

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

No. 33

1 Mar 1976

Ted Greenwald editor
St. Mark's Church, 2nd Avenue
& Tenth St. New York 10003.

March. All the programs at The Poetry Project continue. The Wed readings are Mar 3 Walter Lowenfels, Mar 10 Nuyorican Poets: Miguel Algarin, Lucky Cienfuegos, Miguel Pinero Mar 17 Bill Corbett & Sidney Goldfarb, Mar 24 Clark Coolidge, Mar 31 Jim Brodey & John Godfrey. The Monday nite readings and performances are Mar 1 Open Reading, Mar 8 Tom Johnson, Mar 15 Leonard Neufeld & Rose Schacht, Mar 22 Mark Muhich & Michael Cooper, Mar 29 Peter Seaton & Martha Wilson. All workshops meet at 7:30 pm and are Paul Violi (Tues), Bill Zavatsky (Thurs), and Ted Greenwald (Fri).

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READINGS ETC: Check your favorite listings for others . . . The Tin Palace, Sat 3pm, 325 Bowery (corner E 2nd & Bowery), Mar 13 New Rivers Press Reading, Mar 20 Inwood Press Reading. Sobossek's, Bowery & 6 St Mar 22 (10 pm) Barbara Baracks. . . Bill Zavatsky & Ron Padgett will read and discuss their translations of Valery Larbaud at Maison Francaise, 560 W 112 St, 8 pm Tues, Mar 2 (NOTE***). . . The Only Child 226 W 79 St, Sundays 3-5 pm. Mar 7 Boruk & Cynthia Henderson. . . Chumley's, Bedford & Barrow, Sat 2 pm Mar 6 2nd Anniversary Reading, Mar 13 Nancy Ancrum & Robert Kramer, Mar 20 Issac Fergusson & Dan Foley, Mar 27 Rochelle Ratner & Frances Whyatt. . . The Clocktower, 108 Leonard St, Thurs, 8:30 pm Mar 4 Tony Towle, Mar 11 Andy Grundberg. . . The 92nd St Y, Mon, 8 pm Mar 1 Galway Kinnell & Maxine Kumin.

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LIFE IN (MIS-)PRISION: Reading John Ashbery

Here goes. Two years ago I read a highly laudatory article on John Ashbery by the critic Harold Bloom (Salmagundi, Spring-Summer 1973) which left me depressed--dismayed is really the word--rather than encouraged. In the article Bloom called Ashbery one of the two strongest poets "in mid-career" (the other being Ammons) and "something close to a great poet." Which on the face of it seems wonderful; here was an influential critic, at Yale, welcoming one of the most striking members of the avant-garde (and a poet revered, I don't think that's too strong a word, by younger experimental poets all over) into the pantheon while still "in mid-career." (Some of Bloom's other favorites give one real pause.) The problem was, and is, the reasons for the acceptance, in fact the whole approach--one designed, it seems to me, not only to turn off anyone who might really be interested in modern poetry but to do an important disservice to all concerned, Ashbery, poets, poetry, even criticism.

Bloom makes some interesting points in the article, which is really quite heroic given the difficulty of the poetry; though he never manages to say exactly why Ashbery is one of the privileged "strong" poets (other than to hold him up tautologically as an exemplar of the underlying theory). He speaks perceptively of Ashbery's "tacitly rejecting a poetry of privileged moments or phrases," and he also shows savvy in dealing with particular poems like "Clepsydra," which he describes as sitting "on the page as a forbiddingly solid wall of prior . . . turning a Shelleyan-Stevensian self-referential quality into an absolute impasse." But, characteristically, he manages to subvert, and swamp, the praise with one of the most elaborated (not elaborate) critical apparatuses to appear in modern times. The key-note of Bloom's approach (expounded at great length in The Anxiety of Influence, and sequels which I haven't read) is the idea that "strong" poets unconsciously misread ("misprision" is his term),

"swerve away from," even kill off their poetic fathers, as a matter of poetic survival. It's certainly an intriguing idea to say the least--unless, maybe, you happen to be a violent anti-Freudian. (Anyway, if it's all unconscious, how can you dispute it?) As a matter of fact, it begins to seem like a truism. Staking out territory is every poet's survival problem, almost by definition, and being influenced and then transforming or shedding the influence, sometimes consciously, is one of the motor activities beneath every poetic "career" (which word, as in "mid-career," I realize has been bugging me. Did Keats have a mid-career? Rimbaud? I'm "between careers."). That doesn't mean that either poetry or individual poems can be reduced to influence anxiety. (There are a lot of other anxieties at large for inspirational purposes.) It does mean that once the gun is loaded, there are innumerable opportunities to fire it, regardless of how helpful, or wrongheaded, or boring that will be.

With such a "serious" notion of poetry, it isn't surprising that Bloom's aim is directed at what is--what looks--serious. (The look of seriousness is a little like "the look of love," it can make you turn off your radio.) If your method is primarily conceptual, then you spend your time with what can be conveniently conceptualized (not "The Grapevine," not "Leaving the Atocha Station" or "Europe"). And you spend your time, or most of it, paraphrasing or theme tracing. Of course there's nothing wrong with that in itself; it's useful. Ashbery, after The Tennis Court Oath, does deal in concepts, and he is serious, and very difficult (though perhaps not as difficult as he can be made to seem). The nuances of feeling that are worked through in "The System," for example, require study, not just reading. But all good poets are serious, even the funniest or apparently frivolous. (Once when Larry Fagin had showed me a new manuscript of his, I said, "You're getting serious!" to which he replied, "I'm always serious.") The point is that poets aren't serious only when they look it; nor are they necessarily or only at their best then.

Another thing I have a feeling Bloom does--and it seems strange to say it--is pay too much attention to Ashbery the explicator of his own poems, the author who steps in like the narrator of an old-fashioned novel to tell us what he is or isn't doing. (Doubly strange in that Bloom's book is dedicated to W.K. Wimsatt--what happened to the "intentional fallacy"?) Ashbery's poetry is filled with talk and some of the talk certainly is about the poetry itself. But the self-deflations, the undercutting, even the explanations can't, it seems to me, be taken at face value. (Maybe three-quarter profile.) The tone is too wry, the selfconsciousness (artistic) too acute. Often the overt subject matter seems more of a screen, far from all that is there; the "explications" are like tracks made with snowshoes: there's too much underneath, they're too much of the moment, to be satisfied with them. If there is a genuine "apology" at any point (for example, in "The Skaters"), the best bet, I think, is to take it as modesty--even, possibly, a momentary insecurity; brilliance, after all, is no defense against anxiety. But Ashbery's no more sorry about what he's written than Williams was about the plums--or than we are. "Mild effects" indeed. For a critic with one foot in the unconscious to be led by the conscious in the poetry is a little too convenient. And it may be what makes him overlook other things.

Bloom canonizes Ashbery's "putting it all in," from "The Skaters" on (in The Tennis Court Oath) he left it all out, though the it tersely enough tells what Bloom somehow won't see), primarily the banalities, the cliches. But the putting in strategy goes for ideas as well, which ups the ante tremendously. If he is a surrealist at all, Ashbery might be called a surrealist of the intellect: it is ideas as much as images which are allowed to spill out, as images do in dreams; which is tantamount to a total trusting of the unconscious. There is, moreover, a kind of snowball effect (this is January) in which each discovery seems to beget new ones: unconscious and conscious fuse into something like an extended epiphany--which paradoxically resists explanation. It is almost as if Ashbery were playing with ideas emotionally or sensuously, as a child might, rather than conceptually which we always assumed was the only way. And accepting the inevitable mysteries resulting from such a procedure. That the result is both emotionally and conceptually rich, despite being "unedited," is his genius. This way of working, it occurs to me, is related to overt use of collage. In "collaging" from himself, as it were, he makes explicit what is operating undercover in selecting from children's books, newspapers, etc., namely the role of the unconscious. At the very least, he makes things too complex for neat "exegesis"--possibly that sort of criticism, with

which we have become familiar, just won't work where there is such a mingling of truths, half-truths, truisms, heard remarks, philosophical speculation, folksy wisdom, cornball nonwisdom, etc. He's too willing to write anything.

In fact, it strikes me that Ashbery is one of the most self-indulgent writers who ever lived. Can you imagine writing this, and leaving it?

Leading liot act to foriage is activity
Of Chinese philosopfer here on Autumn Lake thoughtfully
inserted in
Plovince of Quebec

("On Autumn Lake")

Similarly, six lines into the long, marvelous, and very serious poem "Grand Galop" a dopey school lunch menu is allowed to materialize, replete with "sloppy joes," "scalloped corn," all those things we used to lump together as "shit on toast." "On Autumn Lake" is not Ashbery's best poem ("Grand Calop" is close) but it is, I think one of the clues to his brilliance. He fools around; he lets things into print; he continually does what you're not allowed to do. Of course it doesn't work every time. But by trusting himself absolutely, by indulging himself--seeing what's really inside, feelings, images, ideas, fragments--he's able to arrive at those illuminations that seem to abound in his poems. In "Autumn Lake" he tells himself, "stop it!" Then: "I will not." And that's that; it stays. Bad taste? Horrible. But it's emblematic: here, as elsewhere, the willingness to write anything is virtually a *modus operandi*.

As far as the "leaving out" goes, the mode of The Tennis Court Oath, Bloom's outright dismissal seems to me a selective blindness. (He has an interesting psychological analysis of the reductive impulse in poetry in his book, but for some reason won't extend the canon to include modern-day fragmentation and ellipsis.) The disjunctive, the nondiscursive in general, along with the non-earnest, seem somehow to elude (annoy?) him. I think he misses the disjunction in the more recent poems too, where it is masked by the pervading discursive tone--almost as if he would close the gaps by force. And the Great Tradition, or its current version, rolls on, stretched a bit to accommodate Ashbery but not really changed over as it should be by one of the masters of 20th-century art. Or (to stabilize the metaphor), the critical mill keeps on turning, satisfied for the moment, certain to be unhappy an hour later, and in the meantime finding more undigested morsels than it bargained for or can even acknowledge. (By the way--if the Tradition needs a new third baseman it goes out and gets one; it doesn't take a pitcher and make him over!)

Wasn't the positive contribution of the New Critics to get attention back to the poem? I guess, finally, that's what really has been bothering me for so long. With the laying on of influence-theory, the poetry--modern poetry, what we're all interested in--seems a kind of poor relation, understood when it is really looked at (though often in dismayingly academic style) but more often the vehicle for whatever it is the critic needs to get off his chest. It becomes an excuse. As if the difficulty, the modernism Bloom acknowledges were merely a tic--or worse, something perverse, put in the way of the critic to make it hard for him to get down to the ideas that matter. So that Bloom's avowed hope for a more workable practical criticism seems to me ultimately ironic: however interesting his theory may be to structuralists or other combatants of criticism, he's not really dealing with the work of art. As idolatrous as his praise of Ashbery seems sometimes, it hides the reasons for its being so. It occurred to me on first reading the Salmagundi article that there is a principle at work in reading poetry. (I'm sure there are many!) I thought to call it the Attention Principle, on the idea that attention of a certain kind, when, paradoxically, it is too professional, too earnest, too "aggressive" maybe, produces a Heinsenbergs swerving away of the poem from the reader: the more erudition present, the bigger the swerve. Maybe I mean the Humility Principle.² In the case of a poet as brilliant as Ashbery, to have central features of the poetry--e.g., the humor, the parody, the sheer play which generates so much else--omitted is missing the mark, hamartia. (Bloom is catching.) And since Bloom's shtick is the anxiety

of influence, influence becomes the culprit--along, unfortunately, with Wallace Stevens, who is thrown at us with such persistence that we begin to want to kill him off. What is at first a seemingly important insight, and is then elaborated into a dragnet--it's really a one-joke show, for all its spinning out--ends by so overloading the poems that one wonders if anybody who hasn't will have the courage to read them.

As far as Ashbery's personal anxiety of influence is concerned, Stevens (and through him Whitman) is made the efficient cause, the poetic father. Which of course makes sense. Ashbery was influenced by Stevens, who is a great poet, and who needed to be swerved away from if Ashbery wasn't to be merely a disciple. It makes additional sense, though, when you consider Stevens' seriousness, his subject matter. Like seems to engender like, though here the like is the poetry and the like is the criticism. Ashbery was also influenced by Raymond Roussel and John Cage (as importantly, I think, as by Stevens), Mallarme, Reverdy, Rilke, Wheelright, Marianne Moore, Henry Green, Henry James...maybe Henry Green is his poetic uncle, then de Chirico could be the poetic godfather? Ashbery has done things Stevens didn't dream of doing, as far as I know--which isn't to take away from Stevens: but which is to make reducing Ashbery to a survival swerve something less than illuminating. Undoubtedly Ashbery picked up prose tone from Stevens (probably from Auden too), but the changing of the terms of discourse, the dead ends, misdirections, non sequiturs are as much from the others--who of course are outside the tradition. He gets sidetracked and the siding are frequently as interesting as the terminus, are in fact ends themselves. Which certainly adds to the mystery, but somehow doesn't detract from the emotional resonance. The paraphrasable content, it seems strange to have to insist, isn't all that's going on. In a real sense Ashbery is the post-modern and Stevens merely (historically) the modern. Stevens even begins to seem traditional with his reiterations and iambic pentameter, for all his art about art. (As Leo Steinberg said of Jasper Johns: he forces you to lump Franz Kline and de Kooning with Rembrandt and Giotto.)

Ashbery seems almost to change the terms of the avant-garde, by staying there. I think it's because he's always outstripping himself, not only his poetic ancestors. (Can you be your own father?) it's because he doesn't--as I think Bloom and, essentially, Stevens do--draw interest on an original way of working, an initial discovery. He transforms the capital, continually. Or rather, he transforms base materials (an alchemist, obviously) into capital and then, since his resources are so large, can keep drawing on capital. Among the poems in which he transforms "base materials" from conventional writing are "Idaho" (narrative structure, pulp fiction), "Into the Dusk Charged Air" (almanac language, development), "Farm Implements and Rootabagas in a Landscape" (subject matter, forms, tone), "Rivers and Mountains" (continuity, unlikely sources): all the ways, and there are a lot more, one is not supposed to use language if one is aiming at poetry. Which of course is a part of his genius. Bloom, seeing the poet's dilemma of what's left to be done, seems not to accept the discoveries once they are made. In the fifties, when Ashbery began, one of the things left to do was to leave out. In the climate of serious, high-toned and academic verse that had poetry gasping for air, it was left to be anti-academic and irreverent like the poets in California and at Black Mountain and anti-academic and irreverent like the poets in New York. It was left, as well, to fool around, to be funny; to see what could happen, rather than to receive or pre-form.

It seems to be the rule, of late, that good poets shy away from the real business of literary criticism. David Shapiro is an obvious exception. (See his illuminating piece on Ashbery in Field, Fall 1971; also the December Newsletter.) Maybe poets nowadays are too aware of the unconscious sources of their strengths, and unwilling to risk close proximity either to the poetry of others or to their own rationality, for fear that the unconscious will draw back and hide (like getting dried mucus out of a baby's nostril--you really have to wait for the sneeze to come). And since poetry came out of the schools in the fifties, it's been reluctant to go back. But academic criticism apparently never left. It's probably unfair of me to make Bloom bear the weight of all my pique, although I suspect he'll survive it (just as I suspect I'm aiming elsewhere and more broadly as well). I hear that in academic circles he is a maverick of sorts. But by perpetuating the primacy of everything except the poetry, it seems to me he is working to close the windows again, to undermine all the gains. And to further Freudianize us (instead of leaving us to do that for ourselves, which we all do sooner or later anyway,

probably) is to extend the dragnet throughout space until things get pretty claustrophobic--while the poems themselves remain closed off, merely intriguing. Although there are exceptions --Hugh Kenner comes immediately to mind--I have a feeling lit. criticism for example, the kind that looks at the art, doesn't let psychology or history have (lose) its head. I don't mean formalism. If Ashbery exemplifies certain unavoidable truths about all of us, well then he does. But he's also doing things in poems such as "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror" and Three Poems which are so varied, so new, so potentially rewarding, they require the very best kind of attention. Assuring him a place in the Tradition in the other way is better than not --but it's also a little like Lawrence and the snake at his water trough: a missed opportunity. A misprision.

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We don't, after all, really know how poetry (or painting or music) works on us, though we like to think so. Describing formal characteristics, or one's own responses, strictly speaking doesn't really approximate the work of art--it only makes visible certain ways we've learned to talk about art. It's like being absolutely knocked out by a show of paintings and trying to make someone else know why. You can talk a great deal, and talk well, but the gulf between the paintings and the talk is absolute. Moreover the terms of the praise often apply to art that doesn't mean nearly as much to you. This isn't to say (pretentiously!) that criticism is futile. It's to suggest that overconfidence can be self-defeating; and that developing this or that meaning or set of meanings out of this poem or series of poems is at best a clever, possibly helpful paraphrase and at worst a thorough distortion. Even with the well-known anthology poems, the real reasons some move us to tears (Cf. "So we'll go no more a-roving," Wyatt's "They flee from me"), or whatever, exist beneath and apart from our conceptualizing; the textbook terms apply--music, image, association (all the ones that turn so many students off poetry for life)--but their effect in concert, in the poem, remains unutterable. Art--at least as this goes to press--is still magical. I hope this doesn't sound like know-nothingism. The point is--if what I'm suggesting is right--that professional criticism is left on rather shaky ground (sort of like a physician who isn't really sure of the difference between health and disease). But it seems to me, better shaky than papier-mache: better to fumble around and dig out possibilities, and be aware they're just that, than be secure and systematize. The poem is more important than all its interpreters. (Charles North, 1/20/76)

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BOOKS & MAGS: Joe Ribar, Midwestern, The Alternative Press, Detroit. . . The Coldspring Journal, #9, Box 303, Cherry Valley, NY 13320 (\$1.50) (Guest editor, Victor Bockris, lots of surprises). . . A Hundred Posters #1, Other Publications, 68 Downer Ave, Dorchester, MA 02125 (Newsletter style poetry mag). . . Butt, Fall Issue, 11 Vinyl St, Brighton, MA 02146. . . Three Fire Exits: Issue with Michael Palmer, Bruce Andrews etc; Susan Howe, Chanting the Crystal Sea; Jay Boggis, Pure Ignorance, 9 Columbus Sq, Boston, MA 02116. . . Kite, Greg Weinlein, Book Review Editor, 20 Kinderhook St, Chatham, NY 12037. . . Phyllis Rosenzweig, Seventeen Poems, O Press, c/o Lally, 138 Sullivan St, NYC 10012 (\$1). . . Rochelle Ratner is writing a "small press" column for Soho Weekly News. All notices, correspondence, etc to 50 Spring St, NYC 10012. . . Anne Waldman, Dreams & Journals, Stonehill, NYC. . . The End #10, Box 798, Monte Rio, CA 95462 is looking for crit prose, reviews, interviews.

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Gossip from the Vine alongside the Shithouse

Broke & tired of writing for nothing? Well, hear this - in 1974 book publishing became a \$3.5 billion industry, up 10% from 1973 and over 20% from 72, and in the summer of 75, after a slow start, sales were up 5-10% from 1974... Putnam (including Coward McCann & Berkeley Publishing) had in 72 a merger going with Harcourt Brace, but it didn't work out... a year later there was a tentative agreement that ITT would take over but that too flopped... ITT owns Bobbs-Merrill... the tall story dept's talk that RCA doesn't interfere with Random House's editorial decisions, an editor at Random was in process of accepting a ms and then didn't take it because The General (Sarnoff) didn't like it... Gulf & Western has just bought Simon &

Shuster, and when I asked my source how the S&S editors felt about that, he said, and I quote, they don't mind, they're an upward moving lot... I asked him if S&S is in money trouble... oh no, he replied, there's the most successful house in the city, but, I asked again, why did the S&S owners sell, then? to which he replied, and get this, he said and I quote, well they're getting old and they want to make a pile before they go... Penguin Books has just bought Viking ... Viking has money problems... might be a good move (I'll let you know -- as I see it, of course, you know me)... a major NY art gallery is considering a certain small publisher who the readers of this newsletter know, to handle the publication of a book of the lifelong works of a famous American painter who died a few years ago, but the contract hasn't been signed, so I can't spill the beans, they never have any toiletpaper in this Goddamned place, never, what a drag, oh! there's a copy of Something Happened. That'll do!

More to follow - next issue! Ah! (FD 2/8/76)

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MORE: From Doris Green Editions, Box 798, Monte Rio, CA 95462: Pat Nolan, Counterintelligence (Prose poems, with gene charts by Opal L. Nations) & Ellen Appel, Lana Michaleczko, Gail King, Playing at the (\$2) Plaza (\$1). . . Street Fiction Press, 201 East Liberty, Ann Arbor, Mich 48108, looking for poetry and prose for The Periodical Lunch. . . Larry Zirlin, Sleep, Wyrd Press, Warwick, NY . . . David K. Kermani, John Ashbery: A Comprehensive Bibliography, Garland Publishing, Inc., 545 Madison Ave, NYC 10022 (\$20) (This book is fun to read & a must for all Ashbery poetry lovers. Very very complete and up-to-date.) . . . Slit Wrist #1, 435 E.76 St/#4B, NYC 10021 (\$2) (long prose works). . . Provincetown Poets, 216 Bradford St, Provincetown, MA 02657 . . . Sixpack #9, from Book People, 2940 7th St, Berkeley, CA 94710 (\$5). . . From Momo's Press, Box 14061, S.F., CA 94114: Stephen Vincent, The Ballad of Artie Bremer (\$2) & Jessica Tarahata Hagedorn, Dangerous Music (\$3.50). . . Shankpainter #12, The Work Center Press, 24 Pearl St, Provincetown, MA 02657.

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GEORGE SCHNEEMAN, painting at Holly Solomon Gallery

The painter takes people from their apartments and into the gallery. The canvas is white behind his portrait figures; there is a window box maybe, or the chair, or the Gem Spa out a window, coffee cup on the sill -- but not more. Sometimes he has not painted the chair or sofa supporting part of the sitter's weight. The colors are very light, almost washed over. This softens the edge of flesh or clothing against the canvas. The figure vanishes into the white and escapes out of it. The figure seems to float near the canvas. Our eye focuses it in and out, sees it at more than one distance in or from the canvas. There is something slightly frightening about the extent to which the figure is not there; but at the same time an intimacy, that the person exists there solidly if not substantially, with the ability to move and evoke. He has settled on only what he saw necessary to each personality, has painted it without adding to it, has let us carry these people away with us like charms. (Alan Davies)

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MISC: Robert Kushner, Persian Line: Part II, Holly Solomon Gallery, 392 W. Bwy, Mar 6-24. . . Wed, Mar 3, WBAI, Interview with Alex Katz. . . The Newsletter is partially funded by a CCLM grant. . . BOOK FAIR: The Third New York Book Fair, an exposition of small press publishers, will be held on Apr 30, May 1 & 2, Fri thru Sun, from 10am - 10pm. The event will be held at Lincoln Center in an underground waiting room. For exact info call Suzanne Zavrian (212) 749-5906. . . DANSPACE, Mar 30 8:30 pm, Suzanne Harris, at St Mark's Church. . . Ed Friedman appearing Mar 12 at 9pm at the Jolly Munk.

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10 best movies seen in '75: Might Makes Right (Fassbinder), Romantic Englishwoman (Losey), A Date with Judy (MGM), Carriage Trade (Sonbert), Shockproof (Sirk), The Invitation (Goretta), Delius (Russell), Rude Awakening (Sonbert), La Rupture (Chabrol), Sleep My Love (Sirk).

10 best new (not reissue) records heard in '75: Dollar Brand-Ode to Duke Ellington (Japanese Phillips), Steve Lacy-School Days (Emanem), Cecil Taylor-Silent Tongues (Arista/Freedom), Ellington-This One's for Blanton, w/Ray Brown (Pablo), Lee Konitz & Red Mitchell-"I Concentrate on You" (Steeplechase), Mingus-Changes One and Two (Atlantic), Basie-For the First Time (Pablo), Bud Powell-Bud in Paris (Xanadu), Dexter Gordon-The Apartment (Steeplechase), S.Lacy & M.Waldron-Journey Without End (Japanese Victor). (Duncan Hines)

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Michael Goldberg showed paintings and paperworks at the Cunningham Ward Gallery, 94 Prince (paperworks on view through February). The paintings are off-circular and semi-circular mandala-like images in jet black metallic pigments, crusted and meticulously detailed, suggesting a slow and decisive tempo of composition. The effect is Japanese-Bronx, a grim contemplative earthiness of quite some beauty. The paperworks are more on the Karate side. Woodburning tools are used on heavy French paper, mostly with mandalar motifs, to carve aggressive and graceful damage. (John Godfrey)

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PLACES: DETROIT: Hour-long weekly radio poetry show WDET. . . CHICAGO: At The Body Politic, Mar 1 Pat McPhee & C.A. Lofton, Mar 8 Paul Carroll & Barry Schechter, Mar 15 Pass Holder's Reading, Mar 22 Fay Kicknosway, Mar 29 Maureen Owen & Rebecca Wright. . . AUSTIN: Laguna Gloria Art Museum reading Mar 7 John Bigley, Sandra Lynn, Loris Essary. Also visual poetry exhibit sponsored by O. Henry Museum. . . DENVER: Muddy Waters of the Platte coffeehouse, 2557 15th St, Sun (8:30 pm) Mar 21 Peter Michelson & Michael Brownstein, Mar 28 Phoebe MacAdams & Jack Collum, program each Sun... . CAMBRIDGE: Blacksmith Readings (Brattle St) 8:15, Mar 1 Robert Pinsky, Mar 8 Alan Dugan, Mar 15 Alice James Books authors. 100 Flowers (Inman Sq) 8pm, every Wed, Mar 31 French translations by Ed Cates, Ron Vachon, Tony Fusco. . . BOSTON: Boston Center for the Arts Readings, all Fri 8-10pm, 547 Tremont St. . . SAN FRANCISCO: The Poetry Center at SF State U, Mar 3 Victor Hernandez Cruz & Dick Gallup, Mar 5 Michael McClure & Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Mar 10 David Henderson & Lorenzo Thomas, Mar 17 Diane Di Prima & Lenore Kendal, Mar 24 Jack Micheline & Janine Vega, Mar 31 Rebecca Brown, Maureen Owen, Rebecca Wright.

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In the coming months Adventures in Poetry will issue a selection in English of Max Jacob's Le Cornet a Des (The Dice Cup). Reader who wish to "bone up" on Jacob might take a look at Max Jacob and the Poetics of Cubism by Gerald Kamber (The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971). Although Kamber's study has its objectionable moments, it has its high points, too, and it promotes a lot of adjacent thinking on the part of the reader. This unheralded piece of scholarship published at \$8.50 in hardcover, is now available for \$1.98 at the Barnes & Noble Annex, directly across the street from the main Barnes & Noble store. [By the way, is Barnes & Noble behind the Wise Discount Books, next to 8th St Bookshop, undercutting best-seller prices? B&N doesn't give much room to poetry!!!] Take the escalator to the second floor, turn left and walk into the next large room, where you will see numerous tables piled high with books. You will eventually find the Jacob study on a table just ahead of you and to the right, bearing a sign that reads, if I remember correctly, "Books of Scholarly Interest." (A Friend)

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Welcome, Moses Edwin Clay Berkson, 9 lbs. 1 oz, Jan 23, 1976.

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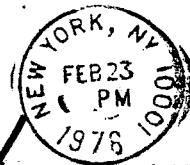
Silencer

Can't see the house at all
in the foggy night
except for the gold windows
hazy beams that as you
pass from room to room
shift like the rays of a dark star
and I could be one slow snake
tired of shedding its skin again
and again and never changing
How I wish I were on a sea
that's the color of your left eye
following you as my memory follows me
black hours passed from wave to wave
cast off an idea
another earth hung beside this one
visible as fruit in the darkness
and the moon is its pit
and I drink to it
I may as well be on my way back
to the Canary Islands
to peer down at that one and only house
in the crater of an extinct volcano
watching a distant family
hang up laundry in their round yard

Paul Violi

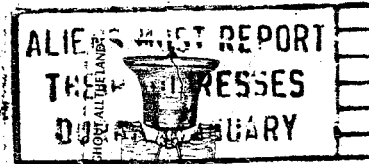
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