

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

January 1983

#95

75¢

Free at the Poetry Project

Straphangers

Felt her reading my Times from over my shoulder
& still I continued to stare at the front page
photo of Alexander Haig, all the way down into
the tooled alloy pinpoint of his eye. She per-
sisted & so I began drawing a swastika on his
forehead, over & over, ripping the paper all
the way to Arts & Leisure. She tightened up.
I got off on 23'd & Americas. Felt her watch
me across the platform & into the lights.

—James Ruggia

January 1, 1983 - **The Poetry Project's Annual Mammoth Marathon Benefit** will be truly Marathon again, one night only, in the main sanctuary of St. Mark's Church this Saturday night. This is the first time since five years ago that the Benefit'll be in the church, though times've changed and now over 120 poets, musicians, dancers & performers will be appearing in the inspiring egalitarian fashion starting at 7 PM. The contribution is \$10, five dollars after midnight. A small number of truly reserved seats at \$25 for those who want to be patrons.

"Proven for years to be the best way to begin the new year, especially now."

—The NY Times

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

- January 5 - **Cynthia Genser & Michael Scholnick**
- January 12 - **Faye Kicknosway & Ken Mikolowski**
- January 19 - **Ed Sanders & Jim Carroll**
- January 26 - **Janet Hamill & Jack Collom**

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

- January 3 - **Open Reading**
- January 10 - **Joan Eckerman, Safiya Henderson, Jason Hwang**
- January 17 - Performance: **Barking - Bruce Andrews, Tom Cora, Sally Silvers/Music: The Scene is Now**
- January 24 - Film & Music: **Andrea Kirsch & a host of others/Music: Lulu Review**
- January 31 - Performance: **Alan Graubard with Hugh Levick, Butch Morris, Caroline McGee** (live music, tape, text)/Performance: **Peter Rose**

A special workshop with **Ed Sanders** will take place on Jan. 20 at 8 PM, free.

Ongoing free weekly writing workshops continue with **John Godfrey** on Tuesdays at 7:30 PM and with **Jack Collom** every Friday at 8 PM.

A 10-week workshop with **Simon Schuchat** about Chinese Poetry, "Poems From Yu-Yu Studio", will begin on January 15, Saturday, at noon.

Steve Levine will lead the Kid's Workshop which is beginning on January 8th & is being co-sponsored by the Tompkins Square Library, to be held there.

Descriptions of these two workshops inside.

"Readings at the Poetry Project" continues on alternate Saturdays at 7 PM on WBAI-FM, 99.5.

The International Center for the Disabled at 340 E. 24th St. (679-0100) has a fund to make free treatment available to artists with chronic physical and psychological disabilities. Call the Center or the Poetry Project for more information.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Early Routines by William Burroughs (Cadmus Editions CA \$5.95)...from New Directions, NYC: *New Directions 45*, ed. James Laughlin (\$6.95p); *Memories of the Moderns* by Harry Levin (\$7.95); *Selected Poems of Saint-John Perse* (\$9.95); *Pound/Ford: The Story of a Literary Friendship* (\$22.95)...from Random House, NYC: two beautiful bi-lingual volumes - *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, ed. & trans. by Stephen Mitchell (356 pp, \$25c) and *The Random House Book of Twentieth Century French Poetry*, ed. Paul Auster (635 pp, trans. include Ashbery, Padgett, Beckett, Merwin, Blackburn, Tarn, Rexroth, Brownstein, Hollo, Dos Passos, Ellmann, Levertov +)...from Black Sparrow, CA: *Krazy Kat & 76 More* by Fielding Dawson (\$10p \$14c) and *The Plain of Smokes* by Harvey Mudd (\$6.50p \$14c)...from Grove Press, NYC: *15 Contemporary New Zealand Poets*, ed. Alistair Paterson (\$9.95p); *The Hawk's Dream* by Donald Everett Axinn (\$4.95p \$12.50c); *Crossing Cocytus* by Paul Mariani (\$4.95p \$12.50c)...from North Point Press, CA: *Finding the Islands* by W.S. Merwin (\$6p \$11c) and *The Magpie's Bagpipe*, selected essays by Jonathan Williams (\$12.50c)...*Miles Davis, a Biography* by Ian Carr (Wm. Morrow, NYC 301 pp. \$14.95 - this book details the evolution of a musician who's never stopped making breakthroughs. Carr takes us from album to album, giving care to the musical developments as well as the constant personnel shifts, cleanly displaying how vital one was to the other. Each album is analyzed offering insights to the technical achievements. Miles' progression is inspiring for its daring & constant growth & this book rides with that carrying us through -from be-bop to cool, through the orchestral textures, on to the small combos of the 50's which began to push song forms till bar lines & keys were abandoned in the 60's, to his newest groups which've used funk to contain an otherwise uncapturable force of sounds. Any one of these periods is enough for a valuable contribution but what compels us in this book is that there's no stopping. Personal and the business side are also weaved in as well as many pieces of interviews with his band members & associates. A discography also. -GM)...*DICTEE* by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (Tanam Press, 40 White St NYC 10013 \$6.95p \$13.95c)...from Hanging Loose Press, 231 Wyckoff St, Brooklyn NY 11217: *Attitudes; uncollected poems of the Seventies* by Michael Lally (\$7.50); *The Water in the Pearl* by Carol Cox (\$4.50); *The Clouds of That Country* by Jack Anderson (\$4.50)...from Garland Publishing, NYC: *The Collected Poems of Lionel Johnson*, ed. Ian Fletcher (\$60) and *Garcia Lorca: An Annotated Primary Bibliography*, ed. Francesca Colecchia (\$40)...*Stripping* by Laura Boss (Chantry Press, PO Box 144 Midland Park NJ 07432 \$5 - affecting)...*More Places Forever (Writings & Drawings from Hoboken's Grammar Schools)*, ed. Sharon Guynup, Mark Rogers & James Ruggia (Steel Garden Press, 813 Willow Ave. Apt. 1 South, Hoboken NJ 07030 nicely produced for just 50 cents)...from Telephone Books, 109 Dunk Rock Road, Guilford CT 06437, all \$3: *'Brooklyn-Queens Day'* by Susan Cataldo; *Twenty-Four Haiku After the Japanese* by Tom Weigel; and *Alsace-Lorraine* by Fanny Howe...*Clouds and Red Earth* by Gene Frumkin (Ohio U. Press \$6.95)...from Roof Books, 300 Bowery, NYC 10012: *The Son Master* by Peter Seaton (\$5) and *Active 24 Hours* by Alan Davies (\$5)...*The Spirit That Moves Us Reader: Seventh Anniversary Anthology*, ed. Morty Sklar (PO Box 1585, Iowa City IA 52214 \$6p \$12c - 106 contributors)...*The Book of Fortune* by Daniel Mark Epstein (Overlook Press c/o Viking, NYC \$10.95c)...*Passing Through* by Allen Katzman (Hesperdian Press, NYC, npl)...from The Charles St. Press, Box 4692, Baltimore MD 21212 \$3 ea: *Half the Story* by Karen Sagstetter and *the Last 1000 Years* by Ginny Friedlander...*The Queen of Wands* by Judy Grahn (Crossing Press, Trumansburg NY \$5.95p \$11.95c)...from Dolphin-Moon Press, PO Box 22262, Baltimore MD 21203, \$3.50 ea: *Tiger-wolves* by James Taylor and *Prose/Poems* by John Strausbaugh...*8 Pieces Written In Italy* by Mary Sternbach (Lines, Box 18, Annandale-on-Hudson NY 12504, npl)...*Contrasts in Keening: Ireland* by Geraldine Clinton Little (Silver Apple Press, Hainseport NJ 08036 \$2.50p)...

MAGAZINES, ETC. RECEIVED

Hanging Loose 42, ed. Hershon, Lourie, Pawlak, Schreiber (\$1.50, address above - Brook, Levertov, Wachtel, Weaver + + +)...*The Difficulties*, ed. Tom Beckett (429 Irma, No. 3, Kent OH 44240 \$6 - Charles Bernstein Issue: Creeley, Davies, Gottlieb, Grenier, MacLow, Perlman, Sherry, etc. on CB)...*Lips #4*, ed. Laura Boss (PO Box 1345, Montclair NJ 07042 \$3 - Clausen, Notley, Hillrighthouse, Koln, van Houten, Bass + + +)...*The Hoboken Terminal*, ed. Jack Nestor & CH Trowbridge (Little Father Time Society, 831 Clinton St, 6, Hoboken NJ 07030 \$1.50: V1 No. 1 - Sirowitz, Koln, Holland, Behrens +; V1 No. 2 - Rower, Dwyer, Elwood, Nurse +)...*MR 31/32*, ed. Frederick Barthelme (Center for Writers, Southern Stn, Box 5144, Hattiesburg MISS 39406-5144, \$4.50 - Standing, Low, Page, Osamu, Kuzma, Dunn + +)...*Straits, Newsletter of the Detroit River Press*, ed. Glen Mannisto (Detroit Council of the Arts, 47 East Adams, Detroit MI 48226 - a few pieces from Ted Greenwald, plus Natambu, Teichman, Dyc, Neale, Mikolowski, \$5/yr sub)...*Cafe Society*, a Serial Novel by Group 4 (Group 4, Box 113, The Compound, 3160 - 16th St, SF, CA 94103 - anonymous collective looking for contributions to weave into their ongoing project; \$4 for first 6 issues, check to Michael Mullen; hot)...*The Sanders Report* (Box 7244, Capitol Stn, Albany NY 12224, \$8/4 issues - poet/citizen Ed Sanders continues his investigations this time mostly into the proceedings of the NY Telephone Company; readable reporting vital to consumers everywhere)...

POEM

again like never I feel
my fool way dreamed me
and so you know me
heart of that me I leave
foolish always like love

—David Trinidad

Drawings on pages 3, 5, 7 & 11 by Alex Katz.

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

St. Mark's Church
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Greg Masters, editor

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Midwinter Day by Bernadette Mayer (Turtle Island. Berkeley CA \$6.95p)

When the weather got colder I began to have long detailed dreams that made me want to sleep longer, an annual hibernating instinct. I keep dreaming about snow, knocking ice off my boots, and several mornings I've hallucinated snow falling outside my kitchen window, as if reading *Midwinter Day* was rushing me into the thick of a season that hadn't arrived yet. *Midwinter Day* is a 100-odd page poem that follows the course of "the year's least day", 1978, when Bernadette Mayer lived in Lenox, Mass. with her husband and two young daughters. Turtle Island Foundation finally made it into a book, exquisitely designed by Eileen Callahan, with an austere dark blue cover, and long large pages that give a graceful spread to this epic day.

Bernadette had the idea for this poem a long time. In *Studying Hunger*, she wrote:

I had an idea before this that if a human, a writer, could come up with a workable code, or shorthand, for the transcription of every event, every motion, every transition of his or her own mind, and could perform this process of translation on himself, using the code, for a 24 hour period, he or we or someone could come up with a great piece of language/information.

Earlier books like *Studying Hunger* and *Memory* resulted from similar "emotional science" projects devoted to studying memory, dream, states of consciousness, and language. What makes these works, along with *Moving* and *Erudito Ex Memoria* so interesting, aside from the raw psychological stuff, is the struggle behind her brilliant fooling around with grammar, syntax, structure, and sound, to make a relationship between herself, words, and the reader (the world). This struggle becomes less painfully evident in *The Golden Book of Words*, where the poems show off a command of language like muscles. When she finally decided to write *Midwinter Day*, she didn't need a code, and she had broader ambitions - "to write a book that would translate the detail of thought from a day to language like a dream transformed to read as it does, everything, a book that would end before it started in time to prove the day like the dream has everything in it."

Part 1 of the poem begins with a dream-telling binge, "from dreams I made sentences", adjunct musings, and hilarious dream logic. Part 2 is made of blocks of sentences, each block a perfect paragraph, altogether describing a morning and a house. The poem leaps between the inside and outside with enviable ease, inside her mind a dream of mountain hearts, outside "one of the shoes falls off again." In Part 3 Bernadette, Lewis, Marie and Sophia go outside to the post office, library and market. This part is written in rangy lines and is a real walking tour guide to Lenox. The dreams and memories never stop. Part 4, back home, blocks of details spliced with memory stories, including the wonderful part where synopsis of Marie's children's books get overwhelmed by Bernadette's stories. This block form is pleasing. The spaces in between are pauses in concentration. In Part 5, after dinner and dancing, the babies go to bed and there are no more pauses. Part 6 gets more concentrated, ending with a crescendo and a neat rhymed summation. This is the ingenious architecture of the poem.

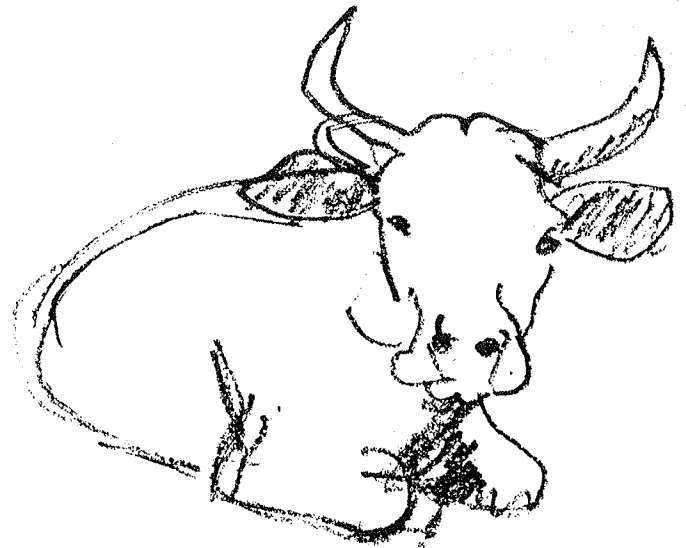
The more I read this poem, the more there is to read, it works like that. It is the kind of poem a Latin, Sabine or Etruscan mother didn't have time to write, with grocery lists, tantrums and endless domestic details, interesting because they pertain to other humans. It is the details of thought that sustain the poem though, and make surprising and beautiful lines - "I know/The world is straight ice" and "Always has red in it and so does same, not so same". I keep

trying to understand more clearly, while awake, the ineffable dreams language she is searching for in all her books. A sentence like "It's getting dark out, what's this desire?" catches me every time I read it, while certain sentences follow her from other books into this one. "Some old people try to live on one can of soup a day."

The word love might be mentioned more than any other in *Midwinter Day*. "Love is the same and does not keep that name,/I keep that name and I am not the same." Love is general enough to encompass all the news, specific towards her children, or obsessive with a cabin-fever intensity addressed towards Lewis. It is love that spurs the poem into its highest, eeriest ecstasies in the unrelenting Part 6, when she is at her desk. "In Yokuntown we write all night,/In the literal, love and experimental ways." In Part 1 she wonders "What kind of person I must be to be a poet" before she goes on to transcribe the day into gorgeous poetry. She is a person for whom "writing is a need, and when there's time a pleasure." She wrote *Midwinter Day* which tells about her, and her day, magnificently, and does more than that, if it's true that "having it all at once is performing a magical service for survival by the use of mind like memory."

—Lorna Smedman

(Bernadette Mayer will read *Midwinter Day* on January 29, 1983 at the Ear Inn at 2 pm sharp.)



Similitude In Dissimilitude

Sappho's Boat by Eileen Myles (Little Caesar Press, 3373 Overland Avenue, No. 2, LA, CA 90034, \$3)

Eileen Myles is one of my favorite Poets. Her thoughts: "...Some people are so sure they aren't loved/they'll throw themselves to the task of being hateful..."; enliven and cling to the moment of the word enduringly. She is profound. "Tuesday Brightness", the sky-blue volume's initial offering, is a perfectly good example of the immoderate intelligence with which she typically sweetens and qualifies existence. She contemplates the numerable forms of materiality: "We had a fight so/We didn't fuck at night./...And at home I ate Philadelphia cream cheese,/Thomas' english muffins./Color xeroxed *Catholic Comics*./Sent to Katz. "Isn't color xerox a miracle, Steve?"/..." We should hail this Poet's brand of excitement and her willfulness:

Post Office. Cobbler's.
Big Library where read Sappho.
Holes and all. Feel the wind
Shifting through. Aeolics.
Shiver when Sappho speaks of her
Heart Beat. It
Pounding down through the ages.
Old adrenaline, gives me a rush...

Her time-faring voice grips one by the ears.

F.T. Prince informed an audience at the Museum of Modern Art in 1980 to the effect that reading Poetry to oneself, especially, required careful listening, that such a perceptive skill was the demanding staple of comprehension in the literary arts. If Jazzman-musicologist Don Cherry is inclined to lecture softly in whispers, let nothing, no room-sized pink rose even, distract your desire to learn something. With Eileen Myles' book, if you like that kind of thing, we are confronted with a caliber of work wherein acoustical riches dwell. "...If you put a couple of tea bags in a quart jar/of water and set the whole mess on your fire-escape/you wind up with something called Sun Tea..."; and, "...When I dream I dream nothing extraordinary. That's what I'm/tryingto say. If something's broken maybe the cat did it..." for instance.

The English Romantic, William Wordsworth, believed vigorously in an ideal Poetics. Envisioning a revolutionary improvement in taste, he reasoned that an interesting Poem genuinely purified and upgraded the "real language of men", a rustic language consonant with the indigenous images of nature; and did so, with force, by virtue of the Poet's somewhat mechanical habits of reproducing, imaginatively, in metrical arrangements, those situations and complexities whereby delight and sympathy and passion were associated inherently and expressed. Such a Poetry kindles pleasure in abundance and dignity in the human heart, Wordsworth argued. And lo, Eileen Myles has written "Romantic Pain", an appealing masterpiece indeed. The Poem, about 150 lines long, is one of a handful of lengthy compositions presented in *Sappho's Boat*. Again, Eileen's shot is the familiar—bartenders, sex, bourbon, the cold mist, tobacco—starched with the acumen of her individual knowledge. At night, burning with the child-like ambition to remain awake until daybreak, she walks to Battery Park "...through the plaza/day of the criminal courts..." The most dismal, loathsome emotions of futility and despair arrest the Poet's commanding attention. Round-trip on the Staten Island Ferry. She smells the donuts and sauerkraut and feels weird. Withall, the spirit of love in the ladies room is sanctified and acknowledged:

Push this piece of hair. Move
that collar Inspect that eyelash.
I can see us from overhead
and call the configuration "Feminism."...

Eileen's finest Poetry is often oriented to the traditional: "...All week long I've seen nothing but Lilacs/..."; concerned with the pretty and fabulous, with flowers, personae, heavenly bodies, the mind, and the apparitional severity and movements of weather: "...The moon doing this thing you couldn't see,/well I was standing on my roof inside magic/a very mad and pleased Druidical woman/..." Her overwhelming theme, however, is modern Lesbianism and, in apposition, sexual politics. "Unleashed" is a gem, praising Sisterhood's power. Still, it is in every instance her own life's incidents and contingencies, thoroughly felt, which provide those observations their true subject. In "A Woman Like Me", she writes: "Each one of us undoes history/A little bit & that's a lot." Her idea, perhaps, is that Lesbianism per se morally counteracts the geophysical imprint of monopolistic, patriarchal determinism. It is within such a grand scheme that "Captain" Eileen discovers everyone's loneliness and continues to commune with the beautiful universe. She titled a Poem "1980: The Year Of The Ox", another emphatic self-portrait, which ends:

I suppose I'm looking for a woman
—rowing in the old night boat.
I like the dark water, trying
to imagine where you'd go tonight
or else just throwing
my head back
watching the sky
wishing I could eat
all
those flowers.

Ms. Eileen Myles is a real sharp Poet. Just read this quote from her poem "Joan", about Joan of Arc:

She was 19 years old
when they burned her body in the middle of town
while she was still alive. A white dove
came out of her mouth as she died.
Four hundred and thirty-one years ago today.
A dove leaped right out of her mouth.

If you think that such language isn't noteworthy, I advise you to purchase a copy of *Sappho's Boat* anyway.

—Michael Scholnick



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Rude Awakenings by Bob Rosenthal (Yellow Press, Chicago \$3.50)

I had been told to find out what Bob Rosenthal was writing, that what he was writing was very good—but there was never time, never the opportunity, not until last winter, and when I had the chance, it was a last minute thing. I was free for once, nothing that had to be done that evening, no deadline to meet, no papers to grade. Free, and he was terrific.

Poetry that moved according to sound, rhythm, not idea or intellectual intent, and poetry that was always in control—perfect timing, perfect measure.

But I couldn't decide if that rhythm in performance would be there on paper, too. It's one thing to convince listeners, never as easy to convince readers—they can always take (or make) their time.

But in *Rude Awakenings*, the poems, however gentle they superficially sometimes seem, are rhythmically strong. Strong enough to force readers, if at all attentive, to follow the words with a deep, inevitable sense of that intended rhythm. And that means that it is poetry that should be around and read for a long time.

I have been reading the book this afternoon again, and again it seems, its rhythm, its diction, its real contained force, remarkable—language that cannot be spoken except in one way and feel right, perfectly controlled language, a wonderful book. There is a strange hesitancy in the rhythm, grace notes and syncopation, I think, a tendency to wait just a fraction of a second more, just enough to get the attention the poem needs, and then real force, determined force. Over and over again: pause and force, hesitancy and aggression—in other words it's what jazz at best, I think, can be about.

For example:

PARK POEM

you can do
things to
your folks
that you can't
do to others
for instance
the sand
Aliah piles
on my knee
is only accepted
by me
just as someday
he may
bury me

James Laughlin has a similar poem, "Step on His Head," in which he talks of a walk with his children in the country. They try to step on the shadow of his head, and he knows that, in a sense, someday they will really be stepping on his head the way he stepped on his father's, and he wonders if he will still have enough love for them when it is no longer a game that they are playing.

Laughlin's poem is exceedingly fine, one of his best, and I wonder if Rosenthal had it in mind when he wrote "Park Poem." If so, he could hardly have altered the rhythmic intent of Laughlin's poem more. Laughlin's poem moves gently (...and I wonder if then I will/have love enough...) and thoughtfully, even stately at times, but Rosenthal's moves nervously, tensely. In its own way, its rhythm is as inevitable and right as Laughlin's; "Step on His Head" begins with a walk in the country, and "Park Poem," as its title suggests, is a city poem, and it moves appropriately like traffic and people in the city, not like people out for a walk in the woods. The sound is just right.

Again and again, Rosenthal gets things perfectly. There are extraordinary poems in *Rude Awakenings*: "Messenger," "Star Witness," "Philosophy The Air," "Kissing Game," "Acceptance," many others. Poems like this matter:

MESSENGER

midtown blue & high up
things to do
or not so proud
find the electric
touch
watusi on 53rd street
gold reflections melt
the tribe is of sin

only that
the eagle has landed
a girl with green eyes
pictures upon pictures of her kissing
and she has refused all of them

I've a funny feeling the background is white
though looks so blue
like glass

take two options on one corner
cab air
up twenty floors
how lovely she is!

here is your package

And the verdict. Envy? Oh, certainly that—anyone who does so much with language has to be envied. But admired.

There are more than four dozen poems in *Rude Awakenings*. For less than the price of a ticket to the best movie in town—and worth much, much more.

—Ed Foster



By Lingual Wholes by Victor Hernandez Cruz (Momo's Press, 126 pages, \$5.95p \$15c)

I never met Victor Cruz but I like his sense of irony, which is very subtle yet powerfully lucid. Irony in writing isn't an easy quality to pick up because it requires you to mask your delivery, like throwing a changeup in baseball—you have to "take something off the pitch." If your motion is too obvious, it won't work. The art of indirection depends on giving a convincing imitation of doing one thing while you're actually doing something else.

An example of this is Cruz's prose-poem to some low-riding modern-day caballeros, the Watsonville Road Kings, who glide from Mission Street to "T.J." (Tijuana) on "El Camino Irreal," a road "the state of California made for us," in a "full fleet of twenty cars." Their caballos are metal. It doesn't matter to them "if the manufacturer was Ford or General Motors," because what counts is not the original model but the styling, which is as personal as the riders' souls—and involves things like chrome, velvet, and the silky vocals of Smokey Robinson cooing "Oo Baby" over Pioneer speakers. "When the metal is yours you put your mark on it, buying something is only the first step, what you do to it is your name, your history of angles." Cruz's Road Kings make their customized cars their living rooms, in a weird architectural enjambment of "Gothic mixed with Toltecas."

In the middle of the Road Kings' power glide to T.J., though, Cruz changes speed on us. The "Low Writer," or author, does some ironic styling of his own, which changes the heroic naturalism of his piece into something else. "But wait," he implores the riders, "how long will this oil supply last...you cannot replace it like coffee or tobacco...the blood of the earth once it's taken out leaves space." The Road Kings, in their hungry Detroit combustion boxes, don't replenish what they burn up, and so leave behind them only another one of those "holes" Cruz writes so much about—this one full of nothing. (Colonization and "energy," he notes in another poem, are twin heads of a hydra-philosophy of "take and get.")

This ironic collision of values—the romance of low-riding vs. the diminution of planetary resources—is really a mini-clash between poetry and "realistic" practicality. Cruz resolves it by letting poetry momentarily fly up over the practical world as only it can. "When the gasoline stops pumping," he suggests, "the vehicles will run on perfume and music." Customized soulfully, they're no longer mere Detroit iron but "butterflies with transmissions," existing beyond the depreciable earth in a dimension of pure style.

But don't get the impression from all this talk of "irony" and "values" that these densely flowering urban jungle poems are classroom-sleepy. Victor Cruz's tropics aren't triste. On white pages, they turn red and green and yellow from sheer metaphorical heat. Cruz can write with an angel on his arm, a bird in his ear, a woman in his heart and history on his mind, make it all come out sadly funny or beautiful and still walk down the street smiling, his work makes you feel.

This collection's punning title is multiply suggestive; it's meanings pervade the book. Holes, dots and zeroes—universal symbols which can "become everything in the world"—crop up in work after work. So does the idea—or ideal—of "bi-lingual wholes." Ideal is matched by performance; Cruz indeed creates something as close to a seamless, bi-lingual lyric voice as one can imagine, weaving English and Spanish not only into the same poems but often into the same lines. (Two poems are entirely in Spanish and several are entirely in English, but most are composites, subsuming the two languages into singular "bi-lingual wholes.")

It's an adventurous attempt that works, because Cruz has a sureness of music that can only be natural. By strange accident of biography, he takes his place in a tradition of "English" which is twice removed from his roots: he was born in Puerto Rico, grew up on the Lower East Side of New York, but is wise enough to recognize that "if I lived in older times/With a funny name like Choicer or/Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, what chimes!/I would spend my times in search of rhymes." If his discrimination of ear is ancient ("the Island of Puerto Rico/is the ears of Saru-Saru, a poet reported to have lived/in Atlantis"), the pacing of his work is modern, post-bop, post-rock, post-salsa—not a "minuet slow" but a "mambo of much more haste," or sometimes a *merengue* that "vibrates more than a mambo by about 30 per cent." When he slows down, it's not to walk but to take up the sinuous movements of "the bolero, the ballade, the fish, the grind." This is poetry with an asphalt-bred choreography nimble enough to state its anti-colonialism in a quick pivot between steps and stoops: "Ponce de Leon knew that to be truly successful he'd have to ban feet."

For sheer penetration of reality by intelligence, vision and music—qualities as rare in most contemporary verse as moonbeams in a tunnel—I think *By Lingual Wholes* (Cruz's fourth book) outdoes any collection of poetry to appear in this country since Edward Dorn's *Hello, La Jolla* (1978); and on top of that, you can dance to it.

It's like they always said—He who changes the mode of the music, makes the walls of the city shake!

—Tom Clark

A CENTURY IN TWO DECADES

EDITED BY KEITH AND ROSMARIE WALDROP
An anniversary anthology of poetry and prose
from twenty years of Burning Deck books.

1981 marks the twentieth anniversary of Burning Deck Press. *A Century in Two Decades* draws from the one hundred volumes published in that time, to capture the unparalleled range of Burning Deck's tastes and interests. Included among the sixty-three authors represented are Robert Creeley, Russell Edson, Larry Eigner, Kenward Elmslie, Barbara Guest, Lyn Hejinian, Ruth Krauss, Jackson MacLow, Harry Mathews, Christopher Middleton, Rochelle Owens, W.D. Snodgrass, and Mark Strand. More than half of *A Century in Two Decades* is reprinted from chapbooks long out of print.

A Century in Two Decades also contains the first full bibliography of Burning Deck Press, including complete details of ephemerae.

200 pages, letterpress, sewn
Cloth \$20, paper \$6



Burning Deck Press
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POETS THEATRE IN SAN FRANCISCO: "TWO LIVELY NOCTURNAL PASTELS"

The Poets Theatre of San Francisco presented two one-act plays for three weekends in November at Studio Eremos housed in Project Artaud: *Particle Arms* by Alan Bernheimer, and *Under The Midwest* by Eileen Corder. The poet-studded cast was exceptionally fine in the Bernheimer piece. There are some stock characters here. Tom Mandel acted with confidence the part of gangster sideman Karp. Bunker, a dark tortured soul who may or may not be heroic was played quirkily and intensely by Steven Benson. Eileen Corder's timing as the glamorous moll Nyla was impeccable. A sly old couple, sharp as aged cheddar, were secretly Tinker Greene and Melissa Riley. Steve Rodefer looking like an overstuffed chair was an excellent Liguras, the slow sardonic hotel nightclerk. Kit Robinson brought the house down opening night with his tics and antics as the idiot suspended janitor, Fictitious Doe, his long body twitching like a spastic puppet. But these familiar characters say the darndest things: "Tips my mitt to that little custard? Get those curves out of here. Charm is a little crease beneath the eyes. It's hard find-

ing people that don't take advantage of familiarity." or "Lips print a tissue that connects the weather, lulled by the weight of public opinion. My downfall was a trampoline catastrophe." or "I was dreaming two lively nocturnal pastels - clear skies, except for a few cumulus marionettes." At the end of Scene 1, Nyla turns abruptly from her boyfriend, quips "Aw, turn blue." This goes on ad abstraction, always surprising to the unsuspecting ear. Joanna Drucker's sumptuously painted sets are gorgeous. Her hotel lobby outdoes the Chelsea for class seediness, subtly lit by Jean Day. Director Nick Robinson has an obvious flair and good eye. Someone commented on the R. Crumb gestures and some of us agreed that Preston Sturges must be an inspiration.

Eileen Corder's ambitious *Under The Midwest* features a feckless tourist and some characters who are up to no good at all. Her cast was professional and energetic. The Poets Theatre is a hard-working company that has been producing plays of note for over two years including Frank O'Hara's *Try! Try!*.

—Anne Waldman



CANCER OF THE HEART

Last Rites, The Death of William Saroyan by Aram Saroyan (William Morrow and Company, Inc. NYC, 1982, 176 pages, \$10c)

When William Saroyan was dying, he told a reporter he had cancer of the liver, heart, kidneys and bones. The cancer of the heart was fanciful, the invention of a dying novelist, but it was an unfortunately apt metaphor for a man who had said, "The only person I have ever really loved is Saroyan."

Last Rites, however, does more than explore the reasons for Saroyan's impoverished ability to feel, particularly for those who are close to him. It describes his son Aram's quest to find out what bonds there are between them, if any, besides hatred; and in that sense it is also the story of all sons and fathers who have quarreled and then despaired that they will never be able to communicate, let alone love, again.

William Saroyan's father died before William was three, and he spent the next five years in an orphanage in Oakland, California. Being robbed of his parents at such an early and crucial age made him afraid to feel, Aram speculates. Also, William's success as a writer had the effect of "removing him almost entirely from the realm of mortal foibles and failings, of rendering him...an all-but-Godlike example of unassailable perfection. And this, of course, blighted his life as surely as his early experience blighted it." Both served to insulate him from genuine contact with others.

Aram, as he attempts to understand his relationship with his father, also searches for clues to the meaning of his existence. (After all, Aram is both father and writer.) Rejected by his father again and again, Aram is afraid to reach out to the stranger he calls "Pop," and the scenes between them in the hospital in Fresno are poignant but never maudlin. It is difficult to think of another book that attempts to define the father and son relationship so exactly, nor of one that provides a better example of negative capability. Aram's efforts to make contact almost always involve his ability to hold opposing thoughts and feelings in his mind simultaneously, and it is to his credit that *Last Rites* offers no easy solutions.

Perhaps William Saroyan's life is best summed-up in an episode that occurs near the end of the book. Driving to Fresno one day, Aram and his wife see a deer on the road. A small town is on one side and a steep slope is on the other, and the deer races back and forth, panicked, not wanting to go toward the town but seemingly unable to make it up the slope. Finally, the deer leaps onto the slope, going up what must be a 90 degree angle and, defying all probability, makes it to the top. Who can know what terrible cost was involved? Watching it, Aram's wife says, "That deer was your father...What he did was your father's whole life."

—Arthur Winfield Knight

Bud & Bill

Bud & Bill were close friends from age one. They lived only a few miles apart all their lives. Bud loaned too much machinery to Bill & Bill didn't take care of machinery, but they were still the best of friends. Then Bud had a dog he loved but shouldn't have kept because of its temperment and propensity to bite. It's a long story but finally the dog, Barney, bit Bill's son Tom on the nose badly and while most of us were taking him to the hospital the three "men" of the family, Bill & two older sons came in a state of hysteria & shot the dog. Tom's nose got better and we all missed Barney but were relieved in a way since he was subject to such moods. But Bill & Bud never visit each other anymore. If they see each other in town or on the road they stop & chat, but it's not the same. Dolly who is Tom's mother tries to get them together but nothing avails.

(from *Epilogue: The Stories Left Out Of The Journal*)

—Maureen Owen

"POEMS FROM YU-YU STUDIO"

CHINESE POETRY WORKSHOP PROPAGANDA

Comrades! We literary and art workers must constantly be aware of the most advanced techniques in order to maintain a good rate of production at world-class standards. The fate of our civilization depends on it; otherwise, our times will be judged by the future solely on the basis of our soldiers and politicians. We should not be afraid to adopt techniques from any language or culture or literature, no matter how distant in space or time. Our judgement of criteria should be only - can this be used, will it enable us to write more, improve the state of our national literature, clarify our language, ensure literary genius fame, bring enlightenment to all sentient and non-sentient beings and their release from future re-birth, turn the government away from incorrect policies and so on. We should be willing to try any technique and the difficulty involved in applying the methods of vastly different languages should only increase our pleasure in applying them. Rather than formalism, this is common sense.

Chinese poetry is elegant and profound; it has a sensibility of the marvelous interconnectedness of the universe and is justly famous via the hard work of English and American (and French and German, in which languages Chinese poetry is slightly different) translators, many of whom are good and great poets themselves. This sensibility can be only incidentally the material of the workshop. Absorbing the ideas and manipulating the images of "Chinese poetry in translation" is best done on one's own, nor am I possessed of the spiritual authority or fluency to expound the Chinese tradition.

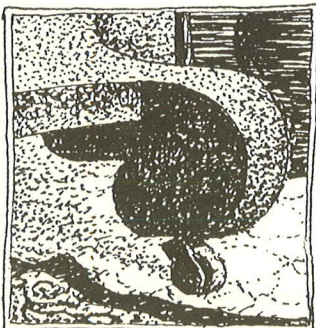
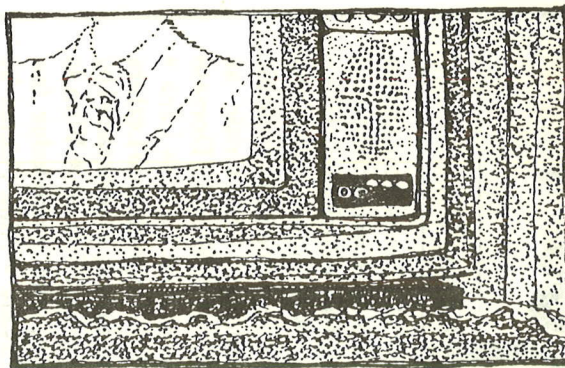
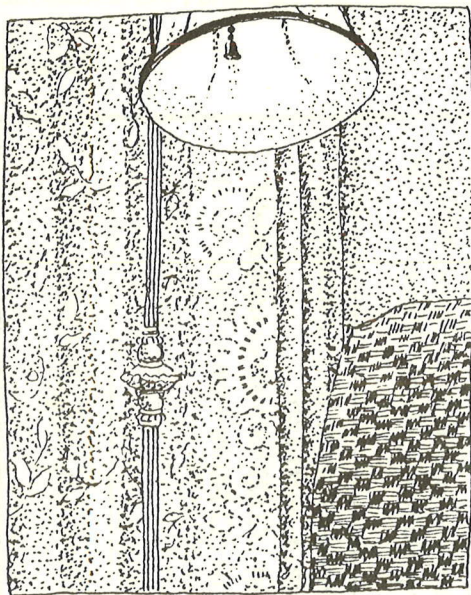
Within the awesomely large bulk of writing in Chinese, certain technologies reappear with the frequency of sonnets, metaphors or hexameters, but only the haiku (and the pan-

toum, if you include S.E. Asia) from all of the East Asian tradition, has entered English. But by now we have as much in common with the Chinese as we do with Shakespeare and Dante (at least with our Chinese contemporaries) and the Chinese have written sonnets, limericks, pastiches of Shelley and of Mayakovsky; they have tried to work with our tradition as well as their own. I would like to collectively experiment with some of these technologies and find out which of them will go in the American language. Unfortunately, what with the neglect paid to poetry in our times, we cannot have the computer equipped country house laboratory this project deserves, but with your talents we will overcome all difficulties.

Some of these technologies I have in mind are the eight-line "regulated verse" which is the most common form; the "filling in of a *ci*" which is the duplication of the rhythmic pattern of one poem in another, the poetries of courtesy like graffiti, visiting poems and job applications; prefaces; Chinese methods of parallelism and ways of generating lines; I've got about ten of these in mind. With translations and interlinear versions of poems and maybe some tapes and some non-Chinese examples, I will describe them and then we see what we can do. I.e., I'll tell you what I know. With luck, we'll have a terrific workshop magazine of our results and at least we should be able to make a poetry writing excursion to celebrate the onset of spring, to see the first flowers and drink together as we write and show each other our poems.

—Simon Schuchat

(Comrade Schuchat spent 3 years in China and is currently studying at Yale grad school. The workshop will begin on Saturday, January 15 at noon in the Parish Hall and continue for 10 weeks. Free)



ANN MIKOLOWSKI

Ann Mikolowski will be having a show of her incredible small paintings (lavishly praised here a few months ago) at the Gotham Book Mart January 10 - February 15. Opening Monday, January 10, 5-7 PM.

Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra

Charlie Haden brought his band, the Liberation Music Orchestra, to NYC for two concerts at the Public Theater in November. This is a large group that was originally formed twelve years ago, recorded one excellent album on the Impulse label which won a few awards in Europe and subsequently went out of print, and has been reformed because, as its leader said, the times demand it.

Its music, arranged mainly by its keyboard player Carla Bley, is derived from Spanish sources (songs of the Spanish Civil War, folk melodies of El Salvador & Chile...) and, in the blending of the ensemble's brass, especially, brings those sounds of the village energy headed off to fight the oppressors and the mourning yet spirit-affirming funeral dirge sounds of their coming home in caskets, right to the plush seats on Lafayette Street.

There doesn't seem to be much hope of defeating the "leaders", which these days means "owners", but music is often the most affecting method of communicating the senses that will be the last thing the corporations will own.

The whole night's program had the Spanish cries and charges of continuing resolve. There were no speeches and you didn't need to know the titles of the pieces. The sad but forward tones, brass harmonies and comrade ensemble work went beyond message. Oppression and control deal with message. Music like this affirms and celebrates the malleability of souls.

What seemed staid was the necessity for politeness and courtesy among the formal-forced concert crowd (crystal chandeliers in the lobby) and this seemed to muffle or contain the musicians who were dealing to a great degree with the tightness of charts to begin with. But the sound system was excellent and it was a pleasure to hear music without the usual accompanying cigarette residue in the air.

Charlie Haden's own bass solos didn't seem as connected as he most often sounds. Having just now listened to his solo during a performance of his *Song For Che* (which surprisingly & unfortunately wasn't played this program) recorded on the Ornette Coleman LP *Crisis*, (there's another wonderful version on the old LMO LP, too) emphasizes the lyrical almost story telling sections that lead into each other like a narrative, taking unexpected but able to gladly follow turns which seemed to not be present on the Friday night I saw the band. I figure Saturday night was better. Too often he'd play straight 8th notes instead of dotted and I missed the tension and sailing quality those emotional dots give. But there's plenty of diversity in his playing and it wasn't long before he'd be doing something you'd never even thought of hearing or thought could sound so beautiful, solo or accompanying.

The other outstanding solos that night were taken by Dewey Redman, Don Cherry and Mick Goodrick. Redman's tenor, especially, arose like a fire during an extended solo in which he both rode the ensemble's firm textures and took off into outer space with sidetracks for us. Don Cherry's pocket trumpet explorations were unique in the tone of the instrument itself but more, distinctive in his brisk punctuations, glissando runs and collage statements which, when he'd end a solo by sitting back down, would leave us in the air where we belong. Mick Goodrick emphasized the Spanish flavor of the night with his tasty flamenco guitar work. His solos were less a display of dazzling technique than what marvelous sounds can result from it. His fast paced picking would take unexpected journeys into different keys that would shock but a second later delight.

The arrangements had little surprise but the sounds they merged the band into were often as plush as the velvet we were seated in. I didn't like the world I was in when the lights went up.

—Greg Masters

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The Poetry Project, in conjunction with the Tompkins Square Branch of the New York Public Library, will be sponsoring this year's Kid's Poetry Writing Workshop. The workshop will begin the second Saturday morning of January (the 8th), is open to people aged 7 - 15 years or thereabouts, and will be held in the Library (331 East 10th Street). Steve Levine, last year's workshop instructor, will again lead the class. Of his aims and ultimate goals for this new workshop, poet Levine modestly states, "Inprincipia Erat Verbum!"

Gallery 345 which calls itself a "political art gallery" and has sponsored shows intended to inform rather than make money, is now in need of support. They're asking those interested for a \$10 annual donation or in kind contributions. For more info contact them at 345 Lafayette St, NYC 10012, 673-7354. Checks to ART FOR SOCIAL CHANGE.

A new storefront jazz place has just opened. The Jazz Cultural Theatre at 368 8th Avenue (btwn. 28th & 29th), 244-0997 is presenting concerts and workshops in everything from piano to Tai Chi.

A new reading series has started at Prescott's (353 Greenwich Street, corner of Harrison) on Sunday afternoons at 3 PM. Jan. 9 - Rene Ricard, Tina L'Hotsky, Barbara McKay, Cliff Fyman. Jan. 16 - Tom Carey & Barbara Barg. Jan. 23 - Eileen Myles & Julie Erlich. Jan. 30 - Ted Berrigan & Tony Towle. A \$2 charge.

Gulf of Maine Books, 61 Maine Street Brunswick ME 04011, are offering a mail order catalog of Native American poetry & fiction.

What's this? Could Jeff Fright in issue #12 of *Lost and Found Times* be the local Wright. If I had the mag instead of just the announcement I'd know (besides his giving it to me). Other contributions from Judson Crews, Dave Johnson, James Johnson, Vicky Mansoon, Keith Rahmmings plus. Luna Bisonte Productions, 137 Leland Avenue, Columbus OH 43214 \$3...

Magic Changes is currently soliciting submissions & subscriptions. Poetry on subjects of Time & Music. c/o John Sennett, 553 W, Oakdale #317, Chicago IL 60657.

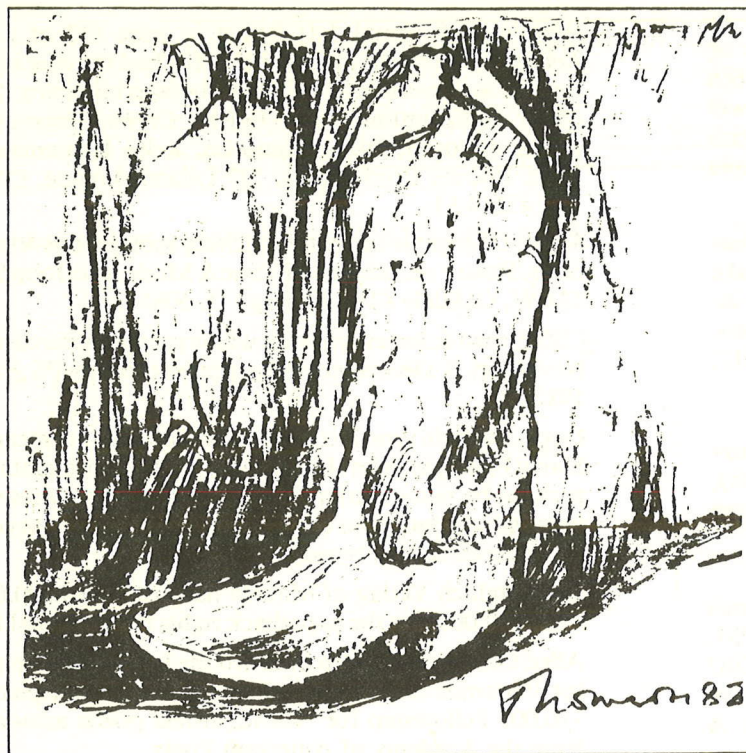
Cliff Fyman & James Schuyler, whose poems appeared in here in November & December, were recipients of CAPS grants for 1982.

Oops, horrible typo last issue - Ted Berrigan's sentence in his Harry Fainlight piece should read: "...to be brought together perhaps by place, perhaps by Gerry Malanga, whose importance as someone who brought people together was central." [not "cerebral" as typed]

Taschenduch Verlag of Munich has just payed 300,000 DM (ca. \$120,000) for the paperback rights to 3 Bukowski books.

Allen Ginsberg has been awarded the LA Times Book Award for *Plutonian Ode*. John Ashbery is the 43rd recipient of the \$10,000 Fellowship for "distinguished poetic achievement" from the Academy of American Poets.





Good luck

What you feel for me (I said) is
Buried, a time bomb. Someday
It'll go off in your face.
On impulse
From a center unknowable as outer space
She hung up
Called back and hung up again. I
Scrawled a note
Well kid you made your point. Please
Don't get in touch anymore. Goodbye.
What remained was a
Couple of paperback treatises on
Palm reading and a pair of
Cowboy boots with a half used
Tube of Ortho-Gynol inside
I can't remember if it was the
Right or left boot.
I packed all this in a brown
Wrapper and shot it off
To the Café Kabul
Where she was waitressing
Saving up for a ticket
Out. Good luck.

David Rattray/Peter Thomson

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