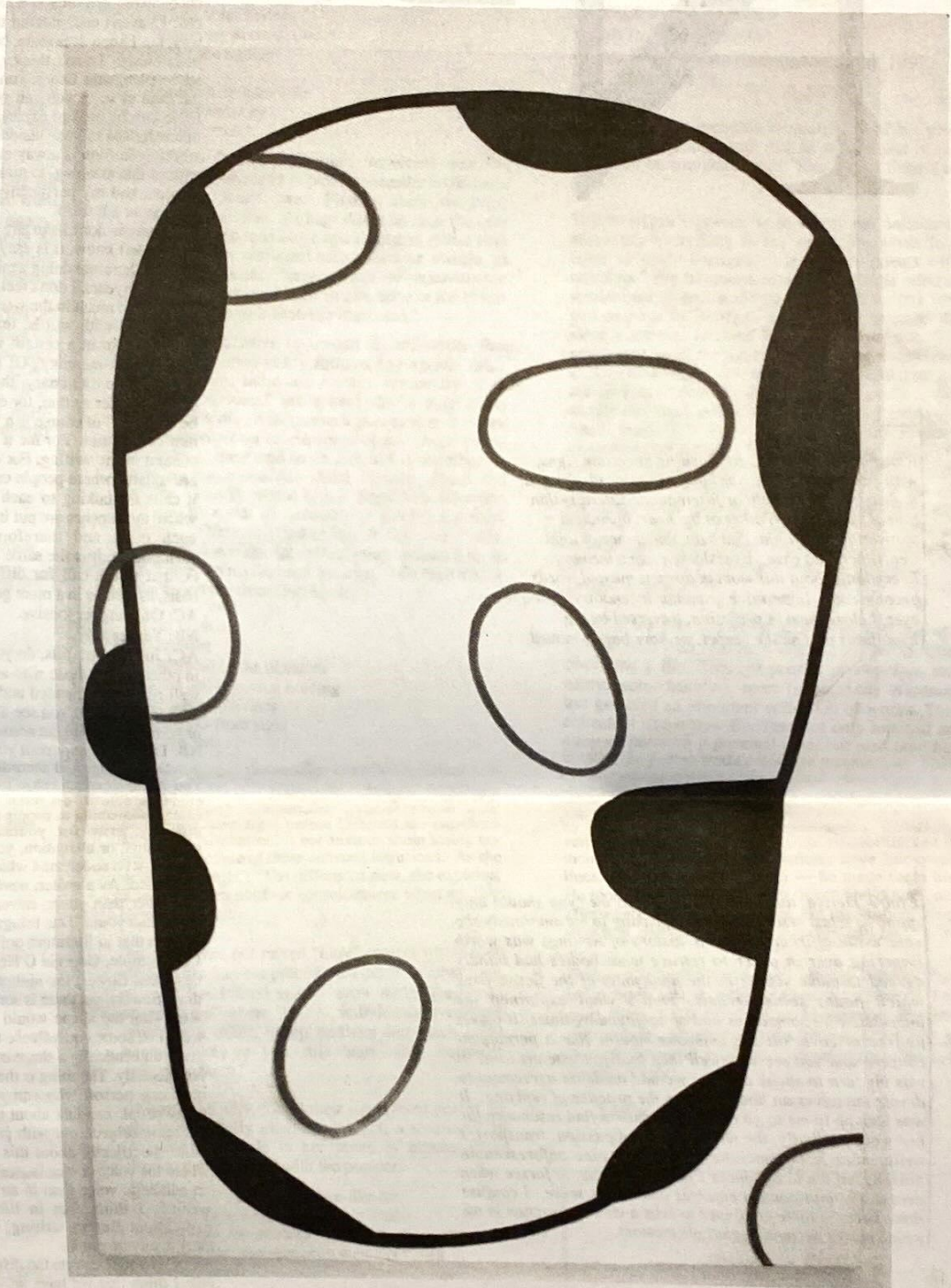


THE POETRY PROJECT

The Newsletter of the Poetry Project, Ltd. at St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery Vol. 143 Dec. '91 - Jan. '92



Gary Peterson: *Holes In My Head*

A Conversation with Nicole Brossard

by Abigail Child

Nicole Brossard: *Picture Theory* is, for me, an encounter between narrative poetry and textuality; an encounter designed to suggest a symbolic, a real and a fictive woman. Now you are talking about new construction? Well, for me new constructions are the result of one of two things: a playful attention to language, or strategies or rituals used in order to exist in language as a woman subject. Both the feminist consciousness and the lesbian experience are somehow called for in a struggle with the making, as well as the mapping, or conquest, of an unknown territory.

Abigail Child: Unknown because unknown historically.

NB: Yes. One makes space for herself in the language; she makes space for vision, for a revolt, for her memory, for utopia. You have to come up with new constructions in order to take a place within a patriarchal language, a language which does not want to know anything about a woman subject. For me, opting for new contents is not enough because words are already connotated with a male experience. So you need to process the words in such a way that they spread another meaning, have another aura.

AC: You mention the politically correct stance...

NB:

The white scene

transparency of skins. Responding to certain signs, with complete fluidity, our bodies interlaced m'urged to fuse in astonishment or fascination. Literally thin film of skin for each other at the heart of radical motivation, Daylight. Such an abundance of light wea(i)thers the gaze. Eyes darken like a memory. Everything about this woman attracts me and words become rare. Imperative grammar incendiary, baroque eyes, I close them in profusion, traversed by the hypothesis that on the carpet, we have barely moved.

Claire Derive took risks in saying to me 'you should only quote as a last resort' although speaking to me amorously she said while affirming that the history of writings was worth lingering over in order to retrace what bodies had blindly agreed to make visible in the anonymity of the fictive fires which haunt some breasts. That's what explained the impression we sometimes had of confounding times "it leaves us free to covet all the amorous mouths like a permanent concern and you see very well then that you write my love." It was my turn to speak because we had made an agreement to devote ourselves an hour a day to the practice of replying. It was now up to me to go onto her terrain to find resonance for her words. Blindly, the word suggested passion, transport, I write: motivation machine and in my voice unforeseeable liaisons led me to distances I had to imagine, to foresee when necessary, until content emerges and makes sense. I confuse times because there continues to exist a vital abstraction in me which makes me tend to multiple memory.

I exercise my faculty of synthesis here because again I must proceed with precision among sounds, bodies and institutions.

Well (laughs) I'll say that my politics have brought me as far as I can dream, but being politically correct never improved my writing. I believe more in being politically connected, working with a wide range of questions rather than working with what is already expected.

AC: In relation to that, what do you think of what we see in America sometimes with writing that is inventive: certain feminists will say this is 'male' writing. It's such a perverse split to my mind, but I do encounter it. Have you ever encountered it? Can you make sense of that judgement?

NB: I haven't encountered this question in a very aggressive way, but I know it is there, being said, that working on form is male-biased. I don't think so. I think there are two ways to address language issues: you can work to offend the reader, for the sake of it, or you can work for women and for lesbians. Form can be used to expand meaning, to discover a meaning that responds to your vision, your version, of reality. For me, working on form is a way of working on ritual and strategy to expand this meaning, to make space for a new version, for my version, and my perspective, on reality, whether or not as a feminist or a lesbian.

AC: But you don't have any sense of why this happens?

NB: I don't know, it is easy to say you are writing a difficult text and therefore doing exactly what men have been doing for the last 20 years. I don't feel attacked by such remarks because I believe so much in the work that can be accomplished. If you are careful with words, really try to stretch their meaning, arrange them in a certain way, each one can acquire a new aura, a new meaning. Of course we cannot change all the words in the dictionary, therefore we have to put them in a different order so that, for example, whatever the word would be, "woman" of course is a very loaded word, it will assume a new connotation. For me it is not enough to simply put a new content in the writing. For example, in some city parks there are squares where people can look at each other and therefore it calls for talking to each other. You can also have a park where the benches are put in such a way that people cannot see each other and therefore it calls for another kind of relationship. It is the same thing if we are talking about form. Formal issues call for different responses on an emotional basis, as well as in a more general way of thinking, let's say.

AC: Of being responsive.

NB: Yes, exactly.

AC: Just to push this, do you think class issues are involved, in other words, those who advance formal structures are often well read and educated and interested in what you call the 'difficult' text. Do you see anything about class issues in this, or perhaps a way to cut across class to reach other readers?

NB: I think it is important you research your writing according to what you are, and according to how you envision writing. You cannot cheat and say, 'I will try another kind of writing. I might be able to get more readers' or, 'I might be able to explain something to people from another class.' You can only properly write for yourself first. Then if you address oppression, or alienation, you might reach others, from other classes, who understand what it means to be colonized or to be oppressed. As a writer, never pretend that your oppression is one other than yours, never pretend that your vision is one other than yours. This brings us to the notion of authenticity. I believe that in literature only the style, the form, is authentic. For example, Georgia O'Keefe designs a flower the way she designs a flower; the authenticity is in the form. We can all draw flowers, yet there is somehow no authentic flower.

AC: That the shape would be the writer's shape, that there would be some equivalence there, rather than that it would be given authentically a shape of a 'writer.'

NB: Exactly. The thing is that in writing I believe that there is only one person who can write about that subject. Maybe many people can talk about the same subject, can write about the same subject, but with good writing only one person can write specifically about this subject or that subject. This is where the voice comes in, and in fact, I would believe more in an authentic voice than in an authentic self-expression in the writing. I think that in life I am authentic in my self-expression. But in writing, I search for my voice in the authenticity of words.

AC: Can you elaborate the difference there?

NB: I think that we have an internal rhythm, yet we usually speak too fast, or too low, too high; it is very hard to attune our own voice to what we feel, and to what we think. Sometimes at specific moments in our life, or in our writing, the voice is probably tuned to everything that we are, that we imagine about ourselves. So what I call authenticity would be more in the voice and in the rhythm of the writing, in the rhythm of the shaping of this version, this vision, that we want to share and give in the writing. The self-expression is more related to ideas, to thought.

AC: Yes, almost like self-expression is what we want to say but your voice is what you find you're saying.

NB: Yes, And it carries you, also it can bring you farther than you want to go.

AC: Yes.

NB: And maybe it's the beautiful part of yourself also, the voice.

Portions of this talk between Abigail Child and Nicole Brossard appeared in the April, 1991, issue of *Outweek, Picture Theory*, Brossard's latest book translated into English from her native French, is published by Roof Books (300 The Bowery, New York, New York 10012).

BOOK REVIEWS

BIG BANK TAKE LITTLE BANK

Paul Beatty
The Nuyorican Poets Cafe
(236 E. 3rd. St., N.Y.C. 10009)
74 pages; \$9.95.

As I was leaving the Poets Superbowl For Peace, a guy behind me on the stairway shouted: "Good Poem!" I turned to thank him, and realized he'd been addressing Paul Beatty, in front of me. Paul mumbled thanks, without breaking a stride.

A fine poet is growing among us, and it's fitting the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, that daffy, messianic Bard Disco, should publish him. This is today's poetry, and though Bob Holman and Pound appear to be influences, it's possible Paul derives his entire philosophy from Flintstones cartoons, as he asserts.

One hint suggests otherwise: the longest list of acknowledgements ever to appear in a book of poems, including "Gracias to the 46 Crew-Black Lynn the Blacksmith, T. Morrow, K-rad, D.W., Lawson, Tia Hooper MD, Shawn, Monica, DCP, 'Shoot me now I'm a Fiddler Crab'." The word-rumba Paul perfects emerges from a community of scholars.

For example:

We Got It Made

the brats want me to buy em some rap tapes

buy slick rick
no get special ed

i'm talented yes i'm

mami i want a batman shirt

gifted

I wanna mini skirt

never boosted.

mama am i too young to flirt

how can i worry about the squirts grades
when their father has aids

no never shoplifted

I've never seen a book with the word POETRY across its cover, like "HIGH EXPLOSIVES" on a truck.

These are patient works (though they read fast). His rhyme scheme alone is giddier than Dvorak.

Take the book on a long subway ride (I suggest the F) and see if Mr. Beatty drops the baby once.

Δ Sparrow

NECROROMANCE

Rae Armantrout,
Sun & Moon Press
(6148 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048)
49 pages; \$8.95 paper.

At a time when much experimental writing has lost at least some of its shock value, Rae Armantrout's new book *NECROROMANCE* could startle even the most jaded reader. There is something compulsive about these poems that seem to be both in and out of control at the same time.

Precision is a word that comes to mind, but not in the conventional sense. That is, most people think of precise writing as harkening back to le mot juste -- just the right word to capture or complete a picture. Here by contrast, Armantrout consistently finds just the right word to throw the picture off and derail our expectations.

Formally, these spare, short-lined poems look like objectivist poems, but to categorize them as such would make for an uncomfortable fit in-terms of

intention and tone. For one thing, she moves faster than the static objectivist moment. The poems seem to leap past a single observational set of eyes:

as bird noise seethes
from everywhere at once
unlike the human

fugue where each note
is compensatory
ringing "true."

She's also funnier and more irreverent than the objectivists, who tend to piously meander around in a state of perpetual awe. Finally, she's just more modern than all that. Perhaps this is because she uses these tightly framed close-ups to distort rather than clarify. One is reminded here of how in science, as Baudrillard notes, "any means of microscopic observation provokes such an alteration in the object that knowledge of it becomes imperiled."

Though it's always important to remember that Armantrout never really follows any agenda other than her own, there are certain similarities with "language writing," the school she is most often associated with. Armantrout's poems almost never present themselves as memories of any single event. If anything, they tend to dissect and dismember by allowing for numerous shifts in time, place and speaker. This is related to her skepticism about the a) value b) myth c) necessity of having a central narrator. Often she pokes fun at the whole idea: "Point of view's/a lot of/demonic possession at first./Later we say/to each his own." Or take a look at the following from "No Matter":

First person
is relative
placement of the phantom
limbs and organs, a holding
pattern which rises
and sinks from sight
to suit me.

Related to this is the way she lets other voices drift in and out of her own poems, including the nonhuman voice of the TV: "Urgent but unctuous/soap actor/stressing every/third syllable./Now how much/time have I/got before Dad/and the cops/bust in?" Yet Armantrout is not anxious about losing her authority because of these constant intrusions. As she writes in "Range": "The difference now, she explains, is that she does not/lose consciousness when another takes the floor."

Her poems are not sacred "little" objects where each element has its own preordained place. Rather they, to quote Baudrillard again, "allow things the liberty of confusion" where "bodies, individuals, events can touch each other, bump and run into each other because they've lost this 'aura' that normally envelops them."

This may be why, for all their rigor, these poems are also wonderfully playful. In fact, a trademark of Armantrout's style is her sense of humor, often mixing the analytical with the popular:

...Bits are said to be dream-like (to reveal what's repressed). In a dream language, the troubled region has returned as a showgirl with masses of fruit on her head.

Paradoxes abound and thrive all in the close quarters of her short poems. And if anything, the formal constraints only serve to accentuate these jarring but exhilarating oppositions. The austere look of her writing, for example, often belies an almost Stevensesque lushness:

The flame trees tip themselves
with flame.
But in that land
men prized
virginity. She washed dishes in a black liquid
with islands of froth--
and sang.

In the poetry world where so much depends upon having a style that's easy to categorize, Armantrout makes you believe that there is still such a thing as originality.

Δ Elaine Equi

A VAST ORANGE LIBRARY OF DREAMS

Nice To See You Homage to Ted Berrigan

Edited by Anne Waldman
Coffee House Press (Minneapolis, MN), 1991.
253 pages. \$14.95.

Ted Berrigan is probably the only poet of his time who would openly admit that he wanted one of his poems to be straightforward "like a John Sebastian song."

Ted Berrigan's poems were emotional salutes to absolutely everything in the world. He wrote in a letter to Sandy Berrigan, "I people my poems with nostalgia." But he always achieved nostalgia without sentimentality, and in the same way, the writers who pay homage to Berrigan in this book manage the same outcome. Michael Brownstein laments, "He won't turn on all the lights upon entering a room and explain how bright light was important, and then ask me if I have any Dave van Ronk records ('You smoke too much pot, man; all you have here is this head music')." Tom Savage compared Ted's compassionate listening ability to Sigmund Freud, the only difference being that Ted had a perfect heart, whereas Sigmund provided only empathy-on-demand for a fee. Aram Saroyan reminisces about their first meeting where Berrigan commented to him about his recently published poems, "I think they're elegant. But I wish --- I wish you'd tell a few *lies* in your poems. You know?"

Nice To See You is not a biography, it is an homage, but one feels after reading it that one has just finished observing a life. Through poems, photographs and essays, some haunting, some funny, Anne Waldman has gathered an important collection of works. This collection shows how Berrigan not only touched an army of poets on a personal note, but also how he invaded the poetry-world collective unconscious. The book contains salutary poems and remembrances written by his peers and the young poets that he influenced with his exuberance and encouragement. Vincent Katz describes how Ted affected his writing by teaching him to use the same line in different variations. Also, in developing the possibilities of a theme, Katz writes, "Many writers have borrowed lines. Ted didn't borrow them --- he made them his. He took them out for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and afterwards for drinks in a bar. He made them sleep with him, and live with him, and they still do."

This is a beautiful book. Not only as a memorium, but a book whose individual works stand on their own. *Nice To See You* is an inspiration for poets everywhere, learning that an intense life force and 'strange beautiful things' are essential ingredients for terrific poetry.

Δ Gillian McCain

FAR OUT

When Arthur heard that there was
a nude beach only 15
miles from where he was staying
he immediately called
his friend Judy and had her drive their old
car over and in less than an hour he and

Δ Mike Topp

PECULIAR MOTIONS

Rosmarie Waldrop and Jennifer Macdonald
Kelsey St. Press
(P.O.B. 9235 Berkeley CA 94709), 1990.
\$9.00 paper.

Can we say
white paper
with black lines on it
is like a human body?

A pleasing textural blend of visual and verbal verse can be found in this collaboration by Rosmarie Waldrop and Jennifer Macdonald. Skin is a point of departure at many points in the text, and the accompanying images were created using phototechnology on a velum, which is also a skin. "Skins" work with the language to create a series of semi-transparent collages in which the images both expose and veil the writing beneath.

The work explores the intricate matter of permutations and permeability. A single reading reaches one layer of impressions, and then there is also foreground, background, and the complexity inherent in "the self consisting of peculiar motions in the head."

Constant movement makes the self difficult to locate, as "A man marries his wife because/there is no way to enter/anybody's mind." The body becomes one tangible interior, skin a possibility for knowledge. Gestures connect matter to mind, and yet there is no singular self to be found. Motion itself is close to defining the presences which navigate through the overlays.

Transparencies change the appearance of language, skin overlaps thought, and simultaneously the figure walks through many realms including innerground, and ground that has not yet been formed.

The difficulty here's not true or false
but that the picture's in the foreground
and its sense back where the gestures link
so closely to the bone

Balance becomes a question of vision, and vision a question of choice. Surrounded by light, blindness, mirrors, and water, illusion influences perception. Patterns of skin are pressed into the senses. "In this part of the ear/you can make inroads." The possibilities of masks and mazes ultimately comment on the image beneath or between.

it's possible
the eye knows
even where there should have been a lake

Amidst the difficulty encountered by those personas who traverse the layered poems, wholeness is suggested in the inability to clearly separate human elements onto one plane of existence. Although the complexities of movement are challenging while being in several places simultaneously, there are advantages in polymorphous travel. Here we find "more than one sky" and many different locations for ground. We are multiplicitious, unlimited in nature. An affirmation of the density of experience is described between drawings and verse. Center, as in self finding self, is found in many facets of interchange--verbal, visual, intuitive, intellectual, emotional, and physical to begin a list. These are fusing poems, they expand to illustrate, they are inclusive, and suggest we are of many impulses, accessible at intervals through skin, thought, or desire. Sensuality is here a part of the mind,

a clearing in the deep
forest of completeness.

ΔLaynie Browne

SELECTED POEMS

Robert Creeley
University of California Press
388 pages; \$25.00

Robert Creeley's thoughtful editing job has made this handsome, easy-to-handle "Selected" more than just the usual culling of a major poet's greatest hits.

The familiar Creeley standards from the U.C. Press *Collected Poems 1945-1975* are here. But in supplementing them with enough writing of the last fifteen years to fill up nearly half the present volume, Creeley has suggested a new trajectory for his life's work: its development from a lonely voicing of the existential self in *extremis* to a different kind of lyric articulation, one powerfully grounded in a common experience of humanness.

Early Creeley verse--culminating in the landmark 1962 collection "For Love," from which he has retained some 50 pieces here--was distinguished by themes of love and trial, taken on in a style ironically echoing that of traditional courtly lyrics.

The wounded hipster lover, anguished yet archly elegant, lamented his self-isolating romantic ordeal in terms that spelled out the primal history of subjectivity for a disaffected postwar generation nurtured on bop and existentialism. These tense, bleak strangely compelling lyrics, bristling with restless alienation yielded a disturbing inverted reflection of the midcentury American lonely crowd.

The ache of separation from a common life is most tangible in poems like "The Hill," a meditation on "what it was had once turned me backwards, / and made my head into / a cruel instrument," and "For Love," with its bitter anatomizing of "tedium, / despair, a painful / sense of isolation and / whimsical if pompous / self-regard." The darkness that surrounds the haunted, anxious driver in "I Know A Man"--still perhaps Creeley's most famous poem--is that of a great blanketing night of self-involvement, impenetrable and seemingly without exit.

As the *Selected* makes clear, an important shift in attitude took place with the volumes "Pieces" (1969), "A Day Book" (1972) and "Thirty Things" (1974). In these transitional works Creeley moved away from relatively conventional staging of poetic occasion to a more casual, notational mode he described as "a life tracking itself."

"So There," a decisive 1975 poem, made it plain that Creeley's basic measure had changed. The world was henceforth to be engaged on the human scale, the self's singular location surrendering its place in the emotional scheme to that in another important late poem, "The Company," the poet would call "some common places of feeling."

What people have in common, not the differences that separates and isolate them, has preoccupied the Creeley of the past 15 years. His later poems speak of life's basic and immediate pains, needs and pleasures--birth and death, the aging process, distance, time passing, regret, sadness, loss, and the "ridiculous, / simple happinesses" that come with all living. "Tangible, they tell / the reassurances, / the comforts . / of being human" ("Love").

Surviving his early subjective ordeals--which, he testified in one poem, were for him second nature, the necessary legacy of growing up in a Puritan culture--and accomplishing "the sweet / closed curve of fading life," this most American of poets here movingly traces our difficult common "journey to an elusive enlightenment, a New World odyssey that to us as to him may well feel at this point like "some old time weird / Odysseus trip / sans paddle--up / the endless creek."

ΔTom Clark

THE MELODY NEVER STOPS

Kofi Natambu
Past Tents Press
(3168 Trowbridge Hamtramck, MI 48212),
1991. \$8.00.

The Melody Never Stops is divided into three sections or "cycles," each consisting of twelve "melodies," melodies (lyrics, polemical raps, meditations, homages, etc.) which are not metaphors for writings. These 36 writings are melodies, interwoven threads of hardcore streetspeak, litcrit diction, surreal rhetoric and exorbitant verbiage that counterpoint, clash and wrestle with one another. The effect on the reader can be startling, disorienting, as wave after wave, sheet after sheet, of dissonance and "loudness" (suggested by the frequent capitalization of sections of poems and, in some cases, total poems) slam into the ears, the eyes. This formal dissonance/distortion marks Kofi Natambu's second book as a significant breach with the received modes of most "literature" published in this country, recalling and echoing the large irreverent gestures of writers as disparate as Baraka, Bidart, Cortez and Piercy. Without succumbing to a reductive phoneticism or concretism, these writings foreground both their phonic and graphic dimensions. Analogically, these writings eschew the profundity of the cool reflective processes of most mainstream American writing. Instead, despair and defiance, rage and joy, explode from every line; what is significantly absent, for the most part, is bitterness. For *The Melody Never Stops* is more than a polemical irruption through the paved surface of literature; these writings aspire to nothing less than the affirmation of the African American cultural sector of our multicultural nation.

Structurally, the general movement of these writings is from an outside to an inside, an outside that is never abstract and an inside that is never private. What mediates this relationship between the predominant cultural landscapes of the first section, "Signs & Significations," and the various interior landscapes of the third section, "Paths & Processes," is the second section, "The For Series." A series of homages to black cultural heroes and heroines, this middle cycle of writings simultaneously functions as a reservoir for the attacks launched against white cultural imperialism in "Signs & Significations" and an antidote to the poisons of hopelessness, self-hatred and bitterness, so alluringly delineated in "Paths & Processes." In musical terms, "The For Series" functions as the "original" melodic undercarriage that the other two cycles "improvise" upon, distorting ("Paths & Processes") and parodying ("Signs & Significations"). Thus, in "Late Summer 1988 Brooklyn," "Too many men of every nationality are aching/for a fight they have no intention of winning &/too many women are waiting ENDLESSLY for someone/to tell them how 'pretty & interesting' they are." Meanwhile, "In the United States everybody as well as everyone wants to be white/even the whites."

These last lines are from "Color Schemes," the centerpiece of the opening cycle, "Signs & Significations." The general issue here is the suppression and denial of this country's multicultural roots; the particular issue is the suppression of the African American tributary. In "The New Fictions," the double movement of suppression and denial--material on the one hand, psychological on the other--is posited as the origin of literal and figurative genocide: "This mask of Empire/a crusty destructive /son-of-a-bitch/ that rules its lair/by hiding from itself/and killing off/all traces/of its very/Existence." Thus the necessity of the white mythology that informs "Color Schemes." This poem is Natambu's account of the flight from the reality of biological, social and cultural miscegenation to a Never-Neverland where all colors blend, integrate into the great

(continued on page 5)

December 1991 - January 1992

THE POETRY PROJECT

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december/january at the poetry project

With the Monday, Wednesday and Friday night series all in full swing, December and January will be busy months at the Poetry Project. Mondays will feature readings and performances by **Vincent Katz'** group, **The Throbbers**; Nuyorican Cafe luminaries **Edwin Torres & Reggie Gaines**; and Poetry Project staffers **Lynn Crawford & Gillian McCain**. Wednesday nights will provide the setting for readings by crime-novelist **Elmore Leonard**; poets **Anselm Hollo & David Henderson**; and poet/musicians **Cecil Taylor & Clark Coolidge**. Wednesday, January 29th will be the first of the Project's 25th Anniversary Lectures, delivered by feminist critic **Cora Kaplan**. The Friday late-evening series will also be rich and varied. Events will focus on journal-writing, fiction, and "The Record Album that Changed My Life." Among the readers will be **Legs McNeil, Janice Johnson, Hal Willner, Wanda Phipps, John Strausbergh, Gary Indiana** and **Lynne Tillman**. Also slated for Friday nights are videos by **William Burroughs, Michael Brownstein, Ted Greenwald** and **Les Levine**. A benefit by **Africa World Press** to aid emerging African nations will be held on Friday, January 10th.

The **18th Annual New Year's Day Marathon Reading** begins at **2 pm** this year. It will continue until midnight or so with readings, music, dance and performances by **Allen Ginsberg, Anne Waldman, Spalding Gray, Richard Foreman, Yoshiko Chuma**, et. al. Besides the advent of 1992, the marathon will be celebrating the publication by Crown Press of the 700-page collection, **Out of This World: An Anthology 1966-1991**, culled from the pages of the Poetry Project's literary magazine, *The World*. Copies of the anthology will be on sale as will copies of **The World, #42**, edited by **Lewis Warsh** and the members of the "Reviving *The World*" workshop.

The Poetry Project has received a grant of \$130,000 from **Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fund** in support of a **National Literary Touring Network** formed in conjunction with four other independent literary centers, **Beyond Baroque** (Los Angeles), **Intersection for the Arts** (San Francisco), **Just Buffalo** (Buffalo), and **Woodland Pattern** (Milwaukee). Coordinated by the Poetry Project, ten writers will give readings at each of the participating centers. The tour, which will focus on emerging writers and writers working in emerging forms, will include five writers who have established a national readership for their work and five writers, one from each of the geographic regions represented by the five literary centers, who have developed a regional audience for their work. Planned as a pilot program, the National Literary Touring Network will test the viability of linking the resources of local literary centers as a means of widening the audience for innovative new work. Among the participating writers will be **Judy Grahn, Charles Johnson**, and **Leslie Marmon Silko**. The tour will begin in March and conclude in June of 1992.

THE POETRY PROJECT WISHES TO THANK

The Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fund and the City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs for their recent grants.

THE POETRY PROJECT ALSO WISHES TO THANK ITS NEW AND RECENTLY RENEWED MEMBERS AND CONTRIBUTORS:

Naomi Antonakos, Cara Berton, Kristen Biebighauser, David Blanchard, Fran Carlen, Noel Cross, Joan Dalin, Donna Dinovelli, Tennessee Dixon, Randy Dolan, Yvonne Fisher, Merry Fortune, Soichi and Misao Furuta, David Goldstein, Evan Haffner, Robert Hershon and Donna Brook, Bernice Holtzman, Vita Jimenez, Ada and Alex Katz, Kathi Kosiancic, H.H. McCain, Mimi McDermott, Anne Misawa, Kristin Prevallet, Sally Reydman, Thomas Sellman, Hershel Silverman, Miriam Solan, Gratia Stevens, Leigh Warre, Nancy Warren, Carol Wiezbicki, Theodore and Joan Wilentz, Harry Li, Catherine Young, Jack Rojas, Lee Ann Radovich, Susan Mills, Dean Kostos, Cliff Fyman, David Brodey, Michelle Curry, Richard Parks, Charles Roberson, and Phyllis Zelchenko.

WE APPRECIATE THE INVALUABLE SUPPORT OF OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Cynthia Nelson, Kathi Kosiancic, Spring Ulmer and Shannon Ketch.

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Yes I wish to become a member of The Poetry Project. Here is my tax deductible membership gift:

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No, I do not wish to join at this time but here is my tax-deductible contribution of \$_____.

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\$50 FREE admission for a year to all regularly scheduled Poetry Project events! PLUS discounts on admission to special events. PLUS a year's subscription to *The Poetry Project Newsletter!*

\$75 FREE admission for a year for you and a guest to all regularly scheduled Poetry Project events. PLUS discounts on admission to special events. PLUS a year's subscription to *The Poetry Project Newsletter!*

\$100 All of the \$75 membership benefits. PLUS your choice of free gift: *Flow Chart* by John Ashbery or *The World Record*, a two-record set of historic readings at The Poetry Project by some of the greatest writers of our time.

\$250 FREE admission for a year for two to all Poetry Project events PLUS *In and Out of the World*, a historic anthology of the Poetry Project's influential literary magazine.

\$500 FREE admission for a year for yourself and two others to all Poetry Project events PLUS *In and Out of the World*, a historic anthology of the Poetry Project's influential literary magazine AND grateful public acknowledgement.

\$1000 All of the \$500 membership benefits AND all 1991-91 Poetry Project publications.

THE POETRY PROJECT



Drawing: No Fear, ©1991 Lori Landes

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8:00 PM Hosted by Wanda Phipps. Sign-up is at 7:30.
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8:00 PM Nicole Breedlove, Malkia Cyril, Sala Cyril and Jennifer Flowers are the collective, Nlakuumba. Their readings, plays and songs focus on the experience of women of color. Their work will be appearing in the forthcoming anthology *In the Tradition* (Marie Evans Publishing Company). They are also producing a chapbook series that will be published by Kitchen Table Press.
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Admission: \$5 (contribution), except where noted.
All programs subject to change.

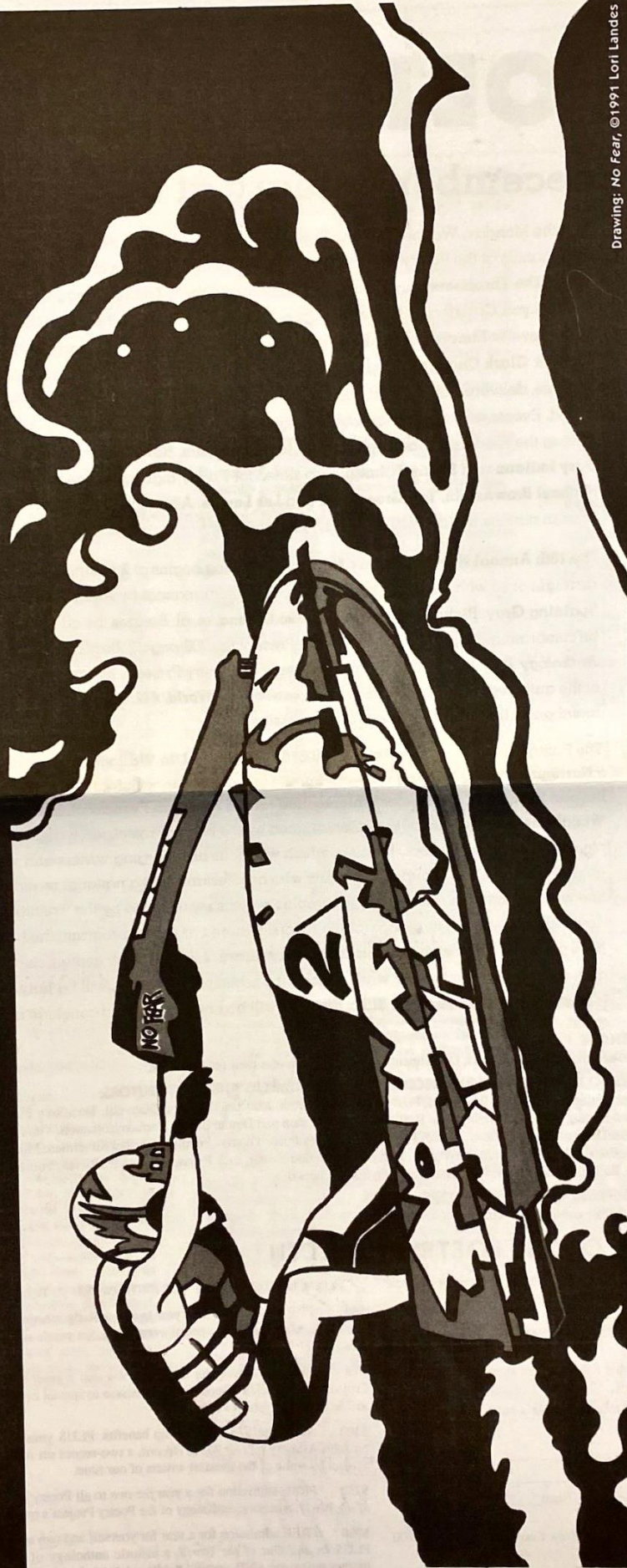
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Edwin Torres received the Nuyorican Poets Cafe's First Annual Prize for Fresh Poetry. Ethan Pettit says, "Instead of 'sounding' things, he (Torres) 'things' sounds, so that words and meanings go ka-plunk like soft percussion." Reggie Gaines won this year's Grand Slam at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe and will be performing his new one-man show *Reggie Gaines' Lame Brain Hall of Shame Poetry Awards at the Cafe* twice a month.
- 22 WED CECIL TAYLOR & CLARK COOLIDGE**
8:00 PM Cecil Taylor has, for over twenty-five years, been one of contemporary music's major innovators. His most recent record album is *In Florescence*. A mesmerizing reader/performer, he is currently at work on a volume of poems and a collection of essays on music. Clark Coolidge is the author of over twenty books of poetry including *Mesh*, *Odes of Roba* and *The Book of During* (Section 1 and 2). Coolidge, himself, is a jazz drummer and longtime admirer of Taylor's work. In fact, he will be reading from *Comes Through in the Call Hold*, *Improvisations on Cecil Taylor*.
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WRITING WORKSHOPS

POETRY AND PROSE WORKSHOP

Taught by Bernadette Mayer. **Thursdays at 7 pm (ongoing through the end of April).** The workshop will be limited to 25 students. Register, in person, at the Poetry Project office or by mail.

EXCAVATING VOICES

Taught by John Yau. **Fridays at 7 pm (ongoing through the end of January).** Register, in person, at the Poetry Project office or by mail.

REVIVING THE WORLD

The workshop will edit and produce four issues of *The World*, the magazine of the Poetry Project. Taught by Lewis Warsh. Saturdays at noon (ongoing through the end of April). *This workshop is filled. Names are being held on a waiting list should there be any openings.*

REGISTRATION FEES

Registration for the workshops costs \$150; \$50 for regular annual membership in the Poetry Project plus \$100 annual workshop membership. Those enrolling in workshops who are already members of the Project and have paid for workshop memberships need only renew their memberships upon expiration.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Fernando Alegria and Jorge Ruffinelli, editors, *Paradise Lost or Gained? The Literature of Hispanic Exile*, The Americas Review (U of Houston, Houston, TX 77204-2090, 1990). 240 pp., \$5.00/ single issues. \$10.00/ double issues.

Michael Anderson & Melanie Neilson, *Triple Sixes/Prop & Guide*, The Figures (5 Castle Hill, Gt. Barrington, MA 01230, 1991). 14 pp., \$5.00 paper.

Charles Bernstein & Olivier Cadiot, *Olivier Cadiot's Red, Green and Black*, Potes & Potes Press Inc. (181 Edgemont Ave., Elmwood, CT 06110, 1990). 37 pp., \$8.00.

Thomas Bynum, *Hecatomb*, Drogue Press (Box 1157, Cooper Sta., NYC, NY 10276).

Paul Celan, *Halo*, trans. by Stavros Deligiorgis, illus. by Jeffrey Scherer, Coffee House Press, Minneapolis, MN. 10pp., paper.

Adrian Clark & Robert Sheppard, ed., *Floating Capital: New Poets From London*, Potes & Potes Press, 1991, 125 pp., \$12.00 paper.

Lauren Fairbanks, *Muzzle Thyself*, Dalkey Archive Press (1817 North 79th Avenue, Elmwood Park, IL 60635, 1991). 64 pp., \$9.95 paper.

Ramon Ringo Fernandez, Stephen-Paul Martin, Henry Faheem Samedy, & others, *Lines During War. A Collaboration of Word and Image After the Persian Gulf Incident*, Heaven Bone Press, (P.O. Box 486, Chester, NY 10918, 1991). 44 pp., \$4.95.

Hoyt W. Fuller, *Journey to Africa*, Third World Press (7524 S. Cottage Grove Avenue, Chicago, IL 60619-1999, 1991). \$8.95.

Forrest Gander, *Eggplants & Lotus Root*, Burning Deck (1814 San Pablo Ave. Berkeley, CA 94702, 1991). 28 pp., \$5.00 paper.

Joanne Kyger, *Just Space: Poems 1979-1989*, Black Sparrow Press (24 Tenth Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95401, 1991). 146 pp., \$12.50 paper - illustrated by Arthur Okamura.

Kim Lyons, *In Padua*, St. Lazaire Press (4 Patten Rd., Rhinebeck, NY 12572). 31 pp.

Gerard Malanga, *Three Diamonds*, Black Sparrow Press (24 Tenth Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95401, 1991). 220 pp., \$12.50, paper; \$20.00, cloth.

Stephen-Paul Martin, *Things*, Heaven Bone Press (P.O. Box 486, Chester, NY 10918, 1991). 39 pp., \$4.95, US; \$5.95, overseas.

Pablo Medina, *Archiving Into the Afterlife*, Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingue (Bilingual Review/Press, Hispanic Research Center, Tempe, AZ 85287, 1991). 84 pp.

Brenda Marie Osbey, *Desperate Circumstance, Dangerous Woman - a narrative poem*, Story Line Press (Three Oaks Farm, Brownsville, OR 97327, 1991). 105 pp., \$9.95.

Deborah Rebolgar Pintonelli, *Ego Monkey*, Another Chicago Press (Box 11223, Chicago, IL 60611, 1991). 110 pp., \$10.95 paper.

Stephen Rodefer, *Passing Duration*, Burning Deck. 62 pp., \$8.00 paper.

Alyce Sadongei, ed., *From Village, Clan and City*. 11 Native American Writers, ATLATL (402 W. Roosevelt, Phoenix, Arizona 85003, 1989). 20 pp., paper.

Annual Poetry Project Community Meeting & Election

The annual Poetry Project community meeting will be held Wednesday, January 8th at 8 pm in the parish hall of St. Mark's Church. All are welcome. Admission is FREE.

Concurrent with the meeting (8 pm - 9:30 pm), will be the election of a community member to the Board of Directors of the Poetry Project, Ltd. All candidates must be self-nominated and must have some on-going affiliation with the Poetry Project. Nominations must be made in writing. They should include a short description of the candidate's affiliation with the Poetry Project and the writing community in general. Nominations must be received by December 20, 1991 in order for candidate to be placed on the ballot.

Current members of the Poetry Project, writers who have participated in Poetry events and all those who have demonstrated an ongoing interest in the Poetry Project are eligible to vote in the election. The election is conducted by written ballot.

An absentee ballot will be sent upon request to any current member of the Poetry Project. All completed absentee ballots must be received by 7 pm on the day of the election in order to be counted.

Spencer Selby, *Stigma*, Score (491 Mandana Blvd. Oakland, CA 94610). 24 pp., paper.
John Yau (poems) and Bill Barrett (photos), *Big City Primer: Reading New York at the End of the Twentieth Century*, Timken Pub. (225 Lafayette, NY 10012). 132 pp., 100 photos, \$25.00 paper, \$50.00 hard.

MAGAZINES:

Avec, Vol. 4, no. 1: A Journal of Writing. (Cydney Chadwick, Ed., published by Syntax Projects for the Arts, Inc.). \$7.50.

Apostrophe, Vol. 2: Audio-Magazine (Marguerite, Ed. 42 Windsor Place, Brooklyn, NY 11215). \$7.00.

Bombay Gin, Vol. 2, no. 1 (Rebecca Bush, Karl K. Schmieder, M.S. Tree, John Wright, Eds., The Naropa Institute, 2130 Arapahoe, Boulder, CO 80302). \$5.00.

Brooklyn Review, Vol. 8 (Jeffery Conway, Joe L. Woodward, Andrea Orsini, Leah Rosenberg, Eds., The Print Center, Inc., 225 Varick Street, NY, NY 10014). \$5.00.

A Gathering of the Tribes, Vol. 1, no. 1 (Steve Cannon & Gail Schilke, Eds., The Source Unitd., 331 East 9th Street, New York, NY 10003). \$4.50.

Giants Play Well in the Drizzle, #28. (Martha King, Ed., 326-A 4th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215).

Gin Mill, spring 1991. (John A. Arrizza, Brett Evans, Gregory Fuchs, Christopher Ycaza, E.F. Hopstetter, Jr., Eds., Gin Mill Press, P.O. Box 21126, Baton Rouge, LA 70893).

Intent, Vol. 2 No. 4/Vol. 3 No. 1: Letter of Talk, Thinking, & Document. (John Clarke, Ed., Shuffaloff Press, 415 Norwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14222).

It Came From the Grog, Vol. 1, No. 3. (Tom Grochowski & Bruce Isaacson, Eds., GROG, Brooklyn College English Department, Brooklyn, NY 11210).

Lactuca, No. 14. (Mike Salender, Ed., P.O. Box 621, Suffern, NY 10901). \$4.00.

La Nuez, Revista Internacional de Arte y Literatura, No. 7. (Rafael Bordao, Ed., P.O. Box 1655, New York, NY 10276).

The New Censorship, The Monthly Journal of the Next Savage State, Vol. 2, No. 2. (Jeffrey J. Murcko, Ed., 2953 Wyandot Street, # 10, Denver, CO 80211-3844). \$2.50.

Notes From The Underground, No. 6. (Mark DuCharme, Ed., 2965 13th Street, Boulder, CO 80304). \$2.50.

Open Magazine, 1990. (Greg Ruggiero, Stuart Sahulka, Paul Pinkman, Steven Hatch, Silvia Muller, Eds., P.O. Box 2726, Westfield, NJ 07090). \$6.00.

Raio: 3, Vol. 1. (Words, Ed., Temple Press Ltd., P.O. Box 227, Brighton, Sussex BN2 3GL, England). \$15.00.

The Wall Off the Wall, Vol. 1, No. 1. (Wes Wilson, Ed., The Poster Project Ltd., Star Route Box 22, Aurora, MO 65605). \$5.00.

The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church

Founded in 1966, the Poetry Project, Ltd. at St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery was the scene of the only joint reading by Robert Lowell and Allen Ginsberg and has been the site of historic memorials to poets Paul Blackburn, Robert Duncan, Charles Reznikoff, Frank O'Hara, Ted Berrigan, and Edwin Denby. Over the years, readers, lecturers and performers have included John Ashbery, John Cage, Sam Shepard, Alice Walker, Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), Virgil Thomson, Barbara Guest, Hugh Kenner, Adrienne Rich, Kenneth Koch, James Schuyler, Yoko Ono, Nicanor Parra, and Patti Smith. Staffed completely by poets, the Poetry Project consistently achieves an integrity of programming that challenges, informs and inspires working writers, while remaining accessible to the general public. The Poetry Project offers a Wednesday night reading series, a Monday night reading/performance series, three weekly writing workshops, a monthly lecture series, a printing and distribution center, a literary magazine, a quarterly newsletter, an annual four-day symposium, a broadcast service and tape and document archives. For twenty-five years, the Poetry Project has furnished encouragement and resource to poets, writers, artists and performers whose work is experimental, innovative and pertinent - to writing that proposes fresh aesthetic, cultural, philosophical and political approaches to contemporary society. While being committed to the highest standards of artistic excellence and to preserving vital literary traditions, the Poetry Project has always encouraged the participation of new poets with diverse styles. In fact, each year one-third of the writers presenting work at the Project are doing so for the first time.

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EXHIBITION REVIEW

DICK HIGGINS'S BROWN PAINTINGS AT THE EMILY HARVEY GALLERY

Dick Higgins's *Brown Paintings* appropriate antiquated, mysterious engravings, charts and illustrations of magic, alchemy, zoology, ornithology, astrology, religion, and advertising. Most of these paintings depict hands and fingers or straight pointing objects, like writing instruments. For instance, the lower left corner of *The Moving Finger Writes* depicts a hand strapped to a contraption that is seemingly meant to facilitate handwriting. The palm rests on a coil as the hand's three large fingers grasp a stylus that is writing in an illegible script. Above it is a large, the Greek letter sigma Σ a symbol meaning "standard deviation." In a lighter shade of brown, so that these hands seem to fade away, two huge and translucent hands point towards one another. Their index fingers intersect. On the right, a hand with vowels written on its fingers seems to recoil in horror.

What can one make of this? Obviously, Higgins is not dealing with any simple matter of hermeneutics. However, *The Moving Finger Writes*, like the other *Brown Paintings*, cannot help but elicit *ad hoc* Fluxist allegories because any statements that the painting makes are produced by Higgins's visual vocabulary, which obliterates any neat distinction between the verbal and the visual.

After all, what does the moving finger write? The "moving finger," like a cartoon character "speaking" a bubble, appears to create a screen filled with semiotic content. Higgins says that this painting's title alludes to Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*:

The moving finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

However, in Higgins's painting, the writing finger does not move on. Rather, it reproduces other, pointing fingers that collapse one into

THE MELODY NEVER STOPS

(continued from page 4)

melting pot to be extinguished, so that all that is left in the mix is the absence of color: white.

If the writings in "Signs & Significations" detail the consequences of calculated historical amnesia, the celebrations in "The For Series" focus on those cultural figures who sing black history in counterpoint to the Sirens of History: "Miles blows down empty empires/while floating upon the memory/of a Song." The emphasis on sound recalls the transmission of history by oral means; most of the heroes and heroines cited are musicians and singers (Coltrane, Holiday, Rollins, etc.). But singing is for Natambu what writing is for Derrida: a general economy of difference. Thus even the comedian Richard Pryor sings to counter Siren droning, his most infamous moment being an appearance on "The Tonight Show, Featuring Johnny Carson." After "listening nonchalantly to an 85/year old whitewoman...moan on and on about the 'good ole days'," Pryor responded, "YOU MEAN WHEN THEY WERE/LYNCHING NIGGERS, RIGHT?/" This was indeed a rare moment in American popular culture: the sudden irruption of history as a corrective to the nostalgia

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—Manuel Brito, Archive Newsletter

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a number of institutions--the print and electronic media being only the most obvious ones--implicitly valorize when they bemoan the "encroachment" of cultural diversity and multicultural movements.

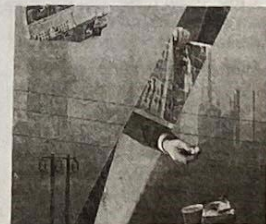
The third cycle, "Paths & Processes," is the most experimental of the three, yoking together various prose pieces (including a mini-novel) with stark cogent bittersweet lyrics. Some of the moments captured in the short lyrics are unnerving. For example, "Late Summer 1988 Brooklyn" ends like this: "Meanwhile a crackdealer asks me if I wanna cop/ 'How did you get way up here?' I ask him." and Natambu's depiction of the confused individual's vulnerability to fantasy is compelling: "a dream can be so/real especially in the night called our feelings..." Like almost all the pieces in this section, this lyric ends, poised at the brink of bitterness and despair.

Natambu's virtuoso performances question the aesthetics of avant-garde and academic poetics, institutionalized or not, to the extent they sift demotic or vernacular lexicons through the fine grating of modernist aesthetics. *The Melody Never Stops* satisfies the appetites of those who have long awaited the appearance of a book like this; it is, I think, a book readers will be reckoning with for years to come.

ΔTyrene Williams

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LONG NEWS: IN THE SHORT CENTURY



Diane DiPrima. David Ratcliff. Chris Tysh. Lewis Warsh.
Fanny Howe. Ron Padgett. Thom Jurek. Joe Groppuso
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AFTER THE DIVORCE: MEETING BY CHANCE IN THE PARK

X.

CRISIS

To be
me is

to be
an "if."

WHY NOT?

Our old map
now had got
too big and

the red sun
has got too
hot and you

say: let the
sea cry and
the sky nap!

DAYS PATH

Dawn grew with many
pale blue dots over
this flat lush land.
Each bird will sing.

Noon came here like
some tall gold myth,
with eyes like fire,
with hair like rays.

Dusk sank down from
that high deck. Zany
bats flew past, then
came this tiny star.

Such deep, such dark
time, wide like seas,
loud with owls that
hoot thus: dear moon.

FIFTH POWER

First: blank paper, stale ideas,
bland tones, blots which glide
slyly along, stuck among reams,
ruins, rains, rasps, Rilke, rouge.
White zones! Polar field! Space!

Still world whole cruel charts
blind every quill, every style,
where every angel calls forth
until skies shout their bleak
hello, their blaze which mocks.

Quiet slaps quiet. Later, maybe,
burnt stems shoot forth, crude
black signs whose frail forms
dance above their empty stage,
speak their brief lines, leave.

Which story tells about these
times where false myths stand
naked? Whose words watch where
light gazes? Whose voice seems
Clear? Which verse halts night?

Relax under these moons. Touch
terra firma. Close these tired
slits which crave their lunar
shade, their white crypt. Sleep
marks these final pages again.

ΔRaphael Rubinstein

THE COMPLETE FAILURE OF EVERYTHING

At the carnival sideshow
the veteran sword swallower has bloodied his
throat.

The snake charmer has been attacked,
his cobras, rattlers, boas
have stung, bitten, and squeezed him to death.
In the tunnel of love the teenage couple
keep their hands at their sides
and look straight ahead,
waiting anxiously for the ride to end.

Out on the rollercoaster people are yawning
while on the merry-go-round children
are screaming in terror.

In the suburbs a man has decided
not to build a deck on the back
of his new house.

His neighbors are at the mall
attending the grand opening
of a multiplex porno theater.

Back in town the crack dealers
and junkie hookers
are giving it away.

The Jehovah's witnesses are wandering around
drunk, cigarettes dangling from their mouths
as they mumble, "Jesus, I just don't know."

In the universities the professors
have taken over the libraries.

They're tearing up the pages
of every book on every shelf
on every subject.

In the nightclub the stripper
with the 72 inch bust is keeping her top on
while the flat chested women
rip open their blouses
and shout, "Va Va Voom,"

to the delight
of the already frenzied crowd.

The billionaire is sitting on a park bench
perusing the want ads
while the panhandler orders dinner

at a fancy French restaurant
for fifty of his closest friends.

Over in the third world
the mercenary is helping to build a hospital
while the Christian missionaries
have just raped and pillaged
in a small town of peasants.

There is snow in the desert
and flowers in the arctic,
wild music in the asylums
and silence in the dance halls,
charity in the casinos

and greed at the Salvation Army,
orgies in the convents
and prayer in the whorehouses.

And what we are witnessing
is the complete failure of everything.

The failure of the rich and the poor,
the failure of the ecstatic and the tortured,
the failure of the loud and the peaceful,
the failure of love and hate
the beautiful and the ugly,
the good and the bad,
the daring and the timid.

It's the failure of the holy to stay holy
and the sinners to keep sinning,
the failure of the rich to stay rich
and the poor to stay poor,
the failure of those who love
and those who hate,
everything failing,
inevitably falling into its opposite,
into its enemy, into its nightmare,
into the end
where the big bang,
having reached its limit,
reverses itself,
with everything you know
falling apart,
here, in the carnival
where the last great act
is to take something,
and through a swift sleight of hand
turn it into nothing
as the bright lights dim
and the merry-go-round
grinds slowly
to a complete
and silent
stop.

ΔJose Padua

INTERVIEW POEM

What does it all begin with
It all begins with two naked people
forchristakes the bible begins with two naked
people

The bible begins with the "word"
and the word was Cop

Cop

u

You

late

Isn't this sex kinda a smarmy thing. You know
not very grown up. Just trying to talk down as a
poet. Pretend to be a pop star

I'm glad you asked me that question. The reason I
wrote this interview poem is I wanted to talk about
two subjects: pleasure, and language as construct.

So

So your question, or criticism, or insult, which is
what it really is, brings us these two points.

What you're really saying is I'm posing. You don't
like the tone I'm using, the sense of game in my
answer, so that it shows that American thing of
like not understanding that language is a construct,

that it is a creation, that it has tone, word
selection, thought development. timing etc.

And you think I'm saying something about
pleasure too

Well really you see I it's the connection,
connection is the wrong word, it's the stickiness
between the two I mean they really go together in
ways language as construct as pleasure. As long as
pleasure can't be talked about the majority of us
will still be slaves.

That's kind of pompous don't you think

Well there you go language as construct

Do you think we should end this poem

interview now

Knowing about the end of the poem is hard, it's not
hard, it's just part of the thing, part of what you got
to do, but you know ending interviews is hard too,

you know interviews they just seem to, well either
there's the scissors, you know just it just blam
stops, or it really pathetically droops out, or it
really ends on some kinda seemingly ridiculous

profound you know dah dah dah note that really
has nothing at all to do with like the rest of the
goings on so, actually poems are like that.

Don't you think this whole thing is kinda self-
conscious

Interviews are self-conscious even if they're taking
place with two people or more (an interview orgy,
my question was wrapped up in your answer which
was intertwined with that statement). The other

thing I really wanted this poem to be about and I
love saying this is what with having just read about
15,000 interviews with like supposedly profound

sixty's stars, you know who I'm talking about, like
sadsack interviews 10 years apart, you know

Questioner: You're profound, you're profound.

Interviewee: No I'm not, No I'm not. What a drag. I

wish people would stop calling me profound. You

know my spit just blows in the wind you know. And

then 10 years later Questioner: Not many people

are calling you profound anymore. Interviewee: I

know. I know. What a drag. Why aren't people

calling me profound anymore. You know I love like

saying this is what the poem's about. I love to say

like I control my spit. Like I gob it up. I decide

how much. I decided to shoot it out and where. You

know what I mean.

That's really kinda disgusting

Well maybe but the point is this poem is about

self-consciousness the importance of self-

consciousness self-consciousness and modernism

and progress, one of the obviously stupid things

about post-modernism is its name, I mean

everybody realizes that, post is stupid, but the

thing is it's on purpose it's a lie, what it really is

and what they're covering up is it's anti-

modernism, anti-self-consciousness, anti-progress,

anti-people, anti what it all begins with, because

really they want to end it

Speaking of end it since this is really where we

started why don't we end it

Are you developing a general theory for how a

interview poem should end

A good interviewer never answers questions,

only asks them

Who said you were a good interviewer

ΔMike Tyler

A LETTER TO THE ACADEMY

in 1974 I was
16 years old
studying chemistry
at the University of Georgia.
I'd go to the lab everyday
at 8am and get to work
mixing, heating, solidifying
chemicals in beakers,
studying their properties
through infrared and
ultraviolet analyses.
I was into science,
mathematics.
I knew calculus and trigonometry,
molecular structure and
nuclear decay.
But I gave it up.
I started reading novels, poetry.
I started writing.
Eventually I forgot
everything I knew about
science, mathematics.
I turned to the study
of literature, I read
Joyce, Eliot, Pound.
I learned the elements
of poetic meter,
the forms of rhetoric.
I eventually forgot
all about these things
as well, and now,
16 years later, there's no
place left for me
in the Academy,
in science or in literature.
But every time I
lift a glass of bourbon
to my lips it's
an experiment
on the effect of chemicals
on the brain.
And every time
I write a sentence
in a drunken state of mind
it's a thesis
on the role
higher education
plays
in the diminishing
of one's soul.

ΔJose Padua

PLAYING FOR MY LOVE (acrostics for Steven)

so I sit and wait
tuned into sound
even now your
voice comes
every syllable pure
new

...

surely goodness and mercy
taken lightly can
eventually spring leaks in
vacuity--pleased--you
enter me and stop
necessary light

...

saccharine is another way
to incite sleep or
verbosity can creep in
every now and then but
never pleases

...

sunning on a Santa Cruz beach
too happy to miss me
endless synchronicity
vibrations from Celtic warriors
entering a California cafe
never stop saying you love me

...

saturday spent in bed sleeping
too tired for anything else
eventually my pulse speeds up
visions--old photographs
emptying out loneliness
numb fingers in my mouth

ΔWanda Phipps

A PRIVATE EMBRACE

James Schuyler, d. 1991

Dear Jimmy Schuyler
How beautiful your poems are.
When I asked Fairfield about them
He spoke of their disjointedness
I asked him whether he associated
That with schizophrenia
He said he did
I thought it a bit naive
Not that Fairfield could ever
Be characterized as that
And lapsed into a complaisant
Dissertation on quantum mechanics

I am amazed that I have given away
Two or three of your books
And will have to buy them again

I am amazed by your courage
As Kenneth would say
To say the things you do
As when you said to a friend
"Can't you be content with your wife and me?"
Would I have published that? What does it
mean,
Too personal? Kenneth says
If it's beautiful, publish it. Or:
If it's beautiful, I publish it.

Thank you for publishing it.

-ΔDavid Shapiro

Headlong the plow
produces the minimum
iates the stirring turbulence
we boo
into the
epithets feocly p'd right v. e. cable truculence a newborn
e pulli a new
Gay Life & Death
section connection no
nger frozen h
not afraid to have the closed paradise between
the trench on
to tear apart the endured flowing bu in

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△

THE MEAT BALL

If you ever want to know
where hamburgers go New Year's Eve
then just ask
me.

△

PHYSIC

A German physicist named Werner Heisenberg formulated the Uncertainty Principle, which states that there is a definite limit to man's ability to measure anything. Nevertheless, when three people tell me I'm drunk, I lie down.

△Mike Topp

THE COURTSHIP OF MICKEY AND MINNIE

It was late.
Mickey had just checked into
one of those bed and breakfast inns
where the tables are mysteriously set
and everyone shares the same toilet.

Suddenly Minnie appeared in the doorway.
Those eyes, those lips, those ears...
he knew he must speak to her.
Minnie walked to the couch and lay down.
"Excuse me," said Mickey. "Wouldn't you
be more comfortable in a bed?"
"I can't sleep alone in a strange room," she
answered.
Now there's an outright invitation, he thought.
"But I really think you should..."
"Who asked you?" growled Minnie.

Mickey backed away and sat down in a chair.
He watched her fall asleep.
She sure is pretty, he thought.
And she really would be more comfortable
sleeping in a bed.
If I carry her upstairs, she'll probably
thank me in the morning.

Mickey bent down and tried to pick her up.
He couldn't budge her.
Lucky for him Minnie was a sound sleeper.
He tried from another angle
but still could not move her.
Looks were deceiving.
Minnie weighed a ton.

Maybe I should just let her sleep here, he thought.
Mickey brushed his lips against her ears
and tiptoed up the stairs to his room.

Breakfast

He waited but she didn't appear.

Lunch

There was no sign of her.

Dinner

He couldn't believe his eyes!
There she was but she was having dinner
with another mouse.

They smiled, they laughed, they flirted,
why they even touched ears.
Mickey was crushed.
He couldn't finish his cheese souffle.

After Dinner Cocktails

Mickey cried into his cafe d'amour.

The Next Day

It was check - out time.
Mickey and Minnie arrived at the counter
at just about the same time.
"Are you next?" she asked.
"No, you go ahead."
Mickey watched in admiration as she methodically
opened her purse and handed the clerk her charge
card.
When she was through she turned
to Mickey and said, "Thanks."

Mickey thought he heard
just a tinge of sadness in her voice.
Maybe she regretted last night.
Maybe she wanted him to pursue her after all.
Mickey rushed to pay his bill,
all the while thinking, maybe she and I can share a
cab,
and then stop off and have breakfast.
If I can just talk to her for two minutes
maybe I can find out her name..

△Vita Jimenez

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A German physicist named Werner Heisenberg formulated the Uncertainty Principle, which states that there is a definite limit to man's ability to measure anything. Nevertheless, when three people tell me I'm drunk, I lie down.

Δ

THE MEAT BALL

If you ever want to know where hamburgers go New Year's Eve then just ask me.

ΔMike Topp

THE POETRY PROJECT, LTD.
St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery
131 East 10th Street (at 2nd Avenue)
New York, NY 10003

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THE POETRY PROJECT, LTD.
St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery

Founded in 1966, the Poetry Project, Ltd. at St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery was the scene of the only joint reading by Robert Lowell and Allen Ginsberg and has been the site of historic memorials to poets Paul Blackburn, Robert Duncan, Charles Reznikoff, Frank O'Hara, Ted Berrigan, and Edwin Denby. Over the years, readers, lecturers and performers have included John Ashberry, John Cage, Sam Shepard, Alice Walker, Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), Virgil Thomson, Barbara Guest, Hugh Kenner, Adrienne Rich, Kenneth Koch, James Schuyler, Yoko Ono, Nicanor Parra, and Patti Smith. Staffed completely by poets, the Poetry Project consistently achieves an integrity of programming that challenges, informs and inspires working writers, while remaining accessible to the general public. The Poetry Project offers a Wednesday night reading series, a Monday night reading/performance series, three weekly writing workshops, a monthly lecture series, a printing and distribution center, a literary magazine, a quarterly newsletter, an annual four-day symposium, a broadcast service and tape and document archives. For twenty-five years, the Poetry Project has furnished encouragement and resource to poets, writers, artists and performers whose work is experimental, innovative and pertinent -- to writing that proposes fresh aesthetic, cultural, philosophical and political approaches to contemporary society. While being committed to the highest standards of artistic excellence and to preserving vital literary traditions, the Poetry Project has always encouraged the participation of new poets with diverse styles. In fact, each year one-third of the writers presenting work at the Project are doing so for the first time.

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