

BIRTHDAY POEM

3 hrs. into the afternoon of March 9th
and the morning is still lingering like
a cloud reflected into a building on 53rd St.
where I am.

the streets are much too involved (with what?)
much too wet too (with rain)
though I don't mind rain
only the wet streets and
Ron Padgett might or might not agree with that
but we're having breakfast together nonetheless.

2.

Ron Padgett is holding two birthday gifts
which come in the form of two books
one being the works of an Italian poet
whose name I quite honestly don't remember
the other book is some selected works of Zeno
whose thoughts on motion I find very entertaining
though they're not very useful (for me at least)
the person about to receive these gifts is
George Schneeman, who is lucky enough
to be having a birthday today.
it's also lucky for Ron that this is true
because wouldn't it be embarrassing
giving George gifts today
if his birthday were, say, a week ago
or a week ahead.

3.

but everything has worked out fine
not like the weather
which is dark as a laundry closet
in a very "cheap" hotel
"on a day like this, I feel like I'm
indoors", says Ron walking
to the subway (of France?) well
it seems like France
for a time, boarding the first car
and watching teenagers giving up seats
to pregnant women,
and those mutilated in the war,
and anyone wearing one of those fucking
red pins (get up Ron)

4.

it's still grey and wet almost pink
as we reach E.14th St. and shake hands goodbye
like someone else I'm reminded of now
writing this poem.
and I catch the bus to Ted Berrigan's
who never showed up anywhere
least of all here on E.14th
right below Larry River's studio
which is the route my bus is taking.

I hope that George enjoys the books that Ron will give him tonight. I guess if I saw George now I'd like to be holding something really valuable to give him also. but as things go (on E. 2nd St.) all I'm holding is a 25¢ orange drink and what would George Schneeman want that for well I was thinking of something more valuable anyway, like a Mercedes Benz or a great feeling, like I have right now, just realizing that someone you know was born today.

JIM CARROLL

THINGS TO DO IN TED BERRIGAN'S WORKSHOP

Arrive at eight-thirty

Arrive early when the room is strewn with banners all strewn with table-shaped stars

Watch the Table Muse getting the room ready for the workshop

Admire the Muse's dedication to poetry

Notice who was here all the time

Read things on the wall

Try to think of something to write on the wall

Dismiss this project immediately

Concentrate on the poem being read

Prepare a statement

Say that the poem is great because the poet speaks of important things in his own voice

Say it's great because the poet speaks of unimportant things in a voice that couldn't possibly be his or anybody's

Disagree with anything anybody else says, especially what Charles, Ted, Nick and Scott say

Agree with everything anybody says, especially what Marcel Flamm says

Figure out who likes what

Be jealous of everybody

Approve of this sentiment and its intensity

Arrive late when all the places around the table are taken

CARTER RATCLIFF