

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER
No. 88 February 1982
Greg Masters, editor
St. Mark's Church 674-0910
2nd Ave & 10th St NYC 10003
\$5 sub./year Circ. 2200

WEDNESDAY READINGS: at 8 PM, suggested contribution \$3, hosted by Bernadette Mayer & Bob Holman: February 3 - Art Lange & Tony Towle. February 10 - Helena Hughes & Zoe Anglesey. February 17 - Jim Brodey & Rochelle Kraut. February 24 - Russell Banks & Steve Katz.

MONDAY NIGHT READING/PERFORMANCE SERIES: at 8 PM, suggested contribution \$1, hosted by Bob Rosenthal & Rochelle Kraut: February 1 - Open Reading. February 8 - Fay Chiang & Jack Powers. February 15 - Sandie Castle & Jacek Gulla. February 22 - Chris Kraus & Michael Summers

Alex Katz will be the next speaker in the Poetry Project Lecture series. His talk is tentatively scheduled for February 25 in the Parish Hall. Call for more info.

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

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

On February 13 a new workshop will be starting led by Hannah Weiner in the Parish Hall: PSYCHIC WRITING - How to read minds whatever and write it in so don't come unless you have a pencil and paper
indent lines only included and we treat people Hannah Weiner
workshop read Clairvoyant Journal only so we can work together with it altogether. - HW The time will be 4:30

Beginning on February 20, The 10 o'clock Series on Saturday nights to be held at The Nuyorican Poet's Cafe, 236 E 3 St. Call us for more info.

The readers on the WBAI taped at the Poetry Project series (produced by John Fisk) will be on February 6 William Corbett & Charles Bernstein and on February 20 Maureen Owen & Fielding Dawson. Time is 7 PM, 99.5 FM.

There will be another GALA BENEFIT for the Poetry Project. This one at the Marlborough Gallery. Larry Rivers' new show of recent work, "The Continuing Interest in Abstract Art," will open at Marlborough Gallery, 40 W 57 St on Tuesday, February 2, from 6 to 9 in the evening. Reading their poems at the opening will be Allen Ginsberg, Kenneth Koch, Ron Padgett & Anne Waldman. Yoshiko Chuma will dance & music will be provided by the THIRTEENTH STREET BAND which includes Larry Rivers on sax. Wine will be served. Tickets are available from the Poetry Project at \$30 a person, \$50 for two & \$100 for patrons. Larry Rivers has donated an original lithograph which will be raffled at the benefit opening. (Tickets serve as raffle stubs). The exhibit continues till the 27th.

Two book parties to which readers are invited, both at the Gotham Book Mart. On February 9 the Kulcher Foundation's Night Flight by Lita Hornick & on February 15 Z Press celebrates with Two Poems by Marjorie Welish, Glass by Richard Thomas, Border Theme by Reed Bye, Cabin by Anne Waldman & Steve Gianakos, a book of comic visuals & Twelve Vermont Postcards by Jean Boulte. Both parties are 5-7.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES RECEIVED

from Toothpaste Press, Iowa: Pure Notations by Steve Levine, \$6 ("...his poems are very well-made, they're very compact, and they're very sleek, so they're a real pleasure to read." - Ron Padgett), Heartbreak Hotel by Tom Clark, \$7.50 and Asparagus, Asparagus, Ah Sweet Asparagus by Faye Kicknosway, \$7.50p \$30c signed...Broken Off By The Music by John Yau (Burning Deck \$4)...The Tenderness of the Wolves by Dennis Cooper (The Crossing Press, NY \$4.95p \$10.95c - reviewed this issue)...Aerial - a collection of poetry edited by Edwin Denby with aerial images by Yvonne Jacquette, book design by Vicki Hudspith (Eye Light Press, NYC - available through NY State Small Press Assoc or from the Brooke Alexander Gallery, \$12 - poets include Ashbery, Coolidge, Elmslie, Lauterbach, Myles, Owen, Ratcliff, Waldman)...Enclave by Tato Laviera (Arte Publico Press, Texas \$5) ...Words to That Effect by Charles Molesworth (Seven Woods Press NYC, \$5.75) ...on the corner to off the corner by Tina Darragh (Sun & Moon Press, MD, \$5)...Evidence by Art Lange (Yellow Press, IL \$3.50 - "The reader of these poems is allowed to see every word they're made of & yet feel like a person..." - Alice Notley)...The Low-Tech Manual edited by Ron Kolm (Low Tech Press, 30-73 47 St, LIC, NY 11103 \$5 - Kupferberg, Sirowitz, Dillon, Hamill, La Bombarda, Yau, Cherches +)...How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America by Rick Fields (Shambhala dist. by Random House, \$19.95c \$12.95p)...W.H. Auden: A Biography by Humphrey Carpenter (Houghton Mifflin, Boston \$15.95c)...The Graves of Delawanna by Miriam Levine (Apple-wood Books, Cambridge \$4.95)...Writers New York City Source Book (The Groundwater Press, 110 Bleecker St 18F, NYC 10012 \$3)...Journey to the Ulterior by Tom Clark (Am Here/Immediate Editions, CA \$3) ...Stigma by Charles Bernstein (Station Hill, NY \$3)...Spiritual Exercises by Robert Kelly (Black Sparrow CA \$7.50p \$25c)...Ship Desert Boat Cargo by John Robinson (The Printing Press SF \$4)...The Yellow Cab: An Essay on New Fiction by Fielding Dawson (Tom Beckett/Viscerally Press 429 Irma St #3 Kent Ohio 44240 \$3 or \$6 signed)...Diana's Second Almanac featuring Somers, J. Gordon, Ragosta, Royet-Journoud, World Imitation Products, H. Fisher (Tom Ahern, Diana's Bimonthly Press RI \$4.95)...OCKER by P. Inman (TUUMBA PRESS Berkeley \$3)...The Revisionist by Douglas Crase Little Brown, Boston \$5.95)...The Selected Poetry of Vicente Huidobro edited w/intro by David M. Guss (New Directions NYC \$6.95)...Bern! Porter! Interview! Conducted by Margaret Dunbar (The Dog Ear Press ME, \$6p \$15 signed)...POEMS by Sparrow (Valmiki Press NYC, npl)...Plutonian Ode and Other Poems by Allen Ginsberg (Poems 1977-80, City Lights Books, SF \$4.95

HARD PRESS - SERIES 21: 12 Postcards by Matthews, Fyman, S. Carey, Kenny, Burns, Lazurchuk, Blue Cloud, Wright, Anglesey, Hanson, Collon, Pommy-Vega with a paper design by Rochelle Kraut (Hard Press 340 E 11 ST NYC 10003 \$3)...The Occasional Review #6 ed. sgos (realities library 1976 waverly ave san jose, ca 95122 75¢ - Cuson, Skinner, Earnhardt, Madzelan+) ...Conjunctions: I Winter 81-82 edited by Bradford Morrow (Conjunctions, 33 W 9 St NYC 10011 \$9 - a festschrift in honor of James Laughlin with new work by K. Rexroth, Corman, Bly, Oppen, Levertov, Eberhart, Purdy, Hall, Warren, T. Williams, P. Bowles, Cowley + many other stable members of New Directions & others)...Poetry Works by I. Rose set of postcards & 2 poetry books (I.R.D. Productions PO Box 660/Canal St Stn, NYC 10013 colorful products 40¢ each for the postcards, \$2.75 for set of 7, \$3.75 for book)

(continued from page ?)

working, but remembering the times I attended PP New Year's Benefits before I was employed here, I can say that they probably added up to 2 very memorable evenings & chance for the audiences & performers to be introduced to a lot of people's work & to bring in the new year among friends.

- Greg Masters

THE TENDERNESS OF THE WOLVES by Dennis Cooper (The Crossing Press, \$4.95)

Los Angeles, you have a poet in your midst! Dennis Cooper extends the spirit of Keats, Rimbaud and John Wieners into the Eighties with a book whose gentle evasive thrust links the child's fear of space with death in a too-winning manner, but whose repeated dying falls (on many a line ending in the so-called "feminine" or weak syllable building inexorable weary fatigue of too many bus stations imagined despite a youth so thin in real experience, dangers crossed, hatreds courted under the neons of a Hollywood night) promises the actual sweet bliss of death, no joke, yagg! I mean: The starry-eyed Todsliebe and post-new-wave non-coy blankness of Dennis Cooper's THE TENDERNESS OF THE WOLVES place the volume alone in the first (only) rank of an awesome assault-on-the-senses the future is so far still too stodgy to have mounted...but when it does, look out for your kid brother...that is, Dennis is too great!

I'm not going to go into the matter of whether Dennis Cooper is the best poet under 30 in the U.S. or whether he looks and acts like the Emperor Caligula and how this come-on is a mere not-meant-to-be-deceptive (but still with a trick up its sleeve) concealment of nice-guyisms too inconceivable to mention... his heart aches and a drowsy numbness pains his sense as if of hemlock he has drunk, darkling he listens and for many a time, he has been half in love with easeful death, this Dennis Cooper! Yes, he knows time. Time is the grandmother of Death who is from the old country (dark twilights, browns, by the Des Plaines River) where there is only the murmurous haunt of flies on summer dawns; Dennis gets up early, listens to sides 3 and 4 of JOY DIVISION's Still (Ceremony, Shadowplay, Disorder, Isolation), eats breakfast, falls back into his coffin; now more than ever (it seems to him) it is rich to die, to cease upon the midnight with no pain in embalmed darkness under the West Los Angeles neons... now he's a normal American kid growing up under Montana skies in Pasadena, I meet him in 1951 (two years before he's born), we cut down the streets of Covina like two buddies in the undertaker-neon american night...

THE TENDERNESS OF THE WOLVES refers straight to the deep world fear of the child, the loss of bliss, sense of direction in Time coming up ahead looming like a billboard, look out!--Death, like a secret melody humming under the AM radio freeway car song in the dense orange highschool sense-phenomena night. That dying fall was there from the beginning in the wimpy strungout Arcadia dawn of eleventh grade crushes... longing toward its goal the sweet aching youth, the poet, the artist--damp soft names to cease upon the midnight Listen/darken/promise/stupid--the feminine endings of our dying soft reward--the enigma of Time insoluble and boys stuffed in the car trunk by the Des Plaines River do not explain this, nothing explains this. Dennis Cooper explains this. Birth is a frontier, a passing, we are actualized, queer, balling, oppressive, hemlock, highschools--to thy high requiem of sense phenomena in the gym shorts night by the darkening stadium. Whispers, kisses and girlfriends make the word "fire" break in the middle, expiring on its final (new) syllable.

A deep relation exists between space and death, men swoon for it, Dennis too, we see him grown up now, in Venice, weak alone--suddenly he swallows a quaalude but doesn't really, smiles, shakes with palsy, has leaden-eyed despairs, writes "The Blank Generation" and wakes up in bed one morning

with Dirk Bogarde. At an appalling distance from his soul. But willing to pay the price to be modern.

In his poems the essentially human fear that we will reach the rigid space which is at the limit of our light-world (Death) leaps out of the history of Western feeling and outdistances the heretofore cinematic approach of our cable television generation like a John F. Kennedy child bride whose quietness has not yet been ravished, but that event is just around the corner. Fled is this music on the dying fall with which it arrived. And every word makes perfect sense why else would I spend six months carving this book on my coffin?

- Tom Clark

IN CHINA
for Mary Jane Eisenberg

She knelt by a river.
Her lover came into her.
Nine months passed by.
She stood in the river.
Her lover lay on the shore.
He waved his good arm.
She shook a small, red
baby in the blue air.
Nine years passed by.
She swam in the river.
Her lover lay in the shore.
His headstone read,
"Lived, loved and died."
Nine years passed by.
She lay in the shore.
The river flowed past.
Her son knelt down in
prayer at the graves.
"Thank you for them,"
he said, "especially her."

- Dennis Cooper

Miguel Algarin's BODY BEE CALLING (from the 21st Century), a choreographed performance of poetry and music, "A geometry for the physique in action", is being done on Thursday, Friday & Saturday nights this month at 10 PM at The Nuyorican Poet's Cafe, 263 E 3rd St. 228-5502 for more info. The text for the poem is taken from Miguel's book of the same name which will be published in the spring by Arte Publico Press and which he premiered here at The Poetry Project in Oct. Admission will be \$5.

PAVANE by David Trinidad (Sherwood Press, \$4)

David Trinidad, another Californian (many of our finer poets reside at one time or another here: Levine, Hass, Spicer, Duncan, Jeffers, etc., etc..) has brought a first book of amazing finesse. Amazing, not because of his age (28), but because his work exhibits a grace usually found later in life among artists, if at all. I am talking here about grace of action, as well as men of action. The later phrase, now so often used to extol various movie actors, here translates itself as the grace of a particular line, gesture, shade of light. Trinidad, again and again shows us his love (in this case, of men) that is untainted and sinless, because it remains love of humanity. In poems like "In Praise of Him", "The Sphinx", "False Apocalypse" and others, Trinidad documents the idea of returning to a golden age (already delineated in William Irwin Thompson's "The Time it Takes Falling Bodies to Light"), an age of gods and goddesses, of beauty, and rapture. Trinidad, along with Dennis Cooper, and side by side with Wright, brings along the journey one step closer.

- Kevin Jeffery Clarke

MORANDI: A RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964) is the master of still life painting in the modern era. Really it's intense that during all the years that other painters of equal stature were confronting Everything Head On which is to say were making grand paintings in very fluid and open ways paintings had never been made before, Morandi was taking the same bottles, vials, and vases on his table and re-arranging them and then painting them again, nearly fifty of the most fruitful years of art history. So here was Giorgio Morandi, public school teacher, who only once left his native Bologna (to go to Switzerland!) yet not unconnected to the major art movements of the time (in on the ground floor of Cubism and futurism with Giorgio de Chirico), putting everything he had, which was considerable, into bottles, teapots, bowls, and an occasional plate. (No fruit, no fish heads). These pictures are serious, beautiful, and haunting. He's asking questions like, what is the background, what is the foreground, what is an object exactly (granted there are objects, we'll assume that, it may not be true, but we know that it is because we do confront objects, we are here, we see that the objects have integrity and are over there) and how does one object exist in relation to another, can objects be said to be "colored" but isn't the color the color of the whole which is to say isn't all the color of the scene the same since the light is always the same color, what is light, what is shape, what is quietness. You can look at all these small oils then look at the watercolors which show a further sense of certainty ease and calmness about these questions then look at the pencil drawings which finally reduce the whole question to one strictly of movement, one stroke maybe. This is a good idea (so many pictures I find are good ideas) but also these pictures are on the whole very pleasant to look at and very convincing. The claustrophobia is overcome by the calmness and some of the pictures seem to glow and pop out at you subtly; others seem dimly to be from Outer Space. Works shown in this exhibit range from some 1914 landscapes through Cubist works through metafisiccia still lifes through his long continuous experiment with the still life motif beginning in the 20's and going up until his death in 1964.

- Norman Fischer

Fall 1981

ALLING

trip to an interview with James Laughlin

West 34 is the start then Derby then take route 8 North
the cusp of fall foliage a building w/3 blue squares
a sky blue cap shaped structure on a hilltop plastic
or steel painted blue 3 Large pipes! she gestures face
ward We notice the trees are more into winter here Win
sted suki mentions she was in Winsted 21 years ago before
Becky was born bBb it's glitzy a townhall with gold foil
& a shimmering post office more gold on the U. then Kent
Pizza & the Republican HeadQtrs. A reliable Package Store a
Memorial Library Now the road winds through steep hills

"I find this vaguely spooky"

"Not me I'm at home in the ravines"

hills grey as nuns dissolving Russet Rust
Rustic Norfolk 1 mile We pull up outside the Norfolk
Library founded by Isabella Eldridge on the edge of the
undefined little green stark fall felling Inside
the Norfolk Library 1911 & Inter:Folia:Fructus over the
fireplace in stone mantel This is the most gorgeous
library ever to be seen by me. Wooden ceilings w/ large black
ceiling fans straight out of Casablanca tall green potted palms
an oriental rug floods a main section gorgeous caned bentwood
chairs on the shore wooden balconies above off which little
alcoves & study chambers lined with books wide window
casements a bust of Abe Lincoln staring out over our heads
into a stained glass window tossing colors back over a huge
ancient carved chair made for a Valkyrie turn of the
Century shelves marvelous wooden cabinets along the walls I
talk to the librarian who tells me the architect was George Keller
"Can I go upstairs" I ask But no she says "Our insurance
company doesn't like it the balconies are too low" so oak
& so lovely Catnip hangs on a panel the library mascot a
dog named Mulligan I have to ask if they stock New Directions
& "of course" she says "but no special corner so many celebrities
writers & publishers live up here now" The library is a
result of two rival families in the town lucky for the
town she laughs Isabella had 2 sisters & has a velvet
& satin in oil of herself over the library entrance above
the pure oak cabinets. Outside the light is New England grey
we walk around the green & Yale Norfolk School of Art & Music
a small grey castle known as Battell Chapel at the middle
of the end of the green an ancient fountain 3 fish sprout water
3 blue spruce behind

water streams down the street

Suki remembers many famous artists went to school here

Brice

Mardin Sylvia mangold we can't come up with more
names.... bells chime.... walking back past the biggest
girthed Tulip tree on earth unkempt grass and broken

pavement lumpy with time across the Norfolk Historical Society
A woman stops us just as we are crawling back into our car she is Ms. History works at the Historical Society she tells us about the trees & says the fountain was designed by Stanford White.

a sign says Drugs
a sign says Bus
a sign says Phone

then Ken's Bar & the Apple House Grocery We arrive at
Laughlin's a maid opens the door.

He comes up bending forward we go outside and sit on metal chairs & chat facing the enormous meadow that is a pasture for their sheep expecting to see the hunt ride by. Back inside we eat brown, red, yellow, and raspberry food. Under control I only have two helpings but dash the wine down In a big comfortable room I set up for the interview I am the technician (later we will find the tape has a hideous buzz) but now I feel confident Laughlin begins. We are in a room of large stuffed furnitures a handy sized desk some books rugs..... cozy, but for the outside wall which is entirely a window a window running the entire side of the room overlooking the same marvelous pasture the sheep a luminous grey is our light He reads one of Wheelwright's poems then a careful narrative jarred with tidbits like "Ezra Pound used to call Hound & Horn Magazine The Bitch & the Bugle we have to laugh that fucking Pound! As he talks about Wheelwright and the circle of writers I think not only did all the writers used to be guys but they were mostly rich guys to boot! As in the interview with Malcolm Cowley I notice the stories hit on Amy Lowell pretty hard but Laughlin while not having the festive humour and good nature of Cowley does show a deeper sensibility regarding Amy. The sound of Laughlin's voice the grey day & the stories of "those days" make a little hollow in the world's space time stops Anne, Laughlin's wife, has fallen asleep it is utterly still I'm mesmerized Suki a statue somewhere in the narrative he says "a flock of pigs" which strikes me as such a gorgeous misphrasing I'm rushed! A few questions then we're finished. I give Laughlin some recent Telephone publications I brought for him & chat a bit we have met before tho somewhat hectically He gives me a copy of his book In Another Country then he takes us to tour The Book Room. New Directions fill the walls plus massive stunning editions of The Faerie Queene & Canterbury Tales in gilt and illustrated by hand two more rooms of first editions and of "just" books Dehumidifiers hummmmmmm a celestial sound. the room the entire room of first editions overwhelms me I can't remember much after it talking to Anne Seeing some artifacts from Africa the hall the door goodbyes back through Norfolk 4.20pm heading for home in late afternoon yellows orange juice sprayed over the hillsides & a little lemon I've got it! the grey I've been trying to describe all through!

that recurring grey It's TUNA!

white smoke puckers through the trees
tuna!

low purplish clouds mug
the mountains

Talking Suki suddenly says "But I'm like Dracula I go there
to suck the blood of books!"

I open Laughlin's
In Another Country & look at the inscription to me

For Maureen Cohen it says

From JL

- Maureen Owen

HELPING ALLEN WITH HIS MAIL

Don't wiretap Ruby Dee or whoever she's in the world with
Postage will be paid by WIN magazine
Hope you'll be at the opening of my show Alternatives to Disaster
Shit. I'm not getting with it Allen
Against nuclear weapons in Britain country
No one consulted the eglantine (that's the kind of thing
I love to say)

The Gospel & Non-Violence have fewer members already in Coventry
I just went into the bathroom to pee & there was ink
On my toilet paper (I am a girl)
And that great dragon was cast out into the earth, called
the Devil & Satan

& wood became lighter & softer than stone
And the Buddha head became elongated
And a few patches of gold remained on the human face
Allen's junk mail senders are self-contained units
They are within each Untitled a very traditional work
They are agitated by the heavenly wind, they crack & split &
often prevaileth not, Announcing Sulfur
I can't read French even worse than you
& I will likely die in this condition

An evening of Irish poets made possible by the New York
State Council on the Arts, partly, my my
They wrote all the poems in Ireland too
Allen send your 12-year-old friends to Rowe Camp
Get with it with the Academic Feminists & their Side Pods
Allen you missed all these readings at the Newfoundland Theatre
last March

Allen is a friend of the USO, a "safe, sane decent place away from
all the temptations that can entrap lonesome souls"
I'd agree that was true about you you queer lecher
My mother has a picture of you in her livingroom
Resist would like to thank you & Bob

Gays are frequently treated shabbily it says, Lesbians not so in
need of draft counseling yet, but they'd like to be named
after an island they've heard of, like Manhattan, for example
"5000 Manhattanites march for the right to kiss girls"
The Rosenbergs, my kids haven't yet heard of the Rosenbergs
My husband & I have heard of the Mandelstams
"At last an authoritative guide to America's nuclear
weapons complex"

a dollar & a quarter, I'm a dollar short tonight
The NEA is getting fucked up the gingy by Ronnie Reagan
& I'm supposed to be upset. I mean you are.

Let's see, everyone else still needs the
government to help them do their art.

Dr. Spock requests help in preventing a war
Congressman Weiss knows your middle initial
But Rosa Ponselle can't spell your first name. Miss Rosa Ponselle
she premiered at the Met "La Forza del Destino" in 1918
"the Caruso in petticoats." Allen, would you
please tell the President that the people of Nicaragua
are our friends? Would you please help an indigent woman
pay for her abortion? She needs 5,000,000 dollars, for there are
many of her, like the seeds of a sunflower, midst the golden
petals all.

Dear Potential Handgun Victim,
We are pleased to send you this Folding Screen Of Birds & Flowers
by Sengen, Edo Period, printed in eleven colors
Dear Friend, we are boat people without boats,
Dear Friend, it is important to be an organization
so would you please commit your life to a non-signature?
Allen some people would like you to look at their graffiti
sometime last year.

- Alice Notley
Nov. 4, 1981
(1st commission)

POEM ON ALICE NOTLEY'S BIRTHDAY

The day ended and you forgot
to notice its gradual descent.
The short days of oncoming winter.
Today, Alice's birthday, was
a cloudless warm Sunday.
I gave Alice a poem with a drawing
of a nude woman on a bike.
Slowly it became a flower garden.
Later, I took a walk over to 12th st.
to see my friend Cliff. We talked about
women. He tried to call his cousin,
he said was a beautiful redhead
I should meet, but the line was busy.

- Elio Schneeman

ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S BENEFIT FOR THE POETRY PROJECT IN THE GRAND
BALLROOM OF THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL HOME - JANUARY 1 & 2

Thanks to Susans C & T, Vito, Johns F & D, Marilee, Grace, Patti, Gary, Rich K, Reed, Cliff, Doris, Jeff, Anns R & K, Roland, Barbara, Lorna, Peggy, Bill, Lewis' H & W, Paul, Elinor, Maureen, Simon & whoever else who tended bar, watched the back doors, took tickets, stamped hands, checked in performers, ran tape recorders, shone lights, got people seated, ran outside for soup with holly bread in the night, did next day leg weary lifting of endless cases of beer & wine down to the basement for storage, up to be sold, down to be returned & over to Astor Place, carried & wheeled precariously on top of post carriers & garbage bins half a stage assembly from Cage 50, Sub-basement 5 of Tower 1 of the World Trade Center through the Kafka corridors around corners requiring quite elaborate maneuvering & up elevators Bob H had special keys for - bringing it all back we practically had it down - did neat & sturdy carpentry beneath the portrait of the Ukrainian revolutionary poet ("Potatoes, mashed" is one of his poems according to one of his translators, Rene Ricard, who quoted it in the bar after hours second night), not to mention the millions of phone calls, letters, special arrangements & fulfilling of specific performer's details (special lighting, extra mikes, movie screen...) which were taken care of by the staff here - Rochelle Kraut, Bob Rosenthal, Greg Masters, John Dixon & especially Bernadette Mayer & Bob Holman - information & details to be attended to stored, filed, note pads used up, 140 introductions prepared & lots of lifting, too.

And then, the Benefit itself. Over two nights, 7:30-2 AM, about 140 poets, musicians, dancers, film-makers, performance artists did what they do 3-5 minutes a piece & the packed house (over 1000 people sat there, milled around or hung out in the back room bar equipped with PA, seemingly amazed that this was all happening.

Allen Ginsberg sang a call to meditation with a Bo Diddley riffed electric guitar accompaniment followed by Vito Ricci who's song was musically more subdued but as assaulting to common taste, Ann Rower & Bob Holman sang & rapped along with their new back to back single (just out on Words on 45), finally got to hear James Schuyler read a poem, on tape, sharing stage with Helena Hughes, Lewis Warsh's poem upset comfort ("this is a backwards country now") & was a hit as was Pedro Pietri's (which when he did it at his Poetry Project reading last month introduced it the same way, "...last time I am going to read this poem"). Ralph Lee's company's processional gave the audience a chance to recall other lifetimes, Richard Hell had mirrors on fire in his dreams & made us see them, dancer Cynthia Hedstrom created a brittle silence through which only her instant caravan shakes & zero gravity upheavals could with full grace swim (complimented by a visual/sound track of 3 children center stage left seated playing on toys emitting mechanical beeps & tone patterns), William-John Tudor's rich soaring layered textures played loud sent comfortable waves through the room - on stage Kenneth King displayed how angles can be ridden fragile & majestic (excerpt from the "Phi Project"), Amiri Baraka pleaded for our sensibilities to condemn the country's move to the right - being one of the few poets either night to address any current political or social situation tho Charles Dennis' film & his subsequent performance (entrance through the screen) forecasted us to a post-bomb gas mask salesman's pitch.

There were over a hundred acts I didn't catch, running around

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THE REAL WORK (Interviews and Talks 1964-1979) by Gary Snyder (New Directions, \$4.95)

If you know Gary Snyder's works this book doesn't add much; and you've probably read these interviews or some just like them before. His point of view, the scholarship and politics behind it, is very sane and well-worked out and there aren't any surprises here. Reading the interviews, people prodding him, well Gary what about this and what about that and what about this and he answers and explains and expands easily you sometimes imagine once he might say, Jesus, I never thought of that objection, maybe I've been completely wrong about all this stuff and should now become interested in Video Games and Broadway, but he never does, he never will. He's been doing and saying these things about Zen, Native American culture, anthropology, ecology, and poetry for twenty-five years and you get more the impression that he cares about these things than that he is making himself up as a person. So if you need to know more about all of that (what a person who is sincere and responsible-- these words, in their grave, original senses, hardly seem applicable to humans lately-- says) you can read these interviews. Many items of interest. Like, "On the average the human brain was larger 40,000 years ago than it is now... Paleolithic people worked about fifteen hours a week and devoted the rest of their time to cultural activity... Their appearance was no different from people you see today... and they ate extremely well," can give you pause.

- Norman Fischer

BRUISES AT THE OHIO

A couple of losers get famous for "Doing Nothing," a fourth rate reporter is cast into the role of savior and everyday preconceptions of success, talent, greed and power are acted out in a feverish intensity of desire and despair. Sound familiar? It's not, for Bruises, a play by Charles Borkhuis and directed by Matthew Maguire, is a mixed metaphor of theatre, fusing realism with cliché, rock n' roll with motherhood, metaphysics with the mundane.

Seen at the Ohio Performing Space (formerly the Open Space), the play opens with Gregory (Sturgis Warner) in a tattered t-shirt seated at a table staring into a plate of mashed potatoes. Behind him are seven multi-colored flats on which a slide of the Camel's camel is projected. In front of the audience, diagonal rows of 3-D glasses are laid out like advancing armies. A small wooden artist's model, poised in running position, spins aimlessly on the record player. Gregory announces: "The desert drinks my eye. Correction. Both eyes." and promptly falls face first into the mashed potatoes. Shortly thereafter, the household is invaded by a reporter (Bob Holman) bearing cameras, tape recorders and the flashing headlines that Gregory and Shawn (Deirdre O'Connell) are "Famous for Doing Nothing." The Warhol prophecy comes true in black and white. But for the frenetic electric bassoon player and his actress girlfriend, fifteen minutes isn't nearly enough. And when the couple realizes that their continuing celebrity status rests solely on the vigilant camera eye of the reporter, the desperate tyranny of role-playing

is brought out with a Genet-like clarity and irony. But that's only one aspect of all that's going on here.

As Gregory ("I'm never natural; it's not my style"), Sturgis Warner is loose-limbed, explosive and utterly hip. His dreams of playing with rock idols Brian Eno and Stiv Bators alternate with wistful longing for desert skies and sand dunes. For him, the need to be famous creates its own sense of non-reality. "You don't know what it's like being nothing... Dead men start walking around in your shoes." Gregory's lack of ambition and near catatonia (he tends to blackout at flashbulbs) contrasts sharply with the down-to-earth Shawn, who wants fame and babies but not necessarily in that order. It is she who has arranged their temporary stardom under questionable circumstances. "You couldn't even raise your own talent," she upbraids him in the twangy tones of the Southwest. "Not without me around to feed it." A spunky opportunist, Deirdre O'Connell is a delight in the role of the aspiring actress cum domestic, making effortless transitions from impish ingenue to scheming bawd without missing a beat. In the delicate moments of her childhood reverie, the purity and rapture of that first "make-believe" are recalled with poignant tenderness.

Despite the very real beauty of such scenes and others, there is no plot in all this but a series of "performances" for the reporter who is there to make them famous. Or is he? As the non-plot thickens, we discover the identity of this fan mag follower to be highly suspect. A former DJ who was in love with the music of the fifties, his own obsession with the elite is revealed in his secret desire to be a brain surgeon. "Someday I'll be working on famous brains all over the country...they'll be coming to me with their brains." Bob Holman plays this obscure figure with a manic mixture of Twilight Zone and Groucho, conveying humor and expression even in a night hood and ball gag.

Seen as a whole, the wealth of verbal and visual poetry of Borkhuis' Bruises seems totally removed from Maguire's previous work with CREATION, of which he is a founding member. The group's Untitled (or the Dark Ages Flat Out) and Eye Figure Fiction are theatre works which tend to focus on objects, technical gadgetry, music -- the whole audio/visual experience of theatre rather than conventionalities of character, plot or even dialog. The central idea of each piece (the relationship of the Booth brothers or the trials and tribulations of producing a play) unfolds itself in a kaleidoscope of image and sound. And while Borkhuis deceptively retains the traditional character/plot/dialog form, the action of Bruises takes place in a dream world of poetic image and disembodied voices. These two elements are also found in Maguire's endeavors with CREATION. In this particular instance, the result is a nether world of fantasy and reality, an irreverant mixture of high drama and cartoon. Whether we are listening to the "Heavenly Voices" overdubbing a freeze-frame glamour pose with THIS IS AN ETERNAL MOMENT or Gregory's hipster acting advice to Shawn ("Remember baby, you got razors for eyes"), the effect is a fragmentary glimpse of a dream. One which becomes, for that brief flash of the camera, the dream of us all.

Bruises is playing at the Ohio Performing Space, 59 Greene Street, November 19-22 and 27-30, December 3-6 at 8 PM. "Heavenly Voices" by Sienna Gregan, music by Vito Ricci, sets by Barbara Helpen and lights by Amy L. Richard.

- Cynthia Savage

Breton Portraits

They pose the simple fullness of their pace.
The girl is shy and ready, the elder blurs
like continuous dream. They share
a destiny like Mary and her cousin, a gift
presented before the stewardship of man.

The old woman works her yarn
its colors course face and hands like rain.
She becomes what she does, assumes
the reds and blues of cloth and the chair
in which she knits.

To sheer and spin wool
confirm the youth whose thoughts wander
over cliffs like clouds and sweep the fields.
Her clear eyes tell the approaching time,
focus past the artist to us the aged
obscure in tapestries of our own.

The long quick strokes define weave and weaver
whose fingers set a pattern for the girl.
Her poised body waits the moment, the rush
like dawn to launch the ceremony of pardon
etched in stone or star-like on mainsails of the fleet.

- Joseph F. Connelly

Two hot new singles have just been released. Words On 45's features Vito Ricci's music on both sides with Ann Rower's singing & writing on one & Bob Holman's on the other. The Rower/Ricci shot is Made in Japan ("She wasn't born in the usual way/caress and undress fight and excite/his mother and father threw him away/distributorships that pass in the night/he never finished the eighth grade/people aren't mated by heavenly plan/it doesn't matter what station you play/these days the Matches are Made in Japan...") and Bob Holman's Rock'N'Roll Mythology defines one man's "total apocalypse pathology...if it ain't comin' at you then it's breezed on by...") Available from 65 Greene St NYC 10012 for \$2. Skeezo's type-setting of the lyrics on the jacket is worth that. Birdbrain by Allen Ginsberg backed by The Gluons (who take up the other side also) is available from WAX TRAX RECORDS 638 E 13 Ave Denver CO 80203 for \$2, I think - that's what it was at the PP Benefit). Hear Homer's political correspondent wail in verse the facts & prophecy's of our troubled times.

A CALENDAR

These days
Days fly
Really, by...

Slips
The mind
To rip

Each
Month's
Page

Off.
O
Tiny

Diurnal
Windows,
You are

Stiff
Competition
For art.

- Steve Levine

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