

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER
No. 77 Oct/Nov 1980
Greg Masters, Editor
St. Mark's Church
2nd Ave. & 10th St. NYC 10003

READINGS AT ST. MARK'S: Wednesday Nights hosted by Bernadette Mayer & Bob Holman:
November 5 - Barbara Guest & Charlotte Carter. November 12 - Robert Creeley.*
November 19 - Harris Schiff & Tom Weatherly. November 26 - Christopher Dewdney &
Bob Rosenthal.

Monday Nights hosted by Rochelle Kraut & Bob Rosenthal: November 3 - Open Reading.
November 10 - Annie Witkowsky & John Godfrey. November 17 - Fleming Meeks & Bob Holman.
November 24 - Lost Texans Inc. presents Patriarchy w/ Eileen Myles, Barb McKay, Barbara
Barg, Rose Lesniak, Ann Rower, Rochelle Kraut, Lorna Smedman, Vicki Hudspith.

WORKSHOPS AT ST. MARK'S: FREE!!!

Maureen Owen: every Tuesday at 7 pm, at the Third St Music School, 235 East 11 St.
Steve Carey: every Friday at 7:30 pm, at the Third St Music School, 235 East 11 St.
*Special Workshop with Robert Creeley, at the New School for Social Research, 66 West 12 St,
at 1:30 pm in Room 604.

Calling all pros: The next issue of The World will be a prose issue. Please submit
stories, essays, letters, lists, dreams, plays, journal excerpts, prose poems by Nov 15
to Ann Rower, Editor, The World, The Poetry Project, St Mark's Church, 2nd Ave & 10th St,
NYC 10003. SASE, but of course.

Community Meeting, Advisory Board Election: The first Community Meeting of the season
will be held on Saturday, December 13, noon-2, in the Parish Hall. Community Elections
will be held from 11 am- 1 pm the same day, the same place, to choose two members of the
poetry community to serve on the Project Advisory Board. Self-nominations for these
positions are due in writing in the Project Office by Monday, Nov 19. Call the office
for more information 674-0910.

William Burroughs' NAKED LUNCH is being performed chapter by chapter at the New York
Art Theatre, 116 East 14 Street, NYC, Saturday evenings at 8 and 10 o'clock thru Dec 20.
Each show comprises a complete chapter of the book. Currently scheduled are "A.J.'s
Annual Party" and "The Hospital." Adaptation and direction are by Donald Sanders,
sets and costumes by Vanessa James. For further information and reservations call 228-1470.
\$6 for 1 show, \$10 for 2 shows. Frances LeFevre (Waldman) plays the 'spirit of junk'.

OUTER LIMITS

Entomologist Ben Fields
was experimenting with bees-
and now they are going to
experiment with him

-Steve Levine

BOOKS & MAGAZINES RECEIVED

Ark by Ronald Johnson: North Point Press, 850 Talbot Ave, Berkeley, CA 94706, \$12.50c, \$6p...The Pillow Book of Carol Tinker: Cadmus Editions, Box 4725, Santa Barbara, CA 93103, \$5...Coming Attractions: An Anthology of American Poets in their Twenties, ed. Dennis Cooper: Little Caesar Press, 3373 Overland Ave. #2, LA, CA 90034, \$4...Fruit and Government by Mira Teru Kurka: Permian Press, 411 Clinton St., Brooklyn, NY 11231, \$2...Cross-Fertilization: The Human Spirit as Place, ed. Morty Sklar: The Spirit That Moves Us Press, PO Box 1585, Iowa City, Iowa 52244, \$2.50...The Last Gas Station and Other Stories by Tom Clark: Black Sparrow Press, PO Box 3993, Santa Barbara, CA 93105, \$6p, \$14c...Awkward Song by Allan Kornblum: The Toothpaste Press, PO Box 546, West Branch, Iowa 52358, \$5 (reviewed next issue)...Women & Men by Paul Verlaine: Stonehill, 1140 Ave of Americas, NYC, NY 10036, \$7.95p, \$14.95h (joyous wet erotic celebrations, bilingual)...Hearts in Space by Maureen Owen: Kulchur Foundation, 888 Park Ave, NYC, NY 10021, \$3.50p, \$7h...from Station Hill Press, Barrytown, NY 12507: The Marchen Cycle by Bruce McClelland, \$4; Facing the Music by Paul Auster, npl and White Spaces also by Paul Auster, npl; The Lich Gate by Clayton Eshleman, \$2.50; Horse Sacrifice by Charles Stein, npl; Letargo by Frank Samperi, npl; Ann Margret Loves You by Franz Kamin, \$3.95; With Ruth in Mind by Anselm Hollo, npl...from Persea Books, 225 Lafayette St, NYC, NY 10012; Poems by Paul Celan (selected; bilingual, Michael Hamburger, trans.), \$20c; The Poems of Laura Riding - A New Edition of the 1938 Collection by Laura (Riding) Jackson, \$20h...Sonnets by Tom Weigel: Accent Editions, 446 E 78 St, NYC, NY 10021, npl...The Temple by Janet Hamill: Telephone Books, Box 672, Old Chelsea Sta., NYC, NY 10011, \$2.50...Sea Air in a Grave Ground Hog Turns Toward by Rochelle Ratner: 'Gull Books, 1736 E 53 St, Brooklyn, NY 11234, \$3.95...Homage to Frank O'Hara, ed. Bill Berkson & Joe LeSueur: Creative Arts Book Co, 833 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94710, \$8.95 (expanded edition of this anthology of poems & memoirs by writers, artists & friends closest to O'Hara, plenty of photos)...Visitor: Jack Kerouac in Old Saybrook by John Clellon Holmes: unspeakable visions of the individual, Vol. 11, PO Box 439, California, PA 15419, \$8 (this small sad remembrance culled from journals tells us of Kerouac's last visits with the author- old friend & writer Holmes- but merely chronicles the desperation & frenzy of drinking-talking episodes failing to give the intimate portrait we'd expect by concentrating on the amount of booze rather than the conversation)...Legend by Bruce Andrews, Ray DiPalma, Ron Silliman, Steve McCaffery & Charles Bernstein: L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, 464 Amsterdam Ave, NYC, NY 10024, \$5...

Bingo, ed Susie Timmons, 346 E 13 St #7, NYC, NY 10003, contribution (S. Levine, Weigel, B. Rosenthal, Krät, Padgett, Krakauer, Cataldo, more)...Bezoar Mendicant, Box 535, Gloucester, MA 01930, cont. (ONE LEAF AT NO TIME by Robert Kelly)...Paris Review #78, 541 E 72 St, NYC, NY, 10021, \$3.50 (Voznesensky interviewed & converses with Allen Ginsberg, poems by Dick Barnes, Tom Disch, John Koethe, Mallarme, more)...Telephone 16, ed. Maureen Owen, Box 672, Old Chelsea Sta, NYC, NY 10011, \$2.50 (dozens of contributors)...United Artists 11, ed. Bernadette Mayer & Lewis Warsh, 172 E 4 St, NYC, NY 10009, \$2 (Notley, Berrigan & Ginsberg, F. Howe, Masters, Collom, Kushner, R. Banks, Berrigan, Denby + editors)...The Niagra Magazine 12/13, ed. Neil Baldwin, 195 Hicks St #3B, Brooklyn, NY 11201, \$2 ('Poets of NYC')...Mag City 10, ed. Lenhart, Scholnick, Masters, 437 E 12 St #26, NYC, NY 10009, \$2 (Myles, Padgett, Rower, Brownstein, Hanson, Burckhardt, Hughes, Nolan, Fyman, Fischer, editors)...

* * * *

The Second National Hispanic Book Fair and Writers Festival will be held at the Houston Public Library from 9 to 9, Nov 7 & 8. The event is sponsored by Revista Chicano-Riquena, a magazine & publisher working out of the University of Houston who have published books by local writers Miguel Algarin, Tato Laviera & Miguel Pinero. The public is invited to attend and participate free of charge, call 713-749-4721 for info.

Dick Barnes will be reading with Robert Mezey on Nov 13 at the Donnell Library, 20 W 53 St, NYC at 6:30 pm, admission free. On Dec 4 The Poems of Ezra Pound will be read by James Laughlin same time & place.

So Going Around Cities, New & Selected Poems 1958-1979 by Ted Berrigan (Blue Wind Press, Berkeley 1980), \$7.95p.

The Author's Note tells us these poems are arranged in approximate chronology. For those who read them where we could find them & speculated about date & circumstance of composition, they are now conveniently placed. Here it's our privilege to watch the poet career full speed. "First Poems" prepare for what's to follow. The sudden eloquence of "The Sonnets" surprises anyhow.

Regretfully, only 17 poems from The Sonnets are included in this selection. Reprint of the rest waits for some publisher to wise up. Many Happy Returns is included in full, slightly rearranged & adding a poem each from In The Early Morning Rain & Nothing For You. Along with "In The Wheel" (poems from Ann Arbor), I find it the most successful of the sections the book is divided into, being as well as an accumulation of fine poems a happy unit. Own favorite is the distracted, severe, peculiarly golden "Winter In The Country". Each section includes poems one is thankful to get. Many of the books in which they first appeared are out of print or reappearing on bookstore shelves only with the distribution of this volume.

The final section & most of "Easter Monday" will be new to readers unfamiliar with United Artists, Mag City & other stapled magazines. Because I didn't have a copy before, I was especially delighted to get A Boke, the saga of a poet on reading tour in the Midwest. I heard Ted Berrigan read this several years ago, but as sometimes happens listening to lengthy unfamiliar work that's more than a string of jokes, I didn't fully appreciate its narrative & emotional precision. Characteristically Ted's poems engage immediately.

Life is Never boring when you are Tarzan of the Apes

e.g. You step out from behind a bush
and you say

"Yes, I am M'sieur Tarzan"

(from "Tambourine Life", p. 102)

A lark like "Tambourine Life" displays funny & formal genius. A Boke, denser, invites less urgently, but rewards extended attention with the same considerable wit.

Ted Berrigan's wit is of that quality distinguished by John Donne & cohorts. That's more than to say he's funny or charming, both of which are true. More people who aren't poets told me they read & enjoyed this book than any book of poems that comes to mind. Those readers live in Manhattan, & many of them are artists. Part of this book's popularity owes to its "colorful subject matter". Ted writes about his diet & environs. A young painter from Indiana who emigrated to this island after dancing in a high school production of West Side Story told me the only people he'd met here who didn't disappoint were Rene Ricard & Ted Berrigan.

Suppose Gertrude Stein had a kid who read Max Brand. So many of these poems feature the preposition without slipping into boredom or forgetting who's saying. These poems are arranged word by word & line by line ('brick by brick') into a music as familiar & repetitive as a ballad, but are not ballads. At a time when a few seriously attempt to separate poetry from speech, & the many as usual effect that separation inadvertently, these poems talk like guys you know, only better.

I never thought
on the Williamsburg Bridge I'd come so much to Brooklyn
just to see lawyers and cops who don't even carry guns
taking my wife away and bringing her back

(from "Personal Poem #9", p. 80)

That's beautifully vivid & not imitation Bogart. Wit plus the good ear makes the story remarkable.

Poets tell me anecdotes about sources, display lines in sundry books, refer to models for poems I particularly like, go on about the Beats, the New York School, American Surrealism. None of this explains why a poem affects. Ed Dorn writes, "A poet's occupation is to compose poetry/The writing of it/is everywhere."

From the exuberant early experiments with scissors & paste to the sentimentally direct lyrics of "An Ex-Athlete, Not Dying", Ted invigorates the practice of rhyme, rhythm, line. The poems are notable for uncommonly insistent use of one-syllable (once called masculine) rhymes, often emphasizing words considered common & auxiliary.

Finally I'd like to mention that Ted Berrigan's poems are friendly. If you studied literature in a university it's difficult to think of poems as friendly exchange. There was the epistle to handle society's elegant gesture. There were the Chinese poets falling into the moon, & Frank O'Hara's phone calls. Right from the beginning, when he was a wise guy, Ted Berrigan could write friendly. Bob Rosenthal considers it the first lesson learned from Ted, that you can set out to write a poem with an amiable tone.

Volumes of selected works often draw less than rave reviews from poets familiar with the uncollected works in other typeface, other order. Some favorites of yours might be missing from this selection, though it's more generous than most selected volumes. Even if you have the other books, the arrangement here will interest & provoke, as a life unfolds in distinctly urban shape. At least 20 of the poems have never been published in any other book, & as a bonus 10 George Schneeman drawings are included, although one would have wished them spread throughout instead of placed sometimes at the beginning of the 14 sections.

- Gary Lenhart

* * * *

COMMON DENOMINATOR

Composed On The Tongue by Allen Ginsberg (Grey Fox, 1980) and Dr. Williams' Heiresses by Alice Notley (Tuumba, 1980).

The common denominator, in this case, is William Carlos Williams and his emphasis on native speech or what is "composed on the tongue" as poetic material. Allen Ginsberg is not generally associated with William Carlos Williams, but in actuality, a young Ginsberg corresponded with Williams for a number of years, Williams even using excerpts from AG letters in Paterson. In the three interviews, two lectures (recorded at the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics), and one travel diary which make up Composed On The Tongue, Ginsberg reaffirms his association with Dr. Williams and pays tribute to him as the pioneer of 20th Century American poetry. Although the talks, discussions, lectures are not always entirely focused on WCW, this is where they always seem to touch base.

Composed On The Tongue opens with the travel diary entitled "Encounters With Ezra Pound" which details part of Ginsberg's trip to Italy in '67 and his meetings with Ezra Pound. Pound was not overly talkative in those days and much of the time had to be prompted or coaxed into speaking. Ginsberg records the contexts, the answers, terse as they are, and a kind of tragic story unfolds in cinema verite fashion, Pound's manner of speaking providing the black holes of interest.

Interviews, on the other hand, can be very much on the surface. Things are talked about, but not gone into in detail. They can also be very revealing, the speaker standing a good chance of being exposed by naked speech. Besides bearing these particular faults and attributes, each of the interviews reveals a different aspect of the poet. He is the expansive, patient master in casual conversation with friends at home; he is the historian, careful with his words, precise with the details of his personal history and associations; and he is the much respected poet, awesome at times, passing on the gospel, making the murky clear. In many ways, the interviews present a spoken autobiography. And while much of the material in these interviews is familiar from Ginsberg interviews years ago, it is being recapped by a mellower, wiser man. The message is basically the same. Speech, native tongue, the ever-changing, totally malleable spoken language is a basic material for poetry. It is the common denominator, and William Carlos Williams is the example that makes sense of it all. The interview conducted by French writer Yves Le Pellec is a gem, covering a wide range of subjects, clarifying particulars and tracing a much-ignored continuity in American poetry.

The Ginsberg-Williams connection is no where clearer than in the Naropa lecture entitled "An Exposition of William Carlos Williams' Poetic Practice".

"So the key thing for Williams' practice and what he likes in Pound is: 'We seek a language which will not be at least a deformation of speech as we know it.' But 'will embody all the advantageous jumps' -- advantageous jumps of mind! -- jumps of syntax, 'swiftnesses, colors, movements of the day... THAT WILL AT LEAST NOT EXCLUDE LANGUAGE AS SPOKEN -- ALL language (present as spoken.' That was actually for those days quite a big serious discovery, both for Pound and for Williams. Same for us now!"

The influence of Eastern thought and religion on Western literature is the basic theme of the lecture entitled, "First Thought, Best Thought", and explores the myriad avenues of spontaneity.

Student: Could you give me an example of spontaneity without form?

Ginsberg: Yes, I believe there are examples. I believe Milarepa is an example of spontaneity without form in certain poems. There are certain open poems.

Student: I know, but he was enlightened.

Ginsberg: We're all enlightened. Fuck that bullshit enlightenment. There is no enlightenment. If we're going to start waiting to be enlightened to write poetry....

Composed On The Tongue is a highly readable, informative volume which rescrambles a lot of known and unknown info and ideas, and sheds a lot of light on aspects of American poetry we should have known about all along.

Alice Notley's Dr. Williams' Heiresses is a work of love from a poet who, calling herself daughter, traces her literary lineage. It is an ode, a tribute. It has an ancient resonance while remaining totally modern. It's a lecture delivered at 80 Langton St. in San Francisco in the Spring of 1980. It is a speech or pieces of speech, manners of speaking which represent a concern for the work and thought of a certain poet, a forefather. William Carlos Williams is, necessarily, the center of this expressionist study which examines a personal universe shaped by the intimate knowing (intuition) of his work. It has guts, it has beauty, it has eloquence, it vibrates with sentiment genuinely felt. However, this doesn't exclude the good humor and perspective a fine poet such as Alice Notley can bring to a tribute to one who's due has been a long time coming.

"The thing about William Carlos Williams is, aside from the fact that he talked & wrote this very particular way he sets himself up to be this character of the American in this way. And besides being the most important American poet. So if you're a woman you can relate to him in this way, where you'll be the woman, the typical American woman character. He made himself be this character, so you can make yourself be this other character, the polar opposite of him, & it enables you to have access to his secrets & to his diction & to his ways of thinking...I don't know there's this way to be yourself, a woman, & person that has a lot to do with William Carlos Williams...There's Williams. In this century, there's Williams. It's actually a secret you know, in spite of everything -- it's still a secret...it's still our secret."

- Pat Nolan

* * * * *

A new magazine is being edited by Madeleine Keller & Vicki Hudspith. They're calling it "the first magazine of funny poems by serious poets." So send your poems SASE if they & you fit the requirements to Ms. Keller at 141 W 24 St, NYC 10011.

Avant-Garde Aramas

Something new and exciting is taking place on the downtown art scene right here under our noses in the East Village. Over at the 122 Community Center (the former PS 122) at First Avenue and Ninth Street a new multi-media performance series, "Avant-Garde Arama" is being produced. The series began last April and was presented each month for four evenings through July. Each evening four to six different artists showed short works in music, dance, poetry performance, film, & visual art together on the same program.

The Aramas were created to provide an alternative performance format, different from the commercially oriented producing organizations. They offer an informal atmosphere where both new and established artists can present experimental works to diverse audiences. They encourage creative risk-taking and spontaneity and allow for exchanges between artists of different media. The ambience combines the best aspects of a dance club (where the real energy seems to be happening these days) and a performance loft. Wine and beer are available and dancing to recorded music follows each evening's performance. The Aramas have made it possible for many artists to show their work (there are limited number of performing opportunities in New York) and both artists & their audiences have been exposed to a lot of work they otherwise probably would not have seen.

This fall the Aramas will be presented on Fridays and Saturdays Nov. 7-8, 28-29, and Dec. 19-20 at the 122 Community Center, 150 First Avenue (9th St) at 9 pm. For further information call Charles Dennis at 431-3477 or Zagreus Bowery at 226-2529.

- Charles Dennis

(editor's note: Charles sounds a little official here. This is one of the best series around giving some top performers plenty of space which makes it very comfortable and amiable for the audience as well. The pretensions some artists allow given this freedom were sometimes evident but generally Charles, who himself is about the most exciting dancer/performer around, and his partners chose a variety of truly talented and fun acts. Bob Holman's "Panic DJ" in his question marked sports coat, would have demolished a lesser space or audience, one dancer disappeared thru the front door to reappear dancing on and under the cars a few flights down on 9th St. bringing the audience to the beautiful long row of large windows which the week before Jeff Wright had yelled out of as part of the performance of his "Draco" diary which also included a long phone conversation which ended with a heckler's unintentioned absorption into the piece and an old college film with Jeff's voice over impromptu narration, the Arizona desert on LSD. Charles Dennis climbed the walls so gracefully and powerful like they were a set built for this and Kenneth King's gliding amazed me in some dancing to records after the programmed performances one night. There was always some nice guy in the kitchen cooking some tasty veg. dishes and giving them away.)

* * * * *

The first single by the band, Knowbody, has just been released and tho it was independently produced sounds like the real thing and belongs up there, or on there, with any of today's pop bands. It could replace a few dozen of them easily. There is perhaps a similarity to Lou Reed in these two sides, "Love Makes You Vicious/Guilty" but Vito Ricci's gutter butter singing assures us the band has other things to do. The playing all thru is solid and could make pedestrians dance. Check out the dive bombing Dvorak riffs of the chorus in "Love...". Ann Rower's lyrics make sense which is almost startling in today's rock and roll. The record stores should have copies, a Europe deal is in the works and they'll be at CBGB's on Nov. 9.

* * * * *

Patty Mucha a.k.a. Oldenburg will be performing poems & songs at Grommet Studio, 537 Broadway, NYC on Nov. 18 at 8 pm.

Chances Are Few by Lorenzo Thomas (Blue Wind Press), \$5.45.

I was amazed to find that this is his first book. I was so sure that one or perhaps two might have slipped past me already. And it's a delightful discovery to make because the pages burn with an elusive grace whose underlying chasms are filled with intense though melodious songs of blind savvy. This man has not only The Eye but The Ear as well.

As usual the Blue Wind people have concocted a very nice package for this first book. The cover and pictures notwithstanding, the quotes (from as far flung jeepsters as Roosevelt Sykes, Percy Mayfield, and Robert Browning) seem more to the poet's taste and probably his idea. The book is broken up basically into three sections: "The Fire Clothes Of Year Before Last" (11 poems), "They Never Lose" (11 poems), and "The Marvellous Land Of Indefinitions" (9 poems). However, there is a 33rd poem which precedes them in the order of works and appears on the table of contents. A stylistic whim, perhaps. But I suspect its positioning should be read as a tip off. The code to be cracked is life itself for this traveler, weary from the road, a few tales tucked beneath his too-warm street clothes. If this was a record album, we'd be smelling a conceptual package by now. He reads the faces, he sees the signs, it's written and it's true. Now, who will read this. Chances are few, he takes all of them. His thirst is fueled by Knowing. He reads the distance, and knows the feelings of a fool too drunk too early in a business-like section of town. He counts his moves. The first poem in his book is "My Office", a poem upon which rests the entire bargain he's probably struck with life. He is direct and moves with the smooth grace of one who knows the turf well. He is at home with his writing, his intellect stretches out, as ours do when we read him right.

He cannot curse the solemnity of the local newscast. He is not a constantly hard bopper, like David Henderson. He is not a raging energy spiritualist, like Amiri Baraka. He is not Ishmael Reed. Not a member of the worker's rebellion. His poems do not acquiesce. They waltz in words, cutting one way then the next, as a conversation between varying motions, each with a voice so credible, you'll all wake up shivering in the morning and reach for this book, asking "Just who controls my dreams, anyhow..."

He's a Panamanian-born genius. He edited the "original" Ear Magazine, in the early 60s, with Ted Greenwald. Went on to first regional then national fame as a teacher and writer working out of Houston, Texas. There are too many works that truly move me to speak generously about them all. Each section has an abundant array of major works. The two longest ones, each a tour-de-force in its own write, "Screen Test," and "Class Action," soar on melodious intersections of freed language bliss. How joyously his structures take his breaths away and bring us good cheer. His voice is the weary traveler, already far too knowledgeable not to foresee Hope in the process. He reads the faces, he sees the signs. "My Office" sets the stage, draws the curtains, lights the lights, bears the burden, reoccurs throughout. What he's done, did, gone for, had, wanted, gave, took, learned now travels with him. He remembers each detail, its color and feeling. He escapes into a little corner. The office is still there. The job. Only he thought life was his job. "The office" becomes his position, within himself, within his world. Far too good a hunter of words and ways to express his feelings in them, to not be happy even when the results bare his lonesomeness. The structures he builds are not complicated, in themselves. To let them flow and the messages contained therein, are simple, but not so easily digested. It will take a while for you to digest this book. NOT because it's a difficult literature that Mr Thomas has given us. But the complexity of any original thought, any new version of the world, to be absorbed must be felt in the head. The heart is in the head here. These poems share a few qualities with poets, who are on a par with The Gods, untouchables, the great ones. The complexity of grace and vehicle of message (method) puts him up there with Edwin Denby, a few others come to mind. Most of them so-called Third World writers. All of whom are fucking masters! Few can touch Lorenzo Thomas. Although he's been lumped in with the New York School (an odious term), his effectiveness runs deep. He is not so much interested in playing with language, as he is with being understood. Some poets get their poems only from their head. From the melodies therein, Thomas uses all his senses and a few others we don't have names for yet.

I've said that this is a difficult book, and it is. But that doesn't stop it from being an important one, even a great one. But for a first book, it's fucking plain brilliant. It'll grow on you. It takes a while to get through, and that's only right. Plenty of these poems will stick in you. They'll come oozing out at odd moments. A line, a whole poem. You'll begin to hum, to recite. Then you'll remember. Chances are few, but all of them are well worth it.

Lorenzo Thomas has made them **OO**.

- Jim Brodey

* * * * *

The Kerouac School of Poetics at the Naropa Institute has sponsored its sixth summer of amazing literary teaching and poetical fireworks. The pace set at the school would be enough to make any New Yorker's head spin. Ted Berrigan was the first visiting poet. He taught a class on the murky realms of poetry one is influenced by before one realizes one is a poet. It was a wonderful first appearance of Conrad Aiken in the Naropa archives. An ebullient Tony Towle came to Boulder, on a crutch, to teach lyric poetry and the many kinds of metaphor employed therein. Clark Coolidge gave lectures on the late Philip Guston and on Albrecht Durer's "Melancholia" in which he incorporated his own poetry influenced by both subjects. Diane DiPrima gave an intensive 12 hour weekend course on "The Structures of Magic". She led us on a midnight tour to see the tree of life. Anselm Hollo kicked off the second session with a discussion on translation which he called "The optical illusion of reality". Harold Norse corrected literary history and taught the gay literary lineage from Verlaine to Burroughs, touching on F.G. Lorca and T.S. Eliot. Fernanda Pivano, renowned Italian essayist and early translator of Hemingway and later the Beats into Italian, gave a talk on American literature in Italy from fascist prohibitions to the so called revolution in the '50's. The only American book allowed official publication by Mussolini's censors was E.L. Masters' Spoon River Anthology which the authorities mistakenly read as Saint Riva and gave approval. William Burroughs answered questions in a public forum. With patience and clarity he explained his views on cut-ups, extra-terrestrials and all between. Philip Whalen gave a five week course called "In the Pressure Tank", in which he concentrated on the poems of Wallace Stevens, Hart Crane, and Lew Welch. There was a marvelous Shakespeare class which core and visiting faculty took turns teaching: Notley on Twelfth Night, Coolidge on Timon of Athens, DiPrima on Midsummer Night's Dream, Whalen on Pericles, Gallup on Richard IV, Bye on Hamlet, Ginsberg on The Tempest, etc. Haiku and the Eastern Objectivists were taught by Pat Donegan. Larry Fagin knocked heads with students in "Writing for Real". Anne Waldman and Allen Ginsberg had their apprentice classes and Allen taught a class which traversed the poetic waves from the English Romantics to the American Beats.

In addition to all this classroom activity were the multitude of poetry readings: Thurs. & Sat. Brillig Bookstore, Weds. Naropa, Mon. The Boulder Poetry Project & The Varsity Townhouses, not to mention the frequent Community Arts Center, Public Library, Colorado University, and Chatauqua Park readings. One of my first shocks in Boulder was to see signs for The Boulder Poetry Project. This project does model itself on St. Marks' example and already is receiving public monies to sponsor readings and in the near future, writing workshops, goo luck!

Alice Notley had told me that the best part of the Kerouac School was the students and I certainly found this to be true. After many years of teaching, the school has come up with a bumper crop of credible writers. Several of them are graduating and visiting New York so, friends, squeeze over and make room. Boulder had many visitors that were not for Naropa but for the entire myriad of literary activities. Gregory Corso read new poems on what was billed as an all Beatnik reading. Jack Micheline, Allen Ginsberg, Peter Orlovsky and Andy Clausen shared the stage with Gregory. Allen thought it might be cute to have an all male (chauvinist?) lineup, however it was a bit low-energy and drear. The Boulder Poetry Project sponsored readings by Sam Kashner, Michael Scholnick, Helena Hughes, Reed Bye, Tom Clark, Alice Notley, Drummond Hadley

and others. Chatauqua Park brought in Ken Kesey and Richard Brautigan, so Boulder just bristled with high powered readers. The thing I found lacking at the Kerouac school was good magazines. Reed Bye and Anne Waldman put out the excellent Rocky Ledge but there is room for so much more. Naropa's Bombay Gin is just too incumbered with bureaucracy to effectively represent or serve the students or faculty.

Boulder is a small town which is I think the prime cause of the Naropa Poetry Wars. War is a misnomer there. What goes on is closer to a soap opera. Both sides have stated their cases and presented their own version of "the facts". To the students, the issue has little or no relevance. But the soap does not rinse off so easy among upper echelon bards. Was that Ed Dorn snubbing Anne Waldman in front of Toms Tavern last night? Did Anne Waldman leave the room when Tom Clark arrived at The Pot Luck? There is a bad sting in the eyeball for the person new in town. However things may be improving: Tom Clark played with the Poetics Department in a softball game against Buddhist Studies. We won which is a major improvement. I personally could not find any deep seeded evil buried in the Naropa/Nalanda corporate structure. I was not attracted to the Buddhist ceremonies because they reminded me of childhood visits to The Episcopal Church. The women dressed fancy and the men wore ruffled suits and tried to stifle yawns. However the decorations are much livelier for no god. The much worried over Vajra guards appeared innocuous and personally I am much, much more threatened by Burns Security Guards who stagger around wearing guns. Meditation skills can be learned there with no religious dogma attached at the Shambhala Training Center, however I was kept too busy to sit. It was my job simply to make sure things ran smoothly in the Poetics Department. We almost made it. A final wish for a speedy recovery to Naropa's venerable President who recently fell down a flight of stairs. It was rumored that he was trying to fly.

- Bob Rosenthal
Sept. 14 '80

* * * * *

Turtle Island will publish Ed Sanders' FAME AND LOVE IN NEW YORK on Thursday, November 6, 1980. There will be a publication and autograph party for the book at B. Dalton's, 666 Fifth Ave. All readers of the newsletter are invited to attend.

Danspace, now being programmed by Cynthia Hedstrom & Eric Bogosian, opens its season on Nov 20, 21, & 22 with "City Landings", a dance & music collective w/ Judy Feldman, Janice Geller, Jackson Kroll & Lynne Salomon. The performances are held in the Parish Hall, St. Mark's Church, & start at 8:30 pm. Tickets are \$4.

THEY'RE OFF

Be gay, the year is about to unfold
a new generation of flowers & seeds
poems, foul deeds and great progress.
A leavening, a discarding,
for some a beginning and others
an end they have no idea of
beyond the desire to have at it,
rearing up and bursting through hedges
into a street of strange characters
square or lean and red-haired,
rolling or bobbing along, the sun
a great air on their chests
calling all buds to reveal
their tightly fistled attractions.

- Reed Bye

TO A MAN

Summer:
the wars continue

brushing by
no one hurt

but "a chair is a
weapon if anything
starts"

"warfare"? hai!
tell a story of
passion

"cold" means unvisionary
as in Cold War

"soldier" too business-like

"army" as in eternity?

OR
army of lies

your lies are insulting,
mister, make no
sense

("I'm going to duke him!")

you war inside your head

outside: occasional skirmishes

or sky clearing
with a saint's
precision

- Anne Waldman

St. Mark's Church In-the-Bowery
The Poetry Project
10th St. & 2nd Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10003

NON-PROFIT ORG. U.S. POSTAGE PAID New York, N.Y. Permit No. 605
