

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER  
No. 87 January 1982  
Greg Masters, editor  
St. Mark's Church 674-0910  
2nd Ave & 10th St NYC 10003  
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WINNERS OF THE  
POETRY CONTEST  
-INSIDE-

WEDNESDAY READINGS: at 8 PM, suggested contribution \$3, hosted by Bernadette Mayer & Bob Holman: January 6 - Barbara Baracks, Melvyn Freilicher, Jeff Weinstein. January 13 - Keith Cohen & Tim Dlugos. January 20 - Clark Coolidge. January 27 - Kevin Clarke & Neil Hackman.

MONDAY NIGHT READING/PERFORMANCE SERIES: at 8 PM, suggested contribution \$1, hosted by Bob Rosenthal & Rochelle Kraut: January 4 - Open Reading. January 11 - Dark Day, V-Effect. January 18 - Carol Samatowicz & Mark Fisher. January 25 - Wesley Brown & Jack Collom.

MAMMOTH ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S BENEFIT at the Ballroom of the Ukrainian National Home, 140 2nd Ave (between St. Mark's Place & 9th Street) on Friday & Saturday, January 1 & 2 at 7:30 - ?. \$6. Over 100 poets, dancers, musicians, film-makers & ? will be participating over the 2 nights to help the Poetry Project bring in the new year. Among the people performing are Jan. 1 - Spalding Gray, Yoshiko Chuma, Tony Towle, John Giorno, Jim Carroll, Ted Berrigan, Larry Rivers, Kenneth Koch, Rudy Burckhardt, Kenneth King, Miguel Algarin, Andrei Codrescu, Peter Orlovsky, Rene Ricard, Charles Dennis, Pedro Pietri, Diane Torr +++ & on Jan. 2 - David Woodberry, Jana Harris, Cynthia Hedstrom, Kenward Elmslie, Alice Notley, Taylor Mead, Anne Waldman, Richard Hell, Charles Henri Ford, Jessica Hagedorn, Allen Ginsberg, Peter Gordon, Jackie Curtis & beyond. Call us for more information and/or to volunteer as we need some help to run this thing. The partial list above gives little indication of what will happen on these two nights. Tickets will be sold at the door or can be purchased in advance at the Project office during the day, say 9 to 4 all week.

Denis Donoghue will speak on Thursday, January 21 at 8 PM in the Parish Hall, here at St. Mark's. The title of his talk is 'Poetry & the Criticism of Poetry.' Denis Donoghue is the biographer of Yeats & Jonathan Swift and the author of Ferocious Alphabets.

FREE WRITING WORKSHOPS in Parish Hall (2nd Floor)  
Tuesdays at 7 with Maureen Owen  
Sundays at 7:30 with Steve Carey

Wednesdays at 10 AM "Writing Group for Older Adults" led by Jeff Wright at Tompkins Square Library, 331 E 10 Street.

Danspace January Performances: Lisa Kraus - Kabuki Home Movie, and Sally Silvers - Lack of Entrepreneurial Thrift, Part I on January 7, 8 and 9, Thursday through Saturday at 8:30 PM. Diane Torr and Peter Rose in new work on January 28, 29 & 30 also Thursday-Saturday at 8:30 PM. All performances are in the Parish Hall at St. Mark's and suggested contribution is \$4 or TDF.

BOOKS & MAGAZINES RECEIVED

IN A BLUE RIVER by Ted Berrigan: Little Light Books, 52 E 7 St #10, NYC 10003, \$3...The Cutting Prow by Edward Sanders: Am Here Books/Immediate Editions, 2503 Medcliffe Rd, Santa Barbara CA 93109, \$3...A Little Original Sin - The Life and Work of Jane Bowles by Millicent Dillon: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, NYC, \$18.95c...Broken Off By The Music by John Yau: Burning Deck, 71 Elmgrove Ave, Providence RI 02906, \$4 also ERAT by Tom Mandel, \$3 and Providence by Stephen Wallin, \$3...Herman Melville - A Biography by Leon Howard: University of California Press, Berkeley, \$7.95...from Knopf, NYC: A Flag For Sunrise by Robert Stone, \$13.95c and Fabrications by Adam Mars-Jones, \$11.50 and Nightingale Fever: Russian Poets in Revolution by Ronald Hingley, \$16.50...Plane Debris by Stephen Rodefer: TUUMBA PRESS, 2639 Russell St, Berkeley CA 94705, \$3...The Devil's Church & Other Stories by Machado de Assis trans. by Schmitt/Ishimatsu): University of Texas Press, PO Box 7819 Austin TX 78712, NPL (monsignors probably saved at the end with "Coming up the staircase a shuffling of swords and feet was heard." from a passionate man who describes how he won a lottery in heaven, wins a rebirth complete with experience, donates \$20 million to the National Library, but is mistrustful of his wife's good intentions & that's only 7 pages worth - the stories stretch the believable but get dragged back down by their oppressive Catholic Spanish morality - GM)...Selected Poems by Odysseus Elytis: Penguin/Viking, NYC, \$6.95p \$12.95c...On Women Artists: poems 1975-80 by Alexandra Grilikhes: Cleis Press, PO Box 8281 Minneapolis MN 55408, \$4.95...The Poetry Reading: A Contemporary Compendium on Language & Performance ed. Stephen Vincent & Ellen Zweig: Momo's Press, PO Box 14061 SF, CA 94114, \$9.95p 25c...Leaving Taos by Robert Peterson: Harper & Row, NYC, \$5.95p...The Peacock's Egg - Love Poems from Ancient India trans. by W.S. Merwin & J. Moussaieff Masson: North Point Press, 850 Talbot Ave, Berkeley CA 94706, \$8.50p...The Full Deck Anthology (poetry 1959-1981) ed. Tom Weigel: Andrea Doria Books, NYC, \$3 (Denby, Whalen, Notley, Berrigan, Hollo, Brodey, Godfrey, Burroughs, Schuyler, O'Hara, C.H. Ford, Waldman, S. Carey, Berkson, Mead, Owen + as many relative newcomers)...Stormy Heaven by Cliff Fyman: Misty Terrace Press, 437 E 12 St #17, NYC 10009, \$2...Little Light 5 ed. Susan Cataldo: 52 E 7 St #10, NYC 10003, \$1 (20 pgs. Jim Brodey + Schiff, Notley, T, & E., Berrigan, Wright, H. Weiner, Weigel, Myles, Cataldo)...The Paris Review 81 (interviews with Paul Bowles & Tennessee Williams + works by Apollinaire, Montale, Atwood, Radar +, \$3.50)...Parnassus Spring/Summer 81 ed. Herbert Leibowitz, \$7 (Brodsky on Tsvetaeva, Rabassa on Cernuda, Lihn & Cuadra, Gallagher on poetry in translation, Schjeldahl on Stanford, H. Adam, Young, Chester, Welish, Yau, Sala & others, Enslin on Rexroth, Spackman on Max Jacob +++)...Hanging Loose 40 ed. Hershon, Lourie, Schreiber, 231 Wyckoff St, Brooklyn NY 11217, \$2.50 (Brodine, Mikolowski, Lally, Whiting + many more contributors from all over including again a poets of high school age section)...Gallery Works Five ed. Holland, Lance, Yurechko: 1465 Hammersley Ave, Bronx NY 10469, \$2.50 (Benedetti, Fraser, Berge, Zweig, J. Harris, editors, +)...Writers News Manitoba, Vol. III, No. 4 ed. Andris Taskans: 304 Parkview St, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3J 1S3, \$1.50 (Adamson, Barton, Brooks, Enns, Friesen, Heath, Hillis, reviews +)...Small Press News, Vol 1 No. 2, ed Diane Kruchkow: Stony Hills, Weeks Mill, New Sharon, ME 04955, 10 issues \$5 (vital supplement with calendars, flashes, mss. wanted & other highlights of small press territory to Kruchkow's own Stony Hills which is \$4 for 3 issues & worth it)

Patty Mucha sent her New Wilderness Audiographics cassette in for a listen. It's available for \$8.50 from them at 325 Spring St, NYC 10013.

WALTZING MATILDA by Alice Notley (Kulchur Foundation, 888 Park Ave, NYC 10021, \$3p \$7c)

Looking in one of my notebooks I found the following:

General character--new, more discursive treatment  
of language (preference for "old style verse" over "regulated verse"\*  
reaction against gracious blandness  
new interest in moral themes  
new interest in stylistic and thematic experience (experiments?)

Also, loss of faith in the imminent order of the world  
New interest in imagination, in order to  
interpret the world  
"cleverness"

Meaning as a construct of the mind  
Meaning of the scene, given by the poet

New strong appearance of voice  
very individual idioms  
poetry of extremes

This does not characterize all poetry of the period, only the best.

(\* Old style verse is formally more open than regulated verse" & less associated with the court, i.e., academic poetry.)

This was mislabelled--it was not, in fact, a reference to T'ang dynasty poetry from late Du Fu through Li Shangyin, but to the present era, to Alice Notley's poems as they have inhabited the world from 165 Meeting House Lane to today.

- Simon Schuchat

DAYS LATER

Days later  
It's days later  
Same sense  
Days later

Blue skies  
Lovely mornings  
Days later  
It's days later

- Ted Greenwald

THE LINES

Falling off the ground  
Is how I hang my heaven upside down  
When I don't recognize it, find  
No heaven's jotting on my face -  
Everything's begun and ends  
While I attempt to mystify  
Familiar buzzing, heavenly harps  
Disfigure sleep. Awake & dumb  
I land an out that doesn't hold  
Intention. Still  
I lend my slot  
Yesterday's instructions  
Lost and found  
List a partial bottom to this heap.

- Susan Noel

A Few Swimmers Appear by Don Yorty (Philadelphia Eye & Ear, Box 1882, Philadelphia, PA, \$3)

Don Yorty's A Few Swimmers Appear (a lovely title, by the way), brings into sharper and sharper focus concerns which plague or bless every serious poet: the need to state something beautiful and right in its mechanics as to render a reader's response one of awe, recognition, silence or a suspiration which inculcates itself into the reader's mind as inspiration. Although Yorty's syntax is occasionally flawed (especially in one otherwise good poem called "Whore") and though other pieces do fall into a kind of acedia, on the whole, a new, variegated voice has quietly and gently entered the consciousness of American poetry. I am gladdened by such events. To give you some idea of how Yorty approaches the language, here is an excerpt from a piece entitled "Lou":

He didn't care what I thought./The same beat he repeat/like waves  
of sea/make us cease the struggle/giving up our bubbles, flow/in  
the push, pull,/toss and tumble of its surf./Mindless, forgotten/  
as the just begotten,/I'm the rhythm of him.

- Kevin Jeffery Clarke

Wing

a widening ripple  
of geese wing it  
back north

there is a power  
that draws them there

a linkage that guides them  
along the flyway  
in V formation

blown off course  
they find their way back

as for us, there are times  
we fail to see  
the goals we work toward

are not simply chosen  
deep within ourselves

but are resolved in dialogue  
between the people we are  
and the winds of consequence

plans which falter  
do not fail, but change

the wise-hearted  
adapt and go forward  
fact to face

like these wild geese  
unjarred from their aim  
they could hearten the world

- Jim Hanson

LITTLE POEM

It is never  
the way  
I remember it

- Pat Nolan

THE BEATS: ESSAYS IN CRITICISM edited by Lee Bartlett (McFarland & Company, Inc., Box 611 Jefferson, NC 28640, 1981, \$19.95c)

At its best The Beats: Essays in Criticism will be useful to professors who want to teach various Beat works, but who have lacked a critical body of work telling them what to think. At its worst this book makes an exciting movement dull. Also, while the boundaries surrounding any movement are often difficult to define precisely, history might be served more accurately if William Everson (Brother Antoninus) were not included as a Beat figure, although he was part of the San Francisco Renaissance, and certainly some of the people who composed that group, such as Ferlinghetti and McClure, are authentic Beat voices. But Everson might better be linked with Kenneth Rexroth, as both men share an anarchist-pacifist point of view, or with Robinson Jeffers, as Jeffers first showed Everson "God in the cosmos" and Jeffers was responsible for Everson's first religious conversion. (Since three out of five previous books by Lee Bartlett have dealt with Everson's work, one suspects that his inclusion here, particularly in light of the fact that this book is dedicated to him, is a matter of friendship rather than literary history.)

The most helpful chapters are devoted to the work of Burroughs, Ginsberg, Kerouac and Snyder. George Dardess, writing about On the Road, convincingly demonstrates that what many people regard as a formless book "moves from hierarchy to openness, from the limitation of possibilities to their expansion." And Robert Kern, writing about Snyder, provides substantial insight into his work. Kern says Snyder's poems "tend to become what they mean, to constitute experience rather than simply refer to it." Addressing the same issue, Kern says the absence of metaphor in Snyder's work "points to an interest in things not in terms of their similarities or potential for taking the place of each other but in terms of the way they manifest themselves through their actions or appearances in the world."

James Breslin and Thomas S. Merrill have similarly valuable things to say about Ginsberg's work, although it is unfortunate that Breslin continually misspells Orlovsky, while Merrill misspells Cassady.

At their worst these essays lack substance or are subject to rant. L.A. Ianni, writing about Ferlinghetti's work, says little more than "Love ultimately proves irresistible and we must get deeply into it," although that might point as much to the fact that Ferlinghetti's work is facile as it does to any failure of Ianni's critical intelligence. Barbara Christian, writing about Kaufman's work, spends as much time indicting 1950's American society -- "At home and abroad, America was racist, money-crazy and destructive." -- as she does discussing Kaufman's considerable achievement.

However, since at least half the essays collected here provide valid insights into the work of a group that has, I believe, produced the most significant literature of our time, the importance of this volume extends beyond whatever flaws it may have. These essays clarify the meanings of works that are often complex and, at the same time, they provide further clues to the meaning of existence.

- Arthur Winfield Knight

INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD  
Los Angeles

I contacted Christopher Isherwood a couple of years ago while researching an unproduced documentary on Bertolt Brecht's experience in Hollywood as an emigré in the 1940's. Though this was not reflected aesthetically in Hollywood films, during the War the studios became an unusual meeting ground for European and American artists and intellectuals.

Some of the German writers, like Bertold Viertel, dutifully went to studio jobs secured for them by friends though their contempt for the work was apparent (Viertel seems almost bewildered by the dominance of aesthetics by mass appeal and money in his autobiography, The Kindness of Strangers). Brecht fought his way into the studio, believing he could popularize and play with his own aesthetic through its machinery. This did not happen. He withdrew his script for Galileo when the director insisted on 'dressing' it Hollywood-goes-Renaissance, and tried to withdraw his name from Hangmen Also Die, an anti-fascist learning-film with elements of Chinese opera, re-written and finally produced 'for an American audience' by a studio staff writer.

Isherwood was working at Warner Brothers at the time for reasons of his own. What follows is a transcript of our conversation:

ISHERWOOD: I became a member of the German Circle by adoption, really, when I got into the studios through my friend Berthold Viertel.

CK: It surprises me that there was so little contact between members of the American Communist Party in Hollywood and the Germans - many of whom were extremely political people - Marxists loosely in name if not in affiliation. American fiction writers like Albert Maltz were working in Hollywood, active in the Party, and would eventually be blacklisted by HUAC. One would think that this would make for some kind of dialogue between American politically oriented artists, who were social realists, and European artists, who weren't.

ISHERWOOD: I don't know. As for the left wing Hollywood filmmakers, I suppose I never took their activity all that seriously. I never felt that they were in the midst of deep political activity.

CK: Were you invited to attend meetings?

ISHERWOOD: I certainly had no intention of becoming involved in that way myself; I suppose because of my experience in Europe. There, political commitment meant something extremely drastic.

In Hollywood, people seemed rather far from the scene of action. I just laughed later when I heard that these same people were being accused of being serious communists.

In 1946, I found that the investigation of my own file by the FBI was rather sophisticated. They realized that I had supported the United Front in the 1940's and their attitude was, but of course, every liberal would have at that time. At least throughout the 30's, the FBI was not impressed or alarmed by 'pinko' labels. I think you'd find that the FBI has a very thorough history of the 30's.

CK: Was most of the Communist Party activity at that time, then, purely theoretical?

ISHERWOOD: Of course, there were many disenchanted liberals at that time who opposed the role of the USSR. The communists were divisive in their clash with the anarchists.

(NOTE: Later research revealed that the major activities undertaken by the Party were: infiltration of the Screenwriter's Guild - a partial, short-lived success; and fundraising for industrial labor struggles in other parts of the country - strikefunds, publicity, food. The filmmaking section of the Party produced its own strike documentaries, and was based in New York. Finding out much about the mechanics of Party activities is difficult. Party literature was propagandistic in intent, not concerned with chronicling experience. I spoke with actors still working in Hollywood who'd been members of the Party, all of whom were later blacklisted. Some won't talk about their experience in the Party because it's in the past and the repercussions were so painful. Others, who remain affiliated to a party believe that this history is still secret and subversive.)

CK: Brecht called Hollywood 'a foul swamp' in his journal. Maybe the Germans had trouble acknowledging that some kind of political/cultural life did exist in America...

ISHERWOOD: Many of the emigrés felt themselves to be totally alien here. They could never adjust. They saw it as an old culture encountering a non-existent culture. This was very unfortunate for them.

CK: What did everybody do?

ISHERWOOD: The Viertel's was the place where people met. It was the most varied salon - Salka (Viertel) would say, we've got some spaghetti and if you want beer you'll have to bring your own - and yet she had these gatherings that the most sophisticated hostess would have died to produce. You'd have Rubenstein at the piano - Chaplin arguing with Bertie Russell, Garbo... This kind of thing went on all the time. There were terrific political arguments - about side-changing, for instance, in the beginning, the pact between the Nazis and the Russians. People were very passionate, they yelled, they carried on. Yet I never felt that I was in a serious political atmosphere. There were theoreticians, much discussion...

CK: I read somewhere that the Germans met every day reading airmail editions of the Berlin papers in the library. It must have been a state of suspended anxiety...

ISHERWOOD: Yes...of course there were people, Americans, who actually fought in the Spanish Civil War. But that doesn't necessarily mean they were engaged politically.

CK: It was a personal commitment -

ISHERWOOD: - but not one to a party.

CK: Were you friendly at the time with Brecht?

ISHERWOOD: We were acquaintances, through the Circle, not especially intimate. Brecht was a very curious man. I remember that he once



attacked Huxley, a good friend of mine, at a party, because Huxley was religious. This was something Brecht could not tolerate. He said to Huxley - this is one of the ultimate insults - that Huxley had sold out: Faukapft, in German. This I could not understand. Huxley was a person of absolute integrity, and Brecht's judgement seemed to be purely stupid.

Brecht was a magnificent poet. But the people around him misrepresented him, I think, as the absolutely just man who took no shit from anybody. It reminds me of a line from Roman history: "I got sick of hearing how just he was, and so I killed him."

(Brecht's wife, the actress Helene) Weigel was a marvelous woman. She was much more a Marxist than he. She was a real Party member in good standing, an important Party figure. As it turned out, Brecht ran afoul of the East German Communist Party over his play Lucullus. And I think Weigel was able to cover up for him. Weigel was, you might say, a professional communist. I don't think she was involved with the American communists. You can call this sheer European snobbery - but we never felt that those writers who were blacklisted could be guilty of anything at all! I mean, compared to people involved in great labor struggles of the time, Hollywood was hardly a battleground. When it comes down to being a movie writer, you do what the studio says.

I'm reminded of seeing the scene in the lending library in The Spy Who Came In From The Cold, where Burton says to Bloom, 'I'm a member of the Communist Party', and she replies, 'Well, it's a free country.' The shock that ran through the audience! When of course the real shock is in how ineffectual that membership really was.

CK: Were you at the studio at the time Brecht was working on Hangmen Also Die?

ISHERWOOD: I remember the problems with Hangmen Also Die. I can't believe Brecht was as naive as he claimed to be. I mean really, what could he have expected? I think it would have been easier had he worked on something totally innocuous like The Flower Waltz to make money, and kept his real work quite separate. There was very little opportunity for aesthetic innovation in Hollywood at that time. The salvation of the studio was its break-up and the emergence of independent units.

CK: Were writers happy working at the studios?

ISHERWOOD: Well - there is a great difference between productivity and quality. It was easy to work in the studios. We (the writers) all agreed with each other, we got along marvelously. The psychological feeling was of us, the writers, united against the front office who had the power to squelch our projects. There was great solidarity in that respect among artistic staff. Warner Bros. in 1945: the writer's building was our castle! That was the extraordinary charm of it - the fun of all the talk, all the jokes and exchange of ideas. The writers had a lot in common, and I learned a lot from those people. I didn't mind. It would have been very frustrating if you minded.

Sometimes I did work that I liked and the project was shelved. Of course, there was the weekly paycheck. And if you could relax towards it, there was ample time to do my own work, to go out swimming, to socialize. I had the best time there. I was a model employee!

People diverged by 1947. Isherwood, and the essayist Leon Feuchtwanger, stayed in Los Angeles; Brecht appeared before HUAC with a ticket

to Germany in his coat pocket; the novelist Carl Zuckermeyer went to New York; the Viertel's went home.

The era is an enticing topic for a documentary because of its many facets: the emigre led a highly social life commingled with immense frustration. Brecht had a bitter political feud with Thomas Mann; there was cultural gossip and intellectual one-upmanship among heavyweights ad nauseum. There was also a huge gulf between the more theoretically sophisticated European left and the ridiculed (and later persecuted) American social realists.

The real stuff can be found in Brecht's journals (published in German), Isherwood's Prater Violet, based upon his friendship with Viertel, and the patriotic war movies of the period, the only mass-market exposure received by American socialist realism of the 40's.

- Chris Kraus

#### ELEPHANT CLOSING TIME

The delegates are all jealous of and mad at and pleased with each other. Their cross-purposes generate heat and light. The newsmen are a further and outer part of this mesh and add to its dogged brilliance. We watch in alarm with laughter.

Who care who wins.

- Clark Coolidge

YELLOW LOLA, formerly titled Japanese Neon by Ed Dorn (Cadmus Editions, PO Box 4725, Santa Barbara, CA 93103, \$6p)

Some people's notebooks are more interesting than others. You would expect Wittgenstein to go along with that remark. Furthermore, once a poet has finished writing the notebook(s), there are only a few possible choices aside from throwing it in the garbage can. To publish it as is is not the common practice, and yet a selection of some face of the handwritten material, although necessary in most cases, can be a little more perplexing than voting for the candidate of one's choice. Then there are the inevitable temptations to re-align the original verse while perhaps adding to and/or subtracting from it. With the publication of Yellow Lola, another face of the same material from which Hello La Jolla was derived, has thus appeared.

What we see here is the more or less raw thought, of which Hello La Jolla is the product. Only someone with splintered knees could see

these dispatches as "out takes."

(from E D's Introduction)

Ed Dorn's emphasis of mind goes straight back to the so-called Enlightenment, and, in particular, to Samuel Johnson.

The common duty of the poet  
in this era of massive dysfunction  
& generalized onslaught upon alertness  
is to maintain the plant  
to the end that the mumbling horde  
bestirs its pruned tounge.

He has always argued for clarity, and the appalling lack of it, especially in poetry, gets shot down on page after page of this little book.

I don't give a dog turd  
for stupidity  
or averageness  
or agreement  
or mass culture  
or straight talk  
or who likes it  
or who sells it  
or who buys it

Satire is at least as old as Diogenes but there is something beautifully punk in these fragments.

I wouldn't go back for god's foot  
if I'd dropped it on the road

The text of Yellow Lola was selected from Ed Dorn's notebooks by a very astute Tom Clark.

- John Daley

Those men whom the gods wish  
to destroy, they first make  
mad, and then, when the first white flecks  
of foam speckle the men's lips--the spit  
of bewilderment, of overpowering visions--the gods  
throw their heads back and they  
laugh and laugh, they laugh and they  
laugh, until they are rolling on the floor  
of the heavenly TV lounge

- Tom Clark

## THE VISIT

Your dark wife died in her own home.  
I can not imagine such joy.  
A slow fan overhead  
Cools your ever warm heart.  
You celebrate wedding after wedding in the garden.  
Yours wasn't the first one you remember  
It's the good one.  
More memories created with each ceremony.  
Until the last one.  
The champagne bottle foams and is emptied.  
The last one at the party sleeps.  
Show me her picture..

- Sandy Berrigan

## Someone Is Pulling My Leg

At a specific time you turn up in white.  
The jamboree hastens, magic circles evaporate in a short  
hour replaced by fire. A girl poses on a dime & trips  
benignly into her accustomed anonymity, breathless.  
They are out to make a buck & blush at the sound of slander,  
holding a torch whose light circulates potent rumors. Vines grow  
through dresses unnoticed, a woman's voice soars.  
This is no joke. The rose leaves a thorn but it's miniscule,  
the hardest trick involves grace & a desired position on  
the tightrope. A capon reflects the mysterious disposition  
of its author whose red bedroom is a notorious paean to Love.  
By morning, Love's entourage has ravaged the entire floor while  
Love herself, you learn, is summering in an undesignated spot.  
Fashion is made in the mouth.  
A legend in regard to amethyst has been treated in French verse  
though your blue stone denotes the sky, being like lightning in  
its pomegranates, you occupy that seat like a cool \$2 million.

- Denyse King

POET'S THEATER

Eye & Ear Theater Presents: The Heroes by John Ashbery & Shopping and Waiting by James Schuyler at the Spectrum Theater, NYC, November 1981

I thought that the Eye & Ear Theater's production of James Schuyler's Shopping and Waiting was disconcerting, putting it somewhere in the twilight zone by not using props and therefore having the characters seem alien to their action & John Ashbery's play, The Heroes was treated fair & squarely with some nice effects tho some of the actors didn't seem acquainted with the legends of the heroic characters they were playing. (Tho I saw it early in its run & later notices claim that the actors, through their own hard work, did become themselves.) Jim Neu, hilarious again bringing the art of deadpan up to date BC; William Rush Fowle, a dashing Achilles; Mary Tepper, a crazed mystic chorus; & Michael Lally, perfect as a sun-glassed gum-chewing guard (& Hector), were outstanding. Vicki Hudspith directed, sets were by Alex Katz and Jane Freilicher. Everyone I know (it appeared) had a good time attending and/or participating as stagehand (one's 'report' follows this), ticket taker, tech, actor, house manager, usher or director & the Eye & Ear Theater people are to be much appreciated for their respectful & loving approach to production - making poet's theater available. Their next production will be in April - Ed Friedman's The White Snake with Bob Holman directing.

- Greg Masters

ANONYMOUS HANDS

Hand One: Now which one of these chairs is the Freilicher chair?

Hand Two: They are not chairs.

Etc. What are they? Seats?

We move naturally and do ordinary things like move things around. We never stand around.

We both have bolts in our pockets.

What if somebody bumped into a lever and this revolving stage turned to the audience.

We would be on stage and the players would be backstage.

We wouldn't notice and we could bitch the director, for instance.

Is that a new jersey?

I got stuck behind the flats.

Why doesn't Ulysses leave his flask back here?

She just came out and said that Vicki is obtuse.

Do you think she means that?

Hey Theseus just asked me what obtuse means.

It was slower when we were together.

Chorus walked into the table.

Oh the flowers!

My column exploded onto Theseus.

We'll never see this play.

This way we feel it.

I felt it looked better not seeing it.

Me too. These are two marvelous plays.  
Hector is going to come back and say something. I know it.  
Next time, you light the joint and I'll grab the horse.  
Did we set the couch right?  
Heroes is so unusual the right person dies.  
Here comes that epiphany of Circe's.  
"Luckily I brought along this magic girdle,"  
Right! That's wrong again.  
Cheers!

- Bob Rosenthal

#### LAWRENCE

And then I walked up to the top of what  
and saw sand gendered of its own dreams.  
That was at the crisp of the long gone past  
when the desert was a plaza  
and a man could go stark crazy  
and be dreamed of.

- Clark Coolidge

"Avant-Garde Books From Russia ca. 1910-1930" can be seen through  
February 13th at The Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin St NYC. The  
Press Release says, "Taking off from Symbolism, Russian writers and  
artists denied the notion of the page as a self-contained narrative  
entity, freely mixing typographical styles and design elements,  
while they also challenged conventional language.

The NY local of the Writer's Union will soon be formulating grievance  
and collective bargaining procedures, entry requirements, dues  
structure and programs. For more information call 228-5762.

#### BAR-B-QUE

There's always  
one piece of chicken  
that won't cook

- Pat Nolan

BEAR WITH ME

Dreams wake  
After a long time away  
Subject matter: who knows  
But moving  
Toward surface sleep  
Strength returning  
Patience, stamina  
In love, again  
Who would've thought  
Again, interest in surround-  
ings, again, surround  
Little show-off things  
Irritation with shit  
Getting up to speed

- Ted Greenwald

The West Side Highway

I pick up a magazine of poetry.  
Then I pick up a book of poetry.  
Then you are sitting naked under a wash of leaves.

Poetry is astounding  
if you don't spend too much time on it.

As today--

(March 4, 1896)

the air is perfect.

There is a single cloud.

The ships are booming through dense groves of light.

1967

- Charles North

Tin Ladle

She often walked the  
    old road  
on the edge of back fields  
dreaming her own thoughts  
as nature expanded peacefully  
around her  
and today,  
picking blackberries  
joyfully, under a generous  
summer sky

    she found  
    in the cool shade of several trees  
    an abandoned homestead site  
    long unnoticed

        and its own bottle dump  
        with damp leafy humus  
        where soft decay lay

    and picked up a water dipper there.

It made her think of  
old fashioned kitchens  
and their smells.

No one uses water dippers now,  
    but

when she wants to refresh her  
memory, which includes  
whole Grandma Moses scenes  
of how things were done way back when  
    the rusty water pump  
    gushed in honest exchange  
    to the effort of a hard working hand,  
    the water dipper extended there  
    for a cool drink,

It is now a continuation  
of her mind  
which often dwells in the past  
and admires in the gentle joinings  
of its welded cup  
and blue-white marbled porcelain finish  
the look of things made in another day.

Bonnie Frazer  
Cherry Valley 1978



POETRY CONTEST

I'd like to thank all those poets who entered poems to this, the first Poetry Project Poetry Contest. The judges, Ted Berrigan & Alice Notley, were pleased at the quality & high caliber of all the entries & I'd like to thank them again for the thorough job they did of reading all the entries. Thank you again for ...The winners are:

FIRST PLACE

Rafael Lorenzo - "IT"

Sam Abrams - SAM COOKE ON THE NANTUCKET FERRY

SECOND PLACE

Kate Farrell - LULLABYE

Richard Helfer - INTERMISSION, ALL SCHUBERT RECITAL, THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

THIRD PLACE

Tom Schultz - untitled (having heard the music fire makes)

HONORABLE MENTION

Mary F. Fox - Dust; Ravi Singh (Neil Hackman) - LATE INNING; David Schneider - untitled (I sat all yesterday in meditation); Mary Ferrari - The Heathen; John Paul - TO THE MOONSTRUCK; Steve Toth - BEFORE & AFTER; Eero Ruutilla - "FRANK AND JOE"

All winners & Honorable Mentions will be receiving copies of the World Record & all entries have contributed greatly to the costs of producing the newsletter. Thank you all.

SAM COOKE ON THE NANTUCKET FERRY

"there's a man goin roun  
takin names "

sweet salty cunt of the beach towns  
silver indian turquoise over slim wrist  
wherever the song will lead us  
how long till you meet my eyes

black & white sitting together gaze down  
across taut skin moves on fine bones  
let it fit be fitting  
how long till

giving instructions one message only  
two beauties say among ten  
every action separate full of meaning

the placing of hair pins  
the patting of a curl  
the chewing of cracker  
the licking of lips  
the taking of a breath  
    thru slightly parted lips  
the lowering of an eyelid

meanings burst thru tunes nowadays  
abandon hope to enter art O  
beloved head of  
noble swineherd  
leader of men

conscious of every strangers gaze that falls upon them  
with impact language impoverished of words of eyes  
the pleasures of evaluation i wish you yet  
many cocks arched high with desire

in the 200th year of the peoples thing  
when only convicts sing as they work  
moving steadily thru the fog with a heart  
like an axe in the hands of a skillfull chopper

---

( envoi )

bowlegged lady apt for fucking  
and all you other women who stand with conscious or unconscious grace  
i want to tell you how much i love you  
all you women i've never even spoken to

- Sam Abrams

"IT"

The girlfriend breaks the window  
The sinews dance up his arm  
A major part of her front teeth  
are missing His gestures hold  
stop cut poses after: FILM MAKERS FESTIVAL--  
CONTINUOUS SCREENING EVERY MONDAY.  
"Sure . . ." His mouth  
has very fine lips.  
A ring of words puff through in the language.

The ghost ship something . . . wall flowers  
lined up to make it in the hold

I am flooded with space.

A single light is swinging overhead  
over the desk of  
yesterday's examples  
put out to the elevator  
a period piece  
they wait to be filled or heard  
jangling their empty patience  
against the storage background  
as if the ship and the instructions were missing with this  
a print-out applicable  
(all those charming port-hole windows)  
let out mainly on what  
(we think it's a path cut through there)  
instantly fills up with irrelevant definitions  
the minute this prowess  
tries to cut through it

well the whole damn dancing-parlor is rocking anyway.

"There ain't nobody out there."  
The foreigner, the midget (he may  
be a midget, he may be a child) is employed apparently  
by the owner, who also doesn't  
speak our language.  
"Is he waiting for someone to ring him?"

"No. I personally believe he's been  
carrying those wax figures  
upstairs one at a time  
for quite a while  
with no one to help him."  
"Should we ring him?"

Someone is raising a terrible racket against the bulkhead.

The semaphore of motions stop

Speak and the window is left open

The beautiful fountain squirting  
all over the children, the tubes  
broken in her animal face  
happy as though  
she happened by in the rain  
in her face  
while you grimace  
busted hydrant--look at  
the kids. Today  
I run away.  
help me, A.

". . . looking into things since the culpable words look possibly innocent. Okay. So I'm not very good at conversation, My eye problem has grown into a mam, no, ,e,ory thing. Maybe all these are "male" idiosyncrasies, But, you know, so much is often killed by this, uh, union of pathologies. . . ."

The creative exercises plow through the interior  
as if a jungle could be out to sea.  
With all these drifting, glad inventions  
it's easier to find what no one's heard of  
there with all this mixing.

Isn't it interesting  
how a human head  
resembles a coconut? No?

.. .. .  
So much water left over  
from so long ago.  
But I'm forgetting myself.  
No, I haven't listed all the frightful colors  
that I think your studios have dripped on me.  
Those glib parti-colors  
(I can't forget my clothes)  
run off dripping paint on all my friends  
fallen out from the bulk of this "send me  
send me back my clothes"  
headed to a composition Today I can-  
not return goodby  
my editor said to my feet  
"useless written  
sinking one down here in deep water".

- Rafael Lorenzo

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