

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

May 1983

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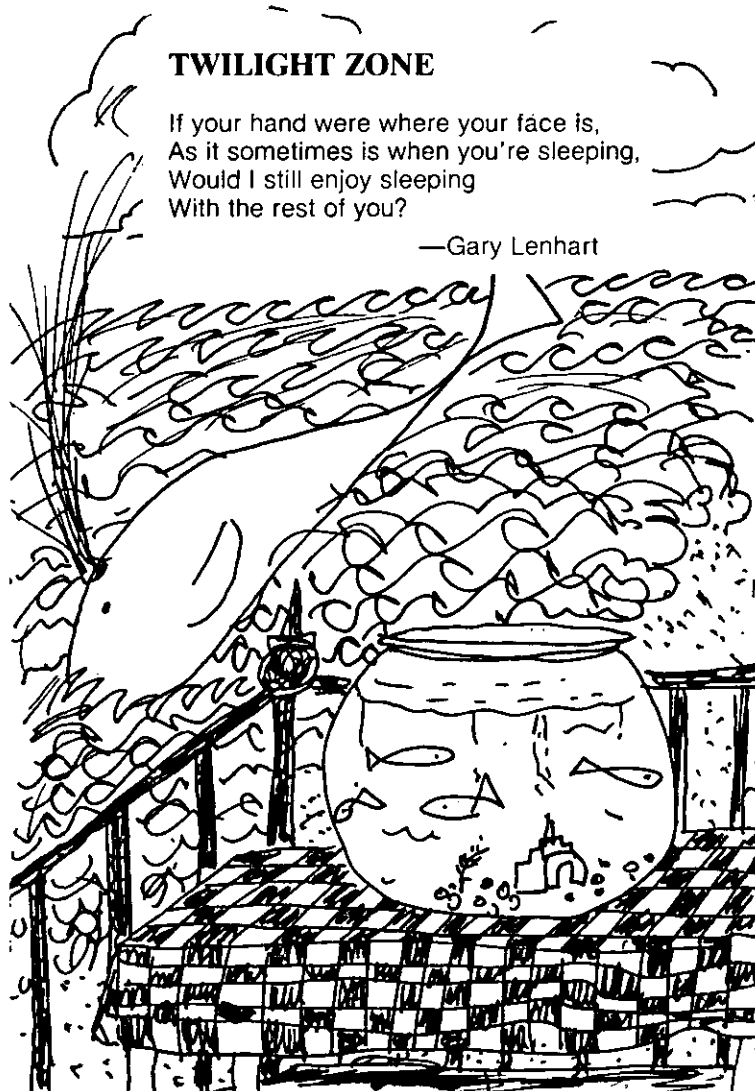
75¢

Free at The Poetry Project

TWILIGHT ZONE

If your hand were where your face is,
As it sometimes is when you're sleeping,
Would I still enjoy sleeping
With the rest of you?

—Gary Lenhart



May and June Readings, hosted by Bob Holman, Rochelle Kraut & Bernadette Mayer. 8 PM. Suggested contribution.

May 2 - **Open Reading**

May 4 - **John Ashbery & Kenneth Koch**

May 9 - **Al Sgamboti & Russell Smith**

May 11 - **Maria Gitin & Greg Masters**

May 16 - **Chris Kadison & Caryl Slaughter**

May 18 - **Robin Blaser & Larry Fagin**

May 23 - **Performance: Lori Landes/Stormy Mullis & Kathy Bernson**

May 25 - **Jackie Curtis, Taylor Mead & Tom Weigel**

May 30 - **Bands: You Rang & Vito Ricci**

June 1 - **Readings by members of the '82-'83 Workshops**

Lecture: May 5th, Thursday 8 PM (contribution \$3) Marjorie Perloff on futurism, hosted by Gary Lenhart

A Rock & Roll Benefit for the Poetry Project will take place on Tuesday June 7th at St. Mark's, details to be revealed.

Free Writing Workshops: Tuesdays at 7:30 PM with **John Godfrey**. Fridays at 8 PM with **Jack Collom**. Saturdays, a tri-lingual workshop with **Frances Chung** at 1 PM and at 10 AM a children's workshop with **Steve Levine**. All meet at St. Mark's.

'Readings From The Poetry Project' continues on WBAI 99.5 FM. at 8:30 PM, produced by **John Fisk**.

DANSPLACE PROJECT SPRING SCHEDULE

April 30-May 1—Bill & George Gordh. May 5-8—Barbara Allen also Simone Forti. June 10-19—Beyond Contact Improvisation Festival with Steve Paxton, Nancy Stark Smith, Lisa Nelson, Robin Feld, Nina Martin, Steve Petronio, Randy Warshaw, and others. June 30-July 3—Street Dancing. Most performances begin at 3:30 at St. Mark's Church. Contribution \$4 or TDF. Reservations: 674-8112.

More Party Than Arty III will be May 6, 8:30 PM at CHARAS, 360 E. 10 St (Between B & C). Slim Williams, Ishmael Houston-Jones, Hektor Munoz, Irene Dogmatic, S-h-o-c-k-r-a-y, Ron Padgett, Lois Griffith, Eileen Myles, Julie Erlich, Andrea Kirsch, Alice Notley, John Davis, Billy Foster are among the performers. \$5.

The Department, "A Chaplinesque comedy about an office being automated", written by Barbara Garson and directed by Chris Kraus continues its run until May 15 at Theater for the New City, 162 2nd Ave. at 10th St, Thursdays thru Sundays at 8 PM. \$4 or TDF.

Daniel Woolf (of *The Real World* fame, a set of beautifully printed poetry pamphlets that took us around the world) continues his poetry/printing projects with a new broadside by himself. Those interested in participating in his mailed poetry can write him at 12 Castle Heights Ave, Upper Nyack NY 10960, contributions welcomed.

Victor Hernandez Cruz is Writer-in-Residence this spring at *Just Buffalo*, May 11-June 15. Folks up in Buffalo are urged to check out his workshops and readings.

Please replace 'open a crack' for 'opens a crack' in Pat Nolan's poem 'Late Afternoon' of 2 issues ago. And while you're at it, Jean Day's book is *Linear C*, not *Linear* as mentioned at some point.

May Readings at Prescott's, 353 Greenwich St, 925-3545—May 1-Gary Lenhart & Hannah Weiner. May 8-Rudy Burckhardt & Lewis Warsh. May 15-Tim Dlugos & Jane DeLynn. May 23-Lynne Tillman & William Levy.

Drawing on cover by Lisa Egan
Drawing of Bill Berkson on page 14 by Alex Katz
Drawing on pages 6 & 13 by Neddi Heller

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New England Wind

Remember me this summer
under the eaves again
stretched out against
the sky again
like Orion's moon

When a breeze crawls
down the screen, pip, zing
or is that a cat
crawling up

Oh was I alone in the
first room I ever
had or who would've
writ this then? Me too
when I am mad?

O leave me alone with
my aching head,
panicky panicky
no where to go
pretty north & silly

the other night
under the eaves
in a rain at 4 o'clock
I woke up it was
so sexy; listened so
careful in the world
the next day
for who also heard it
dreamy-eyed, who could've
come up or I come down
for once from
the sky
to be what
fell.

—Eileen Myles

A writer writes, a poet poets

There's alot about the poetry field you can't learn out there...but you can learn it here, in the poetry project newsletter. Learn about how boy meets girl...how to marry a poet. Learn about who owes who that much & who ripped off who for books and lines. Did you ever wonder how such bad poetry is published...discover it all in the Poetry Project Newsletter. You say you don't have ten dollars to spend...call the editor, sexual arrangements can be acomodated.

—Rose Lesniak

Splurge by Paul Violi (SUN, NYC, 1982, \$5)

Accumulation of details, for instance a guy on a highchair overlooking a dump ("Shadow Royal"). The position's a mite "colonialist" being the overseer of all that rubble passing by. It's history, it's even a mock war, the fellow's in a pith helmet at his command post, but the war is over, isn't it? So everything's okay I guess. It isn't violent (except in that boys-torturing-kittens-idiom—"Flip a cripple a nickel..." ("Big Daddy"))—things are more likely rotting in Violi's universe, posters peeling, or just over-ripeness, all the breasts are large, the wine is, uh, flowing and endlessly renamed like Eskimo snow. And what is Violi's thing about snow? What's a snow-flake after all but a vanishing point. The poet here wants to be outside of time:

it could be green, dark green the entrance
to the dark empty well
that Pliny told Astronomers was the best place
from which to watch stars move in daylight.

("One for the Monk of Montaudon")

I tend to think that the prettiest passages in most poet's work locate their "real" desire. I tend to think Violi's killing time, is a pleasure-monger, pleased as punch to tell you how happy he is to be lying on the lawn, and in the simpler narrative poems like "Montauk" you feel you are experiencing exercise, Violi trying on the present, walking on the beach describing. He's not a historical escapist, he could equally escape into the present, counting and precisely naming the rocks. I often wish I was a guy when I read his work, there's a self-containment to his work that could only be male, a self-satisfaction that would be utterly despicable if he wasn't so funny. I mean what about the poor woman whose sandwich flies away at the lunch counter. How does she feel? That's not the point. It's supposed to be funny. And it is funny. I believe the point here (meaning "Splurge") is beauty. Beauty of language, fantasy, comedy, "nature," knowledge and even thought—"Remember what the Ancients said: life is more/than a conversation between the sea and the air." But how come nobody's telling?

—Eileen Myles

Logan's Silhouette #1

walking with happiness
laughing at shadows
eyes bulging with fun

the men on the beat
think chasing fare
jumpers is ludicrous
they hafta carry a gun
& I don't think I do
so I don't
won't
get into it
 spiral violence
keep it away from the sun

& the laughter
bubbling forth into
delightful autumn
out to get milk
the fruit looks good
tonight

—Harris Schiff

Pure Notations by Steve Levine (Toothpaste Press, Box 546, West Branch, IO 52358, 1981, \$6)

Steve Levine's clarity, attention, understatement, and formality owes something to the French poets of the early 20th Century, mainly Reverdy, and, to a degree, Mallarme. His work has a cosmopolitan *elan* generally associated with Apollinaire, but it is one that seems to serve the self-esteem of those who live and write in the city that considers itself (and it could quite well be) the literary capital of the nation and possibly the world. "Now I would tell of my great technical skill//Discovered in Des Plaines, Illinois//And celebrated, by me, in//New York City."

On the other hand, to emphasize only this aspect of Levine's approach would be a disservice to a distinctive young American poet. The elliptical fades, dichotomous harmonies, startling segues, the American twang to the swing and sway of his lines, the compactness of the poetic units all indicate a background rich in a solidly native style. Levine is fortunate to be in a generation of poets who finally have a diverse range of indigenous poetic traditions to draw on.

Stumbling nonchalantly home city streets late
afternoon
under trees over black patterns I was sidetracked
by a frightening invitation
and left at the station rattling wheels down
the track I fell back
into the melodious berry or maybe mud
climactic nature of coincidence

from "Coincidence"

Steve Levine has mastered the poem best read at readings ("The Best of Friends", "Homage to Kurt Schwitters"); the meditative, perceptual lyric ("Final Days", "Against the Edges"); the personal "I do this, I do that" type poem ("Before Going Out", "To Mister Ed, Dead"); and the word mobile characterized by an *integral balance* between word and page ("Seconds", "Poem"). He has synthesized these elements in an extended lyrical form that combines the dramatic observed within the personal context that is a conscious construction in the field of the page ("Coincidence", "Epistle"). Levine's understanding is a precise study in the American poetic.

—Pat Nolan

Looking for Butterfly

"Do you have but-ah-fly?" asks short Asian
woman with red lipstick
"Right here in my heart" says I from behind
 jewelry stand
"No" (giggle, giggle)
"I have a frog...an elephant..."
"No, no. I'm looking for BUT-ah-fly" and she walks
away smiling

—Cliff Fyman

The Fox by Jack Collom (United Artists Books, 172 E. 4 St, 9B, NYC 10009, \$3.50)

One opens a book of 84 pages beginning, "A bright cold dawn ends," flocks of birds fill the page, cowboys & corvettes, chamomile tea, rabbits, pancakes, eggs, a moose, bears, bees, the snapping turtle, Marty Robbins, cars inhabit the poems which are so filled with life & the various by-products of living that to speak of the book as one thing seems impossible. There is a sound Jack Collom makes in the poems that can be heard no where else. Yet many of the poems in this book have little in common with each other. At first glance, there are as many different kinds of poems here as there are kinds of poets in print. Collom's work is truly experimental in that he will write any kind of verse or prose that presents itself to him. Here is evidence that there is no way of writing that is right, no wrong. Unlike many self-proclaimed experimentalists, Collom's work is polished, often seamless. When it is jagged, it is intentionally so; awkward in the way that life is awkward, precise even when it is most edgy. There is finesse, clarity.

The title poem is a narrative network of secret passages & caverns under a mountain conveniently equipped with push-button controls & trap doors in the interest of privacy. The Fox lives here amongst dried rodent bones & leftover rabbit meat. "Darkness was the fox's form...and in darkness he sleeps & dreams...a white fox in the air." The Fox is a myth in the larger sense: that of the American Indian or the fur trapper. The old timer who will tell you all you want to know about foxes. It is in this personal approach that Collom exceeds much previous mythopoetic brooha (i.e. we don't get laborious quotes & interpretations of quotes, just the story simply told). Although the poem is mythic, it is not predictable. The myth is Jack's myth, not a textbook mythology. Likewise, in "The Rabbit," we are given a carnivorous rabbit hacking a hawk to pieces. The very syllables of the poem embody the rabbit's "pallid sunburst tail," the hawk "eyes saw sailing safety high."

In another poem, a wolverine is captured & skinned only to replace itself again & again. A magic wolverine. All this time the poet sits on his porch drinking stout. It is from the porch that the reader hears tell of the wolverine in rhyme. And rhyme is one of the many things Collom does. I count five tightly rhymed poems in this collection. Each rhyme is a surprise, a quick supple delight:

out/giant/pliant/apart/heart.

POEM

oh dahlia
you wild pugnacious
flower
your petals reach wildly
out to me
your rusty color
your sepia & burnt
umber
my heart with dried blood
all over it
thank goodness
I don't have a
gentle heart.

—Rochelle Kraut

Toy Sauna

In the sauna
the rocks seem decorative
and useless.
We're trying to relax
so we talk about everything
that makes us nervous.

—Vicki Hudspeth

In the Third Month

In the third month
there is a last snow
fall releasing spring.
This is not something
in the air, it begins
just below the surface
of the cold, wet mud,
endlessly grey. It stirs
the bulbs to shoot out
sprouts, then buds and
all the promises they bring.
Promises like secrets lie
just below the surface.

—Helena Hughes

In "Ruddy Duck," Jack lists 63 names of ducks in what I would call a sound poem (with notes pertaining to the duck's nesting & feeding habits).

"too white & still" is the kind of poem where every line carries a punch. But there is a soft, delicate sound structure within the lines, the way one pulls a rod behind one's head & swings it gracefully out over the surface of a river. The line drops deep down below the surface to get a bit, causing tension in the line which is then reeled in. The hook is pulled & the line is cast back out again. A complicated business even in fishing, much less love poems.

The four backyard poems demonstrate Collom's deft notation of what he sees & hears. The synchronicity of events that might fill his day. A willingness to include everything: the five cars passing by, breakfast (what he had & how he cooked it), thoughts, wonderings. Here the line is flat & condensed. Likewise in "Work Notes," Collom doesn't miss a minute.

From the mythical ballads to the love poems, work notes to the heroic:

"I love this mighty West of ours
I get steamed up when people put it down,"

(le spectre de la rose)

Jack Collom speaks of the West with the authority of one who is there. He is here. Jack speaks of his family, the Rocky Mountains, New York City, life, love. *The Fox* is a selected poems in every sense of the word. To select from Collom's work must be a gargantuan task. There is a lot of it. A lot of territory, a lot of styles, a lot of poems. Poems which take a lot of risks. Not all of them work for me. Most of them do work. Clearly Jack works on them. In the collection's last poem, an "angular dramatic witch":

"presses her small belly on your neck
her fingers tear at your pants
she puffs heat on you
you ejaculate all over the fire
it is dark
she flies away
you are in love"

as I am—with *The Fox*.

—Mitch Highfill

First Blues by Allen Ginsberg (2 LP set: John Hammond Records, 311 W 57 St, NYC 10019)

This double album collects a decade of Ginsberg's rhapsodic musical invention in Song. Included also in the contemplative, inspiring Gallimaufry are "No Reason," a sweetly stoic love plaint by Steven Taylor and two skillfully hymned William Blake poems, "The Tyger" and "My Pretty Rose Tree" along with "You Are My Dildo," Mr. Peter Orlovsky's highly instructive, friendly-voiced and deeply self-revealing improvisatory classic. Gracefully strummed and lyrically vocalized, Orlovsky's solo endeavor here amounts to something heavenly, a vivid compost pile, a string of joyous beads. Equally impressive is Peter's yodeling harmony as it tickles the fourteen noble bluegrass stanzas of "Old Pond." The energetic yet mellow, adaptive musicianship of Arthur Russell, Steven Taylor, David Amram and John Scholle is much in evidence on this track.

Revering Milarepa, Chogyam Trungpa suggested the possibility of improvising great poetry to Ginsberg in 1971. The chanting Professor of "minute particulars" soon thereafter learned some twelve-bar blues ("I went to see the doctor, he shot me with poison germs/I got out of the hospital, my head was full of worms") chords and the harmonium's predictable winds evolved straightaway into a new kick of passionate sincerity for Allen ("September on Jessore Road" written November '71) which, in the course of seeing *Mind Breaths* and *Plutonian Ode* and a dozen other books published, he's professionally mastered. Instrumental was tender, lion-hearted Bob Dylan in coaching the Bard to practice improvisation technique and rhyme premeditated verses together during studio time.

In nineteen hundred and forty-five
China was won by Mao Tse Tung
Chiang Kai Shek's army ran away
and they're waiting there in Thailand today
Supported by the CIA
pushing junk down Thailand way

(from "CIA Dope Calypso Blues")

Minnesota born Dylan screams 'He loved the folks who wished him well and everybody did,' performing Woody Guthrie's "Dear Mrs. Roosevelt" with The Band at Carnegie Hall, pronouncing every letter. I can never tire of living in the same world with Truth and Beauty's illimitable proportions as expressed in that particular song. *First Blues*' gallant wit and democratic moral vision contributes to the ideal.

Not mere chance, of course, turns the tide. Allen Ginsberg's tangible resourcefulness and breadth of intent are present indivisibly in details complexly woven and fundamentally stated in his work's entirety; as mentioned amid the album's handy magazine insert "All 50 years of funky solitary musing" become a sort of compiled moment that the tongue initials with "song-form." Literary tradition is most original, he seems to assume, among "Central Australian Desert Aborigine Pitjenjara" whose "12,000 year old poetics" represents the earth's oldest living Culture. These people have no written vocabulary having relied to preserve their sophisticated song-cycles on oral mnemonic devices and personal specialization. Bygone the golden, silent era and the weeks of America's vaudeville and tent show days but our History, either, never fades. "Bishop Rómera...got shot."

W.H. Auden once said, "I prefer to hear music played in concert halls," when Mr. Ginsberg's "Hare Krishna" demonstration was done. Perhaps Allen's next record will contain even more snap. Robert Frank designed the album jacket's stupendous, grey environment. The photographs, portraits, and film montage within, glitter with Frank's dream-lined, nearly cubist demands. Well, *First Blues*. It's here to buy.

—Michael Scholnick

We've cheapened ourselves!

BUY ONE

Get One Free!

**Third
Almanac**

Kathy Acker's Translations of the Diaries of Laure the Schoolgirl five-page French novel of 1918, the single example of Bibisme praised by Pound, also includes the selected poems of I Adjil Strong, works by New Yorkers and Spens "Museum of Modern Rat" illustrated.

104 pages, \$4.95

**Second
Almanac**

96 pages, \$4.95

**UHFO
by
Harrison
Fisher**

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Cumming's
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and the
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32 pages, \$4.50

Diana's

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Hegemony

gyroscopes tilt toward sand people
robustly yellow & immediately asiañ
& also gradually dissipate
pronunciation to the point of pristine
edifiers. oh golly, do you

languish in the center of the
earth? who are your mole creatures-
& why aren't they waiting on you?
voice your complaint here, but
esther says we should fight like animals
anyway. so lets fight.

"ouch, you big fat elephant
just you try that again!"

like when before has this happened—
a large mammal is a people & a gyroscope
is the way this task is assumed, especially
when joined by these aluminum starfish
immediately before.

—Marc Nasdor

Days and Nights by Kenneth Koch (Random House, NYC)

The cover of my copy of Kenneth Koch's *Thank You and Other Poems* has fallen off from use, but the achievement of the poet has not been publicly and sufficiently underlined. While his influence among some poets has been enormous and fruitful, it isn't adequate to limit him to this influence, and it is interesting to note that he has consistently and to date suffered because he is our reigning comic poet of intelligence. Since his poetry is one of affirmation among parodied forms, it has not appealed to rationalists or naturalists. His new poetry, say of the last few years, has become increasingly open to the theme of suffering, memory, and limitation, and his mastery exhibits itself even more fiercely with these new topics of disunity. Like the late Fairfield Porter, who abhorred abstract antinomies, Koch's poetry is always at once abstract and realistic, always concerned with process but never careless, always embodied with the light of the particular.

Days and Nights, Koch's latest volume, is a disturbing and enthralling book. It begins with a masterful collection of short variations, 'In Bed,' rivalling Koch's own early 'Collected Poems' as a way of making something solid as an Alex Katz cut-out of Gertrude Stein. In the midst of parodies, philosophical beds, art beds, suicidal and futurist beds, and beds referring to the beginning of the poem itself, Koch floats this tender couplet:

The bed lies in the room
The way she lies in the bed.

And, in case you thought all this was obfuscation through metaphor, he includes 'Psychoanalytic Criticism in Bed': "What are you trying to avoid talking about/ When you talk about bed?" It's a little diabolic series of cadenzas: a dictionary of beds to wake you up. The next poem, 'The World,' is a very brave poem about unhappiness. It seems as if Koch is applying the same audacity to suffering and its sequels that he wanted to apply to affirmation: "Saying I ought to see/ Suffering is simply that/ A thing for every day./ Can one person cure me?/ Am I sick? I am/ Unhappy and I think/ I shouldn't be.///...Poetry, my enemy!/ Why can't you do everything?/ Make me young again./ Give me that hand in my hand." The difference between Koch and other confessors to suffering is that he bribes us, as Freud says, with a public form to his private intimacies, a consciousness that mediates all cliché: "Sic transit ego/ And sic fugit this poem."

One of my favorite poems in the volume is the explosive and explosively titled: 'Girl and Baby Florist Sidewalk Pram Nineteen Seventy Something': "Sweeping past the florist's came the baby and the girl/ I am the girl! I am the baby!" It's as if he started with a little genre scene and then shattered it with every cubo-futurist device known to man: "Florist stands whistling/ Neither inside nor outside thinking about the mountains of Peru." Poetry has probably never had a person as learned as Koch as willing to scramble and sacrifice. I can think as a comparison only of deKooning sculpting a dog or elegantly crushing a clam-digger. He celebrates the child, but as an adult.

If Koch's largest moods used to be presented in the present and future tense, his new mode is the past in elegy: "The leaves were already on the trees, the fruit blossoms/ White and not ruined and pink and not ruined and we/ Were riding in a boat over the water in which there was a sea/ Hiding the meanings of all our salty words." "I loved the texture of your talk..." "Plate glass was nowhere around." "You were/ A blue coat..." Like Frank O'Hara's 'A Step Away From Them' it is a celebration of fullness of life, however,

rather than an academic frightening us with allegorical skulls: "I wore Leonard's jacket and my clothes, then shoes/ Meet yours, advancing, so walk about the best/ Final of beach, to not notice numbers/ Except when they are speaking, as we stopped less/ When all this was around." Koch once said love induced him to a new clarity, and here it induces him to a new complexity. 'Twenty Poems' has the Catullus-like ambivalence again: "Then he loves her no longer,/ For one second." 'Days and Nights' is a startling, extended "meditation" on poetry and its possibilities amid all this worldliness and multiple emotion: "The idea of Mallarme/That/Well that it was so/Vital/Poetry, whatever it was/Is inspiring/Is I find even more inspiring/Than his more famous idea/Of absence..."

Koch's prose piece, 'The Green Step' seems to me to be one of the most limpid and yet replete stories any poet has written since Koch's own perfect 'The Postcard Collection'. It's as complicated as 'Letters from Tula' and is both a love story, music and architecture criticism, and a description of itself. The philosopher Ted Cohen says metaphors are used to create intimacy, sometimes destructive. What Koch gives us is a tense artistry that is at once extraordinarily intimate and yet also public, even epic in scale. This polarisation is the secret, I think, of his great art. We learn from his green steps the way the surrealists learned from deChirico's blank arcades.



—David Shapiro

LOVE AWRY

Saw crocus, forsythia,
real leaves on bushes and
planted plastic roses blooming
in the city April 2nd
nevertheless have alot of dead
& disorganized shit in mind
including half-destroyed contents
of this my house including
fraying blankets of the children
walls all written & drawn on
things strewn all over the kisses
left on the windows for snowflakes
paint petals falling from the ceiling
old torn clothes with holes,
no buttons, a richness of
unmatched socks, dead friends,
dead lovers, parents, doctors & poets
a million things not done
fear in an unmatching self
a bad cold on feeling old
four tooth fillings lost for
heartily eating the toast
at a breakfast, I cannot go
back to the psychiatrist
with these problems of my tongue
as if all this spring
were kindergarten again.

—Bernadette Mayer

Entre Nous by Tim Dlugos (Little Caesar, LA, 1982 \$4.95)

Tim Dlugos writes about the poignancy of the impulse within the lucidity of the moment. There's an undeniable spiritual quality to his work, what light does pass through as you're being there. I do wonder how he chooses his details (Just like everyone else does I suppose,..)—in "New Hope" the growth of a potato is his central obsession so I flash back to Biology 101, leuco-, leuco,...—he's talking about the "eye of the potato"—how Irish of Tim, but there are these leucoplasts in potatoes—"colorless granules found in the protoplasm of vegetable cells in which starch forms in the absence of light." Believe it or not I think Dlugos is watching his spiritual development.

His poems have a brisk social surface, they're populated by cities, systems, concerns, characters that merit quick identification, click, okay I know where I am. Bess Truman, yup, yup, Gilligan, yeah, okay. But something is vaguely wrong. It's like when John Lennon was shot—he was famous but what was tragic was he was just this guy—why did he have to get shot? Tim uses these known cultural characters. Serge Prokofiev—"his kleptomania increased in intensity"—details, humanizing details. You know—it's the opposite of assassination, something Dlugos does seem to be obsessed with. Taking a cultural piece of change, a name and humanizing it, the opposite of the shellacking effect of fame. If much art idealizes a figure, Tim's stuff embodies. It's what gossip does too—it says *re* famous people *we* have power over them, or they are us, *Entre Nous*. I roughly thought *Entre Nous* meant we are coming or something, pictured these Polish Irish hordes coming over the hills, arrggh!, why would he do that? These are gleamingly spiritual poems, on a personal level he's opening and closing doors within himself, this is Sadness, this is Sex, Ambition, Bills—it all seems to take place along a current of lights and darks—his "I" is a system, as is all culture, quirky, toothy vultures running through their habits. Some book I read recently described the "initiation" beyond a) animal and b) ego onto c) which consists of a true consciousness of the group. For me, I think of Tim Dlugos' work in *Entre Nous* as describing a path from B to C. I mean I think he's "evolved."

—Eileen Myles

The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke, trans. by Stephen Mitchell, intro. by Robert Haas (Random House, NYC)

Stephen Spender begins his recent review of Mitchell's translations with:

Many years ago, at a time when I was obsessed by Rilke's poetry, I happened to cut myself shaving, and (looking in the mirror) I thought: 'If Rilke cut himself shaving, he would bleed poetry.'

This is just the sort of melodrama (I see Cornell Wilde as Chopin in "Song to Remember" coughing blood on the piano keys) and hyperbole surrounding Rilke that has always put me off. As I read the poetry I found Rilke death-obsessed, creepily spiritual and snotty about it. But I kept at it both not wanting to miss out and eager to know what it was so many had found in his work. I read David Young's Williamsish translations of the elegies, but they did little for me. A. Poulin, Jr's versions of the elegies and *The Sonnets to Orpheus* also left me cold. Each time I opened Robert Bly's translations I saw Orson Welles emerging from fog on the moors. To anyone who has had similar struggles reading Rilke and who, like me, has no German I recommend Stephen Mitchell's new translations. Perhaps the poems are now so open to me because Mitchell has brought them into the American idiom. I know that Rilke's work is "familiar" to me in a way it never was before. And compelling—I feel drawn into the poems, not held at arm's length by an attitude or posture. And piercing—When Hermes seeing that Orpheus has looked back puts out his hand to stop Eurydice and "she could not understand, and softly answered/*Who?*", I feel a chill run up my spine and breathe sharply in surprise and fear. So perhaps there is something to all that melodrama. Anyway, it is a great poem in Mitchell's version as is "Requiem For A Friend" which I had never before read. The book also has a long introduction by Robert Haas and very helpful notes.

—William Corbett

MINDS

Is enlightenment
humanly dark like gambling?
Does the rain enforce it?

Is it borne in your arms
like a flower, a bird of paradise?

Does that which is unenlightened
provide a clue?
How do I perceive enlightenment?

There can be no other way,
You must breed it inside of yourself.

—Michael Scholnick

WARRIOR

for Jeff Wright

I watch the road: I am a line-
man for the County. City streets
await me, under lustrous purple skies, purple
light,
each night. Manhattan is a needle
in the wall. While
it's true, the personal, insistent, instant-
myth music cuts
a little close to the bone
& I have to get up early for work tomorrow, still
there's
lots of quail in Verona, & I am
jubilant with horror
because I'm searching for pain underneath
another overload.
I hear you singing in the wires.

—Ted Berrigan

Code Poems by Hannah Weiner (Open Book, Barrytown NY)

Many were trying to do it; few could. For various reasons we wanted to get poetry off the page: vivification, experimentalism, media crossover, new audiences, language analysis, chutzpah. Off the page and into the streets. Off the page and into the theaters and art galleries. Off the page and into the dustbin of history. It was the '60s, so everything seemed possible. The poetry reading became the poetry event became the performance. And Hannah Weiner was in the middle of it.

I remember Hannah Weiner's all-purpose, many pocketed cape that she made for the Fashion Show Poetry Event: no need for luggage when you fly. I remember her street work that was arranging to meet the other Hannah Weiner listed in the phone book. The other Hannah Weiner was a psychologist or psychoanalyst and they met on 57th Street. I remember Hannah Weiner's beautiful theater piece at Hunter College. When the curtain opened, the stage was dark except for the flickering light cast by a television set facing the back of the stage. This lasted for twenty minutes.

But Hannah Weiner was best known for her code poem performances. One night she had two people waving flags at each other from one end of West 26th Street to the other. I remember her Central Park band-shell spectacle that included flares, flags, and Coast Guards. And what is left of these works? Hannah Weiner burned all her documentation and became a clairvoyant poet.

Nevertheless, a small compilation of her code poems and code poem performance texts (they are often one and the same) has just been published. I guess she didn't throw out everything. We can be thankful for that. And now that we

have the texts in front of us, some people will wonder why they didn't get what Hannah was doing way back then. She was using an existing system—the International Code of Signals for the Use of All Nations—to make poems: altered found-poems, funny poems, and sometimes sexy poems. She was also asking certain questions before it was fashionable to ask them. Is language a code? Is poetry a code? Can you use one code to describe another code? Can personal expression be avoided?

I will use one of her poems to give my answer to this last question:

TQA POSSIBLE-ITY

- TQB I doubt if it is possible
- FRW Barely possible
- TQD Is it possible?
- TQE Possibly
- TQF Quite Possible
- FBG As slow as possible
- FBG As quick as possible
- FAI As fast as possible
- FBO As soon as possible
- FAY As much (or, many) as possible
- TQC If possible
- FOU Avoid, if possible (impossible)
- PFB Not possible.

There is a kind of disassociation at work here—later manifested in a different way in the clairvoyant works—and a humor. Neither of these characteristics should distract the reader entirely from the more important thing going on: *doubt and deconstruction. The coding is the message.*

—John Perreault

Soft Shoe

When I stopped
eating roses during that summer
little feet always came to me in dreams
and I concluded they were yours.
The mountains and the care were yours,
the weed path up the hill that
soaked our sneakers, and the car.
Mary knows the meaning of hairpin turns
and their incomparable joy.

This boxed summer
lent the lid of a beautiful sky
to our dying of boredom
among various bridges
that sparkled at night. Your tutorials
sang in the dark: a red string tie
and advice to the taxi,
the sneaker effect on coming home
strewn across the boundaries—

one shoe here, one shoe there.

—Gyorgyi Voros

CASE

Use of purified catastrophe
may represent a more potent
diversion such as panting.
I am clearly labile, I might
be a related disturbance.
In my human form I might act human.
Yet the rest must wonder at my action.

However seems yet for example.
Step on it mister. We are
the last to board her & feel
as do most investigators
quite surprising as noted above.
It is of interest to risk
being redundant it appears.

Loud thoughts feign to explain
the mutually contradictory ideas.
Therefore she remains grimacing.
Thereafter she fell full away.
There is a balance in nature.
Flutes of rain hire me in NYC.
I watch jubilant with horror.

—Jeff Wright

Prose Encounters

American Ones by Clark Coolidge (Tombouctou Books, Bolinas CA 1981 \$5)

Clark Coolidge's recent book, *American Ones*, is an unpretentious little red book just short of fifty pages in length. Inside are ten chapter-like segments of his quite original prose. Each section is headed by an epigraph from various sources (Stevens, Grenier, Kerouac, Sacha Guitry) which seem to serve as a springboard for the improvisations that follow. The dedication is to Philip Whalen, and although these two poets would seem poles apart, they are actually tangent at a point described by Whalen in 1959: "This poetry is a picture or graph of a mind moving, which is a world body being here and now which is history...and you."

The work, subtitled "Noise & Presentiments", is not preconceived as a narrative, but in the reading of it, the reader cannot help but see a travelogue develop with little Burma Shave signs along the way testifying to the importance of place names (countries, states, cities, natural wonders, and the like) in among the larger billboards of consciousness. Sentences such as "A Mr. Bojangles, just waiting, plaid shoes, bulky banquet camera, Yosemite, a Mr. Watkinds of Oneonta, October." and "I turned Duluth and got chaired." reinforce the impression of some sort of geographic meandering. Out of it comes a depiction of the American landscape that goes from Hopper and Mondrian to Ruscha and Pollack.

Coolidge's prose doesn't immediately reveal its intent perhaps because the reader, at first, is only aware of the density of its disparate elements. But these passages go places: for a drive, to the movies, camping, roller skating, exploring the physical whose description is an overlapping of layer upon layer of detail which resonates with meaning, inference, and reference. The strict surface of the prose is meticulously intact, but the sheer variety of patterns and textures resembles the whirring intricacies of a mandala. All this is accomplished with the use of a rich, unpretentious vocabulary

which includes coined words, half words, contractions, and a liberal representation of proper nouns to pep things up.

In this context, Coolidge uses the proper noun almost better than anyone else. Section IX in particular reads as if it had been taken from the TV Guide crossword puzzle. The epigraph from Charles Olson ("Names are the colored barrels we trip over inside") directs the reader's attention.

"Electricity, the high priest of false security"; Basil Rathbone, an attribute of Sherlock Holmes. Refusing to be original and every one differs. Scanning the table, picking a name from anything. The painter is drawing: still, there. Chair of cadmium red, call it Muscovite. Rouben Mamoulian's first production was *Beating on the Door* (London). And Janet Leigh's real name is (was?) Jeanette Helen Morrison from Merced (cleanest voice). And Peggy Lee (as a child forgot), Pincus Leff (passed on the tube). And Clint Walker went to Vegas to make contacts and landed a contract to star in *Cheyenne* (collects rocks).

The prime concern of this work is language and how it can be used and reused in a completely original and unpredictable manner. It shows its utility to be conversational as well as observational, perceptual as well as conceptual. It is a system of private notations, spoken assumptions, and shorthand short cuts that don't ask to be deciphered, but simply read, and with a latitude of interpretation. Reality is transformed into a literature of sentences, the meaning of which is so compressed and concentrated that it is like peeling back the layers of an onion to get at it. "This is hem light still bean migraine, in toto flam step fail clap lexicon to the meadows fall flat stir." Perfect sentences such as these tap the unconscious and come up with a between-the-lines surrealism. In this way, much of what the writing is "about" is left up to the reader. Its like saying the words belong to the user. It becomes a liberating experience. Inspiration is triggered by this variety of factors and fact invents.

—Pat Nolan

FOR THE BIRDS

Our long-haired drooling ancestors climbed into the trees among the birds and decided not to fly. Instead they came back down and walked on the hard ground. We know through them, though, what it is to fly, and for eternity, for no bird has ever died in flight.

—Ron Padgett

"Thereto I Plight Thee My Troth"

The vestal clergy sang "Ancient of Days" as it made its way from the vestry room to the stalls. As the bride entered the church, escorted by her father, the choir sang the wedding march from "Lohengrin" by Wagner. As the bride & bridegroom left the chancel Mendelsohn's wedding march was played on the organ. For the recessional the choir sang "Rejoice the Lord is King." During the service the choir sang "Oh Perfect Love."

—Lewis Warsh

ECHO

Pushing out from
this insistent

time makes
all of it

empty, again
memory.

—Robert Creeley

The Wheel by Wendell Berry (North Point Press, SF, CA 1982)

Wendell Berry's new volume of poetry, *The Wheel*, continues the examination of man's relationship to the entire natural world, a theme that has dominated his prose as well as his recent poetry. Whereas *A Part* (1980) cautions the readers that they are one segment of a complex universe, and a small segment at that, the new volume concentrates on the harmony of man and nature, past and present, east and west, life and death. It is appropriate that Wendell Berry begins the new volume with death for it enables him to portray the wheel or cycle with the awareness of his own vulnerability and mutability that leads, in turn, to the values he summons as important to mankind.

The burial of Owen Flood occupies the first of the volume's six sections. "Elegy" recalls the poet's fellow farmer and mentor and pays him the highest respect: "The dead abide, as grief knows./We are what we have lost." With his friend, Berry associates the unsung creation song, the changes and basic oneness of life and death. Song and dance become the controlling images of the volume, not because of their artistic qualities, but because they serve as metaphors for the wide range of feelings, cyclic occurrences, and reinforcement of values in a world that ignores seasonal change, commitment to persons and land, and such delicate visions as a hummingbird drinking from flowers.

Berry's accusers condemn him for being opposed to progress because of his role as spokesman for the small farmer and farm community. He contested the expansion of the Louisville airport, at the expense of farm land, for the purpose of making it an international airport when one already existed within a hundred miles. Recently, he was arrested for trespassing on a utility company's property in protest against nuclear power. The philosophy of big is beautiful works against this poet's vision and sensitivity as he celebrates the personal and universal as in his marriage by comparing his union with Tanya to two trees "whose lives in annual shedding/made their way into this ground,/whose bodies turned to earth/and song. The song will tell/how old love sweetens the fields.

Further in section four, the poem "The Gift of Gravity" centers on change, natural change reflected in sky, light, birds, and hills. Berry favors this downward motion for it brings rain to earth, rivers, and shores, and new life forms. Early in the poem, he tells us "Gravity is grace," in reference to the natural phenomenon of this earth, and in the last line the statement reverses to "This grace is gravity" as the poem includes the very song and dance which run throughout this volume. Berry asks that change be recognized in its natural mode and not made surrogate to whim in mankind's willful obstruction of the wheel. The words gift and gravity circle throughout the poem in harmony with its theme.

As the dancers reel and sing in the poems of section five, so do the movement and language of the poems in a mimesis reminiscent of ancient poetry. Berry also pays homage to fellow Kentucky writers Robert Penn Warren and Guy Davenport whose recent writing includes the cyclical concepts of life and death, the past and present. It is as if some sacred communion is occurring among poets, language, darkness and light that culminates in *The Wheel's* last section, in the single poem "Rain." "Rain" completes the cycle of the volume's first poem "Requiem" whose harvest is complete and substance is dry. Berry returns to the personal I in the last poem as he finds again the metaphoric path covered by brush that is the wheel. He concludes: "...In earth/in blood, in mind,/the dead and living/into each other pass,/as the living pass/in and out of love/as stepping to a song."

While some individual poems may appear obtuse to the reader, the purpose of the volume calls for a certain vagueness in language and movement from physical death to enlightenment. Essentially, Berry is writing theology without religion as his quiet though forceful tone probes depths that are elusive out of context. Lastly, the fine printing by the North Point Press of this volume and Berry's previous one complements the insights that spring from a soul whose knowledge surpasses reason.

—Joseph F. Connelly

In Place of Saint Mark

Ted's old man had some trouble with the company
and as a point of honour and self respect died
when they told him to go.

The old lady applied to a local party chief
who found her a job after a couple of phone calls
as a cashier at the school meal's cafeteria.

Ted said, come round, Alice is very interested to talk
and can remember folks' histories for a long way back
and better than you could yourself. Its scary man.
And they end up in poems. Come around, just shout up
at the window.

—Tom Pickard

Flagstaff Cafe

Brownie Hattie, she my love.
Hopi Harry, that's my name.

Navajo wear headbands
And Navajo are Hopi enemies.
Take off your headband
And I'll teach you the sacred songs.

Harry, you stop that caterwauling
Or out you go, into the blizzard.
I warned you plenty times.

That's Brownie Hattie,
She my love.

—Gary Lenhart

The Wellsprings by Harry Lewis (Momos Press, SF, CA, 1982, \$5.95p \$12.50c)

The subtitle, *A Suite for Thelonious Monk and Wilhelm Reich*, is postfixed to the title poem of Harry Lewis' latest book, *The Wellsprings*. This poem, or rather, series of poems, comprises the entire second half of the book. A jazz composer and a psychiatrist seem an unlikely duo to write a series of poems for and about. That they each brought a revolutionary brilliance to their fields is undeniable. But that would seem the total of what they have in common. At least on the outside. However, Lewis is only concerned with the outsides of things in how they evoke the sources and energies that shaped them and continue to shape them.

Charles Olson, in his poem "These Days," explains this a bit differently and, probably, better. "...leave/the roots on, let them/dangle/And the dirt/just to make clear/where they came from."

This sounds kind of serious and it is. It's the kind of stuff the most serious poems are made of. However, the information is carried in a music you can dance to. The lines are precise yet seem unlabored, conversational and written with a lyric joy. I'd call it a smooth, easy-breathing, human dance. The kind that suits me best.

The voice is often three voices at once.

"Blue dancing
blue Monk dancing
blue Reich dancing
blue Harry..."

Reich lifts his head, makes his voice most prominent and says:

"Why not
touch the animal?take the prehistoric beast of
yourself into the light layer
by layer..."

Then Monk:

"...blowing those devils away
funny that way - how easy we can take it when
we
can dance to it..."

And as Harry Lewis:

"the picture of me
one year old
pushing up at
the world smiling
—it is not
a mask but
a smile
and down through
that smile
I see
a heart beating..."

All three, one voice, attempting to reveal a little of the human fact that lives, for the most part, deep in the complex set of circumstances we refer to as life.

The first part of *The Wellsprings* is called "Love Poems and Situations" and is just that. It consists of sixteen poems, few longer than two pages, in which Lewis mines the same human territory. This time via people he shared a *situation* with or observed within one. "Situation 12" takes place in the waiting room of a doctor's office.

"her toes
move
her toes are alive
all her life in
those toes
in
her open shoes
wiggling
for dear life. she coughs
her body
takes new
shape
settles
back
to long tight breath/she fixes
her hair for
the doctor
her toes
cough."

I recommend the poems in *The Wellsprings*, not only because they attempt to reveal a little of what us human beings are all about, but also because they possess a lyric joy that makes them both easy and pleasing to read.

—Chuck Wachtel

POEM

Sometimes it seems the night conspires
to undo me It hasn't stopped pouring
and I'm trapped inside listening to songs
that inevitably evoke these sentiments
I'm really lost Hopelessly immersed
in lyrics "Love is the answer," etc.

—David Trinidad

UNITED ARTISTS

UNITED ARTISTS SEVENTEEN features the "Japan Journals" of Rudy Burckhardt, an interview with Edwin Denby by Anne Waldman, an excerpt from a new novel by Kathy Acker, and work by Joe Brainard, Jack Collom, Diane Ward, Gary Lenhart, Bernadette Mayer, Lee Harwood, Jonathan Cott, Lewis Warsh, Bill Berkson, Edwin Denby and Anne Waldman. Cover by Yvonne Jacqueline,

Edited by Bernadette Mayer and Lewis Warsh.

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5 Favorite Books of the last year

Ken Kesey:

Burton & Speke - William Harrison
Cadillac Jack - Larry McMurtry
Ironweed - William Kennedy
A Walk on the Wild Side - Nelson Algren
Horn - John Clellon Holmes
Most inspirational publication is Ed McClannahan's after a couple decades: *The Natural Man*.

Tom Weigel:

The Awakening - Kate Chopin
A Curtain of Green & Other Stories - Eudora Welty
Mary Queen of Scots - Antonia Fraser
The Distracted Preacher and Other Tales - Thomas Hardy
Excellent Women - Barbara Pym

Paul Violi:

Selected Poems 1958-80 - Gilbert Sorrentino
The Sadness of Sex - Barry Yourgrau
Proensa-An Anthology of Troubadour Poetry - selected & edited by Paul Blackburn, intro. George Economou
Pure Notations - Steve Levine
A Fresh Young Voice From the Plains - Eileen Myles
Ethiopia - Eric Torgerfen

Anselm Hollo:

Poetry—
My Poetry - David Bromige
Back to Forth - Gloria Frym
Plumbing the Depths of Folly - Dick Gallup
Lessons for a Fourth Grade Class - Mary Molyneux
Writing - Tom Raworth
Prose—
Neighbors - Stephen Emerson
Herakleitos & Diogenes - trl. Guy Davenport
Tell Me Again - Alice Notley
A Flag for Sunrise - Robert Stone
High Rising - Angela Thirkell

Marc Nasdor:

A State of Blood: The Inside Story of Idi Amin - Henry Kyemba
Journey to Nowhere - Shiva Naipaul
Elvis - Albert Goldman
God's Trombones - James Weldon Johnson
William Carlos Williams - Paul Mariani

Tom Ahern:

Sophie's Choice - William Styron
Danse Macabre - Stephen King
The Pacific Islands - Douglas L. Oliver
Somebody Talks a Lot - Paul Hoover
The Wounded Land - Stephen R. Donaldson

Julie Erlich:

Cadillac Jack - Larry McMurtry
A Friend of Kafka - I.B. Singer
The Man Without Qualities - Robert Musil
Middlemarch - George Eliot
Stop-Time - Frank Conroy

Alice Notley:

Cadillac Jack - Larry McMurtry
Behind the State Capitol, or Cincinnati Pike - John Wieners
Days and Nights - Kenneth Koch
God's Fifth Column - William Gerhardt
Every Secret Thing - Patricia Hearst

Ted Berrigan:

The Well of Loneliness - Radclyffe Hall
Studying Hunger - Bernadette Mayer
The Maharajah's Son - Lewis Warsh
I Should Run For Cover... - Harris Schiff
Morte d'Arthur - Thomas Mallory

Robert Creeley:

Because of endless travel, nothing was particularly looked for—but one book was an absolute delight sans question and one I'd long been waiting for: Fielding Dawson, *Krazy Kat & 76 More, Collected Stories 1950-1976*. Equally engaging because of its heart and very deft compacting of a lot of literal event: Tom Pickard, *Jarrow March*, with design by Johanna Voit. His use of poems in this text, especially his own, makes again clear the unique power he constitutes in the English scene. Finally, three very commercially offered books of translation, each of which gives us something I don't think we had substantially before: 1) *The Random House Book of Twentieth Century French Poetry*, edited by Paul Auster. Given he had to cut back on his original selections for want of space, this is an excellent and very useful book. The range and authority of the translators is itself a triumph and the texts here collected give the non-French reading reader finally some sense of what's been going on over there, lo, these past 80 plus years. Then 2) Stephen Mitchell's *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, with very useful introduction by Robert Haas (e.g., he tells you Rilke was born a year after Robert Frost), is the best yet for my money. Finally 3) though not all that much to an American's (my) sense of active prosody, nonetheless D.M. Thomas' translations of Pushkin (Ed Sanders' old hero!), *The Bronze Horseman*, gives us some purchase on this great poet's texts. Thomas is certainly a poet and that helps.

Michael Scholnick:

Lucy: The Beginnings of Humankind - Donald C. Johanson and Maitland A. Edey
The Pound Era - Hugh Kenner
Almost Everything - Bobbie Louise Hawkins
Rude Awakenings - Bob Rosenthal
One at a Time - Gary Lenhart

Johanna Boyce:

The Thinking Body - Mabel Elsworth Todd
The Wisdom of the Serpent - Joseph Henderson and Maude Oakes
Love and Will - Rollo May
Hotel New Hampshire - John Irving
Fear of Filing - Robert Holcomb

Lewis Warsh:

Days and Nights - Kenneth Koch
Utopia - Bernadette Mayer
Red Devil - Bill Berkson
One at a Time - Gary Lenhart
Collected Poems - Robert Creeley
Exit The Face - Ted Greenwald & Richard Bosman
Mine - Clark Coolidge
Alsace-Lorraine - Fanny Howe

Eileen Myles:

Nerval's Stories
Diary of a Drug Fiend - A. Crowley
Sun & Steel - Yukio Mishima
Initiation Human and Solar - A.A. Bailey

Tom Carey:

Dress Her in Indigo - John D. MacDonald
The Dreadful Lemon Sky - "
The Green Ripper - "
The Empty Copper Sea - "
Sword of Honor - Evelyn Waugh

Anne Waldman:

The Poems of Laura Riding
Midwinter Day - Bernadette Mayer
Millennium Dust - Joe Ceravolo
Blood on the Dining Room Floor - Gertrude Stein
Il Convito - Dante Alighieri
Journey Without Goal - Chogyam Trungpa
Beauty & Sadness - Yasunari Kawabata
Minor Characters - Joyce Johnson
Splurge - Paul Violi
How the Swans Came to the Fields - Rick Fields

James Schuyler:

An Unsuitable Attachment - Barbara Pym
Less Than Angels - Barbara Pym
Sappho's Boat - Eileen Myles
Splurge - Paul Violi
A Nest of Ninnies - John Ashbery & James Schuyler

Helena Hughes:

Sappho's Boat - Eileen Myles
Splurge - Paul Violi
Sermons and Sodawater - John O'Hara
Road to Oxiana - Robert Byron
The Pillow Book - Sei Shonagan
Middlemarch - George Eliot

Bernadette Mayer:

One At a Time - Gary Lenhart
Cadillac Jack - Larry McMurtry
Days and Nights - Kenneth Koch
Played Out: Biography of Jean Seberg

Vicki Hudspeth:

The Morning of the Poem - James Schuyler
Selected Poems of Paaavo Haavikko, trl. Anselm Hollo
When I Was Alive - Alice Notley
A Fresh Young Voice From the Plains - Eileen Myles
The RH Book of 20th C French Poetry - ed. Paul Auster

Bob Rosenthal:

Letters to Allen Ginsberg - William Burroughs
Sappho's Boat - Eileen Myles
New Grub Street - George Gissing/Dr. Zhivago - Boris Pasternak
Amores - Ovid
By Lingual Wholes - Victor Hernandez Cruz

Carl Rakosi:

The Book Of Laughter and Forgetting - Milan Kundera
Selected Letters - James Thurber
Diary of Virginia Woolf, vols. 2 & 3
Collected Essays - Katherine Anne Porter
Jubilate Agno - Christopher Smart, ed. W.H. Bond

Bob Holman:

Utopia - Bernadette Mayer
By Lingual Wholes - Victor Hernandez Cruz
Early Auden - Edward Mendelson & Scuse Me While I Kiss the Sky - David Henderson
First Blues - Allen Ginsberg, on John Hammond Records (The book as record)
Poetry in Motion, a film by Ron Mann (filmed poetry performance anthology)

Greg Masters:

One at a Time - Gary Lenhart
Splurge - Paul Violi
Cadillac Jack - Larry McMurtry
Sappho's Boat - Eileen Myles
Rude Awakenings - Bob Rosenthal
Joe the Engineer - Chuck Wachtel
The Cosmic Code - Heinz R. Pagels
Stop-Time - Frank Conroy
Collected Poems - Robert Creeley

Simon Pettet:

Collected Poems - Robert Creeley
Meyer Berger's New York - Meyer Berger
The London Novels of Colin MacInnes
Monsieur Proust - Celeste Albert
In Youth is Pleasure - Denton Welch

Peggy DeCoursey:

Pomp and Circumstance - Noel Coward
English Bread and Yeast Cookery - Elizabeth David
Utopia - Bernadette Mayer

Joel Lewis:

RH Anthology of 20th C French Poetry, ed Paul Auster
Collected Poems - Robert Creeley
The Ecology of Freedom - Murray Bookchin
Mine: The One That Enters The Stories - Clark Coolidge
Situationalist Anthology - ed. Ken Nabb
Dabble - John Godfrey

Daniel Krakauer:

The Simulacra - Philip K. Dick
The Cosmic Code - Heinz R. Pagels
Jacques Lacan - Anika Lemaire
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The Sonnets - William Shakespeare

Ron Padgett:

Plumbing the Depths of Folly - Dick Gallup
Canisy - Jean Follain, trans. Louise Guiney
Days and Nights - Kenneth Koch
Red Devil - Bill Berkson
Splurge - Paul Violi
Fiction Complete - Serge Fauchereau
Stick - Elmore Leonard



Catching My Breath at St. Mark's Bookshop, 19:iii:83 nyc.

No sooner had I finished the semio-txt poem about the 'mystery woman' of 207 E. 15th Street whose movements I've crossed no less than ten times since July of '82 and regaining myself from the so-called "depths of [my] inner self" than I turn to p. 18 of Jung's *Synchronicity* where he's discussing how "if space and time prove to be psychically relative, then the moving body must possess, or be subject to, a corresponding relativity [then flip to p. 64] and create favourable conditions for the occurrence of meaningful coincidences" as my eye catches a pretty young girl no older than 18 betw the stacks at St. Mark's Bookshop and suddenly I'm a character in a Woody Allen or Jean-Luc Godard film or Paul Blackburn scopophilic poem. Tactile is a word to describe her, or as an object she's sensual besides being an object of words. Translucent skin, bronze-like. Lavender scent. I can't say that something of extraordinary, significant value has been brought about because not a word was exchanged betw us, much less a chance of eyes even, a passing glance. The aura that sets up the feeling of the situation is writing this text to place myself as much as I can in the midst of the moment of time positioned at the center of the moment. I close the book. Perhaps "to beget their like", in other words, to produce "meaningful coincidences" an event in the present can have influence and/or cause an event in the future. Perhaps we will meet again.

from *Three Diamonds*

—Gerard Malanga

Art With the Touch of a Poet: Frank O'Hara

The William Benton Museum of Art, University of Connecticut at Storrs, February—March. 1983

First off, the show is a honey, perfectly chosen, elegantly mounted. To curator Hildy Cummings and her assistant Stephanie Terenzio, plaudits. (Likewise, with the museum's director Paul Rovetti, they handled needs and whims of various artists on "Get Together" days with uncommon grace and perspicacity.) Most of the best portraits and collaborations were there: the stunning 1951 Freilicher doorway image, mostly black and grey with sudden streaks of red and orange (John Myers said that Jane was known in those days as the sibyl of Nyack"); the stately Rivers double portrait (which MOMA seems never to hang); many of the Bluhm poem-paintings and Brainard collage-comics; the big Elaine de Kooning portrait with facial features just edging through mauve overbrushing; *Oranges gouaches* by Hartigan; Michael Goldberg's *Sardines* (which also has "EXIT" scratched in the upper left); a nice set of pieces (Guston, Willem de Kooning, the Dubuffet "Salut") from collection O'Hara. One surprise was a 1957 portrait by Fairfield Porter of a lanky FO'H in jeans, T-shirt, sneakers and rockingchair on a lawn beside oak branches that hang like lightning in Giorgione. (A fine day trip could be made to see this show en route to or from the Porter one currently in Boston.)

The catalog for "Art With the Touch" is a 10" x 13" packet stuffed with reproductions of paintings, photographs, letters, manuscripts, the entire Koch/O'Hara issue (vol. II, no. 1) of *Semi-Colon*, and more. Meanwhile, the Special Collections Dept. of the Library has its own little display of things drawn from archives, some of them in the characteristic O'Hara Palmer method script, one the unedited typescript of his statement for *The New American Poetry* beginning "Poetry is life to me."

"The Artists Get Together" (Feb. 11-12) was a dizzying double round of readings, panels, brief lectures, and exchanges with the audience. John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, Elaine de Kooning, John Bernard Myers, Ned Rorem, Patsy Southgate, Joe LeSueur, Joe Brainard, Morton Feldman, Jane Freilicher, Norman Bluhm, Barbara Guest and I were announced as "famous friends of the 50s" by advance billing. (Others were announced, too, but Grace Hartigan was indisposed, Larry Rivers in Mexico, Joan Mitchell in France. Some important figures refused. Arguably, more younger artists could have been invited, Joe and me being the only 60s babies in the fold.) In the audience were Maureen, Philip and Ariel O'Hara—all of whom lent significant works, and Maureen provided a wonderful breakfast of croissants, fresh fruit and stong coffee for the visitors the second

day—George Butterick, Jon Schueler, Albert Cook, Professor Lee Jacobus, Mortimer Guine (eminent Reverdy scholar), Maureen Owen, Alex Smith, many students, et alia.

"There is no point in making any rules because no one is ever going to play that game again"—John Ashbery cited this line of his in evidence of the No-Theory of New York School poetics. Kenneth Koch discussed lucidly Frank's ore-loading practice in revising his poems and read "Terrestrial Cuckoo," "Autobiographia Literaria," "Poetry," and "To The Critic." John Asbery read "Memorial Day 1950." Patsy Southgate read "The Day Lady Died" and described Frank's getting off the train in Easthampton and first reading it to her and Mike Goldberg. Elaine de Kooning read "To The Film Industry In Crisis" and Joe LeSueur "Lana Turner Has Collapsed." I chose "Sleeping on the Wing," "Poem V(F)W" and, with Kenneth, passages from "Biotherm." John Myers delivered rapid-fire, hilarious speeches on the origins of the School of New York and the Artists Theater, demanding several shows of hands "if you've heard of Surrealism...if you've heard of Hitler..." Barbara Guest read two poems addressed to Frank and participated in the women's panel (something ostensibly about "Problems and Triumphs") which promptly dovetailed into non-sexist musings on the pleasures and difficulties of making art. "When we entered that game we didn't think of ourselves as women, which just came naturally, we were painters..." (Jane); throw caution to the winds which is where it should be thrown" (Elaine). Ned Rorem read somewhat petulantly from his diaries. Joe Brainard read beautifully a new version of *I Remember Frank O'Hara*: Morton Feldman recalled Frank's suggesting Gide's *Strait is the Gate* (!) as a possible source for an opera libretto; he also remarked that Frank's "harmonic ear was so full" it was difficult to set his poems to (further) music. Elaine led off the artists' panel by saying the 50s began in 1948, the year Willem de Kooning first showed at Egan (aetat 44) and everyone Elaine, Bill, Rudy Burckhardt, Merce Cunningham, John Cage, etc.) went to Black Mountain. Jane remembered meeting Elaine "when I was about 12 years old because you went out with my brother." Elaine said one remarkable thing about Frank was his ability to pose non-stop in the studio for hours ("he said he was writing poems during the time"), and Jane spoke of his "most elegant manners...all your needs seemed to be anticipated and cared for somehow." Which is pretty much how most of us seemed to feel, even graced with the major snow—sort of non-stop and cared-for—in Storrs. Nothing so dippy as a one-shot reunion, the occasion turned out an impromptu of self-propelling, unselfconscious spirit, worthy of the topic and our friend.

—Bill Berkson



Sante Fe Poetry Scene

Poetry is finally flourishing in Sante Fe and it seems "about time". For years, visual artists have been drawing on the magic of the land just outside of this unusual town and though some writers have made their mark here they seem to have run second to painters, photographers, and sculptors. But now it's happening. In the last two months alone, poetry-related events have been popping up like the sudden crocusses of spring. A storefront called Raul's has been temporarily acquired by the Sante Fe Council for the Arts as a mini-forum for local poets to read and share their latest writing. On Thursday nights you might swear you were in San Francisco sitting among artists and writers drinking wine from plastic cups and paying very close attention to poets like John Brandi and Harvey Mudd reading from their newly published books.

Additionally, the Sante Fe Public Library and the First National Bank of Sante Fe co-sponsored a poetry reading featuring the much-lauded poet Gerald Stern and Sante Fe poet, John Sherman and generally speaking, the Public Library has been the mainstay for poetry readings for the last several years.

The biggest event was held March 16-20, entitled TONE ROADS WEST, & featured nationally acclaimed poets Carolyn Forché and Jackson MacLow. They were joined by Native American writers Simon Ortiz, Joy Harjo, Luci Tapahonso and Harold Littlebird, plus 12 other poets. As a last note, Robert Creeley read at The Living Batch Bookstore in Albuquerque on March 4th.

—Carol Cellucci

This is my last issue as editor. I want to thank everyone who's offered suggestions, criticism; submitted articles, poems, art; sent books, magazines, records, notices, letters, subscription money; put in time helping mimeo & collate (old days) & put on labels & helped with the mailings; special thanks to Chassler, Suzanne & Barbara at Skeezo for allowing me time on their editwriter 7500 & in their paste up department every month this past year. And for their administrative work that enabled me to do whatever I wanted & their poetic inspiration that helped with the contents, Bernadette Mayer & Bob Holman. Which way's the pasture?

At the season's end, the Poetry Project wishes to express thanks to all its contributors and members, including the following patrons and benefactors:

Rudy Burckhardt & Yvonne Jacquette, John Chamberlain, Paul Cummings, Daniel Dietrich, Rackstraw Downes, Kenward Elmslie, B.H. Friedman, John Paul Fulco, Morris Golde, Sally Goldwater Jr., Lita Hornick, Alex & Ada Katz, Allen Katzman, Myron Kaplan, Dorothy & Roy Lichtenstein, Ellen Jo Myers, Saint Mark's Bookshop, C.F. Terrell, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Warsh.

The Committee for International Poetry presents *A Festival of International Poetry: Latin America* at the CUNY Graduate Center, 33 West 42nd Street, May 19, 20 & 21. The three-day Festival will include two evenings of bi-lingual readings, workshops, films, graphic arts, panel discussions and a Celebration-reception.

Among the fifteen poets, many of whom will be reading in the U.S. for the first time, are Gonzalo Rojas (Chile), Roberto Echavarren (Uruguay), Isaac Goldemberg (Peru), Roberto Vallarino (Mexico), Victor Hernandez Cruz (Puerto Rico). More surprises to come.

Contact the Committee for International Poetry, PO Box 437, Cooper Station, NYC, NY 10003. 855-3658.

The Eye and Ear Theater presents: PAID ON BOTH SIDES: A CHARADE, W.H. Auden's first play, sets and costumes by David Hockney, directed by Bob Holman. Christopher Isherwood says: "It's impossible to tell if the characters are heroes of Icelandic sagas or members of Auden's high school football team." Thursdays-Sundays, May 12-May 29 at St. Mark's Church. 8 PM, \$7. 752-7676.

The Massive Black Bart Poetry Society Membership Drive (& *Life of Crime* Benefit) will be taking place on May 8 at On Broadway, 435 Broadway, SF. Joanne Kyger and Bob Kaufman are among the poets scheduled. Bands, videos of poets, comedians etc. This will tease the earthquake. For more information contact Stephen LaVoie at 533-1452 or Pat Nolan at 865-1253.

Mag City 14 is a special Edwin Denby issue and includes an unpublished full-length libretto, a short story, an interview by Mark Hillringhouse plus photos by Rudy Burckhardt and Hillringhouse. Copies are \$3. 437 E. 12 St, #26, NYC 10009, checks payable to Greg Masters.

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P o e m

there's a somewhat bell-shaped frosted lightbulb suspended
from the chalky ceiling of this churchroom
One minor category of nightmares
I have is that of lightbulbs suddenly
malfunctioning I mean not working I mean
lights going out and me frantically
groping for lightswitches in the dark
And what does that symbolize —
O please don't tell me give me a break
dear Doctor the weather's so nice outside
there's light sunlight all over the light
on that brickwall for instance
is surely worthy of the attention
of great photographers but lightbulbs today
are fragile are made
not to last so that the factory
can go on producing and the workers
won't have to be laid off — the bulbs of my childhood however
shone with a golden light forever on and on.

—Daniel Krakauer

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