

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

No. 32

1 Feb 1976

Ted Greenwald, editor  
 St. Mark's Church, 2nd Avenue  
 & Tenth St. New York 10003.

The New Year's Benefit was a success. And here it is, February already. The Poetry Project keeps moving right along with all its programs on no back burners. The Wednesday night readings (8:30 pm) are Feb 4 Ann Lauterbach & David Ignatow (rescheduled from Jan 14 cancellation), Feb 11 Hank Kanabus & Maureen Owen, Feb 18 Edward Field & John Hollander, Feb 25 Dale Herd & Terence Winch. The Monday night readings and performances are Feb 2 Open Reading, Feb 9 Tom Savage & Piero Heliczer (reading), Feb 16 Bob Rosenthal & Simon Schuchat (reading), Feb 23 "ROMANCE" by Ed Bowes (video-movie). The three writing workshops (free) scheduled for 7:30 PM are Paul Violi (Tues), Bill Zavatsky (Thurs), and Ted Greenwald (Fri). Watch your favorite listing for other programs at The Poetry Project.

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Theater Genesis, also located at St. Mark's Church, opens Feb 12 with three Michael McClure plays. The Growl, Spider Rabbit stars Taylor Mead & Pat Ast; and The Meatball. The run is from Feb 12 through March 7, Thurs through Sun at 8:30 pm (contribution). Directed by Tony Barsha and Walter Hadler.

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The summer poetics program at Naropa will have Allen Ginsberg, Anne Waldman, Diana Pineda, and visiting poets. For info and summer catalogue send to NAROPA, 1441 Broadway, Boulder, Colo. 80302.

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READINGS ETC: Keep posted with your favorite listing . . . plus . . . THE TIN PALACE, 325 Bowery (corner of E 2nd & Bowery) Sat 3pm Feb 14 Mulch St. Valentine's Day Celebration, Paul Metcalf, Ronald Johnson, Harry Lewis, Terry Porter, Feb 28 Michael Heller and Friends -- Post Objectivist Reading. . . DR. GENEROSITY 2nd Ave & 73 St, Sat 3pm Feb 7 Iris Brossard & Barry Wallenstein, Feb 14 Kirby Congdon & Robert Hershon, Feb 21 Open Reading, Feb 28 C.W. Truesdale & Russell Edson . . . CHUMLEY'S, Bedford & Barrow Streets, Greenwich Village, Sat 2 pm Feb 7 Roberta Gould & Wende Loche, Feb 14 David Gershator, Fritz Hamilton, & Leslie Levinson, Feb 21 Cheri Fein, Richard Vetere, Feb 28 Basil Bunting's 76th Birthday Reading: Brian Swann, Allen Ginsberg, others . . . THE CLOCKTOWER, 108 Leonard St, Thurs 8:30 pm Feb 12 John Giorno, Feb 19 Gerard Malanga, Feb 26 Susan Howe, Mar 4 Tony Towle, Mar 11 Andy Grundberg . . . Piero Heliczer reading Feb 19 6:30 PM at Christopher Stephen's Bookstore, 325 W 38 St, 17th floor. . . See show of photographs of groups by Neal Slavin at LIGHT, 1018 Madison Ave, (all these groups "about" NYC).

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## BURROUGHS EVERY DAY

On an average day in New York, Burroughs gets up between 9-10 and shaves. In a dream note made on 13th August 1975 he wrote: "Things needed. Shaving mirror. Anyone used to shave feel deterioration if he can not." Burroughs associates shaving with civilisation and throughout his travels has never grown a beard or mustache.

First thing after shaving, he takes a 100 miligram capsule of Vitamin B1 because he believes it replaces the B1 that alcohol removes from the system. He dresses in slacks and a shirt, washes last night's dishes, and eats a breakfast of coffee and a donut, English muffin, or Angel Food Cake.

Around 11 he goes down four long flights of stairs to get his mail (5-10 pieces daily). Between 11.30-12.30 he putters around the loft looking at notes, writing notes, and checking through books.

Between 12.30 - 1 he often goes out shopping for groceries or, lately, new clothes. He's usually back by 1, eats no lunch and writes between 1-4 in the afternoon.

If James Grauerholtz is going to work with him on a manuscript or a reading, he arrives around four in the afternoon and stays through dinner. This happens, on the average, three times a week. They go over the work between 4-6 when Burroughs often relaxes, sitting in a rocking chair by the window. "It's a very beautiful sight" James says. "I'll be working at the other end of the loft. I'll look up, and there will be William just sitting perfectly still in his chair looking kind of serene."

At 6P.M. Burroughs pours himself a drink. 6-7.30 he'll have three whiskies or vodkas and then usually dinner is between 7.30-8.30.

All his life Burroughs has eaten in restaurants, but now he shops and cooks for himself often having friends over, or going to their places nearby for dinner. After-dinner-conversation continues until 11 or 12 and then usually home or to bed. Occasionally he stays up talking till dawn.

A Burroughs day produces six pages. Sometimes he'll write as much as fifteen. When he started Cities of the Red Night he produced 120 pages in two weeks. "William's very good at knowing when to leave things alone and when to go back to them. He knows when enough is enough" James reports. "Sometimes I may try to push him on something -- looking at a manuscript when 600 pages have been written and saying "We should begin editing that" -- and he'll say "No... that'll take another couple of years." He's seen enough time pass that he knows how to pace himself."

(Victor Bockris)

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THE WOMAN POEMS, By Joel Oppenheimer. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, Hardcover: \$7.95, Softcover: \$4.95. 92pp.

This is a book of love poems, but unlike most collections of love poems it is also a disturbing and penetrating examination of the roots and branches of love. The beloved here is both the specific women the poet addresses and Woman. Mr. Oppenheimer's song ranges from the deeply personal lyric to the public (political) rituals which so often determine the interaction between men and women. He focuses on the myths that are both the product of and create the conflict between the internal and external worlds that shape our experience of "Love." It is for this reason that this book is so often mis-read. What this book does is to record the private and public world of a man (the poet) with all the fear, tenderness, anger and humor that "love" can call into play. Such an undertaking is a risky business, but the very premise of this collection is that the territory of love is dangerous and often frightening. The driving force behind these poems is that the exploration of this territory is the core of our existence and that this landscape is where we live out our days:

...every time wondering.  
i have changed, the cells in  
my body twice over, almost  
through a third, the object of  
my devotion also changed, the  
ways of love also, even those  
sometimes subtler sometimes more  
brutal having discovered both those  
things in myself to a far greater  
extent than you dreamed of....

(from "Every Time Wondering")

The best poems in this volume clearly reveal Oppenheimer as a fine and moving lyric poet. If comparisons are to be made then Oppenheimer must be compared to poets like Cavalcanti and Peire Vidal for his ability to fix the emotions of love in the real lives of men and women. If, however, comparisons are (as I suspect) always very personal then let me say that there are few poets that I have read who can open up the love lyric as fully and poignantly as Joel Oppenheimer. Read a poem like "Touch Poem":

feeling you unable to touch me  
i think of the times  
that you did. feeling  
you pull from my touch  
i think of the times  
that you didn't...

(from "Touch Poem")

and you find that vulnerability which must be at the heart of a poem in order for it to sing honestly.

There are disturbing poems here (e.g., "Little Boys Poem"). Oppenheimer accepts many of the standard myths about the dynamic of MAN and WOMAN, which lead to a dead-end.

...in  
the playing and fighting  
man gets hurt, but in going  
to the mother, he gets  
laid. is this all she  
cares about? one assumes  
so, one hopes so. the universe  
thus can move on.  
the mother smiles only  
when happy, frowns only  
when discontented. The  
man has never learned this.

(from "Little Boys Poem")

This is much too easy. He takes a personal experience and insists it is a general condition. This is limiting and this frustration must lead to a demand for a way out of such a trap. What is important, however, when the collection is taken as a whole, is that the poet is just as concerned as any of us about these closures. Even in the most problematic poems in this volume, only a very biased reader would fail to see the struggle to find a way out of the traps that these stereotypes lock us into. Oppenheimer must be credited with a refusal to run away from those forces (right or wrong; popular or unpopular) which shape his life.

A sharp eye and ear and a rich sense of humor are the tools with which Oppenheimer makes his poems. He brings these gifts to bear with grace and he is usually able to see himself as clearly (if not more so) as he does "the others" he addresses. He can take the poem to the point where it becomes something he must tell us:

my son the terrors i did not  
describe to you because i  
did not think it necessary  
have come to haunt us both.  
they are not easily laughed  
at or learned from but  
what else shall we do?  
does the moon fall off the  
edge of the sky, does  
the sun sink? all bears  
are not pooh, either,  
but it is hard to know  
whether the real or the

dreamed are more fearsome.  
if you live through reality  
the chances are good you  
will make it, while the  
terrors fade. peace.

(from "Lost Son Poem")

It is that quality which marks this an an exceptional collection.

This is a very particular book of love poems. It is by no means an easy and gentle excursion. There is a genuine and often moving awkwardness in these poems which can at times become beautifully graceful, and while the work is much more tightly focused than Mr. Oppenheimer's last two books of poems (In Time and On Occasion) it adds depth to his total ongoing body of work. That growth is in itself a pleasure. The fact that he can record his "journey to love" so movingly is a gift.  
(Harry Lewis)

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Now is the time to come out against the dangerous Senate Bill 1. A 753 page legislative bombshell that affirms wiretapping, the death penalty, and high maximum prison penalties. Among other outrages it comes out against trivial obscenity and possession of the slightest amount of marijuana. Write to your Senator and Representative urging them to defeat this bill. Do not sit still and do nothing while the police state is established around you! Assist organizations working to defeat S.1. such as: National Committee Against Repressive Legislation, 1250 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 501, Los Angeles, CA 90017. This bill would make certain that a Watergate exposure never occurs again because there will be no opportunity for public inquiry.

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RAW HONEY

Marie Harris

alicejamesbooks

\$3.00

Marie Harris is a lanky person and poet. To read her is to know her: "three of us and our essentials/ tape recorder full of music/ 200 baseball trading cards/ hiking boots and sweaters/ typewriter/ you learn/ what to carry with you"

Much of her imagery socks in dead end. It's alright. She knows how to pick up and hurdle to another territory: "I sleep fitfully in a Savarin parking lot dreaming/ that pieces of my life are pulling away/ like trucks

The book is divided into four parts: Herbal, Wives, Raw Honey and Interstate. I am most interested in the latter, new to me. Living in Olson country, she has written a long work (for her) reminiscent in structure to his Maximus Poems but completely different in approach. Where Olson moved into his surroundings from the safety of his study, she is forever on the go but always studying herself.

Harris writes poetry like some women watch mirrors, stares at the flaws and faults in her life, catches them in phrases and gives them acuity akin to permanence: "I have become magically old; I am a rocking chair and a lap robe" I hope someday she can hook on to joy with equal energy.  
(Verlaine Boyd)

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MISC: Michael Lally will be reviewing small press books for the Washington Post. Please send review copies to 138 Sullivan St, NYC 10012. . . See Susan Leites paintings at Artists Space, 155 Wooster St, Feb 7-28. . . Jared Bark's photo-booth works at Holly Solomon Gallery 392 West Broadway, thru Feb 12. . . There's a hydra-headed monster in Ann Arbor. A couple of months back we ran a "censorship" story about Lithocrafters. George Mattingly, of Blue Wind Press, tells us that a similar piece of censorship took place with one of their books, The Book of Breeathing by William S. Burroughs, illustrated by Robert F. Gale. This time

Braun-Brumfield is the censor. The only other mind-their-own-business printer in Ann Arbor is Edwards Brothers. Conclusion is obvious. . . Arlene Slavin, hand colored prints, Brooke Alexander, 20 W 57 St, Feb 7 thru Mar 6...At the Clocktower, 108 Leonard St, Feb 12-Mar 6 Robert Grosvenor (giant opening party Feb 11 9-12 pm). . . For info on New York Book Fair for 1976 send to 321 W 94 St, NYC 10025 (749-5906).

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The No-Travels Journal by Maureen Owen. Cherry Valley Editions, Boc 303, Cherry Valley, N.Y. 13320 \$1.50  
Shamp of the City-Solo by Jaimy Gordon. Treacle Press, 4615 Cedar Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143 \$2.95

Maureen Owen has written a scintillating No-Travels Journal, her second collection of poems. Like Baudelaire, but with few hints of his anguished temperament, her wish to "be happier elsewhere" remains jacketed in outfits pieced together from other people's journeys and gleams within postcard borders:

O continent of Asia, I am sitting here  
in the park on these sparkling boulders & only the economy  
of the nation is keeping us apart!

If her travels are non, and her dreamings fired by friendly trinkets from California, Kyoto, and the Second Avenue bargain bins, she nonetheless dresses herself and her vibrant sense of language to the hilt in them, a patchwork of consolations that trades vocabulary for real life. But as Valery Larbaud's voyaging persona A.O. Barnabooth knew, the world is a Baedeker of words until we visit it, and a collection of images to be written down when we return home. With a sensuous participatory imagination, Maureen Owen convinces me of what the construction workers know as they point at her in one of her poems: "That girl she should be in Spain!"

And yet any book prefaced with a quotation from Baudelaire has at least some responsibility to other than the happily exclamatory. As her poem-entries accumulate, Ms. Owen stitches together her future perfect with the familiar threads of desire--for the sheer adventure denied her as a woman and a mother ("my brother's on a Swedish ship in the Panama Canal" she writes, as she counts Minnesota stars); for the chance at transformation ("No one from the Embassy would recognize me now/ no one from the little bodega"); and, perhaps, for the chance to reclaim a passionate nature stalled in domesticity:

I want to lose control  
the way I used to throwing my arms around him  
madly kissing his vest and lapels a straining ever upward  
caught in that intensity of humiliation risking everything  
again for one sign of love one step  
into that future I am proclaiming

The dazzle of minute particulars that refracts from these poems finds a superb complement in severe closeup drawings of seemingly impenetrable New York apartment house facades by artist Hugh Kepets that decorate the book, and that in themselves supply the conditions of reverie. The No-Travels Journal reminds us that if words, like the rag-tag gypsy costumes Ms. Owen favors, can create fantasy spaces where the daily round dissolves in romantic mist, then language can also put the keys in our hands that allow us to turn very real locks and walk out the door.

In Shamp of the City-Solo (punctuated with likably quirky drawings by artist James Aitchson) Jaimy Gordon has given us a first novel that is as whacky and inventive as its title promises. Her picaro, teenage Hughbury Shamp, can't wait to slip away from mom, his boring hometown of Bulimy, and frustrating dialogues with his only companion, Sgt. Weatherall Brakeknot, a very deceased resident of the local cemetery.

Gordon plunges right into the action, and by chapter two Hughby has dumped Brakeknotian colloquy and fallen into the clutches of the first of his three masters, the Topical Tropicist

Shipoff. Shipoff's wisdom consists of "how to pass up nothing, but maintain the reversibility of your position at every turn, "a philosophy founded on an eely rhetoric: "the timeliest topos, via the slickest tropos, from the loftiest lecterns." Which sounds to me like Alfred Jarry's 'Pataphysics spiced with more than a dash of fastbuck guruism. Shipoff takes Shamp in tow and the con-game to the metropolis, Big York (New York?), where he sets up his lecturers academy (i.e., flunky school) in an abandoned subway station near the city limits' sump and dump. Cash is Shipoff's aim, the topos (hustle) fear of overpopulation, the tropos (come-on) hibernation: more sleep, less babies. Cash is what their loony neighbors the Arsleverings have--2.5 million has already gone to the Theater of the People of Barney Street in Big York!--and as the plot unwinds, Shamp finds himself more and more the bait in Shipoff's designs on the grant money.

Before long Shipoff joins forces with two other hustlers, the kindly but lunatic Dr. Analarge (a devotee of researches into the Inexpressible) and World-Friar Tapsvine (the triad's religious wing, who keeps the lecturers in line with his stratagem of "Waste Confession"). Hughby gets the business from all three of his mentors, and only begins to wake up when he discovers he's scheduled to orate at the annual Arslevering Ox Roast, an honor few survive; the survivor gets the money, and competition is literally murderous. Locked in a pay toilet until the "festivities" begin, Shamp quaffs a vial of dope (Tapsvine's gift) only to meet, in a dream, his eternal bugbear--Brakeknot. This encounter, which like the rest of the novel has been beautifully orchestrated by Ms. Gordon, frees our anti-hero of his father-complex (and thus, from his "tripod" of earthly masters) when he finally faces and embraces the shadowy loser who has haunted him.

For like any picaro, Hughby is both a sham and a scamp, and his gullibility the payoff of his own cravings for acceptance and position; that is, everything corpse Brakeknot lacked. In this sense, Jaimy Gordon has nothing new to tell us about human nature; we find ourselves "used" because, deep down, we want to be. And we continue to be pushed around until we recognize the dark Nobody in ourselves by throwing our arms around it in recognition. But the author tells Shamp's story in a dazzling poetic prose that reels with a sinuous bawdiness to which Thomas Nashe might perk, and that James Joyce could have twinkled at. Shamp of the City-Solo is a brilliantly realized work, and Jaimy Gordon an author to be watched.  
(Bill Zavatsky)

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**BOOKS AND MAGAZINES:** Primer #1, Ron Wray, 502 E 38 St, Indianapolis, Ind 46205 (\$1). . . Dick Gallup, The Wacking of the Fruit Trees, The Toothpaste Press, PO Box 546, West Branch, Iowa 52358 (\$2). . . From Blue Wind Press, 1206 Spruce, Berkeley, CA 94709, Wm Burroughs The Book of Breathing (\$3.95), Keith Abbott Gush (\$3.95). . . Ruth Krauss, Under Thirteen, A Shop Book, distrib by The Bookstore Press, Lenox, Mass 01240. . . A baseball issue of Io is in the works. Deadline June 76. Send to RFD#2, Box 135, Plainfield, Vt. 05067. . . From Skylark Press, 21 Chatsworth Road, Brighton, Sussex BN1 5DB, England Paul Evans, Prokofiev's Concerto (\$1.65) and William Corbett, City Nature (\$1.75). . . Leandro Katz, Self Hipnosis, TVRT Press, 25 E 4 St, NYC 10003 (\$4). . . Paul Blackburn, The Journals (ed by Robert Kelly), Black Sparrow Press, PO Box 25603, L.A., CA 90025 (\$4). . . Transatlantic Review #52, Box 3348, Grand Central Sta, NYC 10017 (\$1.50) (Has anthology of New American Poetry edited by Gerard Malanga). . . Harold Dull, A Selection of Poems for Jack Spicer on the Tenth Anniversary of his Death, 1479 5th Ave, S.F., CA. . . Henry Kanabus, Flood Lights, Stone Wind Press, 2925 N. Kenneth, Chicago, IL (\$1). . . The End #10, Box 798, Monte Rio, CA 95462. . . By the end of the month Adventures in Poetry should have published: a catalog; Ron Padgett's translations of Blaise Cendrars' Kodak; We Are Integrated and Wonderfully Made by Thazarbell Biggs (Mrs.); and either Rebecca Brown's For the 82nd Airborne or John Godfrey's The Music of the Curbs. \$2 ea. from Larry Fagin, 437 E. 12 St., NYC 10009. . . John Wieners Behind the State Capitol or Cincinnati Pike published by The Good Gay Poets (\$4.95) paper.

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"Contact Improvisation", a dance concert will take place in the sanctuary of St. Mark's Church on Tues Feb 24, 8 PM, (\$2 contribution). The dancers will be: Paul Langland, Annette LaRocque, Lisa Nelson, Judy Padow, Steve Paxton, and David Woodberry.

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"...and Beth shall have no opinion" Tony Towle is a wit and scholar. "They were simply being cautious, and I have enough shortcomings / without adding vanity, pretentiousness, and stubbornness to the list." His poetry is tough and intelligent, and not praised enough. "It is a tremendous effort / to cope with the nervous suffering to be found here." This is early work and sometimes reads that way but his importance, too often overlooked, makes these works important and the works' achievements make him important before we knew he is. "It is a miracle that I represent my age so thoroughly. 3/64" He does, and in strategies that surprise without telegraphing. "Let's see how he looks as an adult." (Michael Lally)

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Gentle Subsidy by Steve Carey Big Sky Books

Gentle Subsidy comes on like riding in a van (eastward) from San Fernando Valley, grey-white dark cloud snowy peaks tipped rosy beyond sunset dawn skies, a little background music Milton please - guys'd come in unannounced to the glass house in the tropical garden overgrowth green wet & huge empty bullet casings and spare meth tablets rolling around in the steel cab of they're silver metal-flake semi, bleary-eyed surfer kids with gun racks & beards & cases of beer & truant sisters with crazy grins naked beneath long woolen sweaters & their manic comrades in red velvet cowboy hats; or blond unshaven pill-thin poetic balabberers who remember me from someplace party New York I dunno - Steven Carey introduced to me by artist Peter Kantor in a San Fernando sunny afternoon darkened foyer - that booming hoarse radiant sorrowful yet wise SPACE VOICE crawling out of gloom bulldogging uncanny logical edge - reading these poems reminds me of his half-serious imitation of Jim Morrison's own slovenly drunken werewolf wonderful wail-sob - 31 chilling spans from sublime burr pawpalm of golden pale renegade earthling, out to fuck with your mind! Damp of deed, and thought.

Gentle Subsidy comes on, when in the course of reading, you suddenly feel it rolling over you like surf rising in a pitched flowing crest to splash and break thundering up in myriad foam bombardments that stick in swollen pockets, sagging in states that jointly border on liquid and the natural membrane fiber pores.

Gentle Subsidy is filled with pros - the cover, a drawing of an eye-less flaming swan, is by Steven's wife, Effie, the book contains 31 works mostly printed only in small (therefore probably unavailable) magazines and reviews found here for the first time in a book format, his first real collection (although there was his thin volumn, "Smith Going Backwards" most of which is contained herein), his best eyeball movie, The California Papers is here (which has already been successfully decoded elsewhere by El Ron Padgett) & moves at a stanza clip that both those later-masters at momentum Ceravolo & Coolidge (ole SeeSee Ayler Gorge himself) only literary from a whole other space, a whole other time warp cozy lingo mantra - the whole wonderous delirium when lines yell back at ya in space & IT ALL MAKES SENSE, the final piece in the bigger puzzle, it all a precious little piece of perfect emptinesses, that demands the ego detach our bods & stride off giggling, into the skies: Jackson Browne and Philip Whalen both are ardent Carey addicts. What makes you so special? (Jim Brodey)

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BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Beginning at six or seven Broadway lights up--and it's my favorite street, since among all those streets and avenues as regular and even as the bars of a jail cell Broadway alone boldly and capriciously goes at an oblique slant. It's harder to get lost in New York than in Tula. The avenues go north and south, the streets go east and west. Fifth Avenue divides the city into two parts, West and East. That's all you need to know. I'm on Eighth St., at the corner of Fifth Avenue, and I have to get to 53rd St. at the corner of Second; all I have to do is walk 45 blocks, turn right and walk to Second Avenue.

Frank O'Hara?

No, Mayakovsky. Quoted on p. 294 of Edward J. Brown's MAYAKOVSKY, A Poet in the Revolution (Princeton, 1973).

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Charles Reznikoff died on the morning of January 22, 1976. The poems live.

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MAGIC

The cars rush along creating the ocean

which in turn creates the cars.

Meanwhile the baby is up and looking at everything

with a crown of sunlight on her head

where the hair should be. Most babies

are bald at a certain age, acquire some hair

and then are bald again, though eighty percent

of the population wear wigs so you don't generally know.

A lawn mower thuts below down the hill,

on the way to the ocean

which is a milky blue (or else the sky is,

reflected in it) and the sky and the sea,

and the lawn mower, are reflected in the air,

filled to capacity and coming apart,

blowing sand and milk over everyone.

Charles North 6/75

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