40, West Germany, from whom lists and other information are available. Individual tapes in English are by John Cage, Clark Coolidge, Robert Creeley, Edward Dorn, Larry Eigner, Allen Ginsberg, John Giorno, Brion Gysin, Lewis MacAdams, Jackson MacLow, Jerome Rothenberg, Armand Schwerner, Gary Snyder, Anne Waldman.

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POEM

This is my license to ride a voice--
speeding ticket at the period,
my steering-wheel a semi-colon,
capital letter road signs outside,
a parenthesis my chassis,
a dash the topography of Kansas.

--Tom Savage

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BOOKS RECEIVED (poetry unless otherwise noted): Piranha Yoga by Jim Brodey (introduction by John Godfrey), Jim Brodey Books, 437 E. 12th St., NYC 10009... Forever Young by Jonathan Cott (conversations with poet Walter Lowenfels, author Henry Miller, and other luminaries), Random House, NYC \$5.95... The Gospel of Celine Arnaud by Clayton Eshleman, Tuumba Press, Berkeley, CA \$2... Mind Breaths by Allen Ginsberg, City Lights, San Francisco, CA \$3... Shit, Piss, Blood, Pus & Brains by John Giorno, Painted Bride Quarterly Press, Philadelphia, PA \$5... Seeking Air (novel) by Barbara Guest, Black Sparrow Press, Santa Barbara, CA \$14, ppbk \$5... Soujourner Microcosms/New & Selected Poems 1959-1977 by Anselm Hollo (foreword by Robert Creeley, afterword by Ed Dorn), Blue Wind Press, Berkeley, CA \$12.50, ppbk \$5.95... The Bowling Green Poems by John Clellon Holmes, signed & numbered by the author, The Unspeakable Visions of the Individual, Vol. 7, California, PA, \$10... Fulcrum of Vision by Thomas Masiello (introduction by John Ashbery), New Earth Books, 57 St. Mark's Pl., NYC \$2.95... Six Buildings by Charles North, Swollen Magpie Press, Putnam Valley, NY 10579, \$2.50... Light and Shadow by Simon Schuchat, Vehicle Editions, 238 Mott St., NYC \$5... Agreement by Peter Seaton, Asylum's Press, Bernstein, 464 Amsterdam, NYC \$3... Shaman by Anne Waldman, Munich Editions from Shell, Waban, MA \$2... The Celestial Splendor Shining Forth From Geometric Thought (prose) by Britt Wilkie, Telephone Books, Box 672, Old Chelsea Sta., NYC 10011 \$1.50... From Angel Hair Books, Box 257, Stuyvesant Sta., NYC 10009: Erudito ex Memoria by Bernadette Mayer, \$2.50, and The Maharajah's Son by Lewis Warsh, \$3.50 (both prose)... From Frontward Books, 334 E. 11th St., #16, NYC 10003: Monk Poems by Art Lange; A Diamond Necklace by Alice Notley; Lies about the Flesh by Bob Rosenthal, \$1.50 each.

MAGAZINES: Chelsea 36, guest editors Gerard Malanga (poetry) & Brian Swann (prose). All 38 contributors to this issue remained anonymous until after their pieces had been accepted. Box 5800, Grand Central Sta., NYC 10017. Single copies \$2.50...dodgems 2, ed. Eileen Myles, 86 East 3rd St., NYC 10003, works by 27 poets close to the Poetry Project...Koff, works by the "Consumptive Poets' League," with a magnificent, easily recognizable, center nude. \$1 from Maggie Dubris & Elinor Nauen, 312 E. 9th St., NYC 10003...Roof IV, ed. James Sherry, works by 17 poets ranging alphabetically from Bernstein to Warsh, plus a Washington, D.C. group of 11. Segue Press, 300 Bowery, NYC 10012. 4 issues for \$11...Sun & Moon/A Journal of Literature & Art, ed. Douglas Messerli & Howard Fox, 4330 Hartwick Rd., College Park, MD 20740, n.p.l...Telephone #13, ed. Maureen Owen. Works by 80 familiar and unfamiliar poets. Box 672, Old Chelsea Sta., NYC 10011. 2 half-yearly issues \$4...The American Book Review Vol. 1, No. 1, ed. Clarence Major, Charles Russell, & Suzanne Zavrian. A new guide to current books of literary interest from small, large, university, regional, 3rd world, women's, & other small presses. Sent free to members of Poets & Writers, Inc. Subscriptions (\$4, bi-monthly) distributed by Dept. of English, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309.

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Comforter

And the need for

Are indivisible

As earth and universe

Only half the gist

Is breast without mouth

--Jean Boudin

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BURNING, LOVED, AND SUNG

Twenty-One Love Poems by Adrienne Rich. Emeryville, CA: Effie's Press, 1976.o.p.

In an early poem, "Double Monologue," Adrienne Rich, speaking of love, writes "I have wanted one thing: to know/ simply as I know my name at any given moment, where I stand." Also, "The present breaks our hearts." How different the spirit of her recently published love poems, where she tells us she no longer has to struggle with certain kinds of knowledge, does not have "to know it alone," and that "In these" (her lover's) "hands/ I could trust the world."

These are lesbian love poems of acceptance, of rapprochement, about two women who seek more of what they've already found in each other. "I want to go on from here with you," Rich writes, after dismissing her past anguish--the pain left by the suicide of someone she loved. "Suicide wasn't my metier...that's finished..." She describes her lover as "You who have made the unnameable/ nameable for others, even for me"--a defiant humility for her to confess, to feel, to write for everyone to see. Very different from the Ghazal in Leaflets: "When we fuck, there too are we remoter/ than the fucking bodies of lovers used to be?"

These love songs are explorations, their mood almost languorously orgasmic. "Whatever we do together is pure invention/ a flute--fingered by women outside the law!" They are cries of tender astonishment at similarities shared by women in love with women that far exceed their differences. And even these differences are like voyages on a kind of eternal honeymoon, though the imagery is less intense, less muscular, and because of this less memorable than that in Rich's earlier work.

Homely, tactile gestures are soothing, as in poem XIV where, during a rough ferry trip, "huddled in each other's laps and arms/ I put my hand on your thigh." Here Rich speaks of the suffering of fellow-passengers, couples (like her lover and herself) who are "vomiting their private pain/ as if all suffering were physical." She extols the purely physical, which itself has become beautiful.

Animal pleasures are celebrated in a "floating poem" (perhaps from the "Floating World," the Ukiyo of the Japanese?) full of the concrete imagery of woman-love and its slow, careful, knowing play that suggests a girl's, or Rich's, deflowering, the rapture of "the innocence and wisdom of the place my tongue has found there." It concludes, "Whatever happens, this is," implying that even if something should change in this love it will remain a first, wild ecstasy for the poet.

In poem IV Rich quotes with horror a letter from a young prisoner whose genitals are "the object of...sadistic display." This social awareness may be construed as subtly apposite, yet it seems dragged in to me--a reminder that she has not "forgotten," because it all ends on a weak note: "I am crying helplessly,/ and they still control the world, and you are not in my arms." Most of this book lacks the brilliant, dramatic imagery of her other poetry, which I've lived with for decades. It is still here, but only occasionally. More often we are lulled to "sleep to the sound of the sea--where grief and laughter sleep together."

The first love poem begins, "Wherever in this city...we also have to walk... through the rainsoaked garbage...tabloid cruelties of our neighborhood..." and ends, "We want to live like trees/ sycamores blazing through the sulphuric air... our animal passion rooted in the city." It is as though she were saying, "Lest you forget."
--Estelle Leontieff

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AMERIKI 'AMEPIKH

Ameriki: Book One and Selected Earlier Poems by George Economou. SUN, New York, 1977. \$2.95.

It is wonderful to have a full collection of the poems of George Economou easily available now, since his earlier books from Black Sparrow have not been around for a while. Grace and humor are the keys to his work, the grace of a man looking carefully at things with deep and tender feeling, mixed with the humor of a mind trained (but not locked) in the classics and their languages and open to the real world and its languages. These poems teach me; they move and delight me. The title poem is, I hope, only the beginning of a long work that will take a unique and important look at this place, America.

--Harry Lewis

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OPERA EVENT

"The Seagull," an opera based on Chekhov's play of that title, with music by Thomas Pasatieri and libretto by Kenward Elmslie, will be performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. on February 8th & 10th at 8 PM and on February 12th, 2 PM. The production is being staged by the Washington Opera, and the cast includes Evelyn Lear, Rich Stillwell, and Frank Corsaro. For information and reservations write to Suite 501, 2401 H Street, Washington, D.C. 20037, or call 202/333-5011. Another opera by the same composer and librettist, "Washington Square," was given in New York City last October.

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THE SCHNEEMAN FRESCOS

George Schneeman's recent show at the Holly Solomon Gallery was called "ravishing" by James Schuyler and rightly so. It consisted of about two dozen small frescos (plaster over slabs of mortar) of shirts on hangers, plus a few larger portraits. To see frescos is a rare delight, especially when they are new and brilliant. Most of the shirts are plaids and are open in the front so that they hang apart as if invisible bodies filled them. And as Rene Ricard pointed out, "Those hangers are not question marks!" The larger frescos are also striking, with a serene sense of comfort. In one, a boy is floating on the edge of his chair next to a marijuana plant. In another, a woman poet is bemused, as if about to fire a question at the viewer. Mr. Schneeman studied the old frescos in Italy for years, but this was his first show in the medium -- a terrific start. Doing it, he stated, was like learning to paint all over again in a different way, first preparing the plaster forms, then mixing the colors and applying them while the plaster was still wet. If it happened to dry too soon he needed a lot of self-control not to throw hunks of it through his windows above St. Mark's Place, where they might have clobbered an unsuspecting person walking below. The entire show was alive with a precise joy. All those who couldn't get to it are urged to watch for the next exhibition of works by this artist.

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THE PASSENGER

Out the window, as a man lies on a bed. Not as he lies, it goes.
Sees past him, leaves him, into the next. Takes the air past his
shoe, perhaps his sleep. A move past him out, moves on, past the
window, moves on air. The word moves for no word moves. Get out,
it goes, gets, out past the confines, air past him.
Escaping, on a word for air, for it moves, get beyond, moves
get beyond, goes the air, of confines to, no sentence ever ends.

Beyond confines the man. Lies on a bed, confines as gets as
notions, of. Days of a window, moves, past, to go, from pasts,
goes past a window, cuts at last. What does he. Sleeps, perhaps,
still. Lights air past a man goes from window to get, tracks
the confines of escape. Releases the room at a window avoids,
the seal of a man's confines. Day to a room, it windows. Seems
past the man on a bed in a room, lies. Frames past the confines,
holds to catch release at the window, airs out the man. His room,
goes past, his story, every day goes on as well, still. Sun
on stones, of a window frame, go, as well, the story as
every day. His confines, it releases, airs, frames escape,
the man, still, a bed.

Comes loose full of air, turning, the room to his confines.
Beyonds, the room, are otherwise, beyond the room is otherwise,
go a turn. Come to choose, turn to go. Has left the window
with him in. Gone from in it has within. Turned out he was
left there. Turns in he has gone. Turn the way every day goes.
Lies that stay.

--Clark Coolidge

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A REVIEW OF KENNETH KOCH'S THE DUPLICATIONS

K. Koch's The Duplications is an epic
Like one's whole imagination,
Which lives above the ground, cloud, eye, & lipstick
Yet is this man at desk--not correlation
But fusion of the two, writer & shtick,
A shtick that is a cosmic presentation--
As Disney mice are Gods & men & mice
And mice flattened on paper, & art so nice.

Koch's poem is responsive to the Ovid
Of Metamorphoses, in sweet grand way,
Its characters like gods & spirits, vivid
And contemporary each: who will stay
& eat mid-air, mate with stone statues, id
Est--- and change into birds on a bad day.
Their incidents are fabulously linked
At rhyme's suggesting, as if a goddess winked

And Koch caught that blue flash & made of it
The river of a story. * * * * *
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O duplications make up one & life!
And trying on the sky or sea to sing
And imitating nature via life
Of verse are processes of duplicating.
Koch invents a talking butterfly whose life
Consists of kind & god-like intervening:
Lepidoptera Five Hundred Sixty-Five,
Like a plain sentiment you are alive

But more lively, winged & tongued above Venice,
Yet finally are only you, rare insect!
And Aqua Puncture, artifact turned nice
Girl, & Clarabel the cow, your fair aspects,
O girls & engines hitherto unprized
Since unimagined---recognized be! flecked
With rag- & silk-spots of reality---
New real things ever in the galaxy!

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K. Koch sits in the chair of Proust or Byron,
Of Shelley who'd, & they'd fit, sea try on.

--Alice Notley

SMOTHERED IN FOX GRAPE LEAVES

What's that tree with orange lumps?
I can't get close enough to tell.
A water skier passes
On Noyak Bay. Background,
the North fork. Still, gray,
too hot. A breath comes off
the water: what a mercy
to be here, not in New York.
Near my foot, a yucca
holds its seedpods erect:
a candelabrum in an Art Nouveau church.
Here comes a white cat
to see me. No, it's headed for
a tangle of bittersweet,
honeysuckle, Virginia creeper
and, good grief, deadly nightshade.
Suddenly the sun burns through.
Shapes and shades of green and water
and of a woman and a girl
who come up the path.
This oak leaf
is a permit to sojourn.

--James Schuyler

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NYC 10003

First Class Mail