

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER  
No. 42 1 Feb 1977  
Ted Greenwald, editor  
St. Mark's Church, 2nd Avenue  
& Tenth St. New York 10003.

Cold, cold winter. The Mon nite (8:15 pm) readings are Feb 7 Open Reading, Feb 14 Neil Hackman & Kevin Klein, Feb 21 David Herz & Terry Jacobus, Feb 28 Eileen Myles & Michael Slater. On Wed nites (8:30 pm) Feb 9 Constance De Jong & Rochelle Owens, Feb 16 Charlotte Carter & Pat Jones, Feb 23 Allen Ginsberg & Robert Lowell.

The (7:30 pm) workshops continue with Tues Jim Brodey, Thurs Bill Zavatsky, and Fri Alice Notley. There will be a workshop co-sponsored by the Institute for Art and Urban Resources and the Poetry Project on Sat, 10:30 am starting Feb 12 with Tony Towle. The workshop will be held at P.S. 1 in Queens. How to get there: IND-E Train to Ely Ave., 23rd St; 7 Flushing line at Times Square or Grand Central to Hunter's Point; Midtown Tunnel three right turns to Jackson Ave and 46th Road.

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READINGS ETC: Send self addressed stamped envelopes to NYC Poetry Calendar, 52 E 7 St, NYC 10003 (free). . . WBAI-FM with Susan Howe, Feb 3 (8:30 pm) Charles North, Feb 10 (8:30 pm) Anselm Hollo . . . Red Funk/The Newark Sound, Lyrics & Spoken Word of Amiri Baraka & Music by Advance Workers, at Barbara's, 78 W 3 St, Feb 3,4,5,10,11,12. . . Newsletter partially supported by grants from CCLM and NYSCA.

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A petition concerning the editorial policies of the American Poetry Review regarding: a) Lack of space allotted to women and minority poets; b) Responsibility to small press community (especially when receiving public funds); c) Revolving editor/consultant oversight to "okay" mix; d) Seeking out new work by young poets on a regular basis; e) Review more work by contemporary poets; is being circulated. For a complete copy of the letter to APR and further info send to Rich, 670 West End Ave, Apt 10D, NYC 10025 or Jordan, 75 Eighth Ave, Brklyn, NY 11215. Among others, David Ignatow has resigned as editor at large over the issues being brought to public attention.

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#### REVIEW OF TREVOR WINKFIELD'S SHOW FOR PP NEWSLETTER

Trevor Winkfield's first one-man show will open at the Fischbach Gallery, 29 W. 57, on February 12, and run through March 3. If you are in the New York area and do not see this show, you are depriving yourself of an aesthetic pleasure of a high order. Among the twenty-odd acrylics on paper there are at least eleven masterpieces, mouthwatering, exquisite, bright, funny and well made. The byplay between imagination and execution gives the work an exceptional power. The images are conceived with an apparently delirious abandon, but painted with an almost manic severity of control. It's quite English, and rather eccentric, and probably soon fashionable, but it's also very beautiful, and inspiring. (Ron Padgett)

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#### SELECTED POEMS OF ROBERT CREELEY

A selected poems, in your lifetime, with all your previous work in print, suggest the following: a measure of popularity, and a wish to reach an even larger audience, by removing the "difficult" as well as the "dross" of your output. This especially would be the case

with such a book from a big trade publisher. Obviously not all selected poems are like that, but in the context of a major publisher, that's what it is, mostly packaging. There isn't any but commercial value to it, unless it is edited clearly & even then, it usually needs an introduction to explain the rationale for the selection: Rexroth's introduction to the selected D.H. Lawrence, Jarrell's to the selected W.C. Williams, or Creeley's own to the Penguin selected Whitman. This particular kind of selected poems, the ideological kind, can be a fascinating work in and of itself. But a commercial package, well, you'd be better off saving your money to buy drugs.

Creeley's primary publisher, since the early 60's, has been Charles Scribner's Sons. Most of the work they've published has appeared earlier in limited edition small press books, so much that at times it seems Black Sparrow is his real publisher and Scribner's only his mass market outlet. Scribner's has its own sad story. This, once the almost undisputed literary house in New York, (Liveright being its chief competitor), boasting on its list Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe, and the famed Maxwell Perkins as editor, has fallen on hard times. In fact, they ain't done shit in terms of writing--excepting Creeley and a book of Robert Duncan's --& horrors! they ain't even done so well in the money jungle. Someone remarked their only virtue is that they keep everything they publish in print. Right. Because they're carried by their back list--Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Wolfe--none of whom, you'll note (excepting movie tie-ins & one or two minor exceptions) are available in mass market paperbacks. They haven't published anything of interest which I can remember in a long time, excepting Creeley, & its probably because the place really is Charles Scribner's Sons---its still a family enterprise, and obviously the family isn't that interested in either literature or the book business anymore.

This is what Robert Creeley has to say about the Selected Poems: "(it) so depresses me that it's hard to say much more than that. From the grossness of its cover design, to the distorting lay-out of the poems, e.g., the gapping, to the fact of Bob (Grenier)'s being not acknowledged as its editor, and his order 'rearranged' by the Art Department(!) it finally turns out, etc, etc--it's just a godawful mess. Bob's initial selection was terrific, and I'd specifically asked him to do it, and when done, asked my editor then at Scribner's, Burroughs Mitchell, to consider it for their publication--which he did, and then accepted it. My contract for the book (Bob was paid a straight editorial fee) lists Bob as editor, and he was paid for the work by them--so its impossible that any confusion could exist at that stage. Letters from Burroughs to Bob at that time say he'll be consulted about any problems that arise. He (Grenier) had also written a short editor's preface, which I much liked--but which gets dropped without word to either him or me, as well as the crediting of him as editor (and myself, inexplicably, given that credit on the jacket).....Anyhow, attempts to get an explanation from the working editor on the book, Patricia Cristol, (and a person apparently working with her, Brian Dumaine), simply got side-tracked....I had also written Charles Scribner in anger and despair, concerning the whole mess--and did hear from him that the Art Department had changed the order of the poems through-out, i.e., in each section, etc. He and I finally decided it was mutually agreeable that I should leave the firm..." [I've written to Grenier but not, as yet, received a reply.]

Of course, the fact that there was some measure of idiocy in Scribner's handling of the book, and that Creeley himself is unhappy with the selection doesn't automatically mean the book is bad. Just because men have walked on the moon, or a part of it, doesn't automatically mean there aren't vast deposits of green cheese somewhere on that cold sphere, either. The actual selection is what is to be considered--the fact of the book's visual ugliness is sad, but doesn't really affect the contents--and the selection has to be considered in light of the total body of work, behind it, not in light of an alternative selection which was discarded along the road.

I think Robert Creeley is one of the finest poets active today. I don't think there are any bad poems in the book. In some cases, where it seems to me that a specific choice might have been made between two poems, I even think I might agree with the book as it stands--as with the inclusion of "Jack's Blues" and the non-appearance of "A Wicker Basket." There are a great number of poems I would have liked to see included, from "After Lorca" and "For Love" from FOR LOVE up to "Do You Think", "For Some Days...", and "The Graduation" from A DAY BOOK. I find all of the "Recent Poems" attractive & am inclined to consider "The Plan Is The Body," the last poem in the book--one of the author's very finest & one of the finest recent poems by anyone. It takes a concept, as a refrain, and repeats it, so that it falls into compon-

ents which each speak out of a gathered intensity from their apparently fragmented natures:  
it is an impeccable and moving poem.

The order is adequate, although it only seems to display an intelligence behind it--  
doubtless a result of too many cooks, not all of them competent. (The misattribution of ed-  
itorship to Creeley on the jacket copy is criminally misleading & inexcusable.) What the book  
might have been is a silly subject, anyway. Personally, I would have most liked to see a  
selected poems edited & introduced by Creeley himself; I'm sure that Grenier's selection  
(I've not, as I mentioned, obtained a copy of his list) was a good one, but one naturally  
expects the poet himself to have the most interesting take on his own work.

The important question at hand is why bother, why should anyone buy this book, since we  
already have at our disposal all these poems in other books, all in print. Since the book  
was issued in a trade and not a mass market paperback edition, we can safely assume Scribners'  
had no expectation of selling a few hundred thousand copies--it wasn't published for bulk  
profit. It is conceivably that hopes for the book included prizes such as the Pulitzer and  
N.E.A. Since Ginsberg, O'Hara, Snyder and Ashbery have already won such awards, it would be  
quite reasonable for them to feel its Creeley's turn for the laurels. But if this is the  
case, one wonders why so little care was expended on the book, in the sense that it doesn't  
seem to have been either well promoted or distributed---I've yet to read a review and half  
the bookstores I frequent don't have copies. These prizes are nothing for a publisher to  
sneeze at; they represent sales for both the prize winning title and other titles in the back-  
list. But the book doesn't, on the whole, seem destined for the prize ring--whether or not  
Creeley deserves the prizes--& I think he does.

I've always been amazed by the poor reputation Creeley's poems seem to enjoy in New York,  
which might be ascribed to a number of causes. I've read some rather nasty things Frank  
O'Hara had to say about him, for instance, on the subject of control. But then, they had  
dissimilar interests & one can hardly expect one to sympathize with the other. He gets it for  
being influenced by Williams, Beckett, for having a Laurentian self-absorption and intensity.  
The last might be a valid objection, I can understand how his interiority, his particularly  
intellectual self-consciousness, might be more than many readers can stand. But I also think  
its too bad this interferes with their reading of the poems, prevents them from seeing his  
wit, passion, and clarity.

A good selected poems might have served to remedy this lack of appreciation. It might  
have made Creeley's virtues more apparent to those who'd overlooked them. A good introduction  
and a more coherent ordering might have effected a "rediscovery" or a renewed appreciation of  
Creeley. These are things a good selected poems might do. Towards such an end it doesn't so  
much matter if the editor is Robert Creeley or Robert Grenier, as long as the book is of a  
piece & informed with intelligence. This particular book has its virtues, but they are the  
virtues of its final intentions, which I'm sorry to say seem to be those of a course book.  
Yes it seems to me that Scribner's published the book with an eye to contemporary literature  
throughout the land. If it's widely adopted, it will hopefully delight & instruct thousands  
of students around the country. But it is not of much interest of a poet.

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FUCK-UP

you are an act involving an unintentional deviation from accuracy

you mistake my perception for ignorance as the wingback fumbles

normal play would have resulted in an out

or prevented an advance by a masher

you are ignorant of the amplitude

and violate ritual holy water

you have failed in the rackets to return the ball  
you made a mistake in court in matters of law or fact  
and you have illusions about the nature of reality  
which causes tempers to flare and obviate  
you are a body of false beliefs  
in fact to believe is to err and you do that  
in artillery fire it's the diversion of a point of impact  
from the center of impact in a dispersion of shots:  
the distance of a shot from the target  
lapse, faux pas, boner, howler, blunder, bull  
you do them all repeatedly approved by imperfection  
in the structure of function you are not impeccable  
you are deficient and imprudent in your code of behaviour  
you failed to make a spare  
when the previous ball left the split

Anne Waldman

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If you have just read the above piece on Robert Creeley, you might be wondering who wrote it --Simon Schuchat. We were so upset by the selected poems, we forgot to put Simon's name on his own article. Apologies!

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ALICE ORDERED ME TO BE MADE by Alice Notley, Yellow Press, (distributed by Serendipity Books, 1790 Shattuck Ave. Berkeley, Ca. 94709) \$2.50.

Here is a mighty voice following orders. The initial suite of nine poems (entitled: Alice Ordered Me To Be Made) speaks as a catalogue of the themes, colors, and currents that run through the book. The poems in the suite are keen and offguard. They establish a special vocabulary. A ship and the way it travels, The Yoga Lady, and the poet's father dying, intermittently appear in the rest of the poems. They create the fringes of a story. Each poem is of itself a way to defy a deciduous view: all the words stick! Ms. Notley's poems are beautiful to read and see. They bestow a grace in any attempt to know them. "Please keep it with you" she always says 'throughout today and this evening too' (To Act In Harmony) I think that is The Yoga Lady speaking after she has been boycotted (Pure Weather) and infused with Americana "play it Lady play / It" (Clinical Thermometer Set with Moonstone). The book begins "intricate ship" and near ends "a splash alive forever" (Endless Day) but nothing ends "forever." The book is completed in the glyptographic manner that characterizes Alice Notley's sweep, "a hard bright speck of me / the savage formalist / authentic deed of gossip / a kind body." Alice orders you to read.

(Bob Rosenthal)

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Work for Gerard Malanga: incarnations (Poems 1965-1971), gerard malanga, Black Sparrow Press, 1974.

This book is the answer to a question, "Why do we surround ourselves with so many lives?" (p21) Eleven friends are represented with photographs, and arrested by poems. With each poem Gerard enters a life, and can't be ignored; he and his friends yield the twelve incarnations, more secure than gesture. The answer is that these people alone have been those moments as insistent as the poet's thoughts about them. "You are my thoughts in the night/ When I sit in the small room without you." (p40) "I am seeing the world in your eyes." (p42) "One by one the lives are defined." (p49) "You've become so central to everything/ poetic, like this poem in the middle of my heart" (p77) "one feeling in love with another" (p81) "a life the style of all/ a poet could write of" (p82) "one wants one/ to follow its self" (p84) "The beauty of a woman's body/ can make the beauty in a/ mans mind become more beautiful still" (p88) "didnt i have you once for my self" (p89) "in search of the miraculous" (p95) "youre a piece of the same person/ im a piece of/ meaning the person that is the third person" (p112) "but 'what would i be without her?'/ i kept saying to myself..." (p119) "a silence before this one has left your life in my hands" (p133) "as for myself i continue to where i have never been" (p139)

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It is impossible not to think what some will make of this book: "The Trophy Room." Malanga quotes Creeley to answer that : A man writing had now to find his "names" in terms that would free them for use now -- not simply leave them caught in the trap of the "past". The reference, in that way, could no longer be a question of memory.

Gerard brings these friends, as his experience, to us. We aren't asked to some place that only he and they can inhabit. Not Gerard's past; his realization. "You cannot move slowly backward into your life-line" (p19) "The past exists in the future." (p58)

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It would be possible to interview Gerard in terms of the men and women he's loved, and that would be enough of the life to avoid exaggeration. These people have been, for him, constant destinations, perhaps one destination from which to start again. This book relinquishes the necessity for such an interview, Gerard providing himself in these situations, these lives. Each life a history, "from time to time"; not recall. Memory is wasted where it isn't needed, where each life-voice is heard insistent as activity.

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This is a book about friends:

The friendships are all over/ Drawn. (p13)

The young boy searches for simple answers/ For his friends who do not understand what he is/ Saying. (p14)

Friends take advantage of your confusion. (p15)

Even the friends have an air of "destruction" here. (p17)

You see the friends you can never see/ Again. (p25)

The friends come in from/ The street out there in an act of confession. (p39)

The close friends forget/ They don't really know you. (p41)

Her friends began to put/ Questions to her of what they saw/ And heard and did not understand. (p52)

the act of love is also passing/ unnoticed because we misunderstand one another at times (p109)

There is a movement from concern with a number of people at once, to a concern for one person at a time. The book climaxes with the poems for Benedetta Barzini, for whom the most poems were written, who seems to have made her self most insistent in the poet's mind. She occurs as a strong personal life, but with weight of other people's lives behind her. Gerard uses Dante's love for Beatrice as a metaphor of his love for Benedetta. "If only Dante could see/ Us today..." (p39). The fact that Benedetta's past is in Italy, her family and her childhood, allows the metaphoric relationship to be a conceit, the lives themselves natural to poetry.

By the end of the book, the poet has moved from clusters of friends, to the imagery of trees and dreams and wind. From the heart to the eyes in emphasis; but at no time is either ignored.

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This book doesn't permit avoidance of the reader's personal reaction. I was a little jealous, So many beautiful women! Each intimacy moves the heart to want to have shared in it.

I wonder what became of these people, does Gerard still see any of them, do they remain only as residue in the poet's life and mind, his poetry? We know Agneta died, memory (of her) forced in by death, but of the others we can see only how they have gone out of the book, presumably out of the life.

(Alan Davies)

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BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND SO ON: Kit Robinson, The Dolch Stanzas, This Books, Serendipity, 1790 Shattuck St., Berkeley, CA 94709, \$1. . . Jack Marshall, Bits of Thirst, Blue Wind Press, 820 Miramer, Berkeley, CA 94709, \$2.95. . . NRG #3 (Dan Raphael, ed.), 30 1/2 Dewey, Apt. 4, Ashland, Oregon 97520. . . Lita Hornick, Kulchur Queen, Gieorno Poetry Systems, 222 Bowery, NYC \$3.50 paper, \$7 hard (Gotham Party, Feb 9, 5-7 pm). . . The Poetry Mailing List, Stephen Paul Miller, 18 Cheshire Pl, Staten Island, NY 10301 has been sending out mailings of single poems by a variety of poets among whom are Peter Schjeldahl, David Shapiro, Kenneth Deifik, etc. . . The Spirit That Moves Us, (Morty Sklar, ed.), PO Box 1585, Iowa City, Iowa 52240, \$1. . . The Painted Bride Quarterly (Evans & Simons, eds.) 527 South Street, Phila, Pa 19147, \$1.50. . . Ploughshares, (Paul Hannigan, ed this ish), Vol 3, No 2, Box 529, Cambridge, Mass 02139, \$2.95. . . Small Press Review, (Len Fulton, ed.), #46, Dustbooks, Box EE, Paradise, CA 95969, \$6 per year. . . Edward Kaplan, Hard Acts, Triton Press, Boulder Creek, CA . . . Kenneth Gangemi, Corroboree, Assembling Press, Box 1967, Brooklyn, NY 11202, \$2.95. . . Out of Sight #28 (Galen Green, ed for this ish), c/o James Mechem, Box 32, Wichita, KS 67201. . . Roof: Naropa Anthology, Tom Savage & James Sherry, eds., Segue Press, 782 West End Ave, NYC 10025, \$2. . . Anne Waldman, Hotel Room, Songbird Editions. . . Shankpainter #13 (Bill Gilson, ed.) The Work Center Press, 24 Pearl Street, Provincetown, Mass 02657. . . From Burning Deck, 71 Elm Grove Ave, Providence, RI 02906 Barbara Guest, The Countess From Minneapolis, \$3.50, Michael Gizzi, Bird As, \$2.50, and David Ball, The Garbage Poems, \$2.50. . . Source Vol 1, No 1, (Jack Donahue, ed.) c/o Literary Arts Division, Queens Council on the Arts, 161-04 Jamaica Ave, Jamaica, NY 11432, \$1.50.

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Vision is Dizziness: The Technology of Yuki Hartman (Hot Footsteps: Telephone Books)

It seems to me that, while Yuki Hartman's lush and vivacious work has charmed most serious listeners and readers, and lulled some others, it has not been recognized generally as a significant departure from--and contribution to--mainstream contemporary poetry.

Hartman's work shares with much new poetry particularly of the New York variety, an inclination on one hand to explore the dislocation of language from conventional, didactic meaning, and on the other to utilize a folksy, reportorial colloquialism. Hartman, though is perhaps alone in a sensibility which is symbolist even when his imagery is not. This sensi-

bility necessitates, as I shall try to illustrate, innovations of imagery and usage of interest to anyone who cares about poetry and language.

By "symbolist" I refer to the notion of experience as at every moment unique and elusive, the perception of which can be communicated only by allusion, by vivid but ambiguous imagery which functions as a kind of metaphor--a metaphor that is not a visual analogy but the passion perceived in an object or event. It suggests a sense of reality which is absolute as it is personal and imagined. Hartman brings to this sensibility a modernist eye for the sensuality of everyday life as well as a concern for current problems of language and form; it is, perplexingly, a vibrant celebration of life in a mode of pure imagination. "A poem is a holiday of Mind," said Paul Valery. It is as if Hartman had broken the airy confines of the French symbolist equation--that mind=imagination, therefore poetry dwells in imagined realms--with the simple, perhaps Eastern notion that the world of rocks and breathing bodies is mind as well, and a suitable place to take Valery's poetic holiday. "Vision is dizziness: that is technology of poet, that is severe cut erupts in my spine when I come near you, a vista of your torso before me, I'm tempted to place a bright yellow Ming vase on your center, and into it a few branches of Chinese plums..." (Vision)

Hartman's line, stanza, music, and tension are all based on the narrative sentence, like so many younger writers who are attracted to prose, prose-poems, prose poems, ad infinitum. Some, like Brownstein and Acker, experiment mostly with notions of narrative, tone, continuity. Others, Hartman among them, work directly with the sentence itself. Reading a Hartman poem is an astonishing exhibition of the changes in image and meaning, clauses and prepositions chasing one another like Chinese dragons on New Year, until subject and predicate duck unseen into an alleyway: "I like to listen to your beehives in your breast, buzzing, so openly showing the rate of your fast metabolism like the melting stained glass window as the eye is opened to let the spring wind rush in, you go out when a bus load of school kids pass by, waving their hands frantically at you, and you wave back, letting the books fall down from your arms on the sidewalk like the colorful documents of your wide angle perspective..." (Moon and Bernadette) I guess a grammarian might try parsing it out; I wouldn't. Hartman is one of those wordsmiths who can bend syntax to the impulse of the sentence. The tension of constantly re-invented syntax never drops throughout Hartman's work. "...Opening a kind of terrified feeling forcing a half/sleepy scientist to disassemble a somber piano, a new Harmonic Age I speak of." (Forehead) (That written before Einstein on the Beach, by the way.) Hartman's opulence and suggestiveness is less an attempt to overwhelm by dint of verbal pyrotechnics than a necessity of his language structure. Other poems are broken, unpunctuated, into phrase fragments, creating an expanded--or exploded--sentence or thought unit.

Another noteworthy effect of this syntactical ambiguity is the ability to make images include both the personal and general simultaneously: "...your bare back/to the reefs of the veranda--a fan is going around on the ceiling/of a period movie..." (Nostalgia) Is the body the landscape, or vice versa; or are they both images out of Key Largo? All of that, of course. Often, too, Hartman shoots for that same combination of the personal and general directly--occasionally, thereby, verging on the grandiose--and sometimes, remarkably, closing a circle of internal and external. "...In the/Chinese grass land some billions of years ago I was only a frog strange/insects fly by I stick my tongue out and taste the stars in my membranes" (In the Space)

I'm afraid in my enthusiasm to understand how Hartman's work works, I've neglected some of its most characteristic, and self-evident, qualities: intelligence, warmth, visual excitement, and not least is sense of the poet's place and ambition: "...will the/wild flowers bloom again in the backyard of Li Po, sprouting up my message of another century, / that I'm a glutton, and a helpless harebrain lusting after women, will he, and other great ones, / write me a note of dismissal or let me stay with them like a kitchen boy, scooping up a soup / of heron's egg (eagle's heart), and turtles still swimming in the fragrant leaves of some time ago?" (Chinatown Sonata)

Hartman has evolved a form in which distortions of syntax and magnification of image are as carefully and effectually honed as metric in a 17th century master. He has pumped new life into an influential but neglected sensibility. I don't doubt that Yuki Hartman is one of our most accomplished poets. Hot Footsteps is worth a long look. (Michael Slater)

**IN THE RESTAURANT**

**In the restaurant called My Meatball**

**I ate my porkchop up, ate it**

**on my hands and knees like**

**the people whose laundry created the laundramat**

**What do we know about the laundramat**

**or the pants we crease for our personal comfort**

**What we know is the way we eat**

**when we eat the little we bite off**

**when we chew the chop they give us**

**to make us forget what isn't on the menu**

**How far is it to where new jersey**

**will meet new york and disappear**

**Terence Winch**

**THE POETRY PROJECT**

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**First Class Mail**