

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

December 1982

#94

75¢

Free at the Poetry Project

Suddenly

it's night and Tom
comes in and says,
"It's pouring buckets
out," his blonde hair
diamond-dusted with
rain drop fragments.

—James Schuyler

WEDNESDAY READINGS: at 8 PM, suggested contribution \$3. *Hosted by Bernadette Mayer & Bob Holman:*

December 1 - **Quincy Troupe & Andrei Codrescu**

December 8 - **Dennis Brutus & Jerome Rothenberg ***

December 15 - **Twentieth Century French Poetry read by translators: Paul Auster, John Ashbery, Neil Baldwin, Andrei Codrescu, Serge Gavronsky, Ron Padgett, George Quasha, Mark Rudman, Armand Schwerner, William Jay Smith, Anne Wright, Katherine Washburn, Geoffrey Young, Bill Zavatsky & others.**

December 22 - **"Dirt Show" with Bob Carroll, the World's First Anti-Corporate Lounge Lizard, and the Sedition Ensemble.**

December 29 - no reading

MONDAY READING AND PERFORMANCE SERIES: at 8 PM, suggested contribution \$1. *Hosted by Rochelle Kraut:*

December 6 - **Open Reading**

December 13 - **Bernard Heidsieck** (one of Europe's most renowned sound poets here in NY for a special visit)

December 20 - **Didi Susan Dubelyew & Stephen Paul Miller**

December 27 - **Ann Rower & David Rattray**

*SPECIAL WORKSHOPS with **Dennis Brutus** on Tuesday, December 7 at 8 PM and with **Jerome Rothenberg** on Thursday, December 9 at 8 PM. Free.

LECTURE on December 23, Thursday at 8 PM with **Amiri Baraka: Greenwich Village and African-American Music.**

ANNUAL GIANT MAMMOTH MARATHON NEW YEARS BENEFIT FESTIVAL - January 1st in the main sanctuary of St. Mark's Church.

Community Meeting & Election on December 11th for a new community member to the Poetry Project's Advisory Board. Voting is noon - 3 PM with the meeting starting at 1 PM. All are invited.

Watch for the reopening of the Nuyorican Poets' Cafe/Poetry Project reading series soon.

Free Workshops with **John Godfrey** on Tuesdays at 8 PM and **Jack Collom** on Fridays continue.

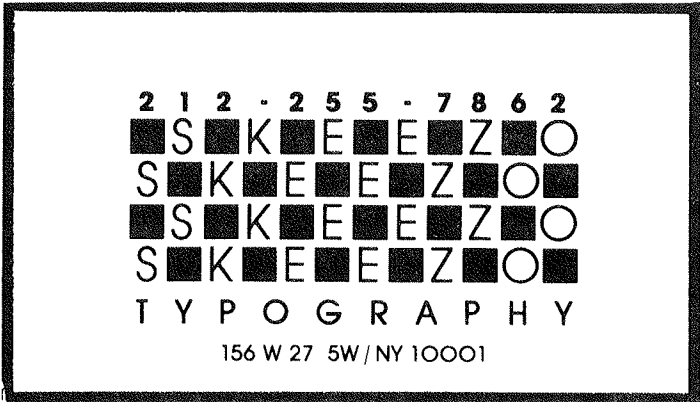
WBAI-FM's show "Readings From the Poetry Project", produced by John Fisk, continues on the first & third Saturdays of the month at 7 PM. 99.5 FM.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Midwinter Day by Bernadette Mayer (Turtle Island, Berkeley CA \$6.95p - "...an epic poem about a daily routine. It is sedate, mundane, yet marvelous. This is a day in Bernadette's life, no one else's—no one made it up, no one else in literature or history or mythology. I think this poem the first of its kind." - Alice Notley)...**Days and Nights** by Kenneth Koch (Random House, NYC \$5.95p \$10.50c)...from New Directions, NYC: **The Gift** by H.D. ("novelistic memoir" - \$5.95p \$14.95c); **Yes, Mrs. Williams** by William Carlos Williams (reviewed next issue - \$5.95p); and **Collected Early Poems of Ezra Pound** (\$8.95p)...**The Complete Wild Body** by Wyndham Lewis (Black Sparrow, Santa Barbara CA \$12.50p \$20c)...**Body Bee Calling** by Miguel Algarin (Revista Chicano-Riquena, U of Houston Central Campus, Houston TX 77004)...**The Making of the "Pre"** by Francis Ponge, trans. Lee Fahnestock (U of Missouri Press, PO Box 7088 Columbia MO 65205-7088 \$14.95p - includes ms. on facing page)...**The Wheel** by Wendell Berry (North Point Press, Berkeley CA \$10c \$5p)...**George Oppen: Man and Poet**, ed. Burton Hatlen (National Poetry Foundation, U of ME at Orono 04469, npl)...**Proof** by Larry Price (TUUMBAPRESS, Berkeley CA \$3p)...**Dinosaur** by Edmund Berrigan (Instant Editions NYC, npl - illustrated by the author)...**A Green Place: Modern Poems**, ed. William Jay Smith (Delacorte/Lawrence, NYC \$16.95c)...**Dump** by tom beckett (AfterHours Press, SF CA \$2)...**Live Me A River** by Helen Lawson (Blue Spruce Press c/o Four Quarters Pub. Co., 28 High St Guilford CT 06437 \$5)...from North Atlantic, Richmond CA: **Translucent Gears** by Richard Silberg (\$4.95c) and **Waiting Game: Photographs of the Oakland A's** by Debra Heimerdinger (w/text by John Krich - \$8.95p)...**The Colors of a Marriage** by Janet Carnecross Chandler (10640 Joeger Rd Auburn CA 95603 \$4)...from Trilke, SF CA: **The Prone Body Under** by Rick London (\$3.50) and **Lascaux** by Beau Beausoleil (\$4)...from Vagabond Press, Ellensburg WA: all by John Bennett: **In the Course of Human Events; Crime of the Century; Hijack** (\$2.50 each or all 3 for \$5 - essays, discourse, reportage)

MAGAZINES RECEIVED

Off Limits, ed. Leonard Goldstein (438 E. 13 St #1C NYC 10009 \$1 -anti-nuclear theme, L. Newman, Connelly, Weigel, Mueller, Jeffrey, Dubelyew + ...**Working Papers**: Phil Honey, It's Time We Settled Down (available from the Poetry Project \$2 - Maureen Owen's Tuesday Night Workshop's mag - Kushner, Nostrand, Repetto, Yorty, Landi, Nasdor, Lewis, Miller + + +)...**New Blood #7**, ed. Niko Murray (2935 Broadway Boulder CO 80302 \$3 - Clausen, P.J. Taylor, Plomp, Deelder, Sgambati, Ginsberg, Rucker, Swartz, Antler, Kerlikowske, Rodriguez)...**New Observations #7**, ed. Peter Licht (144 Greene St NYC 10012 \$5 - *The Man Who Ground Moths Into Film* by Stephen Paul Miller - poems, play, drawings)...**Operative #1**, ed. Naatsuk Corp. (Box 686 Old Chelsea Stn NYC 10113 \$1.50 -very fine looking - Russell, Hall, Hollander, Ritchie + + fiction, poems, articles etc)...**Open Places #34**, ed. Eleanor M. Bender (Box 2085 Stephens College Columbia MO 65215 \$6/year - Piercy, Kendrick, GE Murray, Jiles, Barnes, Hacker, Pierman + +)...**New Kauri 5**, ed. Will Inman (2551 W. Mossman Rd Tuscon AZ npl -english/spanish - Rivera, Mazon, Sempe, brigham, Casillas, Rittmann, Sellers, Barnes + +)



THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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Greg Masters, editor

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More Than a Trilogy, the Doris Lessing Books

Re: Colonized Planet 5, Shikasta. The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five. The Sirian Experiments. The Making of the Representative for Planet 8. (Knopf, NYC, \$10.95, \$10, \$11.95, \$11.95 -also available in paper)

I will not do these books justice in the sense of a true review, telling you all about them judgmentally or what they are all about. I read them all this summer and apparently there's a fifth volume being written. There is one thing you can say immediately about these books which is that if you want to be taken to another place, all the while being conscious of the place you are in, then you must read them. Doris Lessing has done a wonderful thing, she creates the earth as it is and has been as a place in the galaxy, then she makes women and men be both in that place at certain points in time and living for all time, or as for all time as you can get, say, 2,000 years old. It's amazing to see what it feels like to be two thousand years old, especially in a galaxy where there is no difference known between women and men, except of course in the history of Shikasta which is remotely this planet earth. Beyond that there are lots of other planets and for each one Doris Lessing invents two thousand new devices of fiction experimentally without ever getting removed from her most generous way of writing. I've seen these books called a visionary cycle of novels, or rather a cycle of visionary novels and both are true: us is them. Thus the rest of the universe is involved in helping "us" and the vision amazingly becomes progressively more depressing as you realize in the course of the four books that as a human being of one of all the different varieties of those in history (as we know it, just a little bit) you're relatively lost in time (there are emigrations, natural upheavals, ice ages and you name it, on and on endlessly really into eternity) so that your own life has no meaning at all. Now there are a million things that have to be said at this moment. These books are also continuous treatises on the unfairness of having such a short life, as, say, 100 years. Most of the people in them are living at least lives of 800 years; shorter lives seem to wind up being due to bad mixing of types from other planets and depression among people about having no real work left to do. Another thing is that when I use the words life has no meaning, it's obvious that the word meaning has to be changed to be some other word, you name it. Doris Lessing is very much on target in her astonishing assessment by means of these books of this world and, I meekly add, its aggressiveness, wars, politics and greed. Some things about her vision are disturbing like her emphasis on leaders; being "one of the five" means you work at shifting populations around from planet to planet for the purposes of various experiments in making people stronger, live longer, be smarter and often, but not always, happier. There is a moment in reading these books when you might think there's a philosophy beyond the genius of the writer behind it all, and you're being led to believe in something nearly religious. I won't go into that but to say that the books do succeed in giving you a sense of your place (if such a word can be used) in the cosmos, maybe in a sense that is owned as an idea or maybe not. I myself find nothing wrong with being reminded just about every twenty seconds that I am one person, not two or more, and existing at this moment in time which you could describe as being at the rear end of capitalism, between two ice ages, where people are getting taller again but they are not so tall as they once were, where marriage is encouraged, and what type of marriage it is, where half the earth is refugees from political cataclysms, where small fractions of the people on the planet are unwilling to share their privileges with others—this is even

too minute a list & Doris Lessing is pointing out in her books that the ways of looking at things are bigger. I have always enjoyed the anthropological view of Americans, say, as subjects—their mating habits, rituals of transportation, what they eat and build; Lessing's created view is the galactic one where there is much else going on. And if you ever were tempted to believe that you (personally) or perhaps some friend of yours or some group of people was from outer space, well within these books you'll find good reason to believe in that which is part of the vision of change, that someone must be from some other planet in order to be so different. And to change the world. In order to be exempt at this moment from this moment, and wouldn't that be nice. There is a romanticism of sorts taking place in these books and there are weird sexual scenes where, for instance, a more enlightened (none of these words are apt) woman is sort of forced to mate with a man who's like a Hun, which scene sort of reminded me of Ayn Rand or something, yet astonishingly the whole vision of that image is within the context of the civilization in which it was written, and if there is then a forethought as to how the writer wants to make people think, well I'd give her the benefit of the doubt, especially since the woman in the stories is always so real. Somebody told me that Doris Lessing was opposed to the anti-nuclear protests because she felt that if the world as it is now was to explode itself, then that was what was going to happen, and then, thousands of years later something else would happen that would be this proceeding that we try to devote ourselves to daily; also I was told that Lessing was disappointing because she was no longer a feminist. All this was reported to me by various people from an article in the New York Times Book Review, shortly after the publication of the fourth volume of this series. I don't know if it was reported to me right, but I could immediately see the connection between this possible Sufism that was being levelled against her and the idea of saying what's the point, if you know your place in the cosmos, of protesting nuclear war. Not that I agree with that. A woman named Tillie who is in her 60's saw me reading *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8* and said to me, "I'm very disappointed in Doris Lessing, she has lost her ideals." Tillie was talking about the anti-nuclear problem and also about feminism, but when she said that, I was also thinking about the fact that in these books there is very little magic available to those who haven't learned it from the "great ones." & I had been worried about the progressively more depressing feeling one gets from reading these books which situate the earth as it is now in time, but also eventually give the individual no power at all (though the word individual has to be changed to some other word) as I said before. I am amazed at Doris Lessing's largesse in creating a gigantic world vision to be eaten by everyone and it could go on forever in her fiction which is not fiction at all either and I am apparently speechless at seeing in her books the seasons, for instance, as an unusual phenomenon which does not exist on every planet and about which, on the planets where they do exist, there is a whole literature written about them, and ultimately the books are extremely sad though exciting & make your heart beat faster, that's the way they left me who am one person deciding to try and write something about them just today.

—Bernadette Mayer

The White Snake by Ed Friedman

directed by Bob Holman. Sets and Costumes by Robert Kushner. An EYE ANDEAR THEATER Production. April 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, May 1, 2, at Dancerschool, 400 Lafayette Street, NYC.

CAST:

Boatman: Jose Rafael Arango
Blue: Debra Granieri
White: Rochelle Kraut
Syu: Titus Welliver
Yoshiko Chuma as Yoshiko Chuma

Music by Vito Ricci.

CHORUS:

Sophie Clarke, Suzu Kawamoto, Doris Kornish, Marc Nasdor, Ethan Ryman, Margery Segal, Pierre Shradly, Elizabeth Tobier; Trainer: Yoshiko Chuma

The magic of the theater clicks on in that anticipatory moment when the audience goes silent as the play is about to begin, as it will when "something is about to happen," in this production of Ed Friedman's **The White Snake**, & never once diminishes through all the tricks, tangles & turns director Bob Holman, in collaboration with the designer/painter Robert Kushner, and the choreographer/dancer/performer Yoshiko Chuma, constructs to bring to life once again in 1982 a 12th Century Chinese Folktale, reborn as a 20th Century Peking Opera.

Friedman's fast-talking song & dance re-presentation of his source material sparkles with liveliness; and his near geometrical economy in rolling out a many colored but single-strand ball of yarn which remains abrasive enough to stimulate the phagocytes to head-shaking amusement and unflagging attentiveness, while throwing up enough tender-hearted tough-talking optimism in the face of the world muck, is a miracle in that it all remains so simple, just like life. "You had to run downhill in your sink to take a shower," White explains, of former living quarters.

The White Snake is the story of a White Snake Spirit (White) and her companion, a Blue Snake Spirit (Blue) who return to earth in order that White may pursue an ordinary mortal, Mr. Syu, with whom she has fallen in love. This pursuit begins by the shores of West Lake, continues on a boat which the ladies and Mr. Syu board, piloted by an astonishingly deadpan half-sinister, half-cretin Boatman, and culminates in Redondo Beach, after a boatride through a storm. At Redondo Beach action resumes inside a Winnebago camper, evidently the home of Blue & White, which is driven around for a good while, until after some thorough "trying it before you buy it," White and Mr. Syu marry. The wedding is followed by a Kung Fu Honeymoon, consisting of a beach party and then a battle, in the middle of which all freeze, and a shabbily dressed happy pitchman pitches **White Snake II**, which, he says, will appear in the next season; Coming Attractions are highlighted in speech, and what has been seen & heard so far is described as "a story of people's liberation, depicted as a knockout spectacle...& an educational experience." "He was a mortal who couldn't make up his mind. She was a White Snake Spirit, or was she?"

That was merely the story. What the audience got to see and hear was a dazzling progress of stories which ranged from sight and sounds of a pride of lions to the appalling wisecracking and crude fornicating of a nest of ninnies. It was all never less than heavenly, and never more than earthbound.

First came wisecracks, insults and American graffiti, out of the mouths of two beauties. The shining-eyed, radiant, world champion sex-midget, White, was played with heart-warmingly shocking insistence by Rochelle Kraut, who

delivered her foulmouthed lines in a desperately funny roller-coaster Swedish accent thoughtfully provided by Mr. Friedman, who wrote much of the play in phonetics, necessary also for Blue's Mexican accent, and Syu's Indian accent. Debra Granieri, a big broad, played Blue as if she were Walter Matthau playing Garbo, and surrounded the demure White with whirling currents of electricity and thunderclaps. Blue's accent was indecipherable, sounding more coarse Rumanian peasant than Mexican, but her speeches were clear. Rochelle Kraut wore White's Swedish accent like lipstick put on in the dark, fetching, and perfectly shaped, but marvelously off-target. Titus Welliver's Mr. Syu spoke mostly in an accent, slightly "down", but very there, as if someone had told him his legacy was of the highest order, i.e. ordinary. Jose Rafael Arango brought his own distinct accent to the role of the Boatman. He was by turns ponderous, unhurried, vulgar, and devastating. All of the words, Mr. Friedman's, were made, by judicious pace & staging by Bob Holman, to float over the action; thus it was truly an eye & ear production. Mr. Holman does this wonderfully well, as those who saw his production of Edwin Denby's *Four Plays* last year can attest. In **The White Snake**, the final magic was made possible, very obviously, by Yoshiko Chuma, from both on and off stage, and by Robert Kushner, in absentia

I can hardly go on, but believe it or not, literally dozens more things & events to see took place. There were the songs, sung first by a mindblowing chorus of attractive androgynous (only at first) young people in black and other colors; with small songs by the major players. There was a fashion show in the Winnebago, during which Mr. Arango quietly and off to one side went through a half-dozen vividly real portrait appearances, each time by means of adding or subtracting a few pieces of clothing that had been dumped into a party, courtesy of Mr. Kushner. Arango appeared, while sitting up very straight and rarely moving, first as an old man, then a young rake, then a dancing girl, then a shiek, then a sissy, then the devil. Very possibly he was the devil.

And finally, there was the ever-present Yoshiko, who, clad in dancer's workaday costume of tights and stockings, played a kind of robust Tinkerbelle, who never spoke, but at each seeming lull strode purposefully over to the nearest players, made a few abracadabra hand-gestures, and set off something new happening. She, like the chorus, was in constant league with the audience, winking, grinning with satisfaction, or knowingly, as she animated all of every change. There were 16 scenes and in Act One, nine of them were signalled as beginning and ending, by Ms. Chuma, and at each ending a large piece of vari-colored fabric was rolled out across the action, like roof to floor scrolls, coming from far downstage left, right up to and past the audience. When the stage was entirely divided into foreground and behind the curtain by Mr. Kushner's panels, it was the end of Act One, and the Chorus came racing out belting out the song "You've Got To Move." After lining up facing the audience, and directly addressing them in wonderfully natural and intimate but large-scale flirtatious movement, they raced off. To the great delight of the audience, Ms. Chuma then did a slow half-strut "dirty" dance across the front, and sang in perfect, (almost) unaccented American, "you got to move," bawdy and suggestive to the point of making one feel faint, and clean, at the same time. She also made it very clear that she was to be taken literally, and so Act I ended with the audience quite naturally getting up, carrying their chairs to a specified location behind Mr. Kushner's curtain, which had completely bisected the room, to find themselves in a lobby they had half made themselves, to stand or sit in during intermission.

CONJUNCTIONS

Coming up in CONJUNCTIONS:3

An incisive & ranging interview with novelist JAMES PURDY
 New one-act play by MICHAEL McCLURE, "The Deuces"
 A 50-page fiction by GUY DAVENPORT, entitled "Apples and Pears, *Het Erewhonisch Sketsboek*"
 Cover painting, drawings & poems by avant-garde musician DON VAN VLIET
 Passage from COLEMAN DOWELL's novel-in-progress, "White on Black on White"
 A selection from ROBERT FITZGERALD's new translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*
 New work by Theodore Enslin, Gilbert Sorrentino, Michel Deguy, Toby Olson, Robert Creeley, Ann Lauterbach, René Char, Michael Palmer, Jackson Mac Low, Ann Waldman, Cecile Abish, Cid Corman & others

33 WEST 9th STREET, NEW YORK CITY 10011

CONJUNCTIONS:1. A Festschrift for James Laughlin. 312 pages, illus.	\$9.00 paper
CONJUNCTIONS:2. Spring-Summer 1982. 248 pages, illus.	\$7.50 paper \$22.50 cloth
CONJUNCTIONS:3. Autumn-Winter 1982 240 pages, illus.	\$7.50 paper \$22.50 cloth

In Act Two, behind the curtain, where the chairs had been moved to, the three lead players, Blue, White, and Syu, entertained themselves, did "it", which Blue had already done with Boatman, and discussed love, death, the terrible condition of the city and country, reprised discussion along similar lines from Act One, and finally, Syu & White had a wedding. All players, including Boatman, who was still around, and was soon to be a Kung Fu Teacher of different name, went off, to reappear as a wedding party, bride and groom, for the ceremony. When Mr. Syu entered again, with Ms. Chuma on his arm, wearing the bridal gown, she seemingly having become one with White, everything seemed to fall into place, like magic, and one finally "understood." What was understood? Everything that had passed before one's eyes, and in (& out of) one's ears: life was real, all was illusion, everybody is hopeless, and you got to move. Who could ask for anything more.

This truly was at least one kind of "poet's theater." It was poetry, and it was theater. Neither would have come alive without the other.

—Ted Berrigan

Water moving above—clear sound in the dark open **Lost and Found (scenes from a life)** by John Bernd. Pulled as if by gravity or some other force, yet self propelled, five dancers begin a sequence of continual alignment and disalignment in a systematic rotation of planes. These planes reply to the relationships between sets of dancers. Two men move in perfect tandem.

One is standing and one sitting in a chair.

Fields generate until, in general, everyone is included at which point the field disintegrates thru the accretion of inertia's forced focus.

People lie down into a glide across the floor.

Scenes move thru blocks of intense noise, engines, clocks. The blocks cultivate a pace then brutally reduce it, incorporating the lag time of comprehension. The dancers fill and empty circles of relationships. Dancers circle other dancers establishing roles. There is initiation and consequent innovation. There are wardens, acolytes, friends.

In one set, Ishmael Houston-Jones walks demandingly engaging around someone repeatedly and closely. With each circle the two characters become firmer. One wants to escape - the other is increasing a sense of dominance - I even thought of a guard in basketball and the guy inside the circle had the ball - as if whenever you have it someone tries to take it away. Control, position, imposition.

At length the circled dancer dispels his interlocutor & pins him to the floor - breaks the cycle and the circle to find a new one - lost and found.

Sometimes they shake their heads no.

Near the end which begins like junkies nodding, vacuumed dreams, one guy starts to jerk and have a spaz attack. Something's wrong altho you're not sure if the dancer is really hurting himself. It's as if to be out of control is at once the energizing factor and the eventual release.

The spot washes them and the music gets pretty. They form a phalanx of concern around their afflicted friend. They fall into an instinctual ritual and begin to sing a chant. The chant and the dance and one dancer circling the others on his belly are the beautiful question about what goes wrong.

The Blond Slave by Hope Gillerman was more ambitiously an iconoclasm. Poses, stance, title and costume had effect but left me scrutinizing spatial resolution.

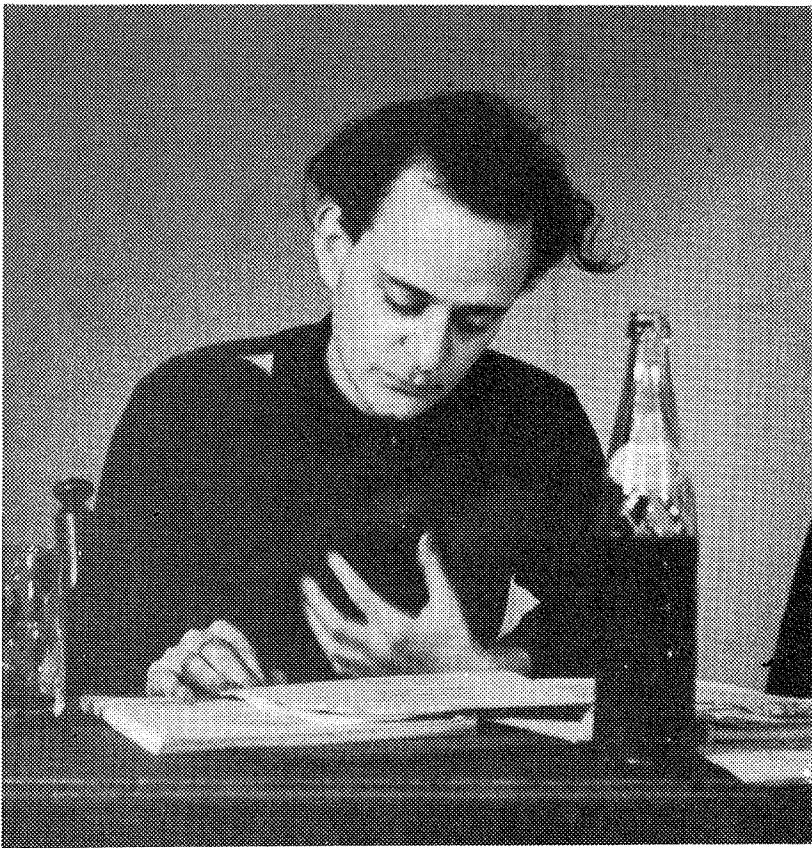
Five women are repeating a futile gesture of trying to depose "The Boss" while Gillerman crabwalked amusingly around the risers to The Talking Heads. She proposed angular Barbie doll-like poses and strolled her breasts in her hand, don't ask me to explain, mincing like a football player across the room. Her leaps were contemporary and innovative.

M.J. Becker portrayed a fawning, frolicsome puppy that cast a vague timelessness over the piece, like a veil of context. When she cut into her solo to a tune by The Tom Tom Club, her dense and effective accessibility was cousin in sense to break dancing.

In the jungle do the monkey.

—Jeff Wright

DANSPLACE presents two programs of its *Dance Film Series & Panel Discussion* in December. On Tuesday December 7th at 8:30 PM work by Charles Atlas/Merce Cunningham, Amy Greenfield, Peter Margonelli/Lisa Kraus, Harry Sheppard, Christopher Wilson, David Woodberry. On Tuesday December 14th at 8:30 PM: Ericka Beckman, Rudy Burckhardt/Edwin Denby/William Dunas, Dunas, Risa Jaroslow, Curt Royston.



Photograph of Harry Fainlight by Lorenz Gude, taken at La Mama, Autumn-Winter 1964-5, at a reading by H.F. and Ted Berrigan.

Harry Fainlight: In Memoriam (d. 1982, London)

Early 60's Harry seemed the most promising new consciousness poet in English tongue, living in New York, sharing the 60's revolution, amphetamine, Motherfuckers, Fugs, Poetry at the Metro, and lived in Chinatown. He wanted my power, I said, "You can have it." Maybe more cursed than blessing for years afterwards he blamed me for laying a prophetic trip on him complaining of conspiracies to watch him and blockade his creation and fame in Albion.

Silent for many years and out of touch, I found him in London 1973 living in a high ceiling studio built into the medieval wall of a courtyard mews hidden in Soho. Studio had no heat in London winter except for a small electrical apparatus. He warmed up and became friendly. He came back with me to visit Miles' flat a half mile away where I was staying. There were piles of manuscripts of disarray in his studio but he said he was writing little. His temperament seemed to be permanently altered by amphetamine paranoia, he still worked his lips back and forth, protruding then drawing them in, halting of speech silent long seconds at a time on the verge of pronouncing a phrase, suspicious of me and the electric surveillance of the British establishment over his consciousness. (As in 1965 in Albert Hall, he sat head bent over notebook before 7,000 people hesitating agonizingly minute after minute unable to begin reading a long poem on the nature of consciousness inspired by New York Methamphetamine, the central image of which was a cosmic spider. The scene is vividly recorded in the film *Wholly Communion*, me shouting desperately offstage to him, "Read poem! Read poem!")

When Peter and I came back to London 1979, he was still struck with neurological lightning but more sociable briefly for this visit than the previous decade. Came to visit at Miles' flat and even stayed over one evening when we went out of town for a reading. The last I saw him, Peter and Steven Taylor and I left Miles' house on tour maybe to Brighton and had to coax Harry out of Miles' basement flat to go to his own home. He then seemed to want the shelter of our company.

I always thought him the most gifted English poet of his generation and wonder what his manuscripts will reveal when they are collected and published. I think a few rare poems were sent by him to small magazines and printed in the late 70's in England. Good Bye Harry.

—Allen Ginsberg
October 6 '82

(dictated via telephone from Gordon Ball's house to Bob Rosenthal in NYC)

(Note: Harry's long work, *The Spider*, recounted an LSD experience, not an amphetamine one, though all kinds of interrelated drug and non drug experiences were familiar grounds for all of us then. Harry, at the Albert Hall reading, can be heard saying: "...I just want to make it clear that *these experiences* are not all...(a bed of roses?)...". Harry Fainlight's one book *SSUSICRAN* was published by Turret Books, London around 1967. —T.B.)

"Many great dears are taken away."

May no fate willfully misunderstand me, butDuration, durability, being something I have never questioned in me, it is just so that I am not, cannot, be surprised that Harry is dead. For it is that fate, Death, early and still late, that Harry had so unquestioningly taken as his own from before I met him. Speaking with Ron (Padgett) over the phone earlier tonight, I heard Ron once again say those words, *poete maudite*, and was struck by with how little severity one could hear and even use that phrase; something I only first realized twenty years ago upon reading Allen Ginsberg's fulsome praise of John Weiners, in an account of first hearing a tape of Weiners' reading. Allen himself, indicated a difficulty with the bare text of Weiners' *Hotel Wentley Poems*. He didn't "get it" at first, for it was in the music. With Harry, too, it was in the music, and in how achingly beautiful the lyric is in the hands of someone who makes it in the throat. "A lamp/creates a glade." is one of Harry's great couplets, from a selection of his, arranged by himself, that I published in "C" Magazine in 1964. The whole arrangement was titled by Harry, "Ah, London", and the reader was referred to a sister selection from FUCK YOU (A Magazine of the Arts), entitled, "Oh, London."

In 1963 I moved back downtown, to 630 East 9th St. in NYC, and into the rush of the days of the underground movie explosion, the heydays of LeMetro Coffee House as the center of Poetry Readings, Allen's return from India, and the emergence of Ed Sanders' Fuck You gang, the "C" Magazine crowd of "soi-disant" Tulsa Poets, and the ongoing pursuits of the Kelly/Rothenberg Camp. Harry Fainlight circulated through all of these, appearing as even I did, into LeMetro from the street, there to be brought together perhaps by place, perhaps by Gerry Malanga, whose importance as someone who brought people together was cerebral.

Harry & I met like two boys in a John Buchan novel; a Yank, with no connotations other than friend on that word, and a Brit, one who as it turned out had American citizenship by birth, but had grown up entirely in England and was Oxford London to the core, so much so that he was even half-jewish, and so, of course, cosmopolitan, urban rather than urbane, and not one bit Middle-Atlantic, as say Bill Merwin was (and later Anselm Hollo would not be). We liked one another from the first, like they say, and spent long hours and nights in Ratner's, comparing maps of the worlds of poetry, our world, as we had boyishly taken it to be, each. Harry was a serious, intent listener, with great handsome sweep of brow and piercing nose above long sensitive lips. I thought he was beautiful. He could blush, and his laugh, part full, part giggle, cracking like the croak of a raven in the middle, encouraged one to greater earnestnesses which still now do not seem extravagances, as they didn't then.

Gleefully earnest we discussed like shopgirls everyone: Allen himself (and Harry recounted to me his own saying to Allen, "I want your power" and Allen's cheerful reply, "you can have it"); Peter Orlovsky no less (Harry recognized further depths than he knew when he came upon them, and further sheer physical strengths); John Weiners, virgin daughter of Mother Mary's sorrows (Harry was severe with John only, for he recognized his own fate and its dangers, and was audibly heard to tsk, tsk, when John would veer beautifully close to playing the role that was each of theirs for real, in a poem at a reading) & Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery, and Kenneth Koch, whose banners, small as they then were, Ron and I carried as we rode our donkeys into the fray. Harry found Frank's cheerfulness distressing (Irish, I said) & his strengths, disconcerting, and after careful brooding consideration, found it necessary to confront Frank, at a party,

and alas, all because of me and my insistence, I'm afraid. For Harry was vanquished with a smile, by a courtier with self-evident friendliness. Approaching Frank, while Frank was in conversation with Bill Berkson, or John Ashbery, and said, abruptly, "Frank, I've been reading your poetry, a lot, and thinking about you a lot, and I've come to the conclusion that it's not all that great!" And waited. And Frank without missing a beat, turned a sun of a smile on him and said to him, laughingly, putting his hand on Harry's arm as he did so, "Oh, stop it!" with rising inflection. There was no malice, there, no patronizing, only recognition of what play we were all in, maybe. Telling me of the incident a few moments after it happened, Harry was rueful, but not chastened. "I was actually wittier than he was!" he complained to me, and I've always loved him for treating me equal at that moment, and always loved myself and Frank and Harry and all of us there in that room, for being there, in New York City in 1965.

Harry was watching, as Harry was always there, seeing, watching, when Paul Blackburn came over to me in LeMetro in early 1964 and asked me if I thought I would like to have a Wednesday Night reading of my own, in a month or two; and he was glad, glad for me, and glad to have been there to see it, and glad to be able to say to me some minutes afterwards, gleefully, and warm, and boyish, and radiant with friendship and comradeship both as indeed there is a difference, "I saw him do it. I saw him thinking it, and I saw him get up and come over and ask you!" I was glad, too, and though we didn't embrace and laugh, as it was neither the time nor the place, I embrace you now, Harry, Goodbye, old friend.

—Ted Berrigan
October. 1982. NYC.

POEM

It's hard to think of
you in any way other than
I already do, a sequel to love
and its brief epiphany
without their love what would
we ever do? stand on a street corner
and think things over
the chastity of the blue is
in the future
"troubled fortunes & chaste lives"
I'm hiding this from you
saw you across a room but didn't speak
a girl named Trish might call
and I'd tell her you're still asleep
how to be less recondite
without disturbing
the hermit's tranquility? lead
me not into temptation etc. let's
cross the surface of the world
where the punishment of love
is its own presumption
seen from a distance beneath the shadings.

—Lewis Warsh

Living With Contradictions by Lynne Tillman, drawings by Jane Dickson (Top Stories #10, \$2.50)

One of the most memorable artist/writer collaborative efforts of late, this intense study of current day love relationships succeeds in the strangest ways. The author attacks her subject like some seemingly sensitive newscaster. Her sporadic runs of glib commentary are laden with dour truisms for the captive audience.

The range of the story is not as impressive as its comical feats, which must proceed from the formal stuff of tragedy. The tragedy being one of perpetually negative identifications between "partners in a pairbonded situation." The situation is fraught with contradictions that have more to do with the work of identity, the only constant thing. Love and mutual dedication function like anachronisms, yet are sorely missed. Too bad. I'm tempted to call it the curse of the Sixties consciousness. The ludicrous proportions of an otherwise tragic subject matter are admirably bantered about by Tillman.

"He didn't want to fight in any war and she didn't want to have a child. They had been living together for three years and still didn't have a way to refer to each other that didn't sound stupid, false, or antiquated. Language follows change and there wasn't any language to use."

For all its grim prospects, the progressions get funnier and truer. At her best when not holding back, Tillman can evince a fatuous pseudo-metaphysical question and the reasonably sane voice of the humorist.

"The manufacture of desire and the evidence of real desire. But "real" desire is for what—for what is real or manufactured?"

Then our narrator plunges forward with the grimmer socio-economic indicators, the kind of rhetoric-bound assessments that make you want to buy a new set of paints or a Jane Austen novel:

"So, Julie and Joe were just part of the great heterosexual capitalist family thrall, possessing each other."

Morbidity abounds now. Are they lost to love or just losers in love? I waver between concern and contempt, being trapped in that very era which is so neatly supported by the cartoonish drawings of Jane Dickson. Do Julie and Joe have breakfast *at home* together, I wonder..Probably not. Do they enjoy DNA's music or Chick Corea? Do they compliment themselves for liking both? Probably. So what? Remember, they are learning to live with their contradictions in a world that has gotten past romance to the ever-more strenuous "relationship."

—Tom Weigel

FAB YOU LUSS QUEENS (GAPING)

The Bathers by Lorenzo Thomas (I. Reed Books, NY, 1981, 158 pp., \$5.95)

Rooms crowd with radios From above, things are materializing in ears Breezes harden in air A sea change

Lustrous questions aflame over beers The TV's on, the rooms's underground Typewriter glare Borrowing and lending dreams Gibberish visual moments

Boredom eats the library Dinner every night Island sense of concentration, music surf, professionals picking through the shells, times with slipper gloves upon old hands

While the memory's happening, school, home, whiff of foreign lands where there are authentic strangers, modernism makes genuine Girls dance for the beneficial finance boys, movingly responsible

Then the coupe with the same seats hurtles down the road with notes rear windshield devil

Trees aren't high, but green is, so we preoccupy Moving from being always echoes, blinding light as a shifting hourglass universal profile discovers where is the airport

"Money is the hobby of Lorelai," says the serpent on the way to shoes Placemats, with Long Island quiz, muscle tremors, discovered to be placed on permanent records, spinning toward eternity, with medical discovery bass

Vertical slopes with interesting mist The little guy lurks among some rocks becoming interesting

A gun among the poplars barks at the moon where childhood walks the dog Various love paints up the forehead and even the imitation, looking into wonder, waiting for the alien

We look in the magazine rack for the note, and denied that, sample some elegant wine with our last breath behind the brick, behind the light, we didn't expect, but kind of expected anyway

How to remove the interference of paper in our trembling hands? All our dreams were shattered into millions

The window: "You wouldn't think of walking out/On the street"

Miniature cantos: "Among the reasons why the beach is beautiful is/The music on the radio is alright/Because it has nothing to do with you/And still it reminds me of something//Has to do with you"

Reeds becoming last straws: "The words the facts so easily gathered/Tonight. It is the creature we both love/I want to hear from you tomorrow/Let alone getting high. And really/This beach is beautiful"

Back and forth, enjoying as-it-were afternoons, solids to liquifying

In balconies, fine times rise as dust We listen to the art criticism of the leaves Our banner unfurls, "I can be smart when it's important"

It is We are
And all the summer others
Admitting it, we're having fun
Out there in this odd California
It is We are
And all the summer others
And this this
The way Egyptians used to see
No woman No cry

—Ted Greenwald

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So Long Chicago by James Drought (Skylight Press, 124 Compo Road North, Westport CT 06880. 1982. 144 pages \$5p)

Despite the fact that James Drought was nominated for a Nobel Prize in Literature by European critics in 1973—he was 42 at the time—his work is known by surprisingly few Americans, tho, he is the most American of novelists. Drought has written 18 books in the last three decades, and those of us lucky enough to be familiar with his work believe he has described our culture with a power and authenticity no other living novelist has matched. With the exception of Jack London, whom Drought admires, no other writer in this century has described as many facets of life so successfully.

In *The Gypsy Moths*, written in 1955, Drought describes one weekend in the lives of three men who earn their living as stunt parachutists, while in *Mover* he relates what happens to a man who is assigned the task of integrating the military stockades at Fort Bragg, North Carolina during the Korean conflict. In *The Enemy* we see an architect who is a genius persecuted by a society that has no place for beauty, nor for those who dare to create a new aesthetic.

At the center of most of Drought's books, we encounter men who face virtually impossible odds, men who dare to follow their own visions at any cost, so it should come as no surprise that Drought attained his greatest popularity in the mid-to-late 1960's, a period characterized by a heightened sense of individuality. It should also come as no surprise that Drought has been referred to as a 20th century Thoreau. Like Thoreau, Drought is alternately obstinate and didactic, and while his prose is often as finely wrought as poetry, it can be erratic, but this is almost a necessary consequence of his willingness to expand, to grow. He is a man who has never been afraid to take chances.

While Drought hasn't mellowed in his attitudes, he has, during the last decade, relied more on humor than on anger in his examination of the American psyche. His newer novels, such as *Superstar for President*, are both scathing and funny. If Drought had attempted to sustain the kind of extraordinary anger his narrator has in *The Secret*, a neglected masterpiece of American literature, he would probably be dead. As it was, he suffered a heart attack in his late forties, so he is a man who has literally laid his life on the line for his beliefs.

Drought says his newest novel, *So Long Chicago*, is as important to him as Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* was to him. In that it is a departure from his earlier work, neither angry nor blatantly funny, he is right. Also, Drought is less prone to provide pat answers in *So Long Chicago* than he has done in his other books. This one is quieter than anything he has written before, and it is more ambiguous. Drought's description of it as "a nice gentle way of dealing with the ultimate escape from death which we call life" is a measure of its ambiguity. Despite its very real and vivid surface, it has the elements of a fable, tho it is utterly lacking in the pretentiousness one finds in Faulkner's attempts to write fables.

Jake and Nora, the main characters in *So Long Chicago*, get involved in the kind of repertory theater that was beginning to surface at such places as the Second City in the 1950's, and they perform skits akin to those that were being done at the time by Mike Nichols and Elaine May. Like Nichols and May, they become successful, finally leaving Chicago to go to New York.

Nora has an abortion she never tells Jake about, and her performance in white face, much like Marcel Marceau's, becomes symbolic of the individual's almost doomed attempt

to confront "the cold will of the universe." She believes people are defeated by places, while Jake believes man can be victorious over all the elements, and that there is a place where he may finally be happy. While New York offers them a new life and provides them with new strength, it also robs them of an innocence they possessed earlier, so they are both richer and poorer. Nora has her first affair, but she realizes, perhaps for the first time, how much she loves Jake. This almost comes to her as an epiphany after she makes love to Tom Magnusson, one of their friends and a business associate, and discovers sex with him is absolutely meaningless. When she tells Jake nothing has happened, she is almost telling the truth.

It is appropriate that all the main characters in *So Long Chicago* are involved in some aspect of the entertainment business as Drought thinks of himself as a "performer." He says, "I began that way...doing tricks in the sky (he was a stunt parachutist in his mid-to-late teens) and I guess I'll never be able to visualize 'art' any other way than as a performance, preferably death-defying!" His books, upholding the highest standards of art, possess the elements of genius, while his characters, existentially alive, spit into the face of death.

—Arthur Winfield Knight

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The Dialectic of Enlightenment

Daryl Chin is a performance creator/critic and his plays spatter Big Ideas across the stage like a Dumb Art action painting. *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, written by Chin, directed by Chin and Larry Qualls, as performed at Theater for the New City, is so full of ideas one is tempted to never stop thinking. But the 20 performers never stop talking, so thinking might become a task. Chin's earlier pieces, notably his dissection of the Judson Dance years, were performed as staged readings, due to the epic quantity of text he uses and the "poor theater" budget he has. In *Dialectic* the script is memorized, but seemingly not directed - each performer has a distinct style, none mesh - it's an anarchic blitz of overlapped yap that takes on love, sex, gay rights, rape, male chauvinist lib, terrorism, Freud, Marx, modern dance, rapping, and Hotel New Hampshire, where the action takes place.

It's a raw and dazzling event, a free-for-all in low tech theater, three hours long (about average for a Chin piece). It sprawls and offends, is totally formulaic and plotted and yet thoroughly alive. *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* is not for everybody. By the time Act 3 begins, most of the audience has drifted into the night. But if you want your ideas to talk with each other, appreciate high irony, yearn for circus brains, and can take on an ensemble of amateur/provocateurs who are loving and smart and earnest, this is your cup of opera. It is genius at play and I loved the work.

—Bob Holman

Polyphonix

Polyphonix, Jean-Jacques Lebel's international poetry festival, turned IV this summer in Paris. And so from June 21-29 poets gathered from Algeria, England, Holland, France, Belgium, Italy, Russia, U.S., Martinique, Switzerland, Japan (Japanese surrealist poetry!), to read and celebrate. Readings were held at the American Center, a funky wonder six blocks from Baudelaire's grave in Montparnasse, and the Beauborg, the future-belch aka The Pompidou.

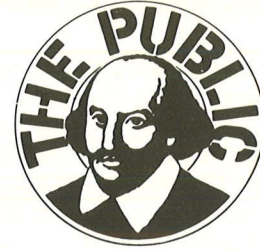
Incredible segues from performance to sound to straight readings: a French couple straight-facedly doing a "poetry ballet" complete with kiss and red flag drapings straight out of *Carmen*; the ethereal, minimal "truth of phonemes" of original surrealist André Pieyre de Mandiargues; Brion Gysin with punk backing on "Blue Baboon"; Sam Canarozzi reading typing exercises with his mouth full of pebbles; Judith Herzberg shocking the audience by *sitting - with no table*, reading tough; Beck and Molina dropped in for a surprise reading; Naani Balestrini, politico turned poet/dancer, gave a mesmerizing performance, and then returned to do a whole night of Futurist performance; Algerian poet Sahli, gagged; Jules Deelder, wheeling from Dutch to English in a nightmare Burroughs' rap; total silence for Edouard Glissant, romantic from Martinique; and Michael McClure gliding into Beast for a grrrousing close to a sparkling group reading. Bernard Heidsick, sound ace, sending us home.

Crowds were large (100-500) and energized. Some punks at the closing night fete were quite noisy, disappointed at Linton Kwesi Johnson's cancellation (his father had died) and the bumping of a punk group from the bill to a later solo shot at an after-hours party.

The best part was the range of poetry presented, and the undeniable sense of "something's coming/here it is." Polyphonix is class all the way: scheduled sound checks for all poets, great organizing, respect. Schedule your Europe for Paris in June—write Jean-Jacques Lebel c/o Polyphonix, 62 rue Charlot, Paris 75003.

—Bob Holman

(The author has modestly omitted his own name from the list of performers.)



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OVERFLOW

Bare unpruned
the apple tree
branches poke
straight up
into the rainy
grey sky
water falling
straight down
in large drops
washed out
yard vegetation
scant and pale
beyond dark green
perpetual conifers
tangle clouds

—Pat Nolan

The Refinery, a poetry radio program broadcasting on Fridays at 5:30 pm on WFMU (91.1 FM), programmed by Bob Rixon, began its second year in October. Past shows have featured readings by Allen Ginsberg, Anne Waldman and Amiri Baraka, interviews with Joel Oppenheimer plus the introduction of several newer poets. Book reviews, up to date reportage on arts news, announcements of events, etc. are also presented. Tune in.

City Magazine is soliciting poems, short stories and other writing for their upcoming issue. They're open to all kinds of writing but have a special interest in political work and spiritual work and writing by foreign-born writers living in the city. 82 Wadsworth Terrace #2A NYC 10040.

A new record by Joe Coco is available from Performance Records, 229 South Avenue West Westfield NJ 07090 for \$10 which features ten songs performed solo in a country/blues style. Recorded in NYC and Arizona.

Allen Ginsberg, Nat Hentoff, Richard Gilman, & Victor Narasky will be the speakers at the American Book Review's *FREEDOM TO WRITE CELEBRATION*. The event will also help PEN, The Writer's Union & others. Admission is free, a cash bar. Sunday, December 5, 3-6 PM at One University Place.

The Committee for International Poetry, in conjunction with The Poetry Project, presents **An Evening of 20th Century French Poetry** on Wednesday, December 15, 1982 at 8 PM at St. Mark's Church. Participants will include: **Paul Auster, John Ashbery, Neil Baldwin, Andrei Codrescu, Serge Gavronsky, Ron Padgett, George Quasha, Mark Rudman, Armand Schwerner, William Jay Smith, Anne Wright, Katherine Washburn, Geoffrey Young, Bill Zavatsky, and others.** This event is in celebration of the publication of *The Random House Book of Twentieth Century French Poetry*. For further information contact the Committee for International Poetry, PO Box 437, Cooper Station, NYC, NY 10003.

Eye & Ear Theater will hold a benefit, *Let's Dance*, on Tuesday, December 7th, 8 -11 PM at the Heartbreak, 179 Varick Street for the Spring 1983 production of W.H. Auden's *Paid On Both Sides* with sets by David Hockney & directed by Bob Holman. \$25 tax deductible contribution. For more information 861-9270.

MORE PARTY THAN ARTY Is it a party? Is it a performance? Is it an event? Yes, yes and yes. Constant, uninterrupted music—words stressing the beat, dance and dancing, dub, rapping, comedy, child dancers, mud boxing, "live" tapes of hot local bands, graffiti films, space footage & films by Vorkopich. DJ: Pan Ethnos. A first-of-its-kind, first-of-a-series event in the East Village. Participants include: Jim Brodey, Susie Timmons, S-H-O-C-K-R-A-Y, The Rower-Ricci Show, Bob Holman, Ed Friedman, Barbara Barg, Susan Yung, Bimbo Rivas, Sonorexia, Kenneth King, Rose Lesniak, Elinor Nauen, Johnny Stanton, Maureen Owen, Ted Greenwald, Lois Griffith, Edmund Berrigan. At CHARAS, 360 E. 10th Street (between Avenues B & C) December 11, Saturday at 8:30 PM. \$4 Wine & beer available.

This coupon good for one free drink.



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MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

For love of Megan I danced all night,
fell down, and broke my leg in two places.
I didn't want to go to the doctor.
Felt like a goddam fool, that's why.
But Megan got on the phone, called
my mother. Told her, Dick's broken
his leg, & he won't go to the doctor!
Put him on the phone, said my mother.
Dickie, she said, you get yourself
up to the doctor right this minute!
Awwww, Ma, I said. All right, Ma.
Now I've got a cast on my leg from
hip to toe, and I lie in bed all day
and think. God, how I love that girl!

—Ted Berrigan

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