

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

No. 81 March 1981

Greg Masters, Editor

St. Mark's Church

2nd Ave. & 10th St. NYC 10003

WEDNESDAY READINGS: at 8 pm, suggested contribution \$3. Hosted by Bernadette Mayer & Bob Holman: March 4 - Michael Brownstein & Daniel Krakauer. March 11 - 4 Plays by Edwin Denby (8:30 curtain, reservations 982-7682). March 18 - Rose Drachler & John Yau. March 25 - Jackson Mac Low & Tom Savage.

MONDAY READING & PERFORMANCE SERIES: at 8 pm, suggested contribution \$1. Hosted by Bob Rosenthal & Rochelle Kraut: March 2 - Open Reading. March 9 - Barry Wallenstein w/ Jeremy Steig, flute & LunaTune. March 16 - Susan Cataldo & Frank Rubino. March 23 - Film Night with Susan Brooker, Sheila Carr, Jacob Burckhardt, Connie Blitt, Steve Fried, Barry Masterson, Susie Timmons, Tim Kelly, Rochelle Kraut, Ann Rower. March 30 - Allan Kornblum & Elizabeth Fox.

FREE WRITING WORKSHOPS: Jessica Hagedorn's workshop, "Tropical Sensibilities and the Immediacy of Language," will commence Sunday, March 22 at 7 pm and will meet weekly through May at the Third Street Music School, 235 East 11 St, in the faculty lounge. Hats off in the breeze to Michael Brownstein for his "Describing NYC" workshop which meets for the last time March 10. Thank you, Michael! From Maureen Owen's workshop comes WORDS, a collection of them in poem form. This magazine proves again that the workshops make it new, so get 'em while they're red hot. Steve Benson's special workshop in reading, "Close Reading," happens Sunday, March 1 at 7 pm in the Parish Hall. Bring magnifying glasses. And add to your musts the special workshop with Rose Drachler at the Third Street Music School, Thursday, March 19, 7:30 pm. Need we mention the steady continuance of Steve Carey's Poetry Workshop? There you have it, each Friday at 7:30, Third Street Music School.

THE WORLD #35 will be edited by Daniel Krakauer and will be a translations issue. Deadline for submissions is March 20, and if you don't know another language, Danny suggests you collaborate with someone who does. Send SASE c/o The Poetry Project.

THE WORLD RECORD, volume one, a two album anthology from the Poetry Project's tape archive edited by Bill Berkson and Bob Rosenthal, will be available sometime this month. It took the editors over a year just to listen to most of the existing tapes. Forty-nine poets are included, jacket covers by Rudy Burckhardt. Orders may be placed with the Poetry Project for World Record 1, \$10.00 plus \$1.00 postage & handling.

Eye and Ear Theater will present the premiere of "4 Plays by Edwin Denby" on Wednesday, March 11, 8:30 pm, as part of the Wednesday Night Series. The plays, which were first published in an early World, will also be performed March 12, 13, and 14 in the Parish Hall. The evening is directed by Bob Holman with sets by Elizabeth Murray and a film by Jacob Burckhardt; in the cast are Tom Carey, Yoshiko Chuma, Jose Rafael Arango, Rochelle Kraut, and Jim Neu. An event.

Gabrielle Lansner will present Primary Color and her film Set Breaks at Danspace in the Parish Hall of St. Mark's Church, 2nd Ave. and 10th St. Performances will take place Thursday through Saturday, March 5, 6, and 7, at 8:30 pm. Ticket contributions are \$4.00 or TDF voucher. For reservations or information call 674-8112.

Ralph Lee and the Mettawee River Co. are looking for a playwright whose work could be performed with masks and Ralph's incredible giant puppets. Send scripts, ideas, queries to 463 West St, #D405, NYC, 10014. This company of characters will be performing "Nanabozho" (a Winnebago trickster) at Washington Sq. Methodist, Feb 26-Mar 15, 581-6470 for more info.

Poets, Writers & Storytellers on Film: A month-long reflection of the literary phenomena beginning Friday, March 6, at 7:30 and continuing every Friday in March at the Just Above Midtown/Downtown Gallery, 178-80 Franklin St, 966-7020, Admission \$4. Wish there were room to list the schedule, which includes Ralph Ellison, Neruda, Creeley, The Fugs.

BOOKS & MAGAZINES RECEIVED

from UNITED ARTISTS, 172 E. 4 St. #9-B, NYC, NY 10009: JUDYISM by Jim Brodey (a selected last 4 years of this free poet's unique & diverse work; masterpieces Unless, To My Hemorrhoids, Song, At The Dogwood Preserve and every other poem has lines better than other poets' whole poems), THE CALIFORNIA PAPERS by Steve Carey (seems I've forgotten why/I'm back you like my letter?), both beautifully printed, both \$3.50...Old Friend From Far Away, trans. C.H. Kwock & Vincent McHugh; North Point Press, 850 Talbot Av, Berkeley, CA 94706, \$6.50p, \$15c (another finely printed winner from this pub.; anthology of 2000 years of Chinese poems clearly & tenderly translated & layed out)...This Passover or the Next I will Never be in Jerusalem by Hilton Obenzinger: Momo's Press, PO Box 14061, SF, CA 94114, \$4.95p, \$12.95c (through poems, stories & interview the author explores the roots of Jewish identity in America & that of Zionism. "I am...rather afraid that Obenzinger will be cast from the temple rather than educate it"- H. Kohl)...The Roses & The Windows by Rainer Maria Rilke, trans. from French (Rilke wrote this one in French) by A. Poulin, Jr: Graywolf Press, PO Box 142, Port Townsend, WA 98368, \$10c...from the Community Documentation Workshop at St. Mark's Church, ed. Arthur Tobier, a group of 6 nicely printed pamphlets, each the oral history of a resident of the lower east side, immigrants from pre-revolution Russia, Poland, & second generation Irish & Puerto Rican including Nora Lugo, the secretary of St. Mark's parish, looks inside to the living rooms: An Oral History by Sara Plotkin, Long Road From Lares by David Perez, Starting Off From Dead End by Michael Donohue, Between Wars (with Ron Padgett's great Ode to Poland) & Changes by Nora Lugo, all \$3...New Directions: Exercises in Style by Raymond Queneau, \$12.95c, \$4.95p, also To Paris by Samuel Hazo, \$11.95c, \$4.95p...Sixteen Drawings & Something to Read to Someone by Beate Wheeler & Spencer Holst: Station Hill Press, Rhinebeck, NY, npl...The Lenni Lenapes Always Came Home by Robert D.B. Carlisle: Noryb Ventures, 82 Eagle Rock Way, Montclair, NJ 07042, \$5p...The Poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism, 1935-70 by Mary Lee Taylor Milton: Garland Publishing, Inc., NYC...from # Magazine, 337 E. 5 St, NYC, NY 10003, 6 handsome chapbooks: Mojave by Brian Breger, El Clutch Y Los Klinkies by Victor Hernandez Cruz, Having Been Her by Hettie Jones, Hudson by Harry Lewis, The Progression Begins by Joel Oppenheimer & The News by Chuck Wachtel (Chuck's short prose works rake events for their essence then go a step further via a Lincoln Tunnel imagination to what we hadn't expected of experience or a narrative detail-"he finds that the little porcelain sign that slides when the doorknob is turned says occupado."), all \$3...Little Heart by Tom Weigel: Accent Editions, 446 E. 78 St, NYC, NY 10021, \$4...Ardis Anthology of Russian Futurism, ed. E. & C. Proffer: Ardis, 2901 Heatherway, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, npl (Mayakovsky, Pasternak, O. Brik & much more)...

Tamarind, 200 W. 83 St, NYC, NY 10024 (a down home friendly publication which since he's always in it I suspect is edited by Yuki Hartman) npl...Translation, ed. D. Galvin & R. Payne: The Translation Center, 307A Math. Bldg., Columbia U., NYC, NY 10027 (translations of poems from everywhere) \$12 sub, \$7 issue...48222, ed. Mannisto, Teichman, Wanless: Detroit River Press, 406 W. Willis, Detroit, MI 48201 (Tysh, J. Sinclair, Ken Mikolowski, Jim Gustafson, more) npl...Moody Street Irregulars: a Jack Kerouac Newsletter, Special Music Issue; ed. Jay Walsh, PO Box 157, Clarence Center, NY 14032 (devoted Kerouac fans tell all, with charts, indexes & love), \$2.00...Stony Hills #8, ed. Diane Kruchkow: Weeks Mill, New Sharon, ME 04955 (probing caring small press review, capsule & longer reviews, listings of mostly New England stuff, CCLM arguments, etc.; worthwhile) \$3/3 issues...Poetry Comics 13, ed. Dave Morice, Box 585, Iowa City, IA 52244 (more cartooned poems) \$5/4 issues...Two Hands News, Stone Circle, 2050 N. Halstead, Chicago, IL 60614 (THE Chicago newsletter & listing publication)...WORDS, Maureen Owen's workshop magazine: The Poetry Project, \$2...

FREE BOOKS - send \$2 to cover mailing & Love Street Books, PO Box 33008, Louisville, Kentucky 40232, will send you 2 lbs/ca. 6 books from their overstock.

The trouble of a book is first to be
No thoughts to nobody,
Then to lie as long unwritten
As it will lie unread,
Then to build word for word an author
And occupy his head

(from "The Troubles of a Book")

The Poems of Laura Riding have been lying unread long enough. Most of her books, including this one, have been out of print for over forty years (Norton did publish Selected Poems in Five Sets in 1970). Last fall, Persea Books published a new edition of the 1938 collection, with a current introduction by Laura (Riding) Jackson, and an appendix of her previous introductions. This dense volume of poems was written in the two decades before Laura Riding declared the true vocation of a poet to be impossible, vacated her active place in modern poetry circles, and seemed to disappear. The book is back, with the troubles that not only "arouse commotion in the margin", but also arouse commotion in the reader who gives this book the close attention and thought it requires.

The common complaint that her poetry was difficult and obscure exasperated Riding. "Because I am fully aware of the background of miseducation from which most readers come to a poem, I begin every poem on the most elementary plane of discovery (or uncovering) by steps which deflect the reader from false associations, false reasons for reading." This concern with the right and wrong reasons for poetry is at the heart of Laura Riding's devotion to poetry. Her definition of what a poem was, "an uncovering of truth.... Truth is the result when reality as a whole is uncovered by those terms which will apprehend in terms of entirety, rather than in terms of parts," exacted a rigorous poetic discipline, and a complete dedication of her self towards that ideal. She is not fooling around when she words her dedication of this book to her late husband, Schuyler Jackson, as if he were a war hero, "who knew, and exerted himself to serve, the beneficent duty words lay upon us, and help us to exert ourselves to serve."

The 1938 introduction begins by asking, why are poems written, or read?, questions any poet stumbles upon. Writing poetry is usually an inherent inclination. "It's what I like to do most." "If I don't write, I go crazy." This is the part of the answer Riding describes as "the physical answer...: a tremendous compulsion that overcomes a tremendous inertia. It is quite true that when someone sits down to write or read a poem the amount of inertia to be overcome is greater than with any other activity." This much effort wants justification. What is the use of it? What does a poem do, who does it affect? What is the 'role of the poet?' These questions bring poetry into an embarrassingly serious realm, embarrassing because they immediately imply the notions of the bard as truth-teller and shaman, and the word as power object, the idea of poetry as a sacred craft, all hard to reconcile with working in a restaurant to pay the rent. I remember several years ago Bernadette Mayer turned to me and said, "We write poetry to change the world, right, isn't that the only reason we write poetry." I was just getting a sense of the scope poetry would have for me, and I knew that what Bernadette said could be believed about poetry. It was Laura Riding's belief. "I believed in the possibility of a transformation, through poetic apprehension of the function of language and the natural force of the life-breath of word-animating human mind, of ordinary human verbal intercourse into a spiritually expressive, a spiritually successful order of human existence." This answered all the questions for Laura Riding. The poet was the one who exercised the faculty of uncovering truth. Any other impulse towards poetry was the wrong reason. It was finally the limitations of the language and its use that led her to give up her pursuit. "What compatibility can there be between the creed offering hope of a way of speaking beyond the ordinary, touching perfection,...and the craft tying the hope to verbal rituals that court sensuousity: as if it were the judge of truth?"

As much as they failed to achieve what she had hoped for, the poems are strange, wonderful, and powerful. The simplicity of her language is like Gertrude Stein's, or

Emily Dickinson's in the way small words accumulate depth. "My head is at the top of me/
Where I live mostly and most of the time,/ Where my face turns an inner look/ On what's
outside of me," (from "Pride of Head"). Riding's poetry is brain poetry. "And fingers
stem closely from the brain/ Tight on the plentitudes of pain/ That from the reach of
heart remain." (from "Seizure of the World"). She is "An extreme violation of Blake's
description of the poetic requisite 'minute particulars'", but I find her transcriptions
of the course of her thoughts, the unfolding of arguments, and the subtleties of emotions
as tangible as the wheelbarrow and the chicken, and more exciting. There is work in
unraveling the complex knot of logic that many of the poems are. Sonia Raiziss, in An
Appreciation (Chelsea Magazine) compared Riding's poetry to mathematics. "In a character-
istic poem, each term functions like a number theorem."

ONE SELF

Under apparel, apparel lies
The recurring body:
O multiple innocence, O fleshfold dress.

One self, one manyness
Is first confusion, then simplicity.
Smile, death, O simultaneous mouth.
Cease, inner and outer,
Continuous flight and overtaking.

Riding's perception of truth lurks in paradoxes, in between things, in the process of
holding contradictions at the same moment. "It says and does not say./ When the going
is gone/ There is only fancy./ Every thought sounds like a footfall,/ Till a thought
like a boot kicks down the wall." ("Footfalling"). The poems meditate on many subjects,
quirks of time, disappointment and passion in love relationships, the continual assessment
of her self, mythology (some of the strangest poems are these that rearrange the cosmic
forces to set right the balance between Woman and Man).

The problem of words comes up again and again though, and this struggle is the crux
of the poems. The poem, "The World and I" defines the trouble of poetry, and is the story
of Laura Riding and the language.

THE WORLD AND I

This is not exactly what I mean
Any more than the sun is the sun.
But how to mean more closely
If the sun shines but approximately?
What a world of awkwardness!
What hostile implements of sense!
Perhaps this is as close a meaning
As perhaps becomes such knowing.
Else I think the world and I
Must live together as strangers and die --
A sour love, each doubtful whether
Was ever a thing to love the other.
No, better for both to be nearly sure
Each of each -- exactly where
Exactly I and exactly the world
Fail to meet by a moment, and a word.

It is an odd love story, where the pathos is prompted by the slippery approximate nature
of words. Laura Riding is not a romantic poetic figure by any means. She has defied
all categorization, either as "only living philosophical poet" or "madwoman", just as
she refused to align herself with any of the literary movements she knew in her time.

There is only the progress of her work, its integrity insured by its intention.

Laura Riding was born in America in 1901. In her early twenties she was associated with The Fugitive, a magazine that also published Hart Crane. In the mid-20's she went to England, where she met Robert Graves, and moved with him to Majorca, where they ran Seizin Press. An Acquaintance with Description by Gertrude Stein was one of the first books they published. Besides the poems, Riding wrote sharp literary criticism and essays, a historical novel, and two collections of stories. It is unfortunate that Progress of Stories is still out of print, since there are no other 'stories' like them. In 1938 the collected poems came out, and shortly after she stopped writing poetry. Back in the United States she married Schuyler Jackson. Together they worked on a dictionary, Rational Meaning: a New Foundation for the Definition of Words, a project she has continued since her husband's death. I suspect that the same struggle that comprised her battle in the poetic field has found a better outlet in the dictionary. In the last 10 years the Selected Poems came out, and also The Telling, a book deserving its own genre. Chelsea Magazine is almost the only publication that treats her work, past and present, with real excitement.

Laura (Riding) Jackson is still explaining what poetry meant to her, and her reasons for leaving it. She has a brilliant, vast mind, and this unique body of poetry is virtually unknown to poets now, and certainly not understood. Her obsession with 'telling' the truth led her far into the concerns of poetry, she thinks farther than anyone ever went. "No poet before me has gone to the very breaking-point." She came back to tell us what she found out, with the poems as a proof. They are valuable for the questions they raise about the meaning and possibilities of poetry. I intuit that The Poems of Laura Riding is a book I will be reading for the next twenty years. There is no end to these poems.

- Lorna Smedman

TIGHT WIRE

we are involved
in an intense drunk
we dig deep.
pass over our natures.
I'm a little bewildered.
beauty.
a fact.
sometimes there is
more.
and when there wasn't
enough
it was as though
there was a snag.
aching doubt.
which now seems ponderous
next to burning joy.
I like the simple surface
of our words.
I'm after something more
than I was before

- Barbara McKay

COMING ATTRACTIONS: An Anthology of American Poets In Their Twenties, ed. by Dennis Cooper & Tim Dlugos (Little Caesar Press, 3373 Overland Ave. #2, Los Angeles, CA 90034), 153 pp., \$4.00.

Most anthologies, like natural borders between countries, justify their existence by delineating some school or group. Coming Attractions begins with its subtitle- An Anthology of American Poets In Their Twenties. In his introduction, the editor Dennis Cooper explains the personal nature of his selection in an unpretentious statement: "The book is not intended to present a cross section of America's young poets." Although I feel the selection of writers could have been broadened, it's an impressive collection.

There is a sense of community realized here with Bernard Welt and Diane Ward exchanging dedications, Joel Colton and Stephen Spera taking each other's pictures, Dennis Cooper appearing in Colton's magazine, Elaine Equi writing about Jerome Sala; something about art is not saying you're sorry for fucking in the museum.

Most of the writers live in NYC, Philly, DC or LA. Bernard Welt, Donald Britton and Diane Ward flesh out the DC legion nicely along with Tim Dlugos, the assistant editor who also claims allegiance to the capital. Dlugos demonstrates a mastery in both poetry chunks (prosish poems) and stanzas. Welt and Ward form sort of prosaic mosaics that leave room for humor and meaning. Ward writes with utter irony, "You become precious and I have trouble hearing." There is something irresistibly accessible about a lot of these writers, as if they were compelled to say something to our generation, one which has seen and heard so much.

So they say things in a lot of ways; prose poems, story poems, stanzaed aphorisms, confessions, regular iambic meter (David Trinidad's "The Party"), in surprisingly effective efforts to be heard and understood. In short, there's a lot going on in here.

Representative of the driving force shaping the new Philadelphia writers are Joel Colten and Stephen Spera. Unfortunately Joel Colten was killed by Mt. St. Helens shortly after this publication. This untimely tragedy underscores the necessity of collecting writings by the young and fails to make less memorable the optimism and clarity of Colten's work: "sometimes you would forget something/but you always thought of something else."

Opposite Spera's and Colten's slim unpunctuated verse, the prose poem breaks into gems of sexy fiction by Anne Pitrone who creates an intense character. If this were poetry we'd think of a persona as we might with Eileen Myles' flat heroic jumpy shapely free form work. Not unsimilarly, Elaine Equi emphasizes a compelling cross breed of poetry, talk and prose.

In the same spirit, the autobiography-credit-statement pages were dealt with in completely divergent ways by each author. Pitrone creates even more fiction in her space. Peter Cashorali uses the space informatively; "i draw on my own experience when i do a poem, & when the poem works it gives shape to that experience & also validation." Steve Hamilton's last page is blank.

Steve Hamilton is receptive to his voice of inner chaos and logically ludicrous, humorous juxtapositions. "The mad trumpets of dawn have forced my retreat..." Donald Britton's work has a similar slant, perhaps with less humor but incorporating more surface area per poem than anyone else here. These two guys remind me of Ashbery's inflectionless, seamless, disaffected rapture. This kind of decorum is present in Cheri Fein's lines and in Dennis Cooper's strict, third person stanzas which read like itsy novels.

Some of the writers are not strangers to the ubiquitous term, "performance artist," such as Jerome Sala whose vivacious photograph hints at the energy he's mixing up. In an effort to reach a larger audience some authors write as if they were talking to a friend or neutral presence as in the personal history pieces of Brad Gooch and Eileen Myles. Bob Flanagan includes the reader by asking hopeless questions like, "What do we say?" Almost as if he were talking his way out of nowhere he asks in 'The World of Science' - "You see?"

There's a big undercurrent here about debunking art with a capital A. There's also a sedulous resonance of formative tradition as in Kevin Clarke's poems addressed to a personal you. Because finally there is always something to break through to, but you have to fight fire with fire. Dlugos states this aptly: "You draw your own/ breath, then I draw mine. This is/ truly great art." This is no easy job as Charles Baxter from Detroit writes, "It is a grace, in love as elsewhere/ to say exactly what you mean and not another thing./ Honesty is not a wind and blows no one away./ It unsells the sold." That's pretty

good, isn't it? In fact, the very high success rate of poems in this anthology does credit to its title. I hope to see more from all these authors. This is what we're looking for. One thing about being young - anything goes so long as it's truly new. Coming Attractions are here!

- Jeff Wright

IRAN

(sung to "Dixie")

Way over yonder in the land of oil & poppies
america did toil & profit
to protect exxon, global corporations
and gave Iran to the Shaw

Oh I wish I was a sausage hooray hooray
wish I was an american sausage way back there in Iran
look away look away look away IRAN

Oil for guns and guns for oil
sewing wars and reaping air pollution
things like that can never last look away IRAN

Now our sausage is good and cooked
CORPORATE FASCISM EQUALS PHONEY NATIONALISM
wrap up my weenie ina'merican flag
all is free all is free

Oh I wish I was a sausage hooray hooray
wish I was a sausage just back from IRAN
& if I was I'd wanta go back there again
& if I was I'd wanta go back there again

One big Link frying in the sky
forever we will fry
look away look away look away IRAN

- Bob Rosenthal

March 2nd benefit reading for Mobilization For Survival (a national coalition of 100 peace, anti-nuke, labor, student, etc, groups merged to fight nuclear power) and the War Resisters League to be held at the Godoff Auditorium, Martin Luther King, Jr. Labor Center, 310 West 43rd St., NYC. Levertov, Paley, P. Levine, Strand, R. Nichols & A. Lorde will be among the readers. Suggested contribution \$7. Info: 228-0450 or 673-1808.

Good whale watching expected off the shores at Provincetown & Plymouth this spring. Contact Peter Dykstra, Greenpeace New England, 286 Congress St, Boston, MA 02210 for more info. Where's my comp?

Nick Kimberley has opened a new book shop in London, "Duck's Soup", 11 Lamb's Conduit Passage, London, WC 1.

Book Gatherings is a new organization ready to assist people who want to make books & participate in events where books are involved, artist's books, etc. Info: Susan Share, 374 State St, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

BENEFIT PERFORMANCE FOR DANSPACE & THE POETRY PROJECT

"the more perfect the dance the less we're aware of its actuality"
- Edwin Denby

On January 22, Daryl Chin presented his ARTISANS REVIEWED, OR A PRIMITIVE MYSTERY, a benefit performance for Danspace and The Poetry Project, an event which points to the closer relationship between the two projects at St. Mark's this year. The 3½ hour performance detailed the history of post post modern dance beginning with Yvonne Rainer at the Judson Church and concluding with an answer to Arlene Croce's recent "New Yorker" article which rewrote this segment of dance history. Performance is the newest art but Daryl's blending of criticism & performance is newer, designed for a specific community/audience of devotees, & wearing. His Cage-like simultaneous presentation of various historical tracks resulted in impromptu audience performance including Jill Johnston's singing "Singing in the Rain" & the landing of an entire squadron of paper airplanes on the playing field. The section of the program which was real dance (on film) was of course the most interesting. Yvonne Rainer's "Trio A" (1979) was a straight filming of her dancing on a bare floor & for this viewer who'd never seen her work before, successfully captured the surprise & fluidity of that day's sequence. From the film's opening with Yvonne's arms moving as if filled with water I knew this was the real stuff & her movements throughout the piece more than abandon the classical movements of ballet; they even these devices out & extend them with a royaling flow of intelligence, spontaneity & humor that is still based on the body's physical momentum. Roll over so/slow you/get stuck/in the river/like a tomb.

Meredith Monk's "16 MM Earrings" (1979) brought dance, performance & film together in a whirl of self-conscious presentation. Your reviewers split on its effectiveness. One thought a pedestrian might be curious at this art as opposed to Rainer's right there beauty, remembering WC Williams' quote: "no ideas but in things." He thought it was like telling a blind man about red. Trisha Brown's film, "Water Motor" (1979) was also the documenting of a dancer working a simple bare space, which seemed totally appropriate for this fast joyous sequence & flirt with balance. In a gorgeous slow motion segment, we could see how she used gravity as a partner. Just little feet/on a big floor/big as all/outdoors inside. Soundtracks for Brown's & Rainer's films, Bernadette Mayer reading, i.e., might have worked.

Especially notable among the dryly presented prose segments were a selection by Edwin Denby and Kenneth King's retort to Croce's singling out Robert Wilson & Philip Glass as the Judson's Cunningham & Cage, drawing on the energy of the women's movement & emerging third world. In his wise bibliography + notes, Chin says: "Those expecting entertainment, amusement or 'involvement' are hereby warned to expect boredom, irritation and disengagement." Well, by the end of the evening about 10% of the audience remained. We were among them and had a good time. We suggested to Daryl that he do in the poets next time and it was to him & Cynthia Hedstrom, Danspace's humming Director, whom we love being in the office with at all hours, that we manifested our excited will to have more interaction between dance, performance & poetry.

- Bob Holman & Greg Masters

MSS. WANTED: POETS ON: WORKING, Box 255, Chaplin, CT. 06235 looking for poetry on theme of working. SASE + brief bio...SATURDAY PRESS looking for book length ms. of women over 40 with no published book for the Eileen W. Barnes Poetry Award. Prize is pub. in edition of 500 + \$100. Colette Inez final judge. 5 sample poems should be sent between 5/15 & 6/30 to Charlotte Mandel, SATURDAY PRESS, PO Box 884, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043...for an anthology of poems dealing with all aspects of John Lennon send work to Barbara Holland, 14 Morton St, #9, NYC 10014.

A clandestine flyer came in describing TAP, which they explain is the former YIPL. This newsletter offers considerable "anti-system technical information", like free cable TV, free postage, free xerox, gas, electricity, etc. more info: TAP, Room 603, 147 W. 42 St, NYC 10036.

March

San Francisco sunny March wind
Blows lonely man's purple baggy pants standing
Noonday Market'n 7th
Same corner I once stood 6 years ago, depressed
And without money
I still don't have much money
But I do get foodstamps
And my rent's paid up at the Y
Where I climb chinese stone steps
Day pack straps dig into my shoulder blades
Woolen hat too warm for the season
No seagulls, empty sky, church bell toll
Echoes in vacant playground
Jealous friends tell my lover she's not right for me
When people kiss each other's nipples
The lake of the world ripples
Who will try & destroy our love?
An unseen roar in the sky
Some days I just wanna die
Coin rolls down steps
--tingling sound--then silence
Copper glistening in sun
Grey haired man chases after it says
"Lucky penny! Lucky penny!"

- Cliff Fyman

Those of us who've been attending the readings and related events at The Poetry Project can't have helped but noticing that a crew has been filming & recording some of the events. They are Steve Jones (sound), Jesper Sorenson (camera), Jonathan Sinniko (lighting) & Gody Suter (director, editor, the one the others look to for a nod) and they've been filming in 16 MM what must now be a few hours of Poetry Project event for what will eventually be cut down to a 15-20 minute segment for the Swiss TV show "Schauplatz" which Mr. Suter described as a sort of cultural "60 Minutes." It turns out the editor of that show, Peter K. Wehrli, was familiar with the Project and sent in this crew to tape a segment. I think we're all hoping to be able to someday see all the footage they've shot here. Tho they're not as conscious as Ann Rower running around with her Super 8 one night of what & who is most interesting, the fact that a pro group with camera needing tripod has been showing up occasionally to document what encourages us further to feel it's worth documenting, adds to the already exciting sense of 'something' happening this year, as continuous as past years, at St. Mark's Church. Are those interviews I saw them taping with Ted Berrigan & Steve Carey at the United Artists book party for Steve's and Jim Brodey's new books, The California Papers & Judyism, which followed the regular Wednesday night reading, tho that night's reading by Elio Schneeman abolished the word regular, going to show up in that 15 minute sequence; and the segment filmed up in the crowded but always lively PP office, with Maureen Owen trying to retain her composure at the mimeo machine but somehow the dummy of her workshop magazine gets collated into the wrong piles, oh Heisenberg! I wonder if those guys are aware of what they're trying to summarize. They even showed up at a community meeting and at an Allen Ginsberg special workshop got him to preface his two day anthology (which presented his reading & pointing out the metrics & essences of poems from Sappho to Mayakovsky & Schwitters) with an extemporaneous history of the Project. With all those bright lights & camera humm sometimes it's been a little hard to pay attention but in the media neglected poetry scene, I guess we're grateful for the attention.

- Gregory Masters

GET WELL CARD

I write this in the garden planted beside your bed.

- Elio Schneeman

OLD AGE AND DECREPITUDE

I do believe that even I couldn't outcamp Eileen Myles' ministunner in NEWSLETTER #80 (the "February 1981" issue). I SUBMIT MY FAVORITE BOOKS is a title only Bob Rosenthal should be able to conceive. And by implying that borrowing, stealing, or the receiving of gifts (from less impecunious friends) is her s.o.p. with respect to keeping hip to it all reading-wise, she effortlessly maintains her I COVER THE WATERFRONT role even while laying down that cool (if slightly breathless) Danny Richmond NEW DIRECTIONS under CITY LIGHTS rap-on-your-door, she has Rocks in her Heart; requited love doth never bore.

It's true. & just the other day I said to Alice, "You know, if you know enough people, sooner or later some son-of-a-bitch will give you a terrific book to read!" For example, I taught a class at The Kerouac School (Naropa) last Spring which met on ten consecutive Friday evenings, and whose name I remember only "as my novel class." Michael Brownstein had invented it & usually taught it. I adored the books we read for it, and then discussed, often heatedly & at great length. They were, ON US by Douglas Woolf; HEAVENLY BREAKFAST by Samuel R. Delaney; FAT PEOPLE by Carol Sturm Smith; WHO IS SYLVIA by Tom Clark; & WHAT'S FOR DINNER by James Schuyler. FYI, the students, including Annie Witkowski & Liz Fox, liked but didn't entirely understand DW; found "Chip" Delaney to be banal, superficial, boring, annoying, and without any redeeming qualities; had mixed feelings about FAT PEOPLE ("I don't think I cared very much about her," said Liz Fox, meaning the heroine); were rapturous over Jimmy Schuyler; & despised Tom Clark, despite having to admit his book met the requirements ("oh, it's a work of art, but that's about all," my favorite student said, pointedly). We finished with THE STREET by Aram Saroyan, which all agreed wasn't much. That was my Spring in Prose. Each book was perfect, in its own way, & all were beautiful. Woolf was very powerful, Delaney brilliant, provocative & spooky/hilarious; Carol Smith was wonderfully moving & resonated with courage, which is no small thing. Tom Clark was a scared novice black-magician who wisely declined offer of a permanent postion, while James Schuyler was naturally, a knockout, & outrageous. Aram had it all covered, & one could never say to him, "You lack charm," though he offended Clark who hated him forever, and despite getting his facts wrong, he pleased me, tho in doing so made my best friend hate me even more than he does now, tho not more than I hate him. A Scorpio's notion of perfect revenge (poetic justice) is, when someone you love, in cold fury for some "reasons" fixes a steely pair of eyeballs onto you & says, carefully, "Don't ever speak to me again," comply.

As preparation for this assignment by Greg "Sheila Graham" Masters I made a partial list of books read during 1980. The list as compiled from memory, with help from Alice Notley & Steve Carey, is incomplete in that A.) It consists only of books I liked, in one way or another; and B.) after 327 titles & authors Greg called and asked to pick up this piece, which I had told him days ago was already finished. Given two more days I'd have remembered at least a hundred more (that I'd liked) which means 950 or so books read during 1980. This seems less than I had recalled other years, when less pressing events left time for recording books read in journals, but of course we did travel a lot (Boulder, Needles, SF, Providence, South Attleboro), and I did get sidetracked by teaching the Spring term at Naropa, and the Fall at Stevens Inst. of Technology in Hoboken. Then, too, we had NEA Grants, which needed to be spent, there was Woody Guthrie's house to be visited

in Okemah, Oklahoma, with Allen; and then, of course, The Great Naropa Poetry War briefly engaged most of my attention. As I knew The Federation (my self's own head) would require of me a full report, I had to imbibe (through my armpits) a great mass of conflicting written accounts of its events, as well as briefs by friends of the court, subpoenaed documents, sub-texts (e.g. SLINGER), and even one great never-spoken statement, part credo, part political exegesis, part Chief Joseph Update ("I will fight plenty more"). Next came microscopic scrutiny of the major participants, followed by depth interviews with same, and finally, the great Naropa dinner, drinks, dope, white stuff, & extended shouting match between myself as non-neutral, & General Andy "Old Hick" Jackson, the Opposition leader. Well, nobody won that, thank god! so after de-briefing Rabbi Martin "the fag" Boob, President of Poetry and Party-leader of the party-in-power, who only wanted to know what exactly was going on, I was able to submit my report to nobody, and leave. It was only June, but I barely remember the rest of the year, except as titles & authors in bed.

I

did read a little poetry, too. TRIANGLES IN THE AFTERNOON is, not heavily, as bleak a series of pictures of current actuality as ever elicited a shrug, an apologetic look, and a fervent "oh, darn!" from any poet just finished reading what he had written. Ron Padgett, of whom I always assume mistakenly that it is clear to everyone as it is to me he is a far better poet than Gary Snyder or Mike McClure, let alone Robt. Bly & Mark Strand, like the United States, owes no apologies to anyone. In this book, even more so than in the past, he speaks of experience and emotion, his own, clearly and directly, with no technical distortion. I gleefully & bitterly envy him this one. Anselm Hollo's HEAVY JARS killed me. He is Wild Bill Hickok facing down Death, father & son & blue-eyed ghost. FINITE CONTINUED. MORNING OF THE POEM: I can't put down Jimmy Schuyler's new book. At third reading last week it was still being almost all anyone could ever want. Bob Rosenthal's poems in magazines inspire like Jimmy, from a different country. Bob wants to get it all, and so do I & he makes it so I can't forget & to try this way. Eileen Myles is better than the rest of you, so eat your hearts out! I'd never dare tell what I like best in her poems! Last but not least, (I'd never not "take the responsibility,") Alice Notley is even better than anyone has yet said she is.

But if you'd rather just have something wonderful to read (rather than me), I recommend THE LETTERS OF EVELYN WAUGH, worth every dime, and TALES FROM THE TEXAS GANG by Bill Blackolive, which Allen Ginsberg got in the mail & loaned to me. Send \$5.50 to TEXAS GANG ENTERPRISES/PO BOX 5974/AUSTIN, TEX/78763. It's the sleeper of 1980, & so am I.

- Ted Berrigan

Moth like porphyry lights the town
Like a phratry against the city how many
Famous men die in a summer today it was
The painter Clyfford Still when he died
I opened the window in the pantry
To bring down the screen, on the sill resting
Was a snake curled snakelike disturbed by me
It crawled back behind one of many of old
Cold New England's kitchen sinks, in childhood
A snake extracted from a pipe is preserved in a jar
In a plumber's window, in New York where I'll go back
Next week I was lucky to see Still's painting
Years ago, I am abstract a poet I am not him for what
I forget, is poetry compared -- moth like porphyry.

- Bernadette Mayer

Qualities

Loose as sneakers
City's fog ceilings

As new is harassed,
Chimes sharpen, mitigate

Petals roaring
Gravel, manna unfenced

Chats fluent as traffic, indestructible
buzzing, a shrine to sailboats

I unexpectedly surpass appreciation
Of ground floors fragrant, and restaurant

Grills disassociated smell.

Boastful, quietly tough as heat,
You'd lance the self-destructive corners

Of peoples eyes.

- Michael Scholnick

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