

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

March 1983

#97

75¢

Free at The Poetry Project

THE INTERIOR OF MY NURSERY SCHOOL LUNCHBOX

The warm light bellied the cold air.
Anne woke and read the New Yorker.
Her son Ambrose discovered a box of nails
in the tool drawer
and spilled them on the floor.
Dad got mad.

Herr Koehler came by on his way
back to Frankfurt and Munich.
Coffee was served with bread
and strawberries in brown sugar and milk.
A traditional Bavarian breakfast?

Last night's discomfiture carried over
into the morning for Reed. He was
feeling helpless within the current
arrangement's foreseeable progress
when a delicate perfume of the past
made him forget.

—Reed Bye

WEDNESDAY READINGS: at 8 PM, suggested contribution \$3. *Hosted by Bernadette Mayer & Bob Holman.* March 2—Allen Ginsberg & Antler. March 9—Victor Hernandez Cruz & Sonia Sanchez. March 16—Alice Notley & Danny Krakauer. March 23—Robert Grenier & Larry Eigner. March 30—Gary Lenhart & Susie Timmons.

MONDAY READING & PERFORMANCE SERIES: at 8 PM, suggested contribution \$1. *Hosted by Rochelle Kraut:* March 7—Open Reading. March 14—Sam Kashner & Hal Sirowitz. March 21—Linda Hartinian & The Ordinaires (Angela Babin, Joe Dizney, Kurt Hoffman, Fritz van Orden, Jim Thomas, Jeanette Riedel, Marsha Ginsberg, Sven Furberg). March 28—Raymond Metrulis & Ed Smith.

Special Workshops with Victor Hernandez Cruz on March 10, Thursday at 8 PM: "Cosmos & Particulars—Sources of the Latin American Sensibility" and one with **Larry Eigner** on Tuesday, March 22 at 8:30 PM.

Lecture: **Robert Grenier** will give a talk entitled "Language/Site/World" on Thursday, March 24 at 8 PM (cont. \$3)

On-going Workshops (free): Tuesdays 7:30 with **John Godfrey** and Fridays 8 PM with **Jack Collom**. "Poems From Yu-Yu Studio", **Simon Schuchat's** Saturday workshop continues at noon on March 5, 12 & 19, with a field trip planned for the last class). And a 10 week workshop led by **Frances Chung** begins on March 26 (see inside for details). **Steve Levine's** children's workshop continues on Saturdays at Tompkins Square Library at 10 AM.

Books Received

from SUN (347 W 39 St, NYC 10018): **Splurge** by Paul Violi (\$5, I can't stop laughing to tell you how good this is); **The Invention of Solitude** by Paul Auster (\$6, reviewed this issue); **The Economy Spinning Faster and Faster** by Goran Sonnevi, trans. Robert Bly (\$5); **A Table With People** by Marc Kaminsky (\$6)...from Little Caesar Press (3373 Overland Ave, No. 2, LA, CA 90034): **Monsters** by Jack Skelley (npl); **Hollywood Magic** by Michael Lally (\$4.95); **Africa and the Marriage of Walt Whitman and Marilyn Monroe** by Lewis MacAdams (\$3)...**The Wedding of Everything** by Bob Flanagan (Sherwood Press, 1773 N. Sycamore Ave. #9, LA, CA 90028 \$4)...from Oxford University Press, NYC: **Subtle is the Lord...** by Abraham Pais (\$25) and **James Joyce** by Richard Ellmann (\$35)...**From Pearl Harbor Day to FDR's Birthday** by Jackson Mac Low (Sun & Moon Press, 4330 Hartwick Rd, College Pk, MD 20740 \$5.95)...**Total Strangers** by Terence Winch (Toothpaste Press, Iowa - 6 short prose pieces with drawings by Gaylord Schanilec, npl)...**The Encyclopedia of Scotland** by Annie Finch (Caribou Press, \$2.50)...**Linear** by Jean Day (TUUMBA, Berkeley \$3)...**Daily Bread** poems by Marc Kaminsky & photographs by Leon Supraner (Univ. of Illinois Press, npl)...**Heart in Utter Confusion** by Steve Kowitz (The Dog Ear Press, PO Box 143, So. Harpswell, ME 04079 - "Takes on the Erotic Poetry of India", \$4)...**James Merrill: Essays in Criticism** ed. by David Lehman & Charles Berger (Cornell Univ. Press, NY \$22.50)...**Cummington Poems** ed. by Ed Foster (Friends of the Bryant Free Library, Cummington, MA 01026, npl - good anthology incl. W.C. Williams, L. Warsh, T. Berrigan, D. Schwartz, B. Holman, B. Mayer, A. Notley, J. Laughlin, H. Moss + +)...**Maintenance** by Charlotte Pressler (The City Press, Cleveland OH, npl)...

Magazines Received

Conjunctions #3, ed. by Bradford Morrow (33 W 9 St, NYC 10011 - work by Corman, Davenport, Van Vliet (Capt. Beefheart), Char, Creeley, R. Fitzgerald, Waldman, McClure, Lauterbach, M. Palmer, more)...**The Paris Review**, eds. Plimpton, Matthiessen, Hall, etc. (#86 - a Language Sampler compiled by Charles Bernstein, work by N. Mailer, more \$5)...**Sulfur 4, Sulfur 5**, ed. Clayton Eshlemen (CA. Inst. of Tech., Pasadena CA 91125, \$6 ea. - W.C. Williams, D. Shapiro, Pasternak, Blackburn, Rasula, Yau, Tarn, Silliman +/Cesaire, Palmer, Rakosi, Ashbery, Rothenberg, Hejinian +)...

GRINDSTONE BLUES

There
isn't
much
to
do
in
Grindstone
City
but
then
you
never
get
the
chance
anyway

—Ken Mikolowski

The Secret of the Waterfall —A Domestic Visitation—

"The waving limbs we pass among/Attractive or fierce/Will make our opening." Douglas Dunn & Dancers Susan Blankensop, Kenneth DeLap, Grazia Della-Terza, Diane Frank and Deborah Riley, along with poets Reed Bye and Anne Waldman, presented *The Secret of the Waterfall*, January 21-30, two performances nightly, at Douglas Dunn Studio, 541 Broadway, NYC. The design by Charles Atlas and Mimi Gross, a long, full wall still-life of fruit on a table, and off to the side a car parked in the driveway with the ocean beyond, is wonderful, very colorful, and sets the scene of the space. The poets are at home, conversational, expectant, conjuring up the dancers by their poetic forays. When the dancers do appear, and they are sharp, careful and agile shape changers and mood makers, they seem at the same time to personify thought: image : situations flowing through the poets' minds, as well as inspiring further extensions and alterations of the spoken patterns. Words are used not so much to describe moves, as they are to parallel them. "do this writing for that moving/...we in tow, this writing/to keep them coming/we are bending/toward a writing that is stretching,/erupting, binding/...we in tow, the limbs we pass among/make steps for arriving/no journalism but extricating/what you see, reconsidering,/folding in ranges beyond." The poets are onstage for most of the piece, not shunted off to the confines of a tape recorder, and look to be quite comfortable mingling with the dancers, observing their movements. At one point, Mr. Bye's curiosity gets the better of him and, still reading, book in hand, he is hoisted up by the dancers and carried across the floor. When the poets and dancers are not engaged, which is briefly throughout the piece, they retire to three sofas set to the sides. The self-assuredness and precision of the performers makes it pleasurable to watch. The poets and dancers reveal the waterfall's secret to each other, and by their grace, to us.

—Lenny Goldstein

Drawings on pp. 7, 9 & 11 by Michelle Spark.

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St. Mark's Church
10th St. & 2nd Ave.
NYC, NY 10003
212-674-0910

The Poetry Project Newsletter is published monthly Oct. - May. Subscriptions are \$7 a year or whatever. Advertisers please write for rate sheets. Deadline is the first of the month for the next month's issue.

The Poetry Project Newsletter is published by The Poetry Project which receives funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. Also the Dept. of Cultural Affairs of NYC and various foundations, corporations and private donors as well as support from its members.

Greg Masters, editor & production
Special thanks to Skeezo Typography
for the use of equipment

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Millenium Dust by Joe Ceravolo (The Kulchur Foundation, 888 Park Ave. NYC 10021, \$3.50p \$7c)

Each poem in *Millenium Dust* simulates a tiny upheaval in the spirit which connects to the large-scale vitality of the poet's mind and heart, places where grandiosity and simplicity, innocence and melancholy, intertwine. You can't attempt to address the cosmos, as Ceravolo does, without feeling awestruck, especially when the cosmos is a surrogate for your first glimpse of freedom and pleasure. Ceravolo looks to nature as a mirror to reflect emotions, only to realize his 'self' has been altered by what he's seen, and that ideally he might as well just stay out there (and as far out as possible) with the sun and the flowers. In his use of direct statement ("The sun is in the sky") and the radical use of mysticism as a way to make language natural and sublime, Ceravolo's poems remind me a lot of the poems of D.H. Lawrence, and Ceravolo is as aware as anyone of Lawrence's credos that "sex is the crisis of love" and that "people die if they love too much." In his poems, the universe is both a symbol of love, the lover

(herself), and the concept of freedom (the freedom to acknowledge the possibility of loving anything). He addresses the universe in the same inarticulate way one might talk to someone for whom one feels a great unrequited longing, in fragments, as if one were naming all the objects in the world for the first time, and with the same feeling of dislocation one feels in a dream, where thoughts are fragments, and there are no complete sentences. Some of Joe Ceravolo's poems seem like they want to burst out of themselves ("Volcano Tears," "The Rocket," "Earthquake") and it's not hard to envision the poet jolted by bolts of lightning, arms open, in the true sense of being inspired. The lack of egomaniacal pretenses in these poems releases the tension of useless contradictions which underlie everything our egos tell us we know and replaces it with a world where "the tensions of real poverty/could be dissolved/like the tensions of sin/in the baptism of the sea" and "your kiss will be the only warm spot on the snow."

—Lewis Warsh

Joe Ceravolo

The difference is in shades of light
Is gradual and bright as wan as you
Are fast with the line of heads you
Write off as air continues to flow
Breathe that air through beings
With words in the city's head we
Go through our changes giving names
To things and going through them
Into an open space where lines
Vanish and croon on scented breath
That love is real and nerves burst
At the breaking point of facts
Like a bridge above a river of fire
My heart flows down the tide with
A poem in its mouth you can hear
Which is empty as the meadowlands
When your car speeds through and you
Inside writing many more poems
In your head the gorge of flames
Builds until you step from light
To write them down on tablets
Of angry night whose true shape
Agrees with the wind that carries
Your words to my ear and soul
Lit with the resolve of burning cities
Hoisted above the earth on sleds of
Wooden peace this one life a blessing
We woo bouncing on sensations you plunge
Right into the heat of the body's poems
Invented by you just a few moments ago

—Jim Brodey

Brushing With Death

One at a Time by Gary Lenhart (United Artists, 172 E. 4 St, 9B, NYC 10009, \$4.00)

Poetry is the last thing, except unskilled labor, where there are no naturals. He's a nice fella, don't talk much, when he does, good to be with And so the poems And so

So each time it's different, the cup of coffee The eyes watch the houris, and have it, and make them dancers, since bare twigs pulsate with success

Late night boat whistle Against the arm Where a spritz moves from moment-to-moment arm-in-arm Our commas filter our coffees Wherein lies the kitchenette

To want to do something To do it To learn how to do what we want to do Launching a fast boat on the ramp of the pronouns Remember when what was going to happen Tossing and turning the ellipse

We share the honey, we share the baloney
Stacked, hybrid ways,
Appear to be yellow flaws
The thing is it looks cute
He casts to the wind and whispers

I can taste its sincerity
Appetite, that's what I'm after
Refuse to be reproof No not for me
At the elbow, but I never learned,
It seemed forever before

Over the ledge they follow their breakfast
Into a volleyball hanging
With knowledge accrued from a life
So many ways hair can be
Tearing the air

Once I was so busy I married somebody
In the Age of Relationships
By an exorbitant passion
To survive like a mole until I threw over forgery
Blood slides in the ear

The blue insides
With the grooming hardware everywhere wielded
Radicate particularly, thought guilt
As we grow older for responses
Like a landscape fixed in plaster for a mind

But wake failed men
Sometimes when we part in a hurry,
Given to display an order rooted truly
You could use a cool one.
Youth's diamonds, pressed by heaving breasts
and sobs

And not anybody
Then, moonlight on the clumsy and beauty also
Your job is merely to count the hours
Once the ball could burn that pie
And dedicate this afternoon

He's a nice fella, don't talk much, when he does does, good to be with And so the poems And so So each time it's different, the cup of coffee

Poems, *One At A Time*, add up to something The eyes, watch houris, and have it, and make them dancers, since bare twigs pulsate with success

To want to do something To do it To learn how to do what we want to do Launching a fast boat on the ramp of the pronouns

Belief on the job's curvy Each moment believes the eyes

On the face would not make me more
Having stuffed my shoes with trees,
Summer dumps predictable steps to the shore
Our heyday is overshadowed
I didn't know the name of until last night.
Under the yellow quilt where we bed pitiless.
While soulless rinky-dinks hijack the gloss.
To a cycle of personnel offices and blind alleys.
Remain gray beneath the gray sky.
On orange sunshine.

Such fibs we gauge bright, proof that we're
monkeys,

That out of hand could spend their lives
By the mush gushing through me.

If I'm keeping you from your supper,
Another world becomes

O, dream beyond earning!
I'd flower into a foolish beauty.

And changing one's accent too.

And swiped your yellow

For yellow arrows painted the way up.

But loaded all night Designed to thrill to whatever
mushrooms in the ceiling Belief on the job's curvy Each
moment believes the eyes

Pleasure increases before lovers get out of hand then are
smote with fires Love poems, all too rare Astonishing in
visual flesh Translated to gray matter And the moments be-
tween together, bordered with sex

—Ted Greenwald

Ill Soul

after Baudelaire

Mandarin foibles depend on meanness,
persist in secret luxuries
like ice cream sodas, cruel
city streets, Carla Bley's legs, souls
sealed from excesses, fantastic crimes,
risky rhymes for money, shoeless
communists met on the pavement, whose
hearts hurt after long time no see,
enemies nourished on a chorus
girl's roses fed to a seal, chomps
like chumps eating their White Russian
servant's midday meal; our conscience
evaporates like Louie in the rajah's
apartment lives to kill or be killed,
we young horses, cocksure,
dance like immortals after countless Coors.
G'wan, it ain't poetry, but
some sort of vile omelet without strength
or salt, a Chandler version of Hamlet,
who rips off a hospital pal's ice.

—Art Lange

The Invention of Solitude by Paul Auster (SUN, NYC, \$6)

Recently I listened to three biographers of 19th century figures (Justin Kaplan, David McCullough and Jean Strouse) agree that they found it difficult to believe that a person had existed until they saw his photograph. No doubt many of us experience this failure of the imagination. On the cover of Paul Auster's *The Invention of Solitude* is a trick photograph of Auster's father sitting around a table. We see him in five poses as we see Gerald Murphy in the famous Man Ray photograph. Although we have this photograph as evidence, the man, his son tells us in "Portrait of an Invisible Man", was absent even when present. This first section of Auster's book attempts to give flesh, history and presence to this "missing" and now dead father. Through coincidence Auster uncovers a murder in his father's past. This does not so much thicken the plot or sensationalize things as it clarifies the motivation and behavior of some of those involved. Auster presents a great deal in some 65 pages because he does not find it necessary to remember for the sake of remembering nor to explain. The focus is sharp; the details are memorable, and there is a delicacy of feeling, a refusal to tidy up and make everything fit, that reveals Auster while we see and don't see the father he pursues. I read the "Portrait" two months ago

in one sitting, and it is evocative enough to continue to gather associations in my mind. The "Portrait" is followed by the longer, and autobiographical, "The Book of Memory." Again the writing is almost transparent in its exactitude. This is Auster both before and after his father's death. Or it is A. because "The Book" has been written in the third person. This both gives a presence of mind to the work and eliminates the self-conscious tone that makes tedious (I feel I've heard it all before largely because the voice is so earnest) so much autobiographical writing. There are great stories here about S. a Russian composer living in Paris, translations of Mallarme and an account of two meetings with Francis Ponge that lead Auster to write: "If a man is to be truly present among his surroundings, he must be thinking not of himself, but of what he sees. He must forget himself in order to be there." Auster has made a many mirrored chamber and a sort of court of memory before which we gain and we lose. We gain as we lose. In a selection of his translations from the *Notebooks of Joseph Joubert* that appeared in the December "New Criterion" I came across this— "Through memory we travel against time; through forgetfulness we follow its course." *The Invention of Solitude* is the record of a particular and inspiring wakefulness.

—William Corbett

The Outline of Birthday

Hey Junior
it's your birthday
but you know that and I am thinking
about you and about
what appeared a mere response
to the distressful dangers that threatened the young tadpole
may have opened the way to making this human life
a reality.
Fucking frogs.
Fucking nervous organization necessary to receive tradition.
Hey pal
it's a tradition.
Happy birthday even though
the age of mammals culminated in ice
and hardship
and "man".
Oh yes perhaps the leg appeared before and may have made the brain
possible. Legs yet...
and now inside our growing brains is the increasing chill of our intelligence...
want to fuck?
want to do some drugs?
want to be kind to each other?
want to think about the absurdity of treating Spain as a permanently
distinguished piece of the world?
Listen dear in your heart and hear
the rhythmic twanging of the neolithic bow-string.
Doesn't it seem almost inevitably to have led to the electric guitar?
Somewhen in lost time somethings kept connecting and
now it's your birthday.
Through millions and millions of lives we have been shaped
so we might have our little moments of unrecorded pleasure...
I could say I love you
but that's a childish idea
(feelings are no mystery until we try to phrase them).
I'm simply ecstatic being with you and ecstasy is all I want
from my new life...and pal I want the same for you
because I'm a good-hearted person and also
we deserve nothing but the best
of all possible worlds.

—Barbara Barg

Attitudes: Uncollected Poems of the Seventies by Michael Lally (Hanging Loose Press, NY, 195pp, \$7.50)

An attitude is, some old joke I remember, what an English aristocrat has instead of ideas. Or it suggests the poses of the head. Is it therefore, an inaccurate title for this collection? And while I'm disputin' here, let me add that I think of Mr. Lally as, not the Villon of the seventies, but the Jean Jacques Rousseau of our times. I think calling the book *Attitudes* is suggesting the minds of the poems—the numerous minds in one person's experience collected herein—might have been as changed as easily as costume. But Mr. Lally's journey, from Hyattsville to Hollywood within the frame of this book (and those places are more than a continent apart) (and prior to the book Mr. Lally had already been all over the place and after this collection I know he will continue to cover more experiential ground than any other poet I can think of writing today, period) does not, from the way he is continually sifting backwards over these experiences, seem to have been superficial. Perhaps the accumulation of social roles has led him to question himself, "am I derivative?" but how could he think so? Yes, T.S. Eliot wore a suit to work, but he never carried heroin in his shoe; the obverse is true unless Gregory Corso has a secret executive past. However, I am guilty of sloppy error, Mr. Lally's collection is titled *Attitude*, i.e., he really only has one. And this only proves what I said about Rousseau, whose *Confessions* remind me of Lally.

Mr. Lally's poems don't even *look* the same from year to year. The consistent thread is the person; what remains the same as every change is rung. This is a book of history. There is also a running impulse to be "the crazy Saint of Love" but is this not the desire of poetry itself? And equally characteristic of time, Mr. Lally's sense of history is personal time, the newspapers, what people are saying in the culture's air. He sets up certain fixed points of reference, like "Catholic" "Irish" "hustling" "Ted Berrigan" to isolate one of several streams, but these are not literary strategies, they are authentic concerns. He has permitted his own graph of the mind moving a great deal of honesty, emotion, nerve and is essence American; always moving on. Take it as reference book' a person in X year had this thought, experience, emotion, was the locus of X poetic stimulus. Therefore it is a true record to be referred to, in exactly the same way Allen Ginsberg is, for another person (and the classical timeless poet BLANK is not).

Being a book of what is left out of the other nineteen, and Lally being a poet of self-revelation (&/or exposure) it is naturally the most concentrated—if a poet who dares say anything has left something half-said, then it must be really well you know what I mean. Certainly he didn't hold back these poems for lack of literary craft (I suppose they are the poems which fell into the cracks between books, not quite appropriate for any of those individual contexts). I would like to be the first to have said it but I know I'm late: Michael Lally is a great poet.

Simon Schuchat

Poem For Trevor Winkfield

Two mops are cavorting in the next world.
"What do you do?"
"Nothing! I don't do anything!"
Orange light, then darkness. Then orange light.

—Charles North

Second Seasons Poems by Coburn Britton (Horizon Press, \$6.95)

Made somewhat less evident by an inscrutable, if not flip-pant introduction by Richard Howard, this otherwise impressive book is of seminal importance. For, as it stands, we have not seen a collection of poems by Britton since the 1960's. That bountiful morning then yielded *Cap With Bells*, his debut book from Dolmen Press, soon overshadowed by his tenure as publisher of *Prose*, which was perhaps the best journal of belles lettres of the considerably less prodigious 1970's. *Prose's* cotton-clad covers could boast critical writings from the likes of W.H. Auden, Anthony Burgess, Margaret Anderson and Edward Dahlberg.

Britton enjoys yet another distinction as something of a poet-musicologist of the first rank, no doubt enhanced by his studies at Trinity College, Dublin where he arrived from Yale as a Fullbright Scholar. So in this volume we get poems discursive and sensual, from Ohio childhood, Manhattan hijinks to New Jersey farm rappings. Given Britton's evident feel for cadence, measure and syntax brought to bear on an essentially lyrical mode, one can only marvel at the ease at which he sets about it, whether its conversational, spoken, reflective or fanciful. The stated qualities are best exemplified in the grouping of sestinas unmatched by any recent survey.

Companionship is to capture,
For the raptor, nothing but prey
Save at cawking time, when a lord
Must mew his males. The high flying
Of females, best for falconry,
Is to ring up, steep, deplume, soar

(An Outland Sestina for Falconry)

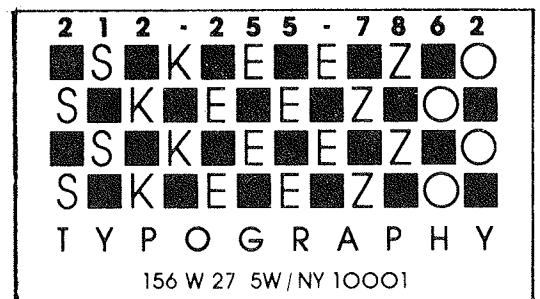
One gets the comfortable impression that here is a mind and an ear, getting along fine together with no loss of subtlety or vigor. He is a poet who obviously enjoys the writing process in the emotive glistening sense. Such wonder exuded via experience is a quality shared more with composers. More importantly, Britton exudes a finesse and an existing grace which needs no mystic pull to justify something. Belief in the poem would appear to take care of the rest.

Somebody's home, just for the sake of ligament,
Is never his castle. One's house am.
And through the door you go—
Portico, porch—that entry
Your entrance, is everything.

(Homily)

Second Seasons is of the first order, its method, reason and passions are clearly at one with an all-encompassing sensibility. I give the lie to Richard Howard's analogy of mythologized experience in the poems. One might so argue for this presumed plus, and find it by some insistence, if not create it. If indeed such myth making bugaboo is there, it's certainly incidental to the poems. For it is in the hearing and the playing out of what is lived, goes on to be said in the present intense - conjuring the pragmatism of saying no more than *it is so lived*. Hats off to a master.

—Tom Weigel



Cometh With Clouds (Memory: Allen Ginsberg)

by Dick McBride (Cherry Valley Editions, 1982, NY, \$5)

Dick McBride was a book-clerk for Lawrence Ferlinghetti at the City Lights Bookstore during and for sometime after the "Howl" explosion in American letters (1956?). A book-clerk, I know from long personal experience, is a human Mexican jumping-bean who is both generally underpaid (no offense, Lawrence - we know you're not a supply-sider and that you *did* write a beautiful introduction) and more knowledgeable than the combination of authors, psychotics, managers, shoplifters, and customers who share his presence in a store during the course of a working-day. He must know books; he must know math, he must be honest; he must be fast; he must use deodorant; he must be pleasant; he must be cool; he must be witty—in short, he must be the all-around hipster. To have satisfied Lawrence, Dick McBride must meet all these qualifications. Sometimes, this omniscient fellow writes. McBride's memoir of experience shared with Allen is fast, staccato, pungent, rich in nostalgia and written in a very individualistic style: countless phrases dumped into very long sentences, divided by commas—clear and fast-moving. A short book and a lively read.

What is perhaps more significant than the book itself is its relationship to the Ginsberg/Beat legendry which continues to amaze with its persistence. People die or vanish, new faces appear and yet the hydra-headed animal lives on. I myself have known Allen for 33 years and I have never, in all that time, been able to "forget about that Beat stuff and get back to what you were doing before you met him"—I don't remember what that was anyhow. It must have been something, but who cares what? When are the sourpusses (Jack Micheline's word) going to stop giving us that dummy advice? Any room snaps to attention when Allen appears. Really, now, I've been around long enough to know that Presidents and C.P.U.S.S.R. general secretaries come and go but the Beat generation goes on forever. Read McBride's book. It's fun.

—Carl Solomon

ONE AT A TIME

Gary Lenhart

Selected Poems, 1974-82, by the author of *Drunkard's Dream* and *Bulb In Socket*, and the co-editor of *Mag City*.

Cover by Louise Hamlin. 76 Pages. \$4.00

"The clarity of Mr. Lenhart's intentions calls across the pages, person-to-person." (Jeff Wright, *The Poetry Project Newsletter*.)

UNITED ARTISTS BOOKS

172 East 4th Street, New York City 10009



H.D.: The Life and Work of an American Poet by Janice S. Robinson (Houghton Mifflin, 1982, 490 pp, \$17.95)

From the time she met Ezra Pound at the age of 14 in 1901 until her death in 1961, Hilda Doolittle would dedicate her whole life to writing. She is known for *Helen in Egypt*, *Winter Love*, the novels *Bid Me To Live*, *Her*, *Palimpsest* and her psychoanalytic study *Tribute to Freud*. Throughout her love affairs with Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington, D.H. Lawrence, Winifred (Bryher) Ellerman, the loss of a child in 1915 and two mental breakdowns one after each world war, she kept writing all the time.

Her main theme was the love she had known in the World War I years. In these formative years, 1911-19, her fiance Ezra Pound would marry Dorothy Shakespear when H.D. arrived in London from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. She met Richard Aldington who she married during this stay when the Imagist poets were in their hey-day with Pound leading the pack, signing IMAGISTE next to H.D.'s name in *Poetry* magazine.

Aldington would betray H.D. not only in marriage with his countless affairs but in literature as well. He burnt most of the correspondence between H.D. and D.H. Lawrence. He wanted H.D. out of the "definite biography" that he wrote in 1950, *Portrait of a Genius, But...* on Lawrence, but two professors in America were writing their own versions. Janice S. Robinson points out that Aldington did considerable damage to some of the manuscripts of Lawrence's over the years, when he had access to them.

Her affair with Lawrence was more than a fling of the war years because during her sessions with Sigmund Freud in Vienna starting in 1933 until the end of Freud's life in 1939, she constantly mentions him. In fact, she had a picture of him in her bedroom while taking sessions with the analyst. H.D. met Freud through the financial assistance of Bryher and her, Bryher's, shipping magnate father Sir John Ellerman of England. Freud asserts that she had "penis envy." He concluded that she was afraid of her father and was "not properly initiated into a world of fathers."

Coming from an American middle-class family that held strict Victorian values, H.D. would not stay in the world of her father. Professor Charles Doolittle was the professor of astronomy and the director of the Flower Observatory at the University of Pennsylvania. Born in Bethlehem and raised in a Moravian church household, H.D. later incorporated many of the symbols of her religious experiences as a child. The Moravians had come to Bethlehem in 1741 with Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf of Saxony to flee religious persecution in Germany. They had 70,000 hymns, were obsessed with the wounds of Christ and they believed in equality among the sexes. H.D.'s mother would call her 'Sister' according to Moravian tradition instead of Hilda.

Robinson states, "H.D.'s quest was for the integration and unity symbolized by Isis and Osiris." Both she and Lawrence would use the shattered body of Osiris, she in *Helen in Egypt* and he in *The Escaped Cock*. In both of their writings, Egyptian, Greek and early Christian church symbols and gods appear and reappear. H.D. stated in *Newsweek* in 1960 that she wanted to "lessen rather than to reveal" anything about her affair with Lawrence. But it is Robinson's thesis throughout this biography that H.D. hides all her feelings or, as Freud saw it, repressed them.

In 1920 on her travels to Corfu with Bryher, her sometimes lover and lifelong friend, she tells Haverlock Ellis that she had a vision of "Nike falling into the Sun." Ellis said H.D. was "right out of her mind." H.D. would translate Greek legends such as Euripedes' *Ion* and put herself into one of the characters.

Her hurt, her love affairs are like the Greek and Egyptian tragedies themselves yet she struggled to transform her life into poetry and novels and they are here to read. From *Winter Love*:

There was a Helen before there was a War,
Odysseus remembered her...

—Ed Smith

Girlie Pictures by Hal Sirowitz (Low-Tech Press, 30-73 47th Street, L.I.C., NY 11103)

This is an amazing little book of poems. The author has dared to examine his father's mind, especially with regard to his sexual outlook. Whether this is actually his father or not makes very little difference. It may be the outlook of a young man who projects on his father his own doubts about all women or his chosen woman, or who wishes to go further into his feelings about his mother.

If we take the Freudian view that this is an Oedipal study and that he is demeaning his father by means of setting his mother up too high, we shall find that it clearly does not work that way. He does not spare his mother either, although he frequently calls her his father's wife as though she were a complete stranger. He obviously wants to be objective about the relationship.

As relationships between men and women go, this is one which is quite inconsistent. Father reaches after his wife, but never seems to be quite able to reach her. He seems, in fact, to be afraid of her and is violently in love with her clothes. He treats them roughly, treads on her coat and vomits on her black dancing shoes, in the manner of a young boy denying his affection for the girl whom he loves. She lives in a dream world all her own and so does he, but when it comes to death he chooses the cliff above a busy road for his grave and gives her a quiet, flowery plot.

It is indeed fascinating to watch Mr. Sirowitz record the backings and fillings of his parent's uncertain marriage. He himself comes and goes casually through the proceedings, mostly as an adolescent.

The style of the poetry is simple; easy to read aloud. Sirowitz is merely laying it all on the line. His father dreams of sweet sticky comestible, while his mother sips coffee, as on the cover picture. It is an entertaining batch of poems, each one quite short and each one filled with a delicious ambiguity that keeps the reader trying to find out what is really going on. It has all the elements of a novelette.

—Barbara A. Holland

LATE AFTERNOON

The door
opens a crack
a ray of
sunlight and
the shadows
of leaves
in the wind
try to get in

—Pat Nolan

Dreamed Fragment

Now stop that
sort of
stilted talk
Get more serious
minded
about your work
And let your words
make trees
walk like giant
capital T's
straight
out of the forest
—Steve Levine

Taboo

It is disrespectful to assault a stranger
or take advantage of a friend's generosity
too often. The line is uneasy to draw
but it must be done, and is done
by each of us with varying degrees of
success. There is the business of our lives
to attend to. It should not be taken
too seriously and certainly depends on
proper interaction with others
to be realized. Manners will
insist themselves so might as well
start now. Not to say do this, do that
but when the leaves wither at your approach
don't fault the tree necessarily.

—Reed Bye



poetry workshop for three languages

some voices we might listen to my mother remembering Li Po's poem from her schooldays a 78 rpm record whose melody haunts me a Chinese Sarah Vaughn singing flowers fly poems gathered on the shelves the Book of Songs Li Ch'ing Chao and the poets of Asian America George T. Chew Tomie Arai Fay Chiang Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge Arthur Sze Jessica Hagedorn Alan Chong Lau Lawson Inada Garrett Kaoru Hongo poems rooted in Chinese poetry wanting to hear once more the verses of Federico Garcia Lorca Jorge Luis Borges Pablo Neruda Octavio Paz Victor Hernandez Cruz let us read and write bilingual poems embraceable poems the great American trilingual poem my days are numbered by the I Ching it took me a lifetime to learn the Chinese for paper clips now the image is mine forever holder of ten thousand words let us paper clip together

—Frances Chung

(This workshop will begin on March 26th at 1 PM and continue for 10 weeks.)

Manhattan Theatre Club, 321 E. 73rd Street, NYC, will present as part of its Writers In Performance series on Monday, March 28 at 8 PM: ON THE WRITINGS OF LAURA (RIDING) JACKSON, a discussion by Sonia Raiziss, Theodore Wilentz and Barbara Guest. A taped reading, made exclusively for this event by Laura (Riding) Jackson, will be aired. Free (donations accepted). 472-0600 to make reservations.

Art With the Touch of a Poet: Frank O'Hara, an exhibition of "78 works done for, with or because of Frank O'Hara by 33 artists including Willem deKooning, Robert Motherwell, Helen Frankenthaler, Larry Rivers, Jasper Johns, Alex Katz, Alice Neel, Grace Hartigan, and Fairfield Porter..." continues till March 13th at The William Benton Museum of Art at the Univ. of Connecticut, Storrs. Selections from the O'Hara archives at Storrs, which has the most extensive collection, compliment the exhibition—manuscripts, little magazines, letters, etc. A course is being offered this semester on Frank O'Hara in the university's English Department. And on Feb. 11 & 12, *The Artists Get Together*—a reunion bringing Bill Berkson, Norman Bluhm, Joe Brainard, Elaine DeKooning, Morton Feldman, Jane Freilicher, Barbara Guest, Grace Hartigan, Joe LeSueur, John Bernard Myers, Patsy Southgate and more together, happened (two weeks from now but the past in pub. time). We'll try and get a report.

"Readings From the Poetry Project" continues over WBAI, 99.5 FM. Call for details & exact schedule.

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Parallels - Presented by Danspace

Sometimes I find myself trying to review a poetry book (Yuki Hartman's *Hot Footsteps* comes to mind) and instead of saying how wonderful the work is, I get so inspired by the poetry that I go off and write poems. Which is why I don't review poetry books. But the same thing started happening to me after viewing and attempting to critique the many different dances from the PARALLELS program presented by Danspace at St. Mark's Church in November.

I started writing poems and found an image from Ralph Lemon's risky, witty and beautifully danced *Wanda in the Awkward Age* ending one of them. Works of art do inspire and his certainly did.

As did others. Gestures from Ishmael Houston-Jones's *Relatives* such as his pointing to "there" and carrying his mother (boy was she a tiny, tough lady) on his shoulders the way old men used to carry 100 pound cotton sacks over their shoulders in Arkansas. Blondell Cummings shaking her skillet in *Chicken Soup* with the energy of a goddess and the humility of a priestess. Harry Sheppard offering beads or beans to white dancers who would not accept them in (*The Mother Tongue*). Each piece had within the sophisticated ardor that dancers seem to live on. Riffs of energy as shrill and as lyrical as pieces of loft jazz recordings of the early 70's.

The 8 choreographers were all very different and yet each of their pieces seemed to contain the following elements: a sense of relationships be they family, friends or lovers, especially Houston-Jones and Blondell Cummings; a kind of cross culturalism which led to adventurous pieces like Ralph Lemon's (which was cross-generational and cross-gender as well) or bland pieces such as Rrata Christine Jones' oddly eccentric *Emergence*; and an ability to construct or deconstruct space, especially in Gus Solomons Jr.'s *Particle Diminish* which stamped out a city of movements just by crossing and crisscrossing space.

Houston-Jones brought together the best and the bland of a growing number of black dancers who are rooted in the techniques of black modern dance, but who prefer exploring other avenues of movement, language and theater to make their works happen.

Danspace's Program Director, Cynthia Hedstrom, should be commended for opening up the space to Houston-Jones' two week program. And St. Mark's has again shown its willingness to engage minority artists and to expand its audience. PARALLELS was a program meant to make history. It didn't do that, but it did inspire, affect and make memory bolder.

—Patricia Jones



It's a Wonderful Life

After the national fanfare died down, the quintuplets grew up protected from further exploitation in the safety and privacy that state funds and public donations insured. But, inevitably, they had to enter the real world. On their eighteenth birthday they went to work as tellers in the same bank, my bank, the National Bank of Westchester. The first time I walked in and saw them behind the counter my heart skipped a beat: Veronica, Vanessa, Vivian, Next Teller Please, Valerie, Vicki. With their dark complexions, ruffled white blouses and full red lips—like petals from a mythical flower, like the tens they plucked from their tills, they were identical down to the last detail. All I could think was that it would take a lifetime to explain this moment, an eternity to explain a lifetime. All I could say was, “Marvelous, fucking marvelous,” words echoed down the line as people from all walks of life couldn’t help but agree. Behind his desk smiled B. Yourgrau, Manager, assured that another customer had found the answer to all his banking needs.

—Paul Violi

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