

THE POETRY PROJECT NEWSLETTER  
No. 59 November 1978  
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St. Mark's Church  
2nd Ave. & 10th St., NYC 10003

The Parish Hall has a new floor and fresh paint on its walls, come check it out when: This year's first Poetry Project Community Meeting will be held on Saturday, December 9th in the Parish Hall. During this meeting we will hold the first Community Elections to choose two members of the poetry community to serve on the Project Advisory Board. Voting: 10am to 12 noon. Community Meeting: 12 noon to 1:30 pm. Self Nominations by those interested in serving on the Advisory Board are due in the Project Office by November 15th, midnight. For further information call 674-0910.

-- Maureen Owen & Ron Padgett

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READINGS ST. MARK'S: Wednesday Nights; Nov 1--Charlotte Carter, Carter Ratcliff  
Nov 8--Jim Carroll, Simon Ortiz\* Nov 15--Michael Heller, Enrique Lihn Nov 22--Helen Adam, Bob Holman Nov 29--Jackson MacLow, Kit Robinson.....Monday Nights: Nov 6--Open Reading Nov 13--Ann Rower, David Herz 'Laundromat': Video Poets Wash Their Poems, directed by Eileen Myles, Bob Holman, Rochelle Kraut Nov 20--Dance Bands: Rose Lesniak, Jim Brodey, Tom Carey Nov 27--Jim Hanson, Steve Levine

READINGS AROUND TOWN EAR INN, 326 Spring Street, NYC, 3pm, \$2.: Nov 4--Jane Delynn, Sharon Mattlin Nov 11--Lorenzo Thomas, Kathy Acker Nov 18--Susan Howe, James Sherry Nov 25--Doug Lang, Reed Bye.....EL CENTRO, 29 St. Marks Pl, NYC, 8pm free; Nov 3--Regina Beck, Elinor Nauen Nov 10--George-Therese Dickenson, Will Bennett Nov 17--Janet Hamill, Ed Friedman Nov 24--Mona diVinci, Joe Ceravolo.....DROLL/KOLBERT GALLERY, 724 5th Avenue at 57th St, NYC, 7pm free Nov 2--Lorenzo Thomas Nov 9--Pay DiPalma Nov 16--Ron Padgett Nov 30--Paul Violi.....Mickey Ruskin's new bar, 1 Univ. Pl., NYC (below 8th St) contribution 3pm; Nov 18--Taylor Mead, Laurie Anderson

WORKSHOPS ST. MARK'S: \*Writers in Residency Workshop--Nov 9, 7:30pm with Simon Ortiz, at the 3rd St. Music School, 233 East 11th St, NYC).....Poetry & Philosophy Workshop, Nov 30-Dec 31 with Edmund Leites (Thursday nights 7:30 pm, 3rd St. Music School)..... Tuesdays 7:30 pm with Ed Friedman at the 3rd St. Music School. Beginning Nov 5, Sundays with Harris Schiff, 7:30 pm at the Parish Hall, St. Mark's Church. All of the workshops are free. Everyone is invited to attend.

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DEADLINES: All Newsletter material is due the 1st of the month for the following month's issue. All submissions of poetry and reviews are encouraged. Please include SASE and a phone number (if possible) where you can be reached. The deadline has been moved up in order to save \$ & ¢ in postage costs of 1st class mailing. As of the December 1978 issue we will be BULK RATE MAILING the Newsletter to you. This may mean many readings will not be listed, but you can get them all and more from the Poetry Calendar, 437 Washington Street, NYC 10013 or call their Hotline (212) 431-7978. As always, but especially now due to rising postage costs and our mailing list of over 1,000, contributions are welcomed with open pockets. Thanks in advance for helping us with this.

ANNOUNCEMENTS · PUBLICATION PARTIES · COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS · RUMORS · BENEFITS · SPECIAL EVENTS :

NOVEMBER 4 --- Michael Slater, editor of The Big House (Ailanthus Press) announces its publication with a party at 200 West 93rd Street (between Bway & Amsterdam) 8:30pm. Readers of the newsletter are invited to come celebrate! Ring 27.

NOVEMBER 6 --- Lamplighter/Tombouctou Press announces the publication of The Basketball Diaries by Jim Carroll with a publication party that afternoon from 5-7pm at the Gotham Book Mart Gallery, 41 West 47th St., NYC. Readers of the newsletter are invited.

RUMORS: Bob Holman is compiling an archive of the history and growth of the Poetry Project. Anyone with anecdotes, gossip, hair-raising tales and other information leading to the culmination of Bob's enormous and interesting project, send their scoop to: Poetry Project Archives, 437 Washington St., NYC 10013.

SPECIAL THANKS --- in helping get out the October issue of the Poetry Project Newsletter to: Steve Levine, Rose Lesniak, Barb Barg, Chas, Bob Holman, Jeff Wright, Frances LeFevre, Yuki Hartman, Maureen Owen, Anne Waldman, Ron Padgett and "Howard". Anyone who has some spare time and would like to help, please leave a message at the Project Office (212) 674-0910.

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RECENTLY RELEASED BOOKS & MAGAZINES: MAG CITY #5, 437 East 12th St., NYC 10009, \$1.: this issue contains works of Michael Scholnick, Bob Rosenthal, Eileen Myles, Regina Beck, Gary Lenhart, Gregory Masters & others.....THIS press, 326 Connecticut St., San Francisco, CA 94107: You Bet by Ted Greenwald (\$2.50 paper) Ketjak by Ron Silliman (\$3.50 paper) .....O Press, 190A Duane St., NYC 10013: At The Heart Of The World by Elaise Cendrars, translated from the French by Annabel Levitt (npl).....Sun & Moon (magazine) 4330 Hartwick Rd., College Park, Md. 20740 \$3. Fall 1978 has works by Peter Frank, Ted Greenwald, Phillip Lopate, John Yau, Tom Clark, Pat Nolan, Bruce Andrews, Bernadette Mayer & others.....ROOF VII, Segue Foundation, 300 Bowery, NYC 10012: works by Michael Lally, John Taggart, Ted Greenwald, Ron Silliman, (\$3, paper) BLACK SPARROW PRESS, PO Box 3993 Santa Barbara, CA 93105: Primitive by George Oppen, (\$3, paper) The following three books by Charles Reznikoff: Testimony: The United States (1885-1915), Vol. 1 (\$6, paper), Poems 1918-1936 (Vol. 1 of the Complete Poems) (\$4, paper), Poems 1937-1975 (Vol. 2 of the Complete Poems) (\$4, paper) Meaning A Life by Mary Oppen, (\$4.50 paper) autobiography..... Little Caesar Magazine #6, 337 Overland Avenue, #2 Los Angeles, CA 90034 (\$4.) works by John Wieners, Joe Brainard, Ted Perrigan, Rene Ricard, Lita Hornick, Gerard Malanga, Robert Creeley, Tim Dlugos.....OTHER PUBLICATIONS, 689 E. 17th St., Brooklyn, NY 11230, Local Color/Eidetic Deniers by Michael Gottlieb (#3.50 paper).....MACMILLAN PUBLISHING, 866 3rd Ave., NYC: Some Do by Jane DeLynn

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POET IN JEOPARDY: Tom Savage desperately needs temporary or permanent living space due to two recent attacks on him in his current neighborhood by street-toughs. Anyone who can help please leave a message at the Poetry Project Office (212) 674-0910 immediately. THIS IS AN EMERGENCY!!!!!!!

"Do you think I am Hercules or  
Sampson to bear such grief..."

---Gaspara Stampa

A heart that's been broken  
has a tiny hinge  
And when it happens a  
second or third time  
it just  
swings open & shut  
like a gate.

Maureen Owen

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You Bet by Ted Greenwald

This Press, 326 Connecticut St., San Francisco, CA 94107 (\$2.50, 74pgs, paper)

You Bet seems to have been begun in the morning, "Coming through the streaming/  
Feeling suddenly gust up" as if the writer had just had his fourth cup of coffee  
and were trying to write while looking in a mirror. The hand that holds the pen is  
disconnected from the eye that should tell it whether to move right or left, up  
or down.

As abrupt and rough as his phrases may sound, Greenwald is "furiously pic-  
turing exactly/where I'd like to see/My left arm be." His "broken record vision"  
cuts into space, "contains a subspace link/With facing it." "It" is states of mind,  
nervously nailed down--he writes while writing. The subject is "Not the general,  
O no! that/Would be too much." It is the corresponding assertive/reflexive dichot-  
omy the writer gets as he sits writing, looking into the paper. It's a meditative  
work.

As the writer looks into the paper, various images arise. Gruff, good-natured  
gestures provide cut-off points for thoughts that one might find obvious. There are  
concepts like "gravity" (p.12) which are emblematic and embedded deeply in the  
straight talk quality of the writing. Out of sight and sexy, the darker references  
are part of the generative process of writing off the top of the head addressed to  
a reader (a lover).

And in the abstract space--float the stanzas. Greenwald can "convert to  
units/Such bits as make take place/...out of some mental (effort will)...and grasp-  
ing said meaning/This said savage water" the lines build up. He takes the "path of  
least resistance" to the stanzas, but cannot be pinned down because the lines break  
irregularly at phrase ends with "registered stubbornness". The texture of You Bet  
derives from this "second generation question", how to come closer to what:

You've been skirting  
With the sounds you're skirting  
With whose mouth you're saying...

Your knowledge puts you in  
My mind in the know  
Where I think of you  
Know I do

Filling up both glasses  
You and me discover by  
Taking something off  
Something completely interesting

Composed of "Said thought" You Bet is structured by "Some old fart idea about/ The present presents you with/What you think/I'm about." The irregularities of the lines' rhythms, their weights and measures, cutting into phrases, the lines and breaks reveal the author and his "Language device", and also brings the reader closer to the writer. In a social context this puts him on the borderline between poetry and lipping off. Formally, he breaks the regularity of the four line stanzas by ending, for example, "word the" and the next begins "The the word". Again rubbing elbows, letting the form have friction.

The broken thoughts allow the reader to "complete at your own leisure/Say how it's over", "Where there's no whether and no not," a yes space. ---James Sherry

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Harmatan by Paul Violi (SUN Press, 456 Riverside Drive, NYC 10027, \$2.50, paper)

On the acknowledgement page of Harmatan, under the Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data, we are given the following information: "1. Nigeria-Description and travel-Poetry. 2. Poetry of places-Nigeria." This phrase reminded me of Wallace Stevens, who in one sense never really travelled, and the Eugene Delacroix, who kept a journal of beautifully precise observations while travelling in Morocco. Like the writings of both Stevens and Delacroix, Harmatan, a book length poem made up of 49 sections, is informed by Violi's observations.

Visual as:

Few sullen girls in courtyard  
and the owner, a big woman with a gold tooth  
or two, a necklace of monkey paws  
and skin like blue coals, aglow with the dye  
that rubbed off her robe.

(lines from #22)

Aural as:

their stumpy palms over the handlebar  
demanding Dash me Bature!  
Dash me one shilling!

(lines from #41)

And culturally as:

at every campsite the traders  
displaying their jewelry,  
flyswatters and red leather satchels,  
wiping Kiwi shoe polish  
on their ebony statues  
the students anxious to speak English.

(lines from #10)

John Updike mentions Charles M. Doughty's Travels in Arabia Deserta (1888) in New York Review of Books (May 18, 1978) as having a "constantly refreshed concreteness," a phrase I find equally applicable to Parmatan.

It is a poetry of places. Exotic but not exotica. Violi never says too much, never glosses, never judges what he experiences. Instead he remains faithful (perhaps paradoxically) to what might have been quite different from his previous experience, and this on a daily basis.

There is a reticence to this poem with its short clipped sentences, phrases and its gnarled, sinuous sense of image. This book isn't merely a set of observations skillfully put together. As he puts it in one section:

You wait for the view,  
for sleep to recede down oceanic slopes  
baring the enormous details  
of an unutterable prophecy.

(lines from #6)

Both mystery and clarity interlock. As for these, section 18 follows in its entirety:

Solitary, usually standing  
motionless on the outskirts of a market  
or beside a main road.  
Hair heavily matted, mop-like.  
Skin coated with a fine gray ash,  
a uniform tone, without a wrinkle  
or fully defined muscle.  
No tribal scars, no charms, always alone.  
They all looked alike,  
softer than a woman  
not squinting in the sunlight,  
not heeding any nearby shade,  
naked or just from the waist down.  
Neither asleep or awake  
but filled with a silence  
an old man said was  
strong enough to carry them off  
in a moment like a bubble  
or leave them right where they were  
with everything else lasting no longer  
than the time it took to pass them by.

A poetry of places. Yes. The one Paul Violi saw.

---John Yau

HEAVEN & Other Poems by Jack Kerouac (Grey Fox Press, \$3.00)

HEAVEN (& Other Poems) is just that a collection of very funny, beautiful, simple, and silly poems.

Like going to Xochimilco and seeing  
everything with clear loving eyes,  
it will be to go to Heaven  
a wise angel of the dead  
among the blind unborn angels  
unnumberable--  
Whole buzzing areas of Heaven  
will have nothing but mosquitos

Anyone who has appreciated Kerouac in his other forms will understand that Jack's spirituality can make him the Puddha of Silliness, and this collection of poems (plus bonus selection of tres droll and right-on letters to Don Allen, the grey fox himself) is another fine example.

for Heaven is big enough  
(it's all empty space  
endless) to take in  
unnumberable non-numbers  
of anything & everything  
that has and aint  
happened all over  
                  anyway  
                  or not at all

God Smiles

Gee God I'm Glad  
'Bye

Don't get me wrong, Kerouac's silliness is and can be very enlightening, that's what's so wonderful about it! Also, these are poems of natural cadence and music 'cos sound plays a great big part in the way Kerouac thinks about what makes a poem (check MexCity Blues for the real be-bop), I mean, talk about melonoeia....

(Louis Armstrong will  
blow his top)

And the music is jazz so Jack does his crooner's thing, he scats, he expresses himself in molten language.

Come little unborn angels,  
get it over with!  
Hello Thomas Hardy!  
Myself I'm going to visit  
endlessly the endless groves  
of trees up there  
and have enough time  
to hug each one -  
and this time they'll talk

Now one of the greatest aids for getting into Kerouac's poetry is to hear him read. Unfortunately, you can no longer pick up the phone and give him a call ('Say, Jack, could you read the poem on page 25...?'). But there are recordings if you can find them. I hear Kerouac, like his jazz hero, Bird Parker, play the saxophone of his soul, and no one has ever touched him at it. His expression for it, was 'coofing'.

"In recent reading appearance at Village Vanguard I was universally attacked, but all I did was stand there and read my heart out, not caring how I looked or what anybody thought, and I am satisfied because the dishwasher (an old Negro named Elton Stratton) said: 'All I wanta do is get 2 quarts of whiskey and lie down in bed and listen to you read to me.' Also, the musicians (Lee Konitz, Billy Fauer, Wilber Little) said I was 'singing' when I read and they heard the music, and since I consider myself a jazz poet, I'm satisfied with that. What intelligensia says makes little difference, as I've always spent my time in skid row or in jazz joints or with personal poet madmen and never cared what 'intelligensia' thinks. My love of poetry is love of joy."  
(from Biographical Resume, 1957')

So he succeeds in a naturalness (spontaneous, sincere, joyous) that transcends pretense.

This knowledge makes me  
go 'ha ha ha' and  
go 'Oh boy' and  
go 'Whoopee'  
because now I know  
that old age is therefore  
the development of angels.

His takes on poetry and poetics were always to the point, as in this 1950 letter to Don Allen:

'My only possible statement on poetics and poetry is this: Add alluvials to the end of your line when all is exhausted but something has to be said for some specified irrational reason, since reason can never win out, because poetry is NOT a science. The rhythm of how you decide to 'rush' or statement determines the rhythm of the poem, whether it is a poem in verse-separated lines, or an endless one-line poem called prose. .(with its paragraphs).'

He imbued his poetry with a sense of his personality, a quiet and holy yet goofy energy.

Please, that's enough,  
huh?

(Unless otherwise noted, the verses quoted are from the title poem.) --Pat Nolan

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JUST TO SPOIL EVERYTHING

I won't call up first, I'll just ring your bell  
out of left field, and walk in:  
just because you told me  
we were not supposed to see each other  
until you said it was all right to do so,  
until you felt less hysterical  
(or whatever your crazy excuse was).  
But I'm going over to your apartment house  
right now, while you're waiting for some old boyfriend  
for tea, just to spoil everything.  
I'll rush in by surprise,  
sit in your rocking chair  
and say nothing, don't expect a scene.  
Perhaps I won't even take off my overcoat,  
with the orange knit scarf  
you gave me once for Christmas.  
My scarf will glint reproachfully at you.  
I'll show you how unwordly I can be!  
Because I want to make a mess of things,  
of the fond poetic understanding last impressions  
you would like to keep of me.

Phillip Lopate

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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