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**Modern American Poetry Conference
featuring four American poets
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The Centre for Extra Mural Studies of The Polytechnic of Central London, Director Colin Adamson, welcomes you to this Modern American Poetry Conference for schools and colleges.

We are delighted that Robert Duncan, George Oppen, Jerome Rothenberg and Jonathan Williams are able to participate.

We are particularly grateful to Eric Mottram, Reader in American Literature, King's College, University of London, for his introductory essay; to Nick Kimberley, Compendium Books, for organising the bookshop and display; to the Polytechnic Short Courses Unit for their administration of the course; to Richard G. Landes for typography and layout; and to Tony and Bruce of the Polytechnic Reprographic Unit for printing the booklet.

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Sixties American Poetry, Poetics and Poetic Movements

Eric Mottram 1973

I

A brief account of some of the origins of current poetics in America can begin with the words which Jonathan Williams places in his poem on Whitman, 'Dangerous Calamus Emotions' (1969 version in AN EAR IN BARTRAM'S TREE):

W.C.W. - "him and that Jesuit, them with the variable feet—they changed it."

To Williams' sense of the point of change in the nature of poetic measure we can add a selection of other acknowledged recognitions: the paragraphic line in Blake's 'prophetic' books and Christopher Smart's line in 'Jubilate Agno', for Allen Ginsberg's poetry; the lyric and improvisatory continuity of line in the horns of Lester Young and Charlie Parker in the 1940's and 1950's which combine with Thomas Wolfe's piling articulations in Jack Kerouac's MEXICO CITY BLUES (1959); the various effects of cubist and Dadaist dislocations and reassemblages which constitute a resource in innovative literature from the 1920's onwards; and the ways in which Kerouac, Williams, Pound, Zukofsky and others use American speech cadences and rhythms as basic measures for their lines. Invention in linearity takes place within investigations into spatial form. Pound acknowledged his 'pact' with Walt Whitman in LUSTRA in 1917: "It was you who broke the new wood, / Now it is time for carving. / We have one sap and one root— / Let there be commerce between us." But he began to consider the possibilities of new spatial organization in poetry earlier, while reading Ernest Fenollosa's 'The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry' shortly before the American scholar's death in 1908. In his 1915 article, 'Imagisme and England', Pound indicated the "two sorts of poetry" which concerned him: lyric poetry in which melody moves into speech, and a poetry whose form is nearer painting and sculpture, the Imagist—"we have sought the force of Chinese ideographs without knowing it". His first Chinese poem came out in POETRY, March, 1915: 'Exile's Letter'.

But contemporary American poetry has a further resource indicated in Kenneth Rexroth's 'The Influence of French Poets on America' (ASSAYS, 1961). The international literary intercourse of the early twentieth century certainly precludes any remaining notion of some strictly national poetic parthenogenesis. For Rexroth, American poetic modernism begins with Alfred Kreymburg's magazine OTHERS (1914-19) printing Williams, Marianne Moore, Stevens, Eliot, Mina Loy, Aiken and others. Pound transmuted Laforgue's interplay of animate and inanimate, and his syllabic forms, into American

currency, and from him Conrad Aiken derived his "inadequate, spleen-ridden and troubled narrators", and from Valéry Larbaud, his long-packed line. Williams' *KORA IN HELL* (1920) "shows familiarity with Max Jacob and Fargue" and other French writers—Williams had lived in France for extended periods, had translated Philippe Soupault and was a friend of Larbaud. His poetry confers unprovincial forms on the New Jersey scene within which he writes:

"Williams could be said to belong in the Cubist tradition—Imagism, Objectivism, the dissociation and re-arrangement of the elements of concrete reality, rather than rhetoric and free association... His long quest for a completely defenseless simplicity of personal speech produces an idiom identical with that which is the end product of centuries of polish, refinement, tradition and revolution."

From Man Ray's *SELF PORTRAIT* (1963), it is clear that French art penetrated far into innovative American work. He saw Cézannes at Stieglitz's gallery before the Armory show of 1913, and his 1913 portrait of 'Donna' contains elements from Picasso and Matisse—painted at Ridgefield, while Williams was living in Rutherford not far away. He knew of Brancusi's golden birds through Stieglitz, and Lautreamont and Apollinaire's *CALLIGRAMMES* through his wife's interest. Before Man Ray went to Paris in 1921, he had contacted Marcel Duchamp (1915) and Picabia, and through them the Dadists in Paris—in fact, Tristan Tzara gave "mock authorization" for the New York Dada magazine (1921).

The American scene was, therefore, not at all provincial. Mayakofsky was translated into American before French. Carl Sandburg wrote a poem to Brancusi. Yehoash made Yiddish versions of 'haiku' and transmuted Apollinaire's ideas into Yiddish verse, long before American poetry in English took them up. Walter Arensberg, whom Man Ray also knew, wrote imitations of Mallarmé and the Dadists. The little magazines, themselves the centres of innovation, moved internationally. The *LITTLE REVIEW* began in Chicago, moved to Paris, and died at what Rexroth calls "Gurdjieff's dude ranch in Fontainebleau". *BROOM* was edited from Rome, Paris and Berlin, before dying in America. *CONTACT*, edited by Williams and Robert McAlmon, like many other magazines, became increasingly integrated with European cultural life, an internationalism exemplified by Eugene Jolas' *TRANSITION* and Sam Putnam's *NEW REVIEW*.

The counter forces assembled predictably. Yvor Winters identified with the anti-modernism of Valéry and Maritain, and became the most 'parnassien' and formalist of American poet-critics: *PRIMITIVISM AND DECADENCE* (1937) and *THE ANATOMY OF NONSENSE* (1943) summarize his position, and *YVOR WINTERS ON MODERN POETS* collects six of his probes (1959). At Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, poets under the

leadership of John Crowe Ransom adopted anti-modernist positions associated with Daudet, Maurras, Pareto, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Major Douglas, and ideas phrased as "social credit", "classless syndicalism" and "new agrarianism". These Southern Agrarians supported reactionary politics and worshipped T.S. Eliot the classicist, Anglo-Catholic and royalist—and Eliot himself derived a good deal of his attitudes from the aristocratic, Dantesque tradition manufactured and upheld by Harvard Jacobinism. The Southern "Fugitives", as they called themselves, approved of some of Pound but not of his extended open forms. They were certainly racist when it came to 'nigras' and followed the political philosophy of Donald Davidson, whose writings, in Rexroth's words, "somewhat resembled those of a literate Senator Eastland". They were also generally Christian and delighted in tight elliptical statements of melancholic irony for which the ideal reader would need special training in exegesis. Theirs was, in Karl Shapiro's summary phrase, "criticism-poetry" (IN DEFENSE OF IGNORANCE, 1960), and it became the standard poetry for the academic mind and the establishment reviewers between 1940 and 1960, the heyday of American criticism. Its imitators thrive because of the steady domination of publishers, reviews and university courses by their attitudes and forms.

Further to the Left, Walter Lowenfels lived in Paris for many years and contributed to TRANSITION; his series of elegies on Lawrence, Hart Crane, Rimbaud and Apollinaire—and structurally indebted to Apollinaire—was printed in Paris. E.E. Cummings lived in France after the First World War, but seems to have understood as little of European modernism as Henry Miller. More important, so far as invention was concerned, were the followers of André Breton who included Charles Henri Ford, Parker Tyler and Philip Lamantia, who together edited the vigorous Surrealist magazine VIEW. Tyler's 'Granite Butterfly' employs procedures derived from Mallarmé's 'Un Coup de des'—the assemblage of elements towards a spatialized philosophical reverie, a form also used by Lowenfels and Rexroth.

American little magazines and their poets in Europe introduced cubist and Surrealist forms, as well as the writings of James Joyce and Gertrude Stein, to American writers who thereby had the opportunity to break from the trap of early twentieth century Bohemian or 'parnassien' modes and attitudes by recognizing post-1916 innovations in form. As Robert Bly and James Wright observed in their 1967 introduction to Neruda's poems: "the French Surrealist poets drove themselves by force into the unconscious because they hated establishment academicism and the rationalistic European culture". With this penetration we can place Blaise Cendrars' and Matthew Josephson's appreciation of American popular movies, comic strips, advertisements, skyscraper styles and Nick Carter dime novels as a way through snobbish academic rejection of popular culture which exploded in the 1960's forms of pop art. Dada rejections of Bohemian

and bourgeois compromise, its contempt for 'cultivated' audiences and its presentation of bad taste to counter the establishment's 'good taste' also had its salutary repercussions in the 1960's. Duchamp's conceptual art finally emerged as a major influence on the work of American writers in the 1960's in C magazine—Ron Padgett, Ted Berrigan and their associates—while Tristan Tzara and Dadaism moved in the writers within TZARAD.

These main lines are not difficult to record. For example: in the 1920's SECESSION published not only Hart Crane's poetry and Marianne Moore's appreciation of HD—the focus of Robert Duncan's magnificent HD BOOK in the 1960's—but also Malcolm Cowley's appreciation of Roussel's LOCUS SOLUS. Between 1961 and 1962, the poets John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, Harry Mathews and James Schuyler edited an important magazine called LOCUS SOLUS, which published among other materials Mathews' translation of Roussel's work and many of the C magazine writers. ART AND LITERATURE (1964-67), edited by Ashbery and others, continues this Franco-American relationship of developments out of cubism into abstract expressionism, minimal and pop art, and poetry related to these art forms, and thence into the period of those extensions of Dada events, the happenings and multimedia events of the 1960's and the activities of Andy Warhol's workshop. (Already in 1952, at Black Mountain College, an event had been staged which included the music of John Cage and David Tudor, the poetry of Charles Olson, the dance of Merce Cunningham and the paintings of Robert Rauschenberg in a multimedial action).

One poet in particular stands at the centre of this field and in many ways exemplifies its activity. Frank O'Hara was deeply aware of modern musical developments and as a curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York produced major exhibitions of Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, Ruben Nakian and Franz Kline. His appreciation of Larry Rivers ('Larry Rivers: A Memoir', 1965), is reflected in the style of his long poem 'Second Avenue' (1960) written in Rivers' studio (and the first edition had a characteristic cover by the painter). But O'Hara also accurately appears in Elias Wientz's THE BEAT SCENE (1960)—a photograph shows him reading with Ray Bremser, LeRoi Jones and Allen Ginsberg as a benefit for Totem Press, an important little press in Greenwich Village. (Memoirs of O'Hara are contained in John Gruen's THE PARTY'S OVER NOW, 1972). His poems in LUNCH POEMS (1965) and ODES (1969) articulate an essentially urban experience—luxuriant and socially sophisticated, exuberant and witty, and completely inside the New York scene of poets and painters, a world in which John Ashbery was an editor of ART NEWS and Harold Rosenberg, one of the finest critics of American painting of the period, wrote for both LOCUS SOLUS and ART AND LITERATURE.

During the 1920's Pound's CANTOS appeared in TRANSATLANTIC REVIEW ('Three Cantos of a Poem of Some Length' had appeared

in the private American edition of *LUSTRA* in 1917). It also carried art supplements with work by Picasso, Brancusi and Gris, and music supplements with work by Pound and Antheil, and on one occasion a song by Erik Satie. Jolas' *TRANSITION* emphasized Joyce's "structure of multiple planes" and "poly-synthetic language", the possible uses of Freud's dream materials, and the pleasures of Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd. Jolas also drew on Blake and Rimbaud (a source also for Hart Crane, even if he spoke little French) in his manifesto, 'Revolution of the Word' in No. 16/17, (1929). At the same time there developed a poetry out of needs to clarify by simplification. Drawing on Pound's and T.E. Hulme's criticism of romantic symbolism, together with the poems of HD, F.S. Flint, Amy Lowell and others, Imagism proposed concise visual clarity and highly simplified ideas and emotions. It produced little interesting poetry until its programme was taken up and modified in the poetry and poetics of William Carlos Williams and Louis Zukofsky and writers associated with the Objectivist Press. These included Charles Reznikoff and George Oppen, both still excellently active in the 1960's with poetry which takes their early styles into far more complicated areas of articulation (Reznikoff's *TESTIMONY: THE UNITED STATES 1885-1890* in 1962, and Oppen's title poem in *OF BEING NUMEROUS*, 1969).

Two major seminal works were written within the Objectivist orbit: Williams' *SPRING AND ALL* (1923) and Zukofsky's *A 1-5* (1928-30). Their poetics, combined with certain aspects of the ideogrammatic form of the *CANTOS* and the modifications of all three masters in Charles Olson's essay, 'Projective Verse' (*POETRY NEW YORK*, No. 3, 1950), form the primary poetics of the 1960's. In fact, Williams himself recognized the significance of Olson's essay by printing part of it in his *AUTOBIOGRAPHY* (1951). To his resources in American and French poetry, Williams added Lorca's response to his life in New York between 1920 and 1930—*POETA EN NUEVA YORK* (1940); his essay on Lorca and Whitman was written in 1939. A fairly representative summary of major writing in the early 1930's is Pound's *ACTIVE ANTHOLOGY* (1933), which included work by Williams, Zukofsky, Marianne Moore, E.E. Cummings and the English poet Basil Bunting, who also worked on editing the volume.

Williams' example was effective right through the 1950's and into the 1960's—a long record of example by poetry and writing on poetry. In 1932 he wrote: "the form of poetry is that of language"—that is, it is not the form of past poetry or of the criticism of poetry. Poetry for him and for all these poets was not simply personal lyricism and imitations of regular measures and stanzas: it was an innovating function of society. The line of speech is the basic measure, a form which "excludes no possibility of intelligent resource". The form is not 'free verse' but the measure and spatial control of cadential lengths, and the varied placing of a wide range of information. The peaks not only exemplify

fine craftmanship; they speak urgently of society—the continuously inventive forms of Williams' PATERSON (in five books, 1946-58), the ideograms and lyrics of Pound's CANTOS, and the nervous argumentative journals of Zukofsky's A (sections 1-21 appeared between 1928 and 1969). In 1948 Williams wrote of a poem as "a field of action", these works carry the sense of a constructed place to work, into which the poet's experience is continuously articulated, becoming synonymous with his life, rather in the sense of the alchemist engaged for life in his Work.

In his early short poem, 'Paterson' (1926), Williams had already stated his credo: "Say it, not in ideas but in things"—a procedure which resisted the transformation of experience into metaphors of something else. It was Pound who early commented on Williams' opacity, lucidity, and refusal of symbolic language of the type that must be seen 'through' in order to reach its meaning. But the form of KORA IN HELL has its sources not only in this insistence and in Max Jacob and Leon Paul Fargue, but in Rimbaud's LES ILLUMINATIONS, and in that dislocation of objects, their reassemblage and metamorphosis, associated with the cubist and surrealist-dadaist complex; in THE DESCENT OF WINTER (THE COLLECTED EARLIER POEMS, 1951), he also used developments of 1923 experiments with automatic writing.

Louis Zukofsky understood that, in comparison with typical early twentieth century poetic styles, objectivist verse tended fundamentally to exclude symbol and metaphor, and could be exemplified in Williams' SPRING AND ALL. In 'An Objective' (1930-31, reprinted in PREPOSITIONS, 1967), he wrote:

"Emotion is the organizer of poetic form...the poet's image is not dissociable from the movement of the cadenced shape of the poem. A new cadence is a new idea."

Typography functions to "tell how the voice should sound":

"the poet is continually encountering the facts which in the making seem to want to disturb the music and yet the music or the movement cannot exist without the facts."

Zukofsky's A 1-5 has exactly this kind of "musical cohesiveness" (it is Charles Tomlinson's phrase), managing to incorporate a large range of information within a continuous play of motifs and sound patterns of considerable vitality and invention. Within a wider field of contemporary poetics, as Rexroth points out in ASSAYS, Objectivism "owed a good deal to Apollinaire and the Cubists and to the German 'Neue Schlichtheit'," and to those in France who, like the painter Léger, spoke of "the return to the object" (c.f., Eric Mottram: 'American Poetry in the Thirties', THE REVIEW, No. 11/12, 1964).

II

These poems and poetics, magazines and movements, helped to release poets writing after 1950 from the officialdom of New Criticism poetry, exegesis poetry and the poetry of snobbish cultural reference—poetry for the academic quarterlies and reviewers still hung up on shored ruins, dissociated sensibility and the bewitching trio: tradition, orthodoxy and heresy—the liturgical trinity of Eliot's 1930's scriptures. It was a release from the poetry and critical terminology of reactionary religion and politics, and from preferential prescriptions for poetry derived from seventeenth century English poems and nineteenth century French hermetic symbolism. Pound, Williams and Zukofsky were alive and well and writing as excellently as ever in the later 1950's when the Beat poets and the younger poets in Donald M. Allen's anthology, *THE NEW AMERICAN POETRY 1945-1960* (1960), needed them as masters, and as examples of persistence against officialdom. The appearance of Canto 85 in Pound's *PISAN CANTOS* of 1948 demonstrated the kind of powers American poetry could exemplify: and the poet not only gained the Bollingen prize for his work but was incarcerated in St. Elizabeth's asylum for his political views and behaviour. The *CANTOS* were not only a compendium of poetic resources but demonstrated the ability to compose an epic poetry which placed the active self within a wide range of defining information. Pound's example became a constant for American poets defining their own embattled position in long poems during the politically and morally disastrous double decade from 1950 to 1970. As late as 1969, Pound's *DRAFTS AND FRAGMENTS OF CANTOS CX-CXVII* showed how this great onward-going work remained the central act of poetry, containing the main interests of major American poets of a young generation: the renewal of the city, the renewal of mythology, the destruction of a degenerate economic system, the placing of the Southeast Asian conflict within the historical conduct of America and the West, and the possibilities of strategies of survival without being overwhelmed by the defeats of compromise.

Pound's 1969 book reverberated with a sense of wonder at human achievement. His scorn for materialist greed—at the heart of his analysis of the City—is as powerful as ever (especially in 'Addendum to Canto C') but it is now juxtaposed to remorse at his own behaviour and a search for personal charity. More than ever, the *CANTOS* could be seen as the measure, both in their poetics and in their information, for the committed American poet. (It is significant that the pirated first edition of the last *CANTOS* came from the centre of post-Beat anarchist poetry, the Fuck You Press, in 1967—"at a secret location in the lower East Side, New York City", with a cover by Joe Brainard, firm associate of the *C* magazine group). Civilization "without tyranny" had always been Pound's criterion, and now he defined the movement of peaceful, fertile pleasure—in art and in landscape—in three exemplary civilizations which harboured the won-

derful ability of men. The effect in the poems is that of a garden which has the freshness and formality of an ideal city, imbued with the erotic myths of Orpheus, Endymion and Artemis. Beyond a brief locating reference to Quemoy in Canto CXI, providing a dateline for the Asian conflict, lies the strenuous definitions of "serenitas", maintained throughout half a century of financial corruption and political cruelty. That "clear discourse" for which Pound has always aimed, in Canto CXIII becomes once again the garden combination of man-made form and natural botany. Zukofsky's emphasis on clarity and the eye, and Robert Duncan's explorations of HD's Mediterranean world continually come to mind. The great light images of the CANTOS seem even more urgent here, as the counter to the major sin of the whole century, the use of belief and usury against justice, to "implement domination". Canto CXIV reaches into a condition which would have been supported by the 1960's Movement itself, with a fine ideogram of the propertyless society, emphasizing men who have been "still, uncontenting—not to possession, in hypostasis". The book concludes with statements distinctly for the 1960's: "the young for the old / that is the tragedy"—and: "To be men not destroyers".

A passage in Charles Olson's MAXIMUS IV, V, VI (1969) can be used to summarize Pound's example and relevance: "An American / is a complex of occasions, / themselves a geometry / of spatial nature". But academic critics and the reviewers seized on Robert Lowell as being the more relevant poet. He began as a disciple of the New Criticism poets, camping out in Allen Tate's garden, and then re-read Williams in an effort to shake himself reasonably free to articulate his sense of personal neurosis and a collapsed society that believed itself to be thriving. LIVE STUDIES (1959) is an exercise in secularized New England exhibitions of conscience as they enter the enforced anarchy of the American 1960's. Compared with the poems in Donald Allen's anthology, Lowell's incline to iambic boredom and uninteresting prosody, and Olson's IN COLD HELL, IN THICKET (1953) had already presented the material of New England under contemporary controls—"An Ode on Nativity" moves far beyond Lowell's tourism of the ego. In David Antin's words, "Lowell's New Englandism is merely an inversion of Tate's Confederacy" (Antin's essay, 'Modernism and Postmodernism: Approaching the Present in American Poetry', BOUNDARY 2, 1972, makes the issues between Tate, Lowell and Olson clear). FOR THE UNION DEAD (1964) and NEAR THE OCEAN (1967) consolidated Lowell's position as a self-consciously 'contemporary' academic poet, aristocratic and vulnerable, the foremost poetic witness of a characteristically bewildered and agonized liberalism, the staple fare of the American middle classes. Lowell can be featured in TIME magazine without undue harm to himself and is consumable with safety. Norman Mailer's portrait of him in THE ARMIES OF THE NIGHT (1968) is accurate, and Lowell himself has endorsed it.

Poetry as a totally invented field of action, not instantly consumable and confirmatory of the liberal 'status quo' required both energy and information in demanding proportions, exploratory beyond the recognitions of the casual reader. In fact, by the 1960's American poetry of any consequence needed an attention beyond the consumerism of the amateur of the arts. For example, the poetics of 'Projective Verse', and the forms of Olson's MAXIMUS poems, present "composition by field, as opposed to inherited line, stanza, over-all form". The poem invents its form and invites the reader to enter the area of invention rather than immediate recognition. The poem is an energy transference (Zukofsky had used a similar terminology earlier), "at all points...a high energy-construct" and "energy-discharge". Pound's "musical phrase" as a unit of form is extended: "form is never more than an extension of content" (a phrase from Robert Creeley's correspondence with Olson which went into the essay—c.f. 'Robert Creeley in Conversation with Charles Tomlinson', KULCHUR 16, Winter, 1964-65, and THE REVIEW 10, 1964—Black Mountain poetry issue). Pound's structure of continuous and overlapping ideograms is a process now formulated as inheritable procedure and placed with Edward Dahlberg's dictum: "one perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception". The juxtaposition of syllables as particles of sound articulates the mind's ear in action, towards that over-all melopoeia Pound had stressed. The unit (line or measure) is a set of these energies and its length is controlled not by mathematical metrics but by the breath of a man making his poem, an action which is partly the automatic or natural activity of his body, and partly the creative activity of play.

Olson's poetic structures play and dance rather than fulfil any puritanical prescription of obedience to a form. Units of energy (sound, social information, spatial size) are assembled on the page with their own dynamic interrelationships and intersections—as they are in PATERSON, which explains Williams' interest in Olson's essay. The field of objects is neither syntactically nor metrically rigid, nor is it imitative. Olson states that he admires Hart Crane's "arc of freshness", based on the word as a "handle", and he understands how the arc needs reinforcement from Fenollosa's idea of the sentence as the "passage of force from subject to object" and of the energy of "the verb between two nouns." Like Harold A. Innis (THE BIAS OF COMMUNICATION, 1951) and his pupil, Marshall McLuhan, Olson was aware of how manuscript and press can remove the voice from poetry, but he asserted the possibilities of the typewritten page as a set of controls equivalent to the notation of sounds in music. His theory and practice at this point are part of a general twentieth century inclination towards the spatial rather than the linear: it is there in the influences of Alfred Korzybski's non-Aristotelian logic (SCIENCE AND SANITY, 1933), in the solutions to notational problems developed by John Cage in A YEAR FROM MONDAY (1967) and his anthology NOTATIONS (1969), and in the poetics of sound-text and concrete poetry, inclu-

ding typewriter poems or "typestracts". As Olson observes, both Cummings and Williams "used the machine as a scoring to their composing, as a script to their vocalization". Space and time become, in compatibility with twentieth century philosophy and science, space-time coordinates. Beyond Olson's "projective verse", the twentieth century poem may exist either in new notation or in mechanically recorded sound or in a single unrepeated performance. Silence is as much part of the poem's score as space: the space-time notation of Webern has its American poetic equivalents in the works of Jackson Mac Low and Aram Saroyan.

"Projective verse" in theory and in its many practices—which modified its origins again and again—place Objectivism and Imagism in a broader poetic with a wider range of application. Olson's aim was to reduce egotistical lyric sprawl and exegetical rhetoric so that "the projective act, which is the artist's act in the larger field of objects, leads to dimensions larger than the man". This is exactly the effect of PATERSON (c.f., Eric Mottram, 'The Making of Paterson', *STAND*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1965; reprinted in *PROFILE OF WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS*, ed., Jerome Mazzarro, 1971), 'A' 1-21, the *CANTOS* and the *MAXINUS POEMS*, and later Robert Duncan's series of poems called 'Passages' embodied in *BENDING THE BOW* (1968). In these large-scale works, the song of the poet's voice unifies his projected information, operating among a wide range of objects and feelings. The resulting epic structure is the movement of a man in his own time and in history. The *CANTOS* began to solve notational problems of how to fuse autobiography with history back in 1915 and evolved a syntax which was not bound to the traditional sentence, with its assumed social order and basis in linear logic. Nine years after "projective verse" Olson returned, as poet and historian, to the difficulties of sentence and syntax in a letter to the English poet, then a student at Cambridge, Elaine Feinstein. The track along which the reader picks up the poem he is into, Olson now says, is a course of speech rhythms which demonstrate "the value of the vernacular over grammar" (and he is well aware of the example in Dante which this entails). Since speech is both inherent and etymological, Olson, in common with a number of investigators into the relationships between nature and culture, became increasingly involved in linguistic scholarship and archaeology (*THE MAYAN LETTERS*, 1953, and *LETTERS FOR ORIGIN* 1960-1956, 1969, suggest the double activity). He placed the action of many poems in the small seaport fishing town of Gloucester, Massachusetts, and then anchors that autobiographical locality in the historical and geographical world map. The action of himself in Gloucester is related at every point to the non-symbolic, euhemeristic reality of myths, especially creation myths used as descriptions of man's apprehensions of earth, sky, migration and ecology. The separate poems are events which project the self in the America of the 1950's and 1960's as a force for survival, through sensuous and intellectual play-understanding among facts. The aim is always as it was

in the early poem 'An Ode on Nativity' (written in 1951): the possibilities of renewed life. That this could be a useful launching basis for a younger poet, and not an impossible personal programme, can be seen in Edward Dorn's *GEOGRAPHY* (1965) and *GUNSLINGER* (1968-72), where Olson's basic triad of "topos/typos/tropos" is developed with formal invention and wit quite different from *MAXIMUS POEMS* (1953-63) and *MAXIMUS IV, V, VI* (1968).

III

Olson showed poets the opportunity of writing ontogenetically without losing a sense of urgency and without the pompous didacticism and dogma of the university poets. Naturally, he had slavish adherents, but works as widely different as Paul Blackburn's *THE CITIES* (1967), Robert Kelly's *AXON DENDRON TREE* (1967) and Ted Berrigan's *MANY HAPPY RETURNS* (1969), use projective field methods of placing information, with an excitement and virtuosity remote from discipleship. Paul Carroll's anthology of poets who emerged in the 1960's, *THE YOUNG AMERICAN POETS* (1968), testifies to both the difficulty of release from the inter-war period's masters and the liberation into new styles which their example enabled.

"Composition by field" is also the poetic equivalent of abstract expressionist and action painting (which Harold Rosenberg was instrumental in defining in the 1950's) in its use of personal gesture made with a controlled spontaneity, the result of discipline within changing and risking inventiveness. Michael McClure's *HYMNS TO ST. GERON* (1959) makes the connections explicit:

...GESTURE THE GESTURE to make fists of it

Clyfford Still: "We are committed to an unqualified act, not illustrating outworn myths of contemporary alibis. One must accept total responsibility for what he executes. And the measure of his greatness will be the depth of his insight and courage in realizing his own vision. Demands for communication are presumptuous and irrelevant."

Besides this direct implication of a major American painter of the period, McClure cites Pollock and Kline in his poem, and makes his connection with Olson: "To hit again, the foot is to kick with", a reference to an essay in *HUMAN UNIVERSE* (1965) which itself quotes Pound's famous maxim: "Prosody is the articulation of the total sound of the poem". John Ashbery's 'The Skaters' (*RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS*, 1965), and 'Europe' (*THE TENNIS COURT OATH*, 1962), are major compositions which relate to contemporary American painting but belong to a completely different set of procedures to Olson's

"projective" methods. The action of 'The Skaters' consists of a moving collage of scenes, objects and reminiscences which illustrates nothing: "Poetry does not have subject matter because it is the subject!" (quoted in *THE POETS OF THE NEW YORK SCHOOL*, ed. John Bernard Myers, 1969). He practices what Pound calls "concentrare"—the presentation of events, rather than what the events are. He acknowledges the influence of John Cage's *MUSIC OF CHANGES* (1952) rather than other poets, and in a statement in *A CONTROVERSY OF POETS* (ed. Paris Leary and Robert Kelly, 1965), says:

"I originally wanted to be a painter, and did paint until I was eighteen years old, but I feel I could best express myself in music. What I like about music is its ability of being convincing, of carrying an argument through successfully to the finish, though the terms of this argument remain unknown quantities. What remains is the structure, the architecture of the argument, scene or story. I would like to do this in poetry. I would also like to reproduce the power dreams have of persuading you that a certain event has a meaning not logically connected with it, or there is a hidden relation among disparate objects."

With Kenneth Koch's poems in *THANK YOU* (1962) and some of the *C* magazine poets, 'The Skaters' belongs to an ambience which contains Auden's narrative landscapes of the 1930's, the poetics of Max Jacob and Pierre Reverdy, and Gertrude Stein's cubist works together with their critical explanation in her 1926 essay, 'Composition as Explanation' (*SELECTED WRITINGS OF GERTRUDE STEIN*, ed. Carl Van Vechten, 1946). Ashbery's 'Europe' suggests the spatial dislocations of cubist and post-cubist painting, the montage methods of film, and the constellatory procedures of post-Webern music. Koch's poetics are related to the work of Paul Eluard, Henri Michaux, Pierre Reverdy, Max Jacob and Raymond Roussel, as well as to the local American actions of Whitman and the Marx Brothers. Ashbery, too, has used popular materials, notably Mickey Spillane, E. Phillips Oppenheim and the poems of Paul Engle. Ted Berrigan, an admirer of both Ashbery and Koch, has used Henry Green's novels (on which Ashbery wrote his graduate thesis), and westerns, as well as Breton and the Dadaists. Berrigan's stylistic eclecticism and range of humour, together with his use of existent works of art, is nearer to the painting and assemblage of Larry Rivers and Andy Warhol than to Ashbery's relatively classicist work (c.f. 'Craft Interview with John Ashbery', *THE NEW YORK QUARTERLY*, No. 9, Winter, 1972). The range of *C* magazine is summarized in *BEAN SPASMS* (1967), a significant work of the period, put together by Berrigan and Ron Padgett and illustrated by Joe Brainard, and exemplifying the Americanization of the European avant-garde which had been continuous since the 1920's. (The title of Padgett's *IN ADVANCE OF THE BROKEN ARM*, 1964, with drawings by Brainard, and published by C Press, is taken from the first Marcel Duchamp ready-made, dated "1915 New York"). It is with Ashbery, Koch,

Harry Mathews, James Schuyler and the younger New York poets in *C* and *MOTHER*, and later *ANGEL HAIR* and *PARIS REVIEW*, that the relationship with French forms of 'écriture' and conceptual art are maintained in America.

The breakthrough in formal education towards a sense of a common field of art work in any medium and the traditional humanities subjects came at Black Mountain College, North Carolina, in the 1940's and 1950's (Martin Duberman: *BLACK MOUNTAIN—AN EXPLORATION IN COMMUNITY*, 1973). In 1953, Olson wrote to the poet and editor Cid Corman about "a show by Kline, De Kooning, Tworikov, Guston (the space cadets, who have all been here the past two years...)" . This was in the influential series of letters through which Olson guided Corman's early editing of *ORIGIN* in the 1950's, and "here" was, of course, Black Mountain College, to which many of the finest painters, musicians and poets had gravitated since its foundation, and particularly since 1950. Founded in 1933 by John Andrew Rice, a liberal dissenting classics professor from Rollins College, Florida, it became, from the late 1940's onwards, something like Brook Farm or New Harmony, the centre for an experiment in community within the competitive anti-community of capitalism and its educational manipulations. From the beginning, Black Mountain had utopian and regenerative purposes: but it did not teach overt sociology. Besides the painters Olson mentions, Josef Albers (with his Bauhaus background), became head of an art department which numbered also Rauschenberg and Esteban Vicente among its members. Besides Olson, who became the last rector of the college, in literature there were Eric Bentley, Paul Blackburn, Robert Creeley, Robert Kelly, Denise Levertov, John Wieners, Jonathan Williams and LeRoi Jones, either on the staff or among the students. *THE BLACK MOUNTAIN REVIEW*, which Creeley edited (1954-57), transmitted the main interests in literature which the college inherited from Pound, Williams and Olson himself (c.f. Paul Blackburn: 'The Grinding Down', *KULCHUR* 10, 1963). Given the interaction between traditionally exclusive 'disciplines' at the college, it is not surprising, therefore, that John Cage was able to organize there the first event of the genre later called 'happening' in 1952 (Richard Kostelanetz: *THE THEATRE OF MIXED MEANS*, 1968).

Multimedia events became common in the 1960's. Poetry, traditionally insulated in the West from other arts, frequently took place within an oral-visual-aural combine, an action which realized in a theatre performance Joyce's "verbivocovisual on the word" (it is thoroughly examined in *EXPLORATIONS* 8, 1957, ed. Marshall McLuhan and Edmund C. Carpenter). It was not simply a matter of poetry with jazz (as a way of widening the audience for poetry and breaking literary insularities), but of using concrete and phonic sound and language elements within a dramatic combine which included space and movement, and yet was still not traditional theatre. Central to this movement were the Fluxus group of musicians, poets and artists, and indications of their work can be gathered from Dick Higgins'

JEFFERSON'S BIRTHDAY/POSTFACE (1964) and FOEW&OMBWHNW (1969). The Great Bear Pamphlets (1965-67), also published by Something Else Press, indicate the international range of the artists involved in happenings and conceptual art (a form which again relates to Duchamp's definitions of art as choice: they include Allan Kaprow, David Antin, Jackson Mac Low, Claes Oldenberg, Al Hansen, Jerome Rothenberg (RITUAL: A BOOK OF PRIMITIVE RITES AND EVENTS, 1966, later included in his TECHNICIANS OF THE SACRED), Emmett Williams and Philip Corner (POPULAR ENTERTAINMENTS, 1967), all from America, together with Diter Rot, Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell, the Zaj group from Madrid, Luigi Russolo, Robert Filliou and George Brecht. John Cage's 'Change the World' (YOU WILL ONLY MAKE MATTERS WORSE, 1967) was later incorporated into his A YEAR FROM MONDAY. (A fuller range of examples of this whole group can be obtained from HAPPENING & FLUXUS, 1970).

Conceptual art or information art is concerned with art as indication, choice, scenario for performance, and as such can be related to the strong advent of poetry performances developing throughout the 1950's and reaching a peak in the 1960's in America. Allen Ginsberg's performances would be preceded by chants adapted from the Hindu, to relax both poet and audience before the poems themselves. Michael McClure's GHOST TANTRAS (1964) again indicates the usage of Indian forms in the period (this would include Kerouac's THE SCRIPTURE OF THE GOLDEN ETERNITY, an American sutra, written in 1956 at the instance of Gary Snyder). It is a collection of phonic texts for oral performance, based on tantric principles of transformation of body-mind continuum through the performance of sound structures (which combine words and invented linguistic forms).

Concrete and sound-text poetry developed rather later in America than in the rest of the world. John Giorno's POEMS (1967) reversed certain principles of Mallarmé and Joyce by transcribing newspaper materials into the shape of poems (that is, into familiar linear and spatial forms), to make "found" poems, again related to Duchamp's ready-mades. (Ronald Gross's POP POEMS (1967) similarly used advertisements). Giorno's book is still well within the New York poets' scene, however: the cover is by Rauschenberg and it was published at Mother Press by Peter Schjeldahl, himself a poet associated with C group writers and ART NEWS. Schjeldahl's WHITE COUNTRY (1968) contains his own poems, and those of his co-editor of MOTHER magazine, Lewis MacAdams, are in CITY MONEY (1967) and THE POETRY ROOM (1970). Again indicating the inclination to performance, the last issue of MOTHER was a long-playing record made by McClure, Aram Saroyan, John Wieners, Ginsberg, Kenward Elmslie and others (1968). The most useful collections of concrete-soundtext work which contain American poets are CONCRETE POETRY: A WORLD VIEW (ed. Mary Ellen Solt, 1968), THIS BOOK IS A MOVIE: AN EXHIBITION OF LANGUAGE ART AND VISUAL POETRY (ed. J.G. Bowles and T. Russel, 1971), IMAGED WORDS & WORDED IMAGES (ed.

Richard Kostelanetz, 1970), and AN ANTHOLOGY OF CONCRETE POETRY (ed. Emmett Williams, 1967).

All these events present both new and not so new solutions to our continuous investigations into form and notation: and it is exactly this which separates them from the conservative inheritors of the academy and the critical establishment reviewers. Frequently the result is a self-evident structure which holds its materials in a dynamic mobile equilibrium, without necessarily reaching after a finished synthesis of all its elements. It may resist definitions of completion in traditional terms of imitation and the fulfilment of recognized programmes. For example, the terminology of 'organic' approval has become tautological since the discoveries of biologists and zoologists represented in L.L. Whyte's ASPECTS OF FORM (1951) and George Kepes' VALUE AND VISION (5 vols, 1955-56). Structural procedure is now understood as invention within a universal morphology of forms, and procedures are openly revealed in order to be part of the pleasure of participating in art. The reader of poetry is invited into an event which takes place as part of the perceptual space-time of his period and place; the work may not necessarily record any fixity or boundary; the participant may be invited to contemplate the poem, meditate on its spatiality rather than track its lineality. To refer to McClure's use of Clyfford Still again: "we are now committed to an unqualified act, not illustrating outward myths, or contemporary alibis. One must accept total responsibility for whatever he executes." That responsibility included political and social responsibility, particularly since the 1960's saw the climax of America's Southeast Asian war and of the Civil Rights movement, culminating in the accumulative bombings of Hanoi and the Vietnamese dike system and the murders of students at Orangeville and Kent State. Some of the poets' response is contained in Walter Lowenfels' anthology WHERE IS VIETNAM? (1967) and Diane DiPrima's WAR POEMS (1968), both of which contain poets whose widely differing aesthetics meet at this focus of opposition to totalitarian capitalism. As Mayakovsky observed: "One condition indispensable for the production of a poem is the existence in society of a problem whose solution is unimaginable except by a poem." The effect on the teaching of poetry in universities of all these changes, and the political ones in particular, were salutary: "Teachers and critics of literature could hardly escape the contrast between the sterility of their academic roles and the new sense of literary vocation discovered by writers increasingly active in the anti-war movement" (Louis Kampf and Paul Lauter, introduction to their THE POLITICS OF LITERATURE, 1972, a collection of essays dedicated to George Jackson). Denise Levertov read her poems in a sanctuary for draft resisters; Robert Bly publically handed over his National Book Award money to young Americans defying the draft authorities; Allen Ginsberg lead chants and songs at the Pentagon and in Chicago streets against the tyranny of government. Kampf and Lauter go further: it was the anti-war poems of Levertov,

Bly, Galway Kinnell, Adrienne Rich and many others, and of course the war itself, "not radical literary criticism, which helped break the claim that self-absorbed, academic poets had maintained (despite the popular success of Allen Ginsberg, for example), over literature classrooms and literary journals." In addition, most of the writings of the flourishing black poets of the period "had to be understood as weapons in a struggle for liberation, just as slave narratives, spirituals and work songs had been before them."

IV

The contemporary American poet who works truly within the poetics of his own time renounces a single point of view, linear perspective and imitation. He respects Pound's sculptural ideal for the poet: "he sees the in and the through / the four sides". He understands Creeley's remark in 'Olson and Others—Some Orts for the Sports' (BIG TABLE 4, 1960; reprinted in A QUICK GRAPH, 1970): "Olson's emphasis is put upon prosody and not upon interpretation" (and he adds Pound's maxim, already cited here, that prosody is "the articulation of the total sound of the poem"). A further example of how a major poet connects in his complete work both his understanding of poetics and his political responsibilities lies in Robert Duncan—his deft summary of the implications of objectivist and projective verse poetics in 'Notes on Poetics regarding Olson's Maximus' (BLACK MOUNTAIN REVIEW, No. 6, 1956, reprinted with revisions in THE REVIEW, No. 10, 1964), and 'Ideas of the Meaning of Form' (KULCHUR 4, 1961), and the movements between passionate denunciation of world tyranny, the nature of professional killing, and the idea of community in 'Orders', 'Up Rising' and 'The Soldiers', the titles of PASSAGES 24-26 in BENDING THE BOW (1968).

Redefinitions of poetry away from academic exegesis and reactionary attitudes received further exemplary help from Jerome Rothenberg's magnificent TECHNICIANS OF THE SACRED (1968). The title is Mircea Eliade's phrase for ethnic artists functioning in tribal societies; the book collates a powerful "range of poetries" from Africa, America, Asia and Oceania which demonstrates how "primitive means complex", and that, as Noam Chomsky's concept of generative language and Levi-Strauss's structural anthropology also indicate, indigenous poetry is a social function right across cultural frontiers and technological "progress". Rothenberg writes in his introduction:

"it is a matter of energy & intelligence as universal constants &, in any specific case, the direction that energy & intelligence (=imagination) have been given. No people today is newly born. No people has sat in sloth for the thousands of years of its history. Measure everything by the Titan rocket & the transistor radio, & the world is full of primitive peoples. But once change the unit of value to the poem or the dance-

event or the dream (all clearly artefactual situations) & it becomes apparent what all those people have been doing all those years with all that time on their hands."

Rothenberg's collection is both a counter to official imperialist policy and its support from anthropology and Darwinist racism (by demonstrating Ernst Cassirer's idea of "the solidarity of all life"), and a demonstration of ways in which contemporary American inventive poetry and happenings are traditional, in the sense that their forms have similar forms and procedures to those of 'primitive' ethnic complexities. The book concludes with a set of "commentaries" which make these connections between ethnic and contemporary America by juxtaposing poetries "carried by voice", poems with non-linear logic, including constellatory forms, poems as social rituals, random and found poems, composition by field, and various instances of bardic or shamanistic functions for poetry. Rothenberg shows similarities between a Seneca Indian eagle dance and the form of 1960's happenings, and relates Hugo Bali's sound poems of 1915, McClure's "ghost tantrums", Maori genealogical poems and Mac Low's LIGHT POEMS (1968). Bantu images and Robert Kelly's LUNES (1965), Aztec definitions and Gary Snyder's poems, Indian picture-writing and works by both Apollinaire and Kenneth Patchen (poems in HALLELUJAH ANYWAY, 1967, for example) are shown to partake of similar materials and forms, because they have a similar social function, or a similar human urge to make and shape. What the reactionary academic and reviewer would like to believe is simply to be scorned as 'avant-garde' is in fact a number of universal constants, across time and culture, forms of "play with serious problems", as Kurt Schwitters once defined his work. When Rothenberg's book is placed with Solt's CONCRETE POETRY: A WORLD VIEW, the implications are clear—they can be indicated by two passages in Rothenberg; the first is Cassirer on "primitive man":

"in his conception of nature and life these differences are obliterated by a stronger feeling: the deep conviction of a fundamental and indelible 'solidarity of life' that bridges over the multiplicity and variety of its single forms...Life is felt as an unbroken continuous whole...The limits between (its) different spheres are not insurmountable barriers; they are fluent and fluctuating...By a sudden metamorphosis everything may be turned into everything. If there is any characteristic and outstanding feature of the mythical world, any law by which it is governed—it is this law of metamorphosis."

The second is from Mac Low:

"The poet creates a 'situation' wherein he invites other persons & the world in general to be co-creators with him! He does not wish to be a dictator but a loyal

co-initiator of action within the free society of equals which he hopes his work will help to bring about."

Mary Ellen Solt's introduction shows how, within American culture, the configurations of Cummings, Williams, Olson, Henri Chopin's phonic poems, Zukofsky, Creeley in a poem like 'Le Fou' (FOR LOVE: POEMS 1950-1960, 1962), Emmett Williams ("the first American poet who can be properly called concrete in terms of commitment and consistency of method"), and certain works of Jonathan Williams and Ronald Johnson, all indicate a precise consideration of composition by field, poetry as serious play activity, and poetry as revelatory function in society. Rothenberg connects Indian shamanistic chants with McClure's "ghost tantras", and the ways in which such poetry penetrates both the human unconscious and the myths which socialize the human into community with the use of "deep image" in the poetry of himself and Robert Kelly, among others. The discussion on this kind of probing image is primarily in two essays of the period: 'Why Deep Image?' (TROBER 3, 1961), and 'Deep Image and Mode', in which Rothenberg is joined by Creeley (KULCHUR 6, 1962). Rothenberg is a fine poet himself, as well as a promoter of poetry throughout the period. He founded the Hawk's Well Press and the magazine POEMS FROM THE FLOATING WORLD and through his studies and discussions, kept in circulation a wide range of European and ethnic poetries, helping to prevent American poetry from becoming parochial. His own poems are transcultural in reference and poetics (BETWEEN: POEMS 1960/63, 1967), and where he is particularly American is in the very act of exploring the relationships between American cultural feeling and his own Polish Jewish antecedents in some of his best poems—POLAND/1931 (1969) and A BOOK OF TESTIMONY (1971).

TECHNICIANS OF THE SACRED is also part of the steady development of hermeneutics and heuristic analysis of myth and culture which poets have taken into their work during this period. It can be seen as an extension of the rather thinner platonistic definitions of "major man" in the 1930's poems of Wallace Stevens—syllogistic iambic structures dedicated to imagining a sensuous aristocratic world without gods. Olson's "human universe" (developed in a series of 1950's essays collected under that title in 1965), and Duncan's "open universe" ('Towards an Open Universe', in POETS AND POETRY, ed. Howard Nemerov, 1967), contain much more necessary information and a stronger sense of relationship to anthropology and physics. Stevens' poems formed "sets" through which to determine the possible nature of an abundance society, a projected vision of mythless space-time (in 'Esthetique du Mal' and 'Credences of Summer'), a way out of inter-war ideologies, conflict philosophies and the Earth treated as an object of conquest in a state of scarcity. Stevens' morphology at least arises from a sense of ecology which resists philosophic myth and dogmatic religion. His "supreme fiction" is close to Creeley's vision, but Creeley uses Wittgenstein and the refraction of

the philosopher of language through Zukofsky's huge compendium, *BOTTOM: ON SHAKESPEARE* (1963). It is as if Creeley's meticulous, wary procedures derived from techniques of founding a proposition laid bare in *TRACTATUS LOGICO-PHILOSOPHICUS*; his poetry might be seen as an offspring of a statement in *PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS*: "it is the field of force of a word that is decisive". Like Stevens, Creeley is making his world so that it will not let him down at a time when confidence has been lost in the society he is raised in and works in. *WORDS* (1967) is a set of poems which gradually and warily explore the poet's situation as a number of events which yield basic propositions. Their movement has no swing, none of Stevens' plausible confidence, and rather more of Zukofsky's hesitant, almost flinching poise. Creeley writes in *A QUICK GRAPH* of the use in 'A' of the words 'the' and 'a': both of which are weighted with as much epos and historical destiny as one man can perhaps resolve". It could just as well describe his own work. His poems define "mind"—the word constantly recurs—and "consciousness" in order to free the warmth of love to combat his sense of panic, of endless threat to a man's integrity while he lives in ad-mass America. *PIECES* (1969) is a continuity of separate poems whose information is now wider, less claustrophobic. Creeley searched here for definitions of law (especially in 'Numbers')—an American preoccupation from the beginning—and, in 'The Finger', the nature of the basic existential elements: light, patterns, the woman, the eye, the room, the fire, thinking, knowing. This poem is a masterly play with vital units in order to make them yield flexible securities for living rather than oppressive limits.

The amount of information in Olson and Duncan is much more ambitious, since they are making epic articulations as poet-historian and poet-philosopher. Their problem is to maintain "total sound" throughout their complex fusions of personal instance and historical knowledge, to maintain the bodily nature of poetry throughout a structure which contains historicized vision, analyzed myth, geographic locality, a critique of the City (in the immediate tradition of Pound), and an analytical use of etymology. Olson calls his means "proprioception"—the body's reception of knowledge as its own, "the data of depth sensibility" in a human universe (*PROPRIOCEPTION*, 1965). Duncan calls his means "rime", defined in a numbered series of passages entitled *THE STRUCTURE OF RIME* intermittently throughout *THE OPENING OF THE FIELD* (1960), *ROOTS AND BRANCHES* (1964) and *BENDING THE BOW* (1968): "correspondences, workings of figures and patterns of figures in which we apprehend the whole we do not see...the plot we are to follow, the great myth or work, is a fiction of what Man is" ('Two Chapters from H.D.', *TRI-QUARTERLY*, No. 12, Spring, 1968). Both Olson's *MAXIMUS* poems and Duncan's 'Passages' are open-ended works (like *PATERSON*, 'A', the *CANTOS*, and, at least by internal implication, 'Esthetique du Mal'), holding their accumulations in an encyclopaedic mobile field. As Duncan expresses it:

"It is the juncture of the suspension of conclusions at the point of decision, so that all decision moves forward towards a totality that is pending, rather than reinforcing the prejudice of an established totality."

These poets are erudite in the Miltonic sense, placing together massive information with which to steady themselves in a time of radical social change and the erosion of social cohesion. They project sets of rapid notations, relevantly juxtaposed chronology and bibliography, felt in the body (the terms are Creeley's in 'A Foot Is To Kick With', POETRY, October, 1966). Their discourse is fairly rapid and its relationships have to be recreated in the reader's experience by slowing up the processes—sometimes their work presents considerable difficulty, through ignorance of their sources; but as Alain Robbe-Grillet once observed, "art is not meant simply to reassure people". The ambition of these poets is to recreate the City as the container, bearer and cultivator of a civilization that is not antagonistic to men. Therefore their opposition to official America is radical—it is open, for instance, in Duncan's 'Passages' 21, 25 and 26, and in Olson's 'I, Maximum of Gloucester to You'. Their aim is like Blake's in JERUSALEM, plates 98 and 99—to contribute to the creation, for the first time, of the four-fold son of man "creating exemplars of Memory and of Intellect, / Creating Space, Creating Time, according to the wonders Divine / Of Human Imagination", and creating "the great City". Their imaginative synthesis extends further than the provincial and national, outward to the global poem, the poem of Goethe's world-literature.

V

America has frequently produced its arts in short-lived communities of common sympathy, beyond mere bohemianism and middle-class dilettante amateurism, or the isolated rogue artist. The huge land mass and the jungle of its cities militate against community, and the militant ethos of competition continually weakens the lateral sense of community. In fact, the common action of artists has been one of the few ways in which the culture has cohered at all. In the 1950's and 1960's poets grouped in New York around painters and musicians with whom they shared interests or grouped at Black Mountain College. These focuses overlapped with three others: the Beat poets, the San Francisco 'renaissance', and the Minnesota Sixties campaign. The most recent has been a resurgence in Philadelphia centred on CONTACT magazine and Telegraph Press books. Such designations immediately suggest more cohesion and planned decision than took place, but they hold as limiting parameters of activity firmly enough.

Out of younger poets associated with Black Mountain College, writers LeRoi Jones, Paul Blackburn, Joel Oppenheimer, Gilbert

Sorrentino—and some of the Beat writers, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, Peter Orlovsky—there developed a poetry scene in New York in the later 1950's and early 1960's of considerable strength and variety. Their work constituted what Rexroth calls an escape from "poet-professors, Southern colonels and ex-Left Social Fascists". Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac were among those who rebelled against the Columbia University/PARTISAN REVIEW dominance to which Rexroth is partly referring (and more fully recognized in Seymour Krim's 'What's THIS Cat's Story?' in VIEWS OF A NEARSIGHTED CANNONEER, 1961); they were joined by Orlovsky and Corso and by William Burroughs (ex-Harvard English major and student of anthropology and experimenter in states of consciousness). This loosely formed band of writers was immediately seized on by the press as good copy—a nicely scary potential threat to bourgeois assumptions of the clean and affluent American Way of Life (some of the documentation is in John Clellon Holmes' novel GO, 1952, and his essays in NOTHING MORE TO DECLARE, 1968, in Bruce Cook's THE BEAT GENERATION, 1971, and in two anthologies: A CASEBOOK ON THE BEAT, ed. Thomas Parkinson, 1961, and THE EASTSIDE SCENE, ed. Allen de Loach, 1969).

Ginsberg's movement from suburban Paterson, New Jersey (his letters to William Carlos Williams at that time, as a struggling poet, appear in PATERSON), to Columbia University, the Lower East Side of New York, and to San Francisco, in itself represents the search for community and audience. But he found mates and a supportive hearing (c.f. Jack Kerouac's VANITY OF DULOOZ, 1968, and Ginsberg's interview in GAY SUNSHINE, January-February, 1973, reprinted in IT, No. 148, 1973, as 'Your Heart Is Your Guru—Interview'). The 1930's generation of Zukofsky, Lowenfels, Muriel Rukeyser and Williams were an active basis for a continuous cultural action. Poets like Carol Bergé, Diane Wakoski, Rochelle Owens, John Keys and Theodore Enslin found at least some community within which to work and be heard, and a few shops—most outstanding was the Eighth Street Bookshop—carried enough poetry to ensure sufficient distribution and visibility. Regular poetry readings culminated in the Café Le Metro sessions, extending later to the St. Marks Poetry Project. Readings took place almost anywhere—bookshops, cafes, apartments—and little magazines, broadsheets, and little presses flourished, all the more abundantly through what the poet and publisher Kirby Congdon called "the mimeograph revolution". Poetry sheets, circulating letters and pamphlets, mimeographed or cheaply printed, could be distributed at minimum price, or given away. Such freedom of choice made excellent inroads into the competitive publishing business, with its connections with the academic reviewers. The amount of poetry increased. As Denise Levertov wrote in the SEVENTH STREET ANTHOLOGY: "they are not writing in competition with each other or with poets outside their groups, not pursuing status". Kirby Congdon's MAGAZINE, together with INTERIM BOOKS, which he edited with his fellow poet, Jay Socin, exemplifies the essential productivity of the scene.

Beat Generation writers were part of a wider action, therefore. THE CITY LIGHTS JOURNAL of 1963 still witnessed to the continuity of values from the 1950's Beats into the 1960's. They were anti-academic and anti-establishment, attacking TIME-LIFE as well as COLUMBIA/PARTISAN REVIEW. They were dedicated to "projective" open forms and the perceptual space of reading with a living audience present and responding, rather than awaiting the approval of critical schools or posterity. Their way of life and their poetry was not simply literary: it gave access to the discovery of God through visionary experience rather than church organization, and through beatific states of consciousness of sometimes self-annihilating terror and joy. They were deeply concerned with non-puritan and non-bourgeois responses to the family, to the body, to love and to friendship. They devoted themselves to living with minimal accoutrements and were opposed to the characteristic American evaluation of life by property and formal educational achievements. Emerson's transcendentalist interest in oriental philosophy, nature mysticism and the Over Soul, Thoreau's civil disobedience and anarchistic pragmatism in social beliefs, and Whitman's sense of the open road, of the individual having "all to make", and of the sensuality and sensuousness of men in contact with the Earth and each other in mutual joy—all these had a renewed life in the Beats and were reinforced by the use of marijuana as a method of reducing ego and relaxing consciousness, and, later, LSD, as a method of gaining access to states of consciousness which conventional training forbade. Beat anti-authoritarianism, in both literary and social forms, reached in some people a certain shapelessness and dispersal of energy, passivity as well as saintliness. The Beat mode, while necessary to break up an urban consumerist conformity, tended to its own stultifying mannerism and conservatism. But the major poets of the period changed and survived. (c.f. Allan Kaplan—review of CITY LIGHTS JOURNAL NO. 1, ed. Lawrence Ferlinghetti: KULCHUR 12, 1963; Eric Mottram—'A Pig-headed Father and the New Wood', LONDON MAGAZINE, December, 1962).

The changes partly involved the culture of San Francisco. Between 1944 and 1960, the Pacific city and its environment—including the Berkeley campus of the University of California—became a major centre. To the north, in Seattle, the painters Mark Tobey and Morris Graves and the poets Theodore Roethke and Caroline Kizer formed part of a nucleus with the ROCKY MOUNTAIN REVIEW and WESTERN REVIEW (Ray B. West was the organizer behind them), which later merged into CONTACT, edited from San Francisco (the first number was dedicated to William Carlos Williams). To the south, Yvor Winters wrote and taught at Stanford University. Lawrence Lipton, poet and representative of dissident radicalism, worked at Venice West, Los Angeles (his HOLY BARBARIANS, 1959, was the first book to document the transition from political commitment to Beat protest). Henry Miller had lived at Big Sur since 1944. But the concentration took place in San Francisco itself and

centred in the first place on three influential poets: Kenneth Rexroth, Kenneth Patchen and Robert Duncan. The second impetus occurred from about 1944 onwards and included the Catholic poets, inclined to personalism and mystical states—William Everson, later to become Brother Antoninus, and Philip Lamantia. Everson (he left his order in 1970), worked during his period in a conscientious objectors' camp with a group whose Untide Press mimeographed protest poetry during the war. In 1968 he published his 1934-1948 poems in *THE RESIDUAL YEARS*, and a series of volumes followed—poems of inventive personal forms and rhythms which record intense experiences of natural landscape, marriage, moral concern with post-Depression America and crisis of religious faith. His centrality can be gauged by his account of the major Californian poet Jeffers (*ROBINSON JEFFERS*, 1968), and by the fact that he introduced Bill Butler's first book *ALDER GULCH* in 1961. Butler's work appeared in the San Francisco *BEATITUDE* MAGAZINE, founded in 1959 but his own major work has been written in England—including *THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA* (1966) and *BYRNE'S ATLAS* (1970).

Philip Lamantia also appeared in *BEATITUDE*—a poet bridging San Francisco, the Surrealism of *VIEW* mentioned earlier, and the resurgence of drug experience for obtaining states and images beyond daily contingency: a long romantic poet tradition (*EROTIC POEMS*, 1946; *NARCOTICA*, 1959; *EKSTASIS*, 1959; *DESTROYED WORKS*, 1962; *SELECTED POEMS*, 1967). One other magazine should be mentioned: George Leite's *CIRCLE*, published from Berkeley between 1944 and 1950. Then a third impetus arrived with the Beat poets in the 1950's, coming mainly from New York. They moved into a scene which, like Black Mountain College, included painting and music. At the California School of Fine Art, in San Francisco, Mark Rothko, Lawrence Calcagno, Clyfford Still and Richard Diebenkorn worked or taught, and Sam Francis, Hans Hofmann and Robert Motherwell worked in the area in the later 1930's and the 1940's. In 1955 a statue of St. Francis by the local sculptor Benny Bufano was erected in North Beach, the main area of Beat and artistic activity, and celebrated in a poem by the local poet, Lawrence Ferlinghetti (Number 6 in his *A CONEY ISLAND OF THE MIND*, 1958). Jazz-and-poetry was a 'natural' for an area in which poetry released itself from the genteel programmes of the academy. If the 'cool' jazz of Gerry Mulligan and Dave Brubeck associated with the Bay Area was hardly distinguished, at least great jazz men played at the Black Hawk club which opened in 1957, the year Jazz Workshop opened and the year Rexroth and Ferlinghetti held the highly popular jazz-and-poetry sessions at the Cellar. In 1953, Mort Sahl offered his satirical comedy at the 'hungri i', part of a local discrimination which also included the listener-sponsored radio station KPFA which transmitted a high level of literature and music. Public poetry readings reached the proportions of a major revival (*THE SAN FRANCISCO POETS*, ed. David Meltzer, 1971, contains interviews and poems from some main figures of the area: Rexroth, Everson, Ferlinghetti, Lew Welch, McClure, Richard

Brautigan).

But it was that third impetus which got the 'renaissance' under way. Kerouac arrived in 1949. Ferlinghetti came in 1953 and took over the City Lights bookshop and the publishing concern associated with CITY LIGHTS MAGAZINE founded by Peter Marin in 1951 (he had printed Corso, Duncan, Antoninus and Ferlinghetti). Ginsberg arrived in 1954 and met up with Gary Snyder in Berkeley in 1955 (Snyder was born in San Francisco and lived as a boy north of Seattle; at this time he alternated between logging and forestry in the Northwest and studying Chinese and Japanese cultures at Berkeley). Corso followed in 1956. In 1955, Ferlinghetti began his Pocket Poets series with his own PICTURES FROM THE GONE WORLD, which was followed by Rexroth and Patchen. Number 4 was Ginsberg's HOWL AND OTHER POEMS (1956), introduced by William Carlos Williams, a major signal of the quality of the poetry now emerging; it was, in Rexroth's words, "the confession of faith of a generation that is going to be running the world in 1965 or 1975—if it's still there to be run". Corso's GASOLINE was Number 5, and then came volumes by Levertov and Duncan. In 1958, Dave Haselwood's Auerhahn Press produced its first volume, Wiener's HOTEL WENTLEY POEMS, another major work of the period; Haselwood's second volume was Lamantia's EKSTASIS, followed by McClure's HYMNS TO ST. GERYON and poetry by Jack Spicer, Edward Marsh, Lew Welch and Philip Whalen. In the NEW YORK TIMES in 1956, Richard Eberhart registered the awareness of the non-involved establishment:

"Poetry here has become a tangible social force, moving and unifying its audience, releasing the energies of the audience through the spoken, even shouted, verse, in a way at present unique to this region."

The word spread to the rest of the world, in the first instance, through EVERGREEN REVIEW NO. 2 (1957) which carried poems and articles by Rexroth, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, Antoninus, Duncan, Henry Miller, Spicer, Snyder, Whalen, Kerouac and McClure. This "San Francisco Scene" issue was then backed by the recorded voices of eight of the poets on an LP entitled 'San Francisco Poets'.

Many of the Beats had returned to New York by the 1960's and San Francisco settled for its own rather more local scene. But the foundations of a good deal of contemporary American poetry were secured there in the previous decade. Bern Porter published Duncan in 1947 and 1949, and Lamantia's EROTIC POEMS in 1946. Jonathan Williams began his Jargon Press series with McClure's PASSAGE (1956). Discovery Press issued Meltzer's RAGAS (1959). White Rabbitt published Richard Brautigan, Duncan, Levertov, Olson and Spicer. THE ARK magazine printed practically all the poets in the Bay Area; and there were THE NEEDLE (1959), NOMAD, SAN FRANCISCO REVIEW, SEMINA and many more. In 1955, Duncan's play, FAUST FOUTU was performed at the Six Gallery, and in 1962, the Poetry Center at San

Francisco State College put on Ferlinghetti's *THE ALLIGATION*. Between these dates, there were theatre events in abundance. Response to the new poetry can be judged from the fact that when McClure's *THE BLOSSOM* was performed at the University of Wisconsin in 1967, it was closed after one performance by the Regents. (His *PILLOW* appeared at the Off-Bowery theatre in New York in 1961, with plays by LeRoi Jones and Diane DiPrima). In San Francisco itself, drama, jazz and poetry continued in spite of pressures from local forces of business, politics and education and their agents, police and censorship.

To Black Mountain, Lower East Side, New York and San Francisco scenes must be added the flourishing Chicago culture between the wars, described in detail in Rexroth's *AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOVEL*, 1966 (long sections are included in *THE REXROTH READER*, 1972, ed. Eric Mottram), and the work of Robert Bly and his *THE SIXTIES* magazine, with its associated poetry books. Rather more significant than American poets in the *SIXTIES* group (the magazine operated from Minnesota, but contributors came from the whole country)—Louis Simpson, Donald Hall, W.D. Snodgrass, James Logan, James Wright and James Dickey—were the foreign poets in translation issued by Bly. Through his enterprise and sense of the need, Neruda, Vallejo, Trakl, Benn and some of the French symbolists were available largely for the first time, at least in the States. A number of the *SIXTIES* American poets took up the 'deep image' concept in order to bypass trite verbalizations and reach into non-verbal areas of experience and recognition—already practiced by Trakl, Neruda, etcetera. The better flowering of this effort did not occur until the later 1960's: Louis Simpson's *AT THE END OF THE ROAD* (1964), Dickey's *POEMS 1957-1967* (1969) and Bly's *THE LIGHT AROUND THE BODY* (1967). The imagic and lyrical procedures of these otherwise disparate poets are linked by what Paul Sweig calls "a common resistance to the orthodoxies of American poetry since the Second World War" ('The American Outside', *THE NATION*, 14 November, 1966). He quotes Bly:

"The fundamental world of poetry...is the inward world. The poem expresses what we are just beginning to think. thoughts we have not yet thought. The poem must catch these thoughts alive, flexible and animal-like as they are."

Bly prefers Yves Bonnefoy's "An interior sea lighted by turning eagles" to Pound's "petals on a wet black bough"; he emphasizes the short poem of perceptions which have the power of resonance rather than the long poem of accumulated instances and continuities. Each issue of *THE SIXTIES* contains an essay relevant to a contemporary poet and focusing this lyricist concern, and signed by "Crunk". Some of the discriminations are shrewd; the more abrasive and less valuable form of this criticism thrashes around in Dickey's *THE SUSPECT IN POETRY* (1964). Bly's recent work has modified his 1960's position. *THE TEETH-MOTHER NAKED AT LAST* (*City Lights Pocket Poets* 26, 1970) is a long poem against the condition

of the Southeast Asian war, read throughout the country by the American Writers Against the Vietnam War (founded by Bly and David Ray in 1966); its form is nearer early Ferlinghetti and HOWL than the SIXTIES poets. His essay, 'Looking for Dragon Smoke' (THE SEVENTIES, No. 1, Spring, 1972), is a fine piece of poetics, concerning "the leap AWAY from the unconscious, not TOWARD it" in poetry of the Christianized West, and the possibilities of recovering "conscious psychic substance".

The only innovation of any strength, since the 1950's, which has urged itself into the lives of any majority as the Beats did, is focused in Richard Goldstein's THE POETRY OF ROCK (1969), which includes lyrics by Tuli Kupferberg (of BIRTH magazine and the Fugs pop-group), Tim Hardin, the Doors and Bob Dylan. Dylan transformed the sentimental traditions of lyrics on disc with an outstanding range of songs, from simply and fairly conventional blues love lyrics to the complex, multi-referential use of social comment and "deep image" in 'Bob Dylan's 115th Dream' and 'The Gates of Eden' (BOB DYLAN SONG BOOK, 1966), and 'Visions of Joanna' (BLONDE ON BLONDE, 1966). Bob Dylan, as the citation for his Princeton honorary doctor of music degree stated:

"based his technique in the arts of the common people of our past and tore his appeals for human compassion from the experience of the dispossessed. His music remains the authentic expression of the disturbed and concerned conscience of young America" (TIME, 22 June 1970)

Since Dylan and the West Coast rock groups of the Sixties, there has been little development in this field apart from the extraordinary lyrics of Captain Beefheart, of a vitality and risk which make a good deal of our poetry seem tame and dull. Rock became big business and went into a trough of imitation and cheap thrills; poetry has never been business but has been just as oppressed by government agencies as the rock artists and their festivals. A good example of the post-Beat generation of poets forced underground by the hostile illiteracy of the great cities is the writers and little magazines associated with D.A. Levy in Cleveland. Poetry was central to the Civil Rights struggle in the 1960's. When Levy was arrested on spurious charges, a letter to a Cleveland newspaper said: "Levy is alleged to have read poetry to juveniles. That being the case, the police have the right to arrest him." In an editorial for his MARY JANE QUARTERLY (Vol. 2, No. 1, 1966—other issues were entitled THE MARRAN-WANNAH QUARTERLY and other variants), Levy wrote: "Cleveland died in 1930 / died so quickly & quietly that no one seemed to notice." He decided to challenge inertia by moving out from "Cleveland's primitive west side" and in February 1963 began to publish poetry in extremely cheap but finely produced small editions—at first known poets like Carol Bergé, Allan Katzman, John Keys and Ed Sanders (with Edwin Morgan

and Dom Sylvester Houéard from Britain), and later his own work and that of local writers: Douglas Blazek, Kent Taylor, etcetera. James Lowell's Asphodel Bookshop provided an important sales and publicity outlet in Cleveland. The city escalated its hostility to both Levy and Lowell, both of whom finally needed 'tribute' volumes to defray expenses of court procedures against them. The cause of free literature became everywhere a common necessity in the States in the period. Levy, born in 1942, founded the Renegade and 7 Flowers Presses, published three journals and a mass of other poets' work, and also found time to compose and read himself. He was arrested twice in 1967 on obscenity charges and was subjected to endless police harassment. According to an interview published that year, he had planned to leave Cleveland in despair. As it turned out, he burned his poetry, sat in his apartment with a rifle, visited friends he had not seen in years, and finally committed suicide on 24 November, 1968. As one columnist in a local paper observed: "D.A. Levy was a threat to no one except those who are afraid of the truth." ('D.A. Levy: Cleveland's Survival Artist', Eric Mottram, *THE SERIF*, December, 1971). He had come to believe that the country was "programmed to fall apart", and that state of the nation reaches into his poems, many of which contemplate the possibility of suicide as the accurate response to the 1960's. Exile or outlawry were the only other alternatives and part of a long American tradition. Levy's *THE NORTH AMERICAN BOOK OF THE DEAD* (1966) and *SURBURBAN MONASTERY DEATH POEM* (1968) are to the 1960's what Ginsberg's *HOWL* was to the 1950's: documents of witness to cultural deterioration. This poetry is created within the disaster area and searches for some kind of viable private life to retrieve from public catastrophe. Levy worked in a wide variety of forms, including visual poems, but his most powerful poems are low-toned, direct and use projective forms. His Buddhism is characteristic of his generation of poets investigating alternatives to the historic destructiveness of the official Christian state. So that his poetry stands in direct relationship to Snyder and the Beats, to later leaders like Timothy Leary, and to the ecological investigations in Paul Shepard and Daniel McKinley's *THE SUBVERSIVE SCIENCE* (1969) in which Lynn White substantiates his claim that "Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects". Levy stood between Ed Sanders' "amer-egyptian underground" (it is Levy's phrase) and the Cleveland poet's fellow American writer (George Dowden, who works in Britain and whose best work, *RENEW JERUSALEM* (1970), has Sanders' energy and the sad indictment of the West exemplified in America which is characteristic of Cleveland's Renegade Press poets).

VI

The effort to resist pessimism by having a vision of a viable human city and a human universe repeatedly gains resource in William Blake, central to Duncan and Olson, and the inspiring

voice which Ginsberg heard one day in Harlem. But for Ginsberg inspiration not only came through Blake's voice and the long-breathed lines of his Prophetic Books, but through an essential sense of the poet as visionary bard. That concept of the poet still gains power in the States: it is there in Duncan, in Sanders, in Snyder and Kelly, and in the inherent policies of Clayton Eshleman's magazine CATERPILLAR (1967-73). Ginsberg has always been aware of his messianism and deliberately checks it in a number of poems. The needs of resistance to the official America of the Ike, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon era created him as leader, as much as his early Beat work. He has had to come to terms with his public function as a poetic shaman for a cultural scene roughly known as the Movement, a scene which found its counterpart throughout the world. Wherever resistance to entrenched power blazed, Ginsberg's poetry became therefore internationally known and his physical presence internationally felt in the period. His measure is frequently a large inclusive line, reaching sometimes paragraphic proportions, a major inventive rhetoric of the time, and eminently suited to declamation. It incorporated Melville's sentence structure (especially in PIERRE), Hebraic scripture, Blake's long lines, and Whitman's chants. At the core of Ginsberg's work, poetry for public persuasion developed a new set of forms. The simple and exhilarating lament and excoriation of 'Howl' exemplified and partly created the Beat ethos of the 1950's, with its strategic avoidance of complex information, its passive protest and its descent into consciousness explored to the point of hallucination and madness, a response to and counterpart of the state of America. But the inspiration of Artaud and the concept of the 'poète maudit' receded in Ginsberg's work as it became increasingly political. The elliptical imagery of Hart Crane, which provided a vertical take-off for emotion within the linear expansiveness of 'Howl', was curtailed and often discarded by 1968 and the poems in PLANET NEWS. He retained his swinging, improvisatory paragraphs—learned partly from Kerouac's prose of the early 1950's (c.f. 'The Art of Poetry VIII', PARIS REVIEW 37, Spring, 1966). He outgrew Beat publicity and became a major transmitter of the American anarchist tradition. His poetic aim is two-fold: first, to create a counter-magic of language against the black magic of the state's electronic communications networks (TV and neon advertising of consumer capitalism and the methods of the Washington-Pentagon-high finance corporations against the American people)—like Norman Mailer, Ginsberg is a super-patriot; and second, to provide examples of the expansion and regeneration of mutual consciousness, the sense of touch and "adhesiveness" which he inherits from Whitman, and that possible sense of unity across the huge landscape and centripetal forces of America—the gradeur of the epic impulse in THE FALL OF AMERICA: POEMS OF THESE STATES 1965-1971 (City Lights Pocket Poets 30, 1972).

'Kaddish' (1961), described his response to the manic breakdown of his mother under the pressures of being a socialist

emigrant in the 1930's; she becomes the type of human being sacrificed to ideological catastrophe in this century. In 'Wichita Vortex Sutra', and 'Television Was a Baby Crawling Toward the Death Chamber' (PLANET NEWS), the poet is himself at the centre of the American vortex which threatens vision with madness. These long passionate poems project dense visionary counter-information against the System in order to stir readers and hearers towards revolutionary change. Their forms are 'directed meditations' which move from printed page into public performance. When they become flaccid, as in 'New York to San Fran' (AIRPLANE DREAMS, 1968), and parts of 'Ankor Wat' (1968), it is due to excessive repetitions of states of vulnerability and anxiety and to blasts at obvious political targets—although, to be fair, Ginsberg does call some of these works "compositions from journals". In 1967, he produced 'Wales Visitation', a wonderful and meticulously detailed description of human oneness with the Earth, a basis which he has always needed, from which to move out into the urban and the political. The poem projects a field of physical "earth relations"—"one solemn wave" or mandala of ecstatic ecological wonder at the particulars of landscape, which the poet is still able to make even in this disastrous time. It is his "Divine Poem on the physical world" (c.f. ALLEN GINSBERG IN THE SIXTIES, Eric Mottram, 1972).

Ginsberg shares this feeling for landscape nature, and its ethical necessities for men with Gary Snyder. They also share usages of Buddhist and other Asian religious and mythical writings and devotional practices (in particular the modes of tantric art and the mantra in Ginsberg and Zen forms in Snyder). This is in itself an American constant at least from Emerson and Thoreau onwards, part of the transcendental mode of philosophy and poetic actions since the nineteenth century romantics. Those poems which are gradually forming the open-ended MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS series (six sections were published together in 1965 and others have appeared in magazines), especially indicate Snyder's centrality in the 1960's: his usage of linguistic analysis, his enquiry into the relevance of world myths, his use of the page as a field for the action of an experience both sensuous and erudite (e.g., 'Lookout's Journal', EARTH HOUSE HOLD, 1969). His strength lies in balancing a sense of labour as a means to live, as well as a human action in itself, and meditation on the human condition, and in maintaining a light tension between "discipline of self-restraint" and "discipline of following desire", "a careful balance of free action and sense of where cultural taboos lay". He, too, uses Blake: "if the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite". His own cleansing of perception takes place within the disciplines of Buddhism and the severely beautiful landscape of northwestern America, between solitary meditation and a finely articulated pattern of love and friendship. He is constantly aware of Robinson Jeffers' example of misanthropic retreat into the Pacific seaboard ecology, and moves away from the city towards the open air with a sense of non-

attachment to objects and with relief for its offer of relative freedom (A RANGE OF POEMS, 1966, and REGARDING WAVE, 1970). Snyder's public readings developed something of the leadership following that Ginsberg had earlier and this was partly due to his highly topical incorporation of both Asian Indian and Japanese procedures and myths with the tribal inheritance of North American Indians (c.f. 'Passage to More Than India' and 'Poetry and the Primitive' in EARTH HOUSE HOLD, and 'Now, India', CATERPILLAR, 1972).

The natural landscape, the city and the world map is the field of exploration for the major American poets of the 1960's as they move across large spaces and through violent cities, aware of their nation's predatory extensions abroad and into cosmic space, and trying to maintain still that old sense of America as a hub of world information (continuous since the 1840's), and the place where humanity always has a further chance. This diagrammatic essay attempts to map some of this scene with some of its poets. By way of tentative conclusion, it still needs brief accounts of a few more poets—their range bears ironic witness to the extraordinary health of literary culture within a disastrous social and political period.

Paul Blackburn's poems in THE CITIES (1967), IN.ON.OR ABOUT THE PREMISES (1968) and EARLY SELECTED Y MAS (1972), project the New York experience with a control of cadence and rhythm unique in contemporary poetry, combining sardonic criticism of his time with a gentle passion for love and friendship in structures of deceptively lightly-held technique. Philip Whalen's skills are even less exhibitionistic; he uses tantric and calligraphic forms, and highly developed projective verse structures, articulating his belief that "art does not seek to describe but to enact". His poems act out an exhilarating but wary and non-ideological stream of intelligence and receptivity to ideas and environments, making "a continuous fabric (nerve movies)" of "total attention and pleasure" (preface to EVERY DAY, 1965), "a picture graph of a mind moving, which is a world body being here and now which is history...and you" (MEMOIRS OF AN INTERGLACIAL AGE, 1960; his collected poems is ON BEAR'S HEAD, 1969). Jonathan Williams also moves between landscape and city, and with a technique and wit unique in American poetry. His selected poems, AN EAR IN BARTRAM'S TREE (1969), shows his range—from what he terms "the garrulous landscape nature that feeds on Brucknerian lengths" to "the exactly contrary nature that yearns to be as laconic as Webern or a pebble". His drastic political humour ("Lawless Wallace Über Alles / all see, alas, / no arse— / nic, no / lace, / as well as no / solace": LULLABIES TWISTERS GIBBERS DRAGS, 1963) is aimed at the annihilation of anyone and anything which has no respect for ecology or privacy or visionary experience, the primary values which he dramatizes in, for example, "Emblems for the Little Dells and Nooks, and Corners of Paradise" and a number of poems infused with Blake, Samuel Palmer, Henry Vaughan and the Appalachian and English landscapes he knows

from firsthand and on foot.

Ferlinghetti's poetry has deepened in tone since his 1950's San Francisco Beat days; the light ironical style of his 1955 and 1958 volumes darkened. His vision remained anarchist and undogmatic in its outrage at political and social victimization, but 'The Third World' (EL CORNU EMPLUMADO 29, 1969) and THE SECRET MEANING OF THINGS (1969) have considerably less gaiety—the work of a poet who can barely hope that there may be "time in some later reincarnation / to lie down in silence, without cunning" and for whom "every day the news gets more surreal" in its abject contingencies. Ferlinghetti retains his dry humour within satirical response, a cool absence of bitterness and a cutting edge in his resistance to resignation. A more painfully personal involvement is the action of John Wieners, America's foremost poet of the exposed and utterly vulnerable life, a true 'poète maudit' as Ginsberg called him in 1960 after the publication of THE HOTEL WENTLEY POEMS (1958). ACE OF PENTACLES (1964) and NERVES (1970), show how he has developed his ability to dramatize city pressures on the human body overcome with desire for love and desperately taking refuge in dreams and drugs. The pathos of his autobiographical witness is formed inside a highly skillful lyric prosody which relates to both Blackburn and Jonathan Williams. A more extroverted poet is Robert Kelly; his poetry yearns to digest any and every kind of intellectual and emotional experience. He probably tries for a too rapid transference of his appetite and enthusiasm to verse forms, but his recent work is central to the period in its inclusion of a wide range of etymological research and considerable usage of alchemy studies and the nature of the occult which reinforce his use of mythology and the surreal image (SONGS I-XXX, 1968; THE COMMON SHORE, 1969; KALI YUGA, 1970).

A far more emotionally committed and risk-taking poet is Ed Sanders, an unclassifiable and powerful figure of the 1960's and in many ways typical of the bardic artist to whom American audiences responded, as they did to Ginsberg and Dylan. As organizer of the Fugs pop-group, he bridged the protest lyric of Bob Dylan and the sardonic humour of the black humorists of the period (THE FUGS SONG BOOK, 1967), and the group also set to music two of Blake's songs. POEM FROM JAIL (1963) is the meditational protest of a scholar, poet and 'peace freak' jailed for his pacifist assault on a nuclear submarine—a double action which forms his "total assault on the culture". Sanders' best poems have an astonishingly direct sensuality in forms which combine classical myth and the language of the Lower East Side (partly invented by the poet himself). PEACE EYE (1965) uses some of the main poetics of the 1960's but emerges as an entirely individual expression of anarchist rejection of the disastrous American status quo by insisting on the nakedness of the human body and its vital sensuality in a sun-centred cosmos. 'Song of the Eye-Heart-Mind' fuses the "clear Eye" of poets like Zukofsky and Williams, the clear, crystal light which penetrates the CANTOS, the Eye

of Horus, which Sanders interprets as the Peace Eye (c.f. *TECHNICIANS OF THE SACRED*, p. 461), and the Emersonian eye of human penetration into the cosmos. In social terms, it is an all-out attack on hatred and divorced union. Sanders was instrumental in forming the Yippie movement of the later 1960's and recently exposed the nature of American culture through the case of Charles Manson (*THE FAMILY*, 1972).

VII

But no black poet could have afforded such language and reference if he wished to reach his people in this period. Their spokesmen were Malcolm X and Stokeley Carmichael rather than the intellectual poet, the rock descendants of the blues singers and Tamla Motown rather than black protest theatre in Off-Broadway playhouses. The problem for the black poet lies between M.B. Tolson and LeRoi Jones. In an interview of 1965, Tolson claimed his right to be both black and complex:

"I am no soothsayer talking to Virgil's dark Aeneas, before his descent into the lower world of the black ghetto...I, as a black poet, have absorbed the Great Ideas of the Great White World, and have interpreted them in the melting-pot idiom of my people. My roots are in Africa, Europe, and America...My catholicity of taste and interest takes in the Charleston and the ballet, Mr. Jelly Roll and Stravinsky, the Congolese sculptor and Phidias, the scop and the Classicist."
(*ANGER AND BEYOND*, ed. Herbert Hill, 1966)

But it is a fact that most Americans and certainly most black Americans do not have access to that range of cultural resources. Specifically 'black' poetry necessarily includes built-in reactions for that particular condition of black Americans which condemns them to second-class citizenship. Poetry written out of the 350 years of the main American Civil conflict is bound to reflect what Bob Dylan calls "philosophic disgrace" as well as the stereotypes of "let my people go", and the passionate assault on any suggestion of imitating white American cultural attitudes. Conflict poetry has to be an instrument in the immediate cause of liberation, to tell it all exactly as it is, to change consciousness from resignation to action. It is pointless to judge such poetry in any other way. The exception would be poetry containing a complexity of material and controls of form not designed for immediate rhetorical consumption or weaponry against ghetto living and Christian capitalist hypocrisy. As Charles E. Silberman put it in 1964: "part of the price of being a Negro in America is a degree of paranoia" (*CRISIS IN BLACK AND WHITE*).

No black poetry approached the power of Malcolm X's autobiography, and yet any black poet who wished to escape the

'Negro' label might well have risked missing the point of his life. LeRoi Jones had been a good poet within the poetics and concerns of the 1950's, skillfully putting across felt criticism of white society's limitations and editing one of the most significant poetry magazines of the period, YUGEN, from 1957. The later development of his poetry, plays and social action, recorded in HOME (1968), moved him towards increased political involvement and a revolutionarily destructive literary aim: "the role of the black artist in America is to help the destruction of America as it now exists. If what he does—whether it's polemical or lyrical or however it functions—if it contributes to that destruction it is beautiful". It is the black equivalent of John Cage's forward to A YEAR FROM MONDAY: "our proper work now if we love mankind and the world we live in is revolution". Jones' THE DEAD LECTURER (1965) dramatizes distress and desperate irony as a preliminary to non-poetic action; the poems move from self-hatred, hysteria, the hypocrisy of art in the society of 'usura' and the injustice of corrupt Hollywood images of the Negro ('A Poem for Willie Best'), to the need to go beyond self-sacrifice ('Rhythm & Blues', dedicated to Robert Williams, the revolutionary black leader), and the struggle for a black identity. The shift to vengeance ('Short Speech to My Friend') concludes in the alchemy of a transformation into true blackness, 'Black Dada Nihilismus', the poetic equivalent to Jones' plays, DUTCHMAN and THE SLAVE (1964). The poet must stop substituting for the dead white lecturer of his Greenwich Village recent past, and take the Dada tradition into action for black liberation. His next work was polemical from within the citadel of "black is beautiful" and the meaning of those words spoken by the black hero of THE SLAVE: "no social protest—right in the act!"

The poems of a first-rate black poet of the next generation, like, for example, those of David Henderson, are more relaxed and confident, even exuberant, within their free forms, black American language, and social consciousness. Henderson's 'So We Went to Harlem', 'Boston Road Blues' and 'They Are Killing All the Young Men' (FELIX OF THE SILENT FOREST, 1967), represent the kind of achievement placing black American poetry beyond the immediacies and instrumentality of propaganda (see also Henderson's DE MAYOR OF HARLEM, 1970, and two anthologies, BLACK FIRE, ed. Larry Neal, 1968, and THE NEW BLACK POETRY, ed. Clarence Major, 1969).

HARLEM GALLERY: BOOK 1, THE CURATOR (1965), the first part of a long work in progress, by Melvin Beaumont Tolson, is outstanding and exceptional in black poetry. Tolson is a veteran of black literature ('Dark Symphony' dates from 1944 and part of 'Libretto for the Republic of Liberia', 1953), was a commission received as poet laureate of Liberia in 1947); he writes within the tradition of multiple reference and complex structures associated with Pound and Eliot, and the tight movement of telescoped metaphors and parataxis found in Hart Crane. But his argument in HARLEM GALLERY is clear: the na-

ture of Negro art in a white culture, "a people's New World Odyssey from chattel to Esquire!" His wit, analysis and sensuousness build towards a major criticism of racial cultures. Tolson has the courage and confidence to place himself within his own poetic and social structure as a possible 'Judas' who needs white and European cultures as much as he needs and understands the need to re-invent black America. Few of the poets in *NEW NEGRO POETS: USA* (1965, ed. Langston Hughes) reach either the heartfelt anxieties of LePoi Jones or the complexity of Tolson. They are mostly too well-mannered and conventionally black, insufficiently complex and inventive, to carry black power into poetry. The exceptions are A.B. Spellman, Ted Joans, J.C. Oden, and Jones himself. The political and emotional strengths of African poetry in English, or the work of Aimée Césaire, or blues lyrics, is hardly present. For that we turn to later work. Jones was right in 'The Myth of a Negro Literature' (*HOME*): "there has never been an equivalent to Duke Ellington or Louis Armstrong in Negro writing; even the best of contemporary literature written by Negroes cannot yet compare to the fantastic beauty of Charlie Parker's music". But things were changing. Calvin Hernton's 'The Coming of Chronos to the House of Nightsong' (1964) showed the way towards a poetry "practically and magically involved in collective efforts to trigger real social change" in the tradition of "freedom fighters like the writer Ahmed Baba of Timbuktu, in the fourth century" and "uganga (native medicine)...the means to the structure of black consciousness" (Clarence Major's introduction to *THE NEW BLACK POETRY*). In music, the parallels for black energy were John Coltrane, Sun Ra, Cecil Taylor and Pharoah Sanders in jazz and Ray Charles and James Brown in rock. In revolutionary poetry the example was the work of South American and Caribbean poets—Guillen, Castillo, Cardenal, Vallejo. Ways in which these examples might be used can be read in the work of Len Chandler, Sam Cornish, Al Young, Tom Weatherly, Ishmael Reed and Nicki Giovanni. Their kinds of technical skill and revolutionary verve is collected in Neal's major book of "Afro-American writing" "aimed at the destruction of the double-consciousness" and the "consolidating of the Afro-American consciousness" rather than the formation of a protest poetry. The collection reflects an inward turning of black Americans towards an examination of the possibilities of a culture which has survived slavery and ghetto and of the need for the poet to be a leader of liberation. The function of the poet in twentieth century totalitarian societies is to be part of the movement to restore the possibilities of personal and communal life against the needs of the reductive and authoritarian. The record of American poets in this survey—both black and white—is honourable, both in inventive form and in imaginative resistance to the consumer-spectator society.

These notes may be of some bibliographical interest to the newcomer. They are not intended for the oldhand.

Roger Guedalla

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ROBERT DUNCAN

Robert Duncan was born in Oakland, California in 1919. After a brief spell in college he left and went to New York in the late 1930's. During the years 1940-41 he co-edited EXPERIMENTAL REVIEW with Sanders Russell and published the work of Lawrence Durrell, Henry Miller, Anaïs Nin and Kenneth Patchen, among others. At the end of the war he returned to California and went to live in San Francisco where he still lives. It was at this time that he became associated with William Everson, Philip Lamantia, Kenneth Rexroth and Jack Spicer.

Between 1947 and 1950 he studied mediaeval and renaissance history under Professor Ernst Kantorowicz at the University of California at Berkeley and published his first books: HEAVENLY CITY, EARTHLY CITY (Bern Porter, Berkeley, 1947; POEMS 1948-1949 (Berkeley Miscellany Editions, 1949); and MEDIAEVAL SCENES (Centaur, San Francisco, 1950). During this decade he also began to publish in a wide range of poetry journals—the best known being ORIGIN—including THE ARK, CIRCLE, POETRY, QUARTERLY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, TIGER'S EYE, PACIFIC SPECTATOR, and THE OCCIDENT. His work also appeared in the FABER BOOK OF MODERN VERSE (ed. W.H. Auden) and THE NEW AMERICAN POETRY (ed. Donald Allen). He has remained a highly prolific poet and prose writer and continues to publish in a very large number of poetry journals.

In the 1950's he began his association with Charles Olson and Robert Creeley and Black Mountain College where he taught in 1956. During this decade his publications included: FRAGMENTS OF A DISORDERD DEVOTION (privately published in an edition of fifty copies, December 1952; reprinted Gnomon Press, San Francisco, 1966); SONG OF THE BOARDERGUARD (Black Mountain College, 1952); PAUST FOUTU: AN ENTERTAINMENT IN 4 ACTS (Black Mountain College, 1955); CAESAR'S GATE (Divers Press, Mallorca, 1955; reprinted Sand Dollar, Berkeley, 1972, with additions POETIC DISTURBANCES and APPEARANCES); LETTERS: POEMS 1953-1956 (Jargon, Highlands, N.C., 1958); and SELECTED POEMS: 1942-1950 (City Lights, San Francisco, 1959). Of this period, he himself has said:

"I have been involved, since the book LETTERS, begun in 1953, in the imagination of what MAN is—in the CREATIVE imagination of what Man is, that is, in making up what Man is as well as making out what Man is, a creation in which I work with whatever lore of Man I can find, with poetic myth, with the lore of the English language, with versions upon versions of what our history has been, with anthropological speculations, both rationalizing and phantastic, with biological sciences of our species. Where others strive to bring 'primitive' man or pre-literate or pre-industrial man into our Western consciousness to re-

form and enlarge that consciousness, I would translate what I am—a creature through and through of European tribal mysteries and miseries, i.e., Judaeo-Christian, Hellenistic Graeco-Roman, Celto-Iberian-Germanic weave—into the language of the species Man."

This process continued into the next decade in such books as: *THE OPENING OF THE FIELD* (Grove Press, 1960); *WRITING WRITING* (Sum Books, Albuquerque, 1964); *AS TESTIMONY* (White Rabbit Press, San Francisco, 1964; reprinted 1966); *ROOTS AND BRANCHES* (Scribners, 1964); *THE SWEETNESS AND GREATNESS OF DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY* (Open Space, San Francisco, 1965); *SIX PROSE PIECES* (The Perishable Press, Horab, Wisconsin, 1965); *THE BOOK OF RESEMBLANCES: POEMS 1949-1953* (Henry Wenning, New Haven, 1966); *THE YEARS AS CATCHES: POEMS 1939-1946* (Oyez, Berkeley, 1966); *OF THE WAR: PASSAGES 22-27* (Oyez, Berkeley, 1966); *THE CAT AND THE BLACKBIRD* (White Rabbit Press, San Francisco, 1967); *EPILOGOS* (Black Sparrow Press, Los Angeles, 1967); *CHRISTMAS PRESENT, CHRISTMAS PRESENCE* (Black Sparrow Press, Los Angeles, 1967); *NAMES OF PEOPLE* (Black Sparrow Press, Los Angeles, 1968); *THE FIRST DECADE: SELECTED 1940-1950* (Fulcrum Press, London, 1968); *DERIVATIONS: SELECTED POEMS 1950-1956* (Fulcrum Press, London, 1968); *BENDING THE BOW* (New Directions, 1968); and *THE TRUTH AND LIFE OF MYTH* (The House of Books, New York, 1968; reprinted Sumac Press, Fremont, Michigan, 1972).

In the last few years he has published: *TRIBUNALS: PASSAGES 31-35* (Black Sparrow Press, Los Angeles, 1970); *POETIC DISTURBANCES* (Maya Press, Berkeley, 1970; now included in the 1972 Sand Dollar reprint of *CAESAR'S GATE*); *THE H.D. BOOK, PART I: BEGININGS* (Black Sparrow Press, Los Angeles, 1971); and *ROBERT DUNCAN: AN INTERVIEW* (Coach House Press, Toronto, 1971).

This is probably not a complete bibliography of books but besides indicating the great quantity of his work it does, I believe, include almost all his books. Fortunately for British readers, the main collections have now been published over here. They are: *THE FIRST DECADE: SELECTED POEMS 1940-1950*, and *DERIVATIONS: SELECTED POEMS 1950-1956* (both published by the Fulcrum Press), and *THE OPENING OF THE FIELD*, *ROOTS AND BRANCHES* (Poems 1959-1963), and *BENDING THE BOW* (Poems 1963-1967), published by Jonathan Cape.

The *POETRY MAGAZINE AUDIT* (Vol. IV, No. 3, Buffalo, New York, 1967), was devoted entirely to Duncan's work and includes *A PLAY WITH MASKS* and his correspondence with Robin Blaser over the latter's translations of Gérard de Nerval's *LES CHIMÈRES*.

Recent work has appeared in *POETRY REVIEW* (Vol. 62, No. 3, Autumn, 1971, and Vol. 63, No. 3, Autumn, 1972). Taken

together the poems published in these two issues constitute the complete set of POEMS FROM THE MARGINS OF THOM GUNN'S MOLY which had previously only appeared in a limited edition in 1972 in the author's typescript.

It would be neither possible nor appropriate to attempt a summation of Duncan's work in a neat phrase or two. It is a continuous life's work which, like PATERSON, A, THE CANTOS or THE MAXIMUS POEMS demands to be read as a total process. In this process in which the form of each poem is an event, "All felt things are / permitted to speak", so that in the crisis of truth and permission there is "a joy in the strength poetry works in us to carry the man in his work beyond the bounds of truth and permission into the autonomous life of the poem--the music of a consonance beyond our knowledge of consonance."

BANK

The Feast PASSAGES 34

The butcher had prepared the leg of the lamb
 "its only mouth being spirit" we prepared richly
 clothing its flavor in a coat of many colours

to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Dijon mustard
 add 1 tbs Kikkoman soy
 1 tbs Pickapeppa sauce (Jamaica) made from tomatoes onions sugarcane vinegar
 mangoes raisins tamarinds

mainly that it be dark and redolent of tamarind
 but the true measure is hidden in the fingers' feel for the taste of it
 and garlic

rosemary ground in the mortar
 salt, pepper and drops of oil workt into the emulsion...

We have come to the Festivities!

The recipe appears
 between fond thought at this table
 and devout actualities we play the host, the guests

gather round

pleasures of the household, the fine
 burnt smell of the meat pleasing to the nostrils yet

This house is not Jahweh's carrots, celery, onions, zucchini cookt with yogurt
 in the meat's company

for Cain's sacrifice is likewise
 satisfying

The smith...the single most important craftsman
 for the Bedouin ritually impure excluded from intermarriage and eating in the company
 blacksmiths a pariah caste only the gods protect them...

Cain, tribal father of the smith and the musician with his sither,
 patron of bards, founder of cities...

Weavers, pottars and carpenters appear to be tribal foreigners...

The Bethlehem Steel Company now in the place of the Moravian smithy at Bethlehem...

this turmoil of peoples in the place where the City was!

milk of the mother, seed of the father cream, barley and wheatgerm

Carl Sauer in LAND AND LIFE: "We have neglected the natural history of man"

"Institutions and outlooks have their origin in time and place;
they spread from one group to another"

"...origins, derivations and survival ... the basic determinations"

"we know even the Logos" —taking meaning and sound in our language as His
attributes— "only as a term in culture history"

in the Orphic rite: the suckling lamb or kid

in the dream (though I was awake or my mind
was wandering for a moment) it came

in another spelling:

EVE is **EWE**

in the cauldron of regenerations: fallen

feeding on milk as though we were born again

on THIS side Man's fortunate feast,

Harvest of his growing Mastery over his Nature

"Antiphonal to this ... the revenge of an outraged nature on man"

The shit of the sheep does not redeem the shifting sands the stript rock surfaces
wastes left after ancient over-grazing devourd landscapes

"Lapse of time has brought no repair" the dirty streams

The hosts have gone down to the edge of the sea,
Time has swept their tents away.

The air we breathe grows dark with the debris of burning fats
and dense with animal smoke. All day

exhausts pour forth into the slues of night their centuries,
 the black soil scums the putrid bay,

the light is acrid to our eyes, and all the old runes
 thicken in our minds—

Ge stinks to Heaven from the dumps of Sleep.

And where her children dream of Chaos come again,

undoing the knots and twists of Man we roast the Lamb,

flesh as we are flesh burgundy wine as our blood is wine

the red glow in the crystal the fire in the depth of her
 remembering

hunger taking over the taste of things

the sun's rays curdle in the pot

as in the first days

the kid or lamb seethed in the mother's milk

the thirst in the desert the hot meat

ready in our need for it.

(The Feast PASSAGES 34, TRIBUNALS, PASSAGES 31-35, by
 Robert Duncan, Black Sparrow Press, Los Angeles, 1970)

ACHILLES

I do not know more than the sea tells me,
 told me long ago, or I overheard her
 telling distant roar upon the sands,
 waves of meaning in the cradle of whose
 sounding and resounding power I
 slept. Manchild, she sang,
 or was it a storm uplifting the night
 into a moving wall in which
 I was carried as if a mothering nest had
 been made in dread,

the wave of a life darker than my
 life before me sped, and I,
 larger than I was, grown dark as
 the shoreless depth,
 arose from myself shaking the last
 light of the Sun
 from me. Manchild, she said:

Come back to the shores of what you are.
 Come back to the crumbling shores.
 All night
 the mothering tides in which your
 life first formed in the brooding light
 have quencht the bloody splendors of the sun,
 and under the triumphant processions
 of the moon lay down
 thunder upon thunder of an old
 longing, the beat
 of whose repeated spell
 consumes you.

 Thetis then,
 my mother, has promised me
 the mirage of a boat, a vehicle
 of water within the water,
 and my soul would return from
 the trials of its human state,
 from the long siege, from the
 struggling companions upon the plain,
 from the burning towers and deeds
 of honor and dishonor,
 the deeper unsatisfied war beneath
 and behind the declared war,
 and the rubble of beautiful, patiently
 workt moonstones, agates, jades,
 obsidians,
 turnd and returnd in the wash of
 the tides, the gleaming waste,
 the pathetic wonder,

*

Job, Iyyôb, the enemy, enmity and righteousness in one, ôyeb, inveterate foe of Him he obeys, cries out: "Yahwe gave and took away. Blessed be His Name in what He does." He tore his robe and shaved his head. The starry legions groaned in his shame.

You think I have but read this story? Or that I have put aside from my thought the despairing Poet's face? His eyes stare into the shadows where the hostile flight of demonic wings shows and vanishes, a flicker out of fire returning like rime the ominous after-intentions of the Word shows Father to the thought. "I alone escaped to tell you," each messenger relates: "The rest are dead or dying. The walls of your story have fallen away."

The name may be explained by the Arabic root ³wb, "return, repent." Rome in all its rimes remains, advances into ruin; and the scholar explains that, back of Iyyôb, the prince of Ashtaroth in Bashan bears the name Ayyab, an older form of the same, from the Akkadian Ayya- abu(m), "Where is (My) Father?"

The Elohim brooding upon these Waters are appalled.

And you could recant, Old Man, recall?
 Look deep into your sight and you will find
 a deeper blindness where you were
 stricken blind,
 our own, revision of the Truth we see
 the Poet stumbles upon. Beauty
 alone triumphant in the light of noon
 turns back the Day upon itself
 embittered, and Night bereft of dreams
 is like a deserted railway station
 after hours or in an age of inanition.
 Will the last train never come? Come?
 Or has it gone and left us? Old...

And you do not think the Day and the Night
 can speak?
 He overhears their curses and embittering words.

The Silence does not put my heart to rest
 but works me up, works me up.
 As if in Emptiness there were infant echoes
 crying, and Death
 refuses me. Whom God has fenced about
 Whose Way is hidden from him.

He yearns:

"Now a word came to me quietly,
 "Just a whisper caught my ear.
 "In a nightmare, in a trance,
 "When other men are sleeping,
 "A breath passt over my face,
 "The hair of my body bristled,
 "I was transfixed, held down where I was,
 "my heart beating under the weight of it."

"Paused, but I could not see who it was.
 "Just a shadow before my eyes.
 "A hush, then I heard a voice saying:
 " 'Twixt morning and evening they are shattered.
 'They perish forever nameless...' "

The scholar comments: "Zophar is sure that God must have something against Job and could make it known if he cared to speak of it."

And didst thou ride the Wind, Old Man?
 high in the roar of the promised year?
 And in your verses scan immortal voices
 thundering certainties? Love and Light
 rain down
 from clouds in which the spirit ran?
 The wind dies and moans among its leavings,
 ways of desolation workt
 among the works of men.

(Ancient Questions, 'Three Poems', by Robert Duncan, NEW DIRECTIONS
 IN PROSE AND POETRY 23, New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1971)

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GEORGE OPPEN

George Oppen was born in New Rochelle, New York in 1908. He has spent most of his writing life in Brooklyn, New York, but recently moved to San Francisco where he now lives. He had previously spent part of his childhood in San Francisco from about 1918 to about 1925 when he left for the University of Oregon where he met Mary Colby, now his wife. Together they went to New York in about 1927 and met Louis Zukofsky that year. In 1929, they moved to Paris and founded To Publishers which later became The Objectivist Press and published AN 'OBJECTIVISTS' ANTHOLOGY and Pound's ABC OF READING, together with a number of other books including works by Charles Reznikoff (who was connected with the press along with William Carlos Williams, Louis Zukofsky, Ezra Pound and others). In 1934, The Objectivist Press published Oppen's first book, DISCRETE SERIES, with a preface by Ezra Pound (reprinted by Ron Caplan in 1966 and distributed by Asphodel Bookshop, Cleveland, Ohio). The 1972 COLLECTED POEMS includes almost all of this first book except for 'Tug Against the River—', 'As I Saw', 'Bolt', 'From This Distance Thinking Toward You' and 'Town, a Town'. Oppen himself, speaking of this first book, says:

"a discrete series is a series of terms each of which is empirically derived, each of which is empirically true. And this is the reason for the fragmentary character of those poems. I was attempting to construct a meaning by empirical statements, by imagist statements. It is still a principle with me, of more than poetry, to notice, to state, to lay down the substantive for its own sake."

The Oppen's became involved in political activities during the 1930's helping to organize the unemployed and to lessen the numbers suffering from starvation. For almost twenty-five years no poetry was written. "During those years I was perfectly aware of a lot of time before me and I at no time thought I wasn't a poet," is how Oppen describes that period of his life. He does not believe in 'political poetry' in the sense of writing a poem about a political situation because no poem is politically efficacious: a dilemma of the thirties not unknown in our own time.

In 1950 they fled the U.S. to Mexico to escape from the McCarthy witch hunts and remained there, making furniture, until 1958. Parts of his next book THE MATERIALS (New Directions, 1962) were written while still in Mexico, in particular 'Blood From a Stone'. In the thirties Oppen had published in POETRY and HOUND AND HORN as well as in Zukofsky's AN 'OBJECTIVISTS' ANTHOLOGY and Pound's ACTIVE ANTHOLOGY. On his return he began publishing again in POETRY and in the SAN FRANCISCO REVIEW and the MASSACHUSETTS REVIEW. William Carlos Williams said of the poems in this new book:

"they fulfill what he has promised to do with the poetic line, to keep it clean and succinct. He has never varied in his direct approach to the word as the supreme burden of the final poetic image."

The phrase "the word as the burden" echoes lines in his next book *THIS IN WHICH* (New Directions, 1965): "Possible / To use / Words provided one treats them / As enemies." Publishing in the *NEW YORKER*, *THE NATION*, *PARIS REVIEW* as well as continuing to appear in *POETRY*, Oppen was by now being widely read first by other poets, and increasingly by ordinary members of the poetry reading public. Official recognition was bestowed upon him when in 1969 he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry after the publication of *OF BEING NUMEROUS* (New Directions, 1968). More recently he has published *ALPINE* (Perishable Press, 1969), and *SEASCAPE: NEEDLE'S EYE* (Sumac Press, Fremont, Michigan, 1972). In 1972, Fulcrum Press (London) published his *COLLECTED POEMS*.

Oppen is a profound student of philosophy and psychology and his world has been described as one "in which the poet phenomenologically defines objects by defining his experience of them, and his poetry is the rigorous definition of feelings that exist after the failure of discursive knowledge and the evaporation of sentiment." Within the limitations of this context it is not possible to give more than the slightest clues to the profundity of his struggles with the object-word. Words are objects with the "same qualities—discreteness—impenetrable clarity—as things." "Words are not like things; they are things." The fact that they also describe ideas provides the situation for the battle. As Oppen himself says:

"The little words that I like so much, like 'tree', 'hill' and so on, are I suppose just as much a taxonomy as the more elaborate words; they're categories, classes, concepts, things we invent for ourselves. Nevertheless, there are certain ones without which we are really unable to exist, including the concept of humanity."

The test is sincerity, the poet is the maker-artisan, and the meaning lies in the cadences, the shape of the lines.

Oppen has published two prose statements of great value: the first in *KULCHUR 10* separating poetry and politics and the second in *CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE* (Vol. 10, No. 2, Spring, 1969). This latter piece is an interview with L.S. Dembo, the editor, and has recently been reprinted in a later issue devoted entirely to collecting the interviews that Dembo has published over the last few years.

It is difficult now to speak of poetry—

about those who have recognized the range of choice or those who have lived within the life they were born to—. It is not precisely a question of profundity but a different order of experience. One would have to tell what happens in a life, what choices present themselves, what the world is for us, what happens in time, what thought is in the course of a life and therefore what art is, and the isolation of the actual

I would want to talk of rooms and of what they look out on and of basements, the rough walls bearing the marks of the forms, the old marks of wood in the concrete, such solitude as we know—

and the swept floors. Someone, a workman bearing about him, feeling about him that peculiar word like a dishonored fatherhood has swept this solitary floor, this profoundly hidden floor—such solitude as we know.

One must not come to feel that he has a thousand threads
 in his hands,
 He must somehow see the one thing;
 This is the level of art
 There are other levels
 But there is no other level of art

(section 27, 'Of Being Numerous', OF BEING NUMEROUS, by
 George Oppen, New Directions Publishing Corporation,
 1968, and in COLLECTED POEMS, Fulcrum Press, London, 1972)

Some San Francisco Poems

1

Moving over the hills, crossing the irrigation
 canals perfect and profuse in the mountains the
 streams of women and men walking under the high-
 tension wires over the brown hills

 in the multiple world of the fly's
 multiple eye the songs they go to hear on
 this occasion are no one's own

Needle's eye needle's eye but in the ravine
again and again on the massive spike the song
clangs

as the tremendous volume of the music takes
over obscured by their long hair they seem
to be mourning

2

A Morality Play: Preface

Lying full length
On the bed in the white room

Turns her eyes to me

Again,

Naked. .

Never to forget her naked eyes

Beautiful and brave
Her naked eyes

Turn inward

Feminine light

The unimagined
Feminine light

Feminine ardor

Pierced and touched

Tho all say
Huddled among each other

'Love'

The play begins with the world

A city street
Leads to the bay

Tamalpais in cloud

Mist over farmlands

Local knowledge
In the heavy hills

The great loose waves move landward
Heavysided in the wind

Grass and trees bent
Along the length of coast in the continual wind

The ocean pounds in her mind
Not the harbor leading inward
To the back bay and the slow river
Recalling flimsy Western ranches
The beautiful hills shine outward

Sunrise the raw fierce fire
Coming up past the sharp edge

And the hoof marks on the mountain

Shines in the white room

Provincial city
Not alien enough

To naked eyes

This city died young

You too will be shown this

You will see the young couples

Leaving again in rags

3

"So with artists. How pleasurable
to imagine that, if only they gave
up their art, the children would be
healed, would live."

Irving Younger in THE NATION

'And Their Winter And Night In Disguise'

The sea and a crescent strip of beach
Show between the service station and a deserted shack

A creek drains thru the beach
Forming a ditch
There is a discarded super-market cart in the ditch
That beach is the edge of a nation

There is something like shouting along the highway
A California shouting
On the long fast highway over the California mountains

Point Pedro
Its distant life

It is impossible the world should be either good or bad
If its colors are beautiful or if they are not beautiful
If parts of it taste good or if no parts of it taste good
It is as remarkable in one case as the other

As against this
We have suffered fear, we know something of fear
And of humiliation mounting to horror

The world above the edge of the foxhole belongs to the
flying bullets, leaden superbeings
For the men grovelling in the foxhole danger, danger in
being drawn to them

'These little dumps'
The poem is about them

Our hearts are twisted
 In dead men's pride

Dead men crowd us
 Lean over us

In the emplacements

The skull spins
 Empty of subject

The hollow ego

Flinching from the war's huge air

Tho we are delivery boys and bartenders

We will choke on each other

Minds may crack

But not for what is discovered

Unless that everyone knew
 And kept silent

Our minds are split
 To seek the danger out

From among the miserable soldiers

4

Anniversary Poem

'the picturesque
 common lot' the unwarranted light

Where everyone has been

The very ground of the path
 And the litter grow ancient

A shovel's scratched edge
 So like any other man's

We are troubled by incredulity
We are troubled by scratched things

Becoming familiar
Becoming extreme

Let grief
Be
So it be ours

Nor hide one's eyes
As tides drop along the beaches in the thin wash of
breakers

And so desert each other

--lest there be nothing

the Indian girl walking across the desert, the
sunfish under the boat

How shall we say how this happened, these stories, our
stories

Scope, mere size, a kind of redemption

Exposed still and jagged on the San Francisco hills

Time and depth before us, paradise of the real, we
know what it is

To find now depth, not time, since we cannot, but depth

To come out safe, to end well

We have begun to say good bye
To each other
And cannot say it

The Translucent Mechanics

Combed thro the piers the wind
 Moves in the clever city
 Not in the doors but the hinges
 Finds the secret of motion
 As tho the hollow ships moved in their voices, ~~whispers~~
 Flaws
 In the wind
 Fear fear
 At the lumber mastheads
 And fetched a message out of the sea again

Say angel say powers

Obscurely 'things
 And the self'

Prosody

Sings

In the stones

 to entrust
 To a poetry of statement

At close quarters

A living mind
 'and that one's own'

 what then what spirit

Of the bent seas

 Archangel

of the tide
 brimming

in the moon-streak

 comes in whose absence
 earth crumbles

58.

(1-5, 'Some San Francisco Poems', SEASCAPE: NEEDLE'S EYE,
by George Oppen, The Sumac Press, Fremont, Michigan, 1972)

JEROME ROTHENBERG

Jerome Rothenberg was born in New York City in 1931. Besides publishing many books of poetry he has also edited a number of anthologies and three magazines and he has produced a large body of translations from European and American Indian languages. He founded the Hawk's Well Press and edited *POEMS FROM THE FLOATING WORLD* and *SOME/THING* in New York between 1958 and 1964. Among his own books of poetry are the following: *WHITE SUN BLACK SUN* (Hawk's Well Press, 1960); *THE SEVEN HELLS OF JIGOKU ZOSHI* (Trobar Books, 1962); *SIGHTINGS I-IX* (Hawk's Well Press, 1964); *THE GORKI POEMS* (E. Corno Emplumado, Mexico, 1966); *BETWEEN: POEMS 1960-1963* (Fulcrum Press, London, 1967, this volume includes *THE SEVEN HELLS OF JIGOKU ZOSHI*); *CONVERSATIONS* (Black Sparrow Press, Los Angeles, 1968); *POEMS 1964-1967* (Black Sparrow Press, Los Angeles, 1968, this volume contains *SIGHTINGS I-IX*, *THE GORKI POEMS* and *CONVERSATIONS*); *SIGHTINGS I-IX & RED EASY A COLOUR* (with ten prints by Ian Tyson, Circle Press, London, 1968); *POLAND/1931* (Unicorn Press, Santa Barbara, California, 1969); *THE FLIGHT OF QUETZALCOATL* (Unicorn Bookshop, Brighton, 1967, limited edition, included in *TECHNICIANS OF THE SACRED*); *A BOOK OF TESTIMONY* (Tree Books, California, 1971); *POEMS FOR THE GAME OF SILENCE 1960-1970* (The Dial Press, New York, 1971).

His anthologies include: *POEMS FROM THE FLOATING WORLD* (Hawk's Well Press, 1964); *RITUAL: A BOOK OF PRIMITIVE RITES AND EVENTS* (Something Else Press, 1966); *TECHNICIANS OF THE SACRED: A RANGE OF POETRIES FROM AFRICA, AMERICA, ASIA & OCEANIA* (Doubleday, 1968); *ALCHERINGA: A FIRST MAGAZINE OF THE WORLD'S TRIBAL POETRIES* (ed. with Dennis Tedlock, 1970 onwards); *SHAKING THE PUMPKIN: TRADITIONAL POETRY OF THE INDIAN NORTH AMERICAS* (Doubleday, 1972); and *AMERICA: A PROPHECY* (due to be published later this year).

His books of translations include: *NEW YOUNG GERMAN POETS* (City Lights, San Francisco, 1959); *THE DEPUTY* by Hochhuth (Samuel French, 1965); *POEMS FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T READ POEMS* by Enzensberger (translation with Michael Hamburger, 1968); *THE BOOK OF HOURS & CONSTELLATIONS, OR GOMRINGER* BY ROTHENBERG (1968); *THE 17 HORSE SONGS OF FRANK MITCHELL, X-XLIII* (1970); and *POEMS FROM THE SOCIETY OF THE MYSTIC ANIMALS* (with Richard Johnny John, 1971).

He founded *ALCHERINGA*, his magazine of ethnopoetics, in the hope that:

"by exploring the full range of man's poetries, to enlarge our understanding of what a poem may be...to provide a ground for experiments in the translations of tribal/oral poetry & a forum to discuss the possibilities & problems of translation from widely divergent cultures...to encourage ethnologists & linguists

to do work increasingly ignored by academic publications in their fields, namely to present the tribal poetries as values in themselves rather than as ethnographic data...to return to complex/'primitive' systems of poetry as (intermedia) performance, etc., & to explore ways of presenting these in translation ...in Gary Snyder's words, 'to master the archaic & the primitive as models of basic nature-related cultures...knowing that we are the first human beings in history to have all of man's culture available to our study, & being free enough of the weight of traditional cultures to seek out a larger identity... to combat cultural genocide in all its manifestations.' "

It is an extraordinary and wonderful magazine presenting, in part, a completely new tradition of American poetry. Rothenberg's new anthology AMERICA: A PROPHECY promises to extend this side of his work providing for Americans an ancient but continuous tradition that has been submerged under what may appear to be a more limited and even simpler Western European, predominantly Anglo-Saxon tradition. Not a total rejection of the already known but a revision of what was thought to be known, intermingled with what has been ignored. We could use such an anthology in England.

Including 'The 13th Horse Song of Frank Mitchell' has to be risky for those who cannot get to hear Rothenberg reading it in ALCHERINGA No. 2. In a note for 'The Second Horse Song of Frank Mitchell', Rothenberg wrote:

"with the help of ethnomusicologist David McAllester, I've been attempting 'total translation' of all 17 Horse Songs, accounting not only for meaning but for word distortions, meaningless syllables, music, styles of performance, etc.; and since translation at no point is mere reproduction, even the music isn't free from changes. The idea never was to set English words to Navajo music but to let a whole work emerge newly in the process of considering what kinds of statement there were to begin with. As far as I could I also wanted to avoid 'writing' the poem in English, since this seemed irrelevant to a poetry that reached a high development outside of any written system."

Of his own work Rothenberg has written:

"I think of myself as making poems that other poets haven't provided for me and for the existence of which I feel a deep need.

I look for new forms and possibilities, but also for ways of presenting in my own language the oldest possibilities of poetry going back to the primitive and archaic cultures that have been opening up to us over the last hundred years.

I have most recently been translating American Indian poetry (including the 'meaningless' syllables, word distortions and music) and have been exploring ancestral sources of my own in the world of Jewish mystics, thieves and madmen.

I believe that everything is possible in poetry, and that our earlier 'western' attempts at definition represent a failure of perception we no longer have to endure.

My personal manifesto reads:

- (1) I will change your mind;
- (2) any means (= methods) to that end;
- (3) to oppose the 'devourers' = bureaucrats, system-makers, priests, etc. (W. Blake);
- (4) '& if thou wdst understand that wch is me, know this: all that I have sd I have uttered playfully —& I was by no means ashamed of it.' (J.C. to his disciples, THE ACTS OF ST. JOHN)

('A Statement', POETRY REVIEW, Vol. 63, No. 1, Spring, 1972)

Blank

'from The Apotheosis of Mister California part one The Cokboy'

saddlesore I came
 a jew among
 the indians
 vot em I doink in dis strange place
 mit deez pipple mit strange eyes
 could be it's trouble
 could be could be
 (he says) a shadow
 ariseth from his buckwheat
 has tomahawk in hand
 shadow of an axe inside his right eye
 of a fountainpen inside his left
 vot em I doink here
 how vass i lost tzu get here
 am a hundred men
 a hundred fifty different shadows
 jews & gentiles
 who bring the Law to Wilderness
 (he says) this man
 is me my grandfather
 & other men-of-letters
 men with letters carrying the mail
 lithuanian pony-express riders
 the financially crazed Buffalo Bill
 still riding in the lead
 hours before avenging the death of Custer
 making the first 3-D movie of those wars
 or years before it
 the numbers vanishing in kabbalistic time
 that brings all men together
 & the lonely rider
 saddlesore
 is me my grandfather
 & other men of letters

jews & gentiles entering
 the domain of Indian
 who bring the Law to Wilderness
 in gold mines & shakey stores
 the fur trade heavy agriculture
 ballots bullets barbers
 who threaten my beard your hair
 but patronize me
 & will make our kind the Senator from Arizona
 the champion of their Law
 who hates us both
 but dresses as a jew one day an Indian
 the next a little christian shmuck
 vot em I doink here
 dis place is maybe crazy
 has all the letters going backwards
 (he says) so who can read the signboards

to the desert
 who can shake his way out of the woods
 ford streams the grandmothers
 were living near
 with snakes inside their cunts
 teeth maybe
 maybe chainsaws
 when the Baal Shem visited America
 he wore a shtreiml
 the locals all thought he was a cowboy
 maybe from Mexico
 'a cokboy?'
 no a cowboy
 I will be more than a credit to my community
 & race
 but will search for my brother Esau among these redmen
 their nocturnal fires I will share
 piss strained from my holy cock

will bear seed of Adonoi
 & feed them visions
 I will fill full a clamshell
 will pass it around from mouth to mouth
 we will watch the moonrise
 through each other's eyes
 the distances vanishing in kabbalistic time
 (he says) the old man watches
 from the cliffs a city
 overcome with light
 the man & the city disappear
 he looks & sees another city
 this one is made of glass
 inside the buildings stand
 immobile statues
 brown-skinned faces
 catch the light
 an elevator
 moving up & down
 in the vision of the Cuna 'nele'
 the vision of my grandfather
 vision of the Baal Shem in America
 the slaves in steerage
 what have they seen in common
 by what light their eyes
 have opened into stars
 I wouldn't know
 what I was doing here
 this place has all the letters going
 backwards a reverse in time
 towards wilderness
 the old jew strains at his gaberdine
 it parts for him
 his spirit rushes up the mountainside
 & meets an eagle
 no an iggle

captains commanders dollinks delicious madmen
 murderers opening the continent up to exploitation
 cease & desist (he says)
 let's speak (he says)
 I feel like a little gas down here (he says)
 (can't face the mirror without crying)
 & the iggle lifts him
 like an elevator
 to a safe place above the sunrise
 there gives a song to him
 the Baal Shem's song
 repeated without words for centuries
 'hey heya heya' but translates it
 as 'yuh-buh-buh-buh-buh-buh-bum'
 when the Baal Shem (yuh-buh) learns to do a bundle
 what does the Baal Shem (buh-buh) put into the bundle?
 silk of his prayershawl-bag beneath
 cover of beaverskin above
 savor of esrog fruit within
 horn of a mountain goat between
 feather of dove around the sides
 clove of a Polish garlic at its heart
 he wears when traveling
 in journeys through kabbalistic forests
 cavalry of the Tsars on every side
 men with fat moustaches yellow eyes & sabers
 who stalk the gentle soul
 at night through the Wyoming steppes
 (he says) vot em I doink here
 I could not find mine het
 would search the countryside on hands & knees
 until behind a rock in Cody
 old Indian steps forth
 the prophecies of both join at this point
 like smoke a pipe is held

between them dribbles through their lips
 the keen tobacco
 'cowboy?'
 cokboy (says the Baal Shem)
 places a walnut in his handkerchief & cracks it
 on a boulder each one eats
 the Indian draws forth a deck of cards
 & shuffles
 'game?'
 they play at wolves & lambs
 the fire crackles in the pripitchok
 in a large tent somewhere in America
 the story of the coming-forth begins

Glossary: Baal Shem: (= Master of the Name): founder in 18th
 century of Hasidic sect of ecstatic Judaism. Shtreiml: broad-
 brimmed Hasidic headgear. Shmuck: prick, cock, etc. (Yid.)
 Nele: Shaman among the Cuna Indians of Panama. Pripitchok:

old fashioned Slavic oven, as I understand it, though I have never sat by same. For the famous Yiddish lullaby in which it is mentioned, c.f. Zukofsky's 'the:' a fragment thereof.

('from The Apotheosis of Mister California part one The Cokboy', by Jerome Rothenberg, POETRY REVIEW, Vol. 63, No. 1, Spring, 1972)

'The 13th Horse-Song of Frank Mitchell'
(Navajo)

Key: nnnn N N gahn

Some 're lovely N nawu nnnn but some 're & are at my hawuz
nawu wnn N wnn baheegwing
Some 're lovely N hawu nnnn but some 're & are at my howinow
N wnn baheegwing
Some 're lovely N nawu nnnn but some are & are at my howzes
nawu nahht bahyeenwing but bahyeesum nahtgwing

NNNOOOOW because I was (N gahn) I was the boy ingside the
dawn but some 're at my house now wnn N wnn baheegwing
& by going from the house the wwideshell howanome but some 're
at my howinow N wnnn baheegwing
& by going from the house the darkned hoganome but some 're at
my house N wnn baheegwing
& by going from the swollen hoganouse my breath has blown but
some 're at my house N wnn baheegwing
& by going from the house the hioly hoganome but some 're at my
house N wnn N wnn baheegwingnnng
& from the plays of jewels we walk (naht gahn) (p)pon but some 're
at my howinow N wnn baheegwing
with prayersticks that are white (nnuhgohn) but some 're at my
house N wnn baheegwing
with my feathers that are white (mmm gahn) but some 're at my
house N wnn baheegwing
with my spirit horses that are white (nuhgohn) but some 're at my
house N wnn baheegwing
with my spirit horses that are white & dawn (nuhgohn) but some 're
at my house N wnnn baheegwing
with those spirit horses that are whiteshell nawuNgnnnn but some
're at my house N wnn baheegwing
with those howanorses that are whiteshell nawu but some 're at my
howinouse wnnn baheegwingnnng
wiiingth jewels of every kind d(go)nN draw them on nahtann but
some 're at my howinow N wnn baheegwing

with cloth of every kind d(go)nN draw them on nahtnnn but some
 're at my howinow N wnn baheegwing
 with sheep of every kind d(go)nN draw them on nahtnnn but some
 're at my house N wnn baheegwing
 with horses of evree(ee)(ee) kind d(go)nN draw them on nahtnnn
 but some 're at my howinow N wnn baheegwing
 with cattle of every kind d(go)nN draw them on nahtnnn but some
 're at my howinow N wnn baheegwing
 with men of every kind d(go)nN draw them on nahtnnn but some
 're at my house N wnn baheegwing
 in my house of precious jewels in my back(acka)room (N gahn)
 where nnnn but some 're at my howinow N wnn baheegwing
 in this house of precious jewels we walk (p)pon (N gahn) where
 nnnn but some 're at my house N wnn baheegwing
 & everything that's g(h)one before mmmore we walk (p)pon but
 some 're at my howinow N wnn baheegwing
 & everything that's more () won't be (be!) be poor but some 're
 at my house N wnn baheegwing
 & everything that's now & living to be old & blesst nhawu but some
 're at my howinow N wnn baheegwing
 because I am the boy who blesses/blisses to be old but some 're
 at my house N wnn baheegwing

Zzmmmm 're lovely N nawu nnnn but some 're & are at my
 howinouse N wnn baheegwing
 Zzmmmm 're lovely nawu N nnnn but some 're & are at my house
 N wnn baheegwing
 Zzmmmm 're lovely N nawu nnnn but some are & are at my howzes
 nahht bahyeenahtnwing but nawu nohwun baheegwing

('The 13th Horse-Song of Frank Mitchell (Navajo)', SHAKING THE
 PUMPKIN Traditional Poetry of the Indian North Americas, by
 Jerome Rothenberg, Doubleday & Company, 1972, available on record
 in ALCHERINGA NO. 2, Summer, 1971)

'Portrait of a Jew Old Country Style'

visitor to warsaw

old man with open fly
 flesh girls could suck
 mothers would die to catch sight of
 sometimes would pass your door
 his song was
 a generation is a day, time floweth
 coldly he blew his nose
 reached a hand around his high round waist
 money was pinned to caftan
 aches & pains

a jew's a jew he says
love brings him to the words he needs
but sadly

no

I cannot stay
for breakfast loving
the taste of duck eggs loving
little rolls & butter
loving cereals in metal pans

he tells them

all we touch is love
& feeds us

this is a portrait of a jew old country style
the gentile will fail to understand
the jew come on better days will run from it
how real

the grandfathers become
my grandfather the baker son of bakers
YOSEL DOVID ben SHMIEL
who was a hasid at the court in Rizhyn
came to U.S.A. circa 1913
but found the country godless
tho he worked in leather
shoes were the craft all our friends
got into first
e.g. his brother-in-law we called
THE UNCLE
I remember in a basement shop
somewhere 'downtown'
bent over shoes he stitched
how many years would pass
till nineteen-fifty maybe
when I saw him last
his lungs gone in east bronx tenement
he slept behind a curtain
seeing me he thought
I was my brother old & crazy
he was the oldest jew I knew
my grandfather had died
in nineteen-twenty
on the night my parents
ran to warsaw
to get married my father
left for U.S.A. the next day
no one told him of his father's death
he would never be a talmudist
would go from shoes
to insurance
from insurance back to shoes
later an entrepreneur & bust
he was always clean
shaven my grandmother

the religious one I mean
 saw the first beard
 I'd ever grown got angry
 "jews don't wear beards"
 (she said) no
 not in golden U.S.A.
 the old man had fled from
 to his Polish death

for which reason I deny autobiography
 or that the life of a man
 matters more or less

"We are all one man"

Cezanne said

I count the failures of these jews
 as proof of their election
 they are divine because they all die

screaming

like the first

universal jew

the gentiles

will tell you had some special deal

('Portrait of a Jew Old Country Style', Program Three, 1968,
 from POLAND/1931, POEMS FOR THE GAME OF SILENCE 1960-1970,
 by Jerome Rothenberg, The Dial Press, New York, 1971)

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JONATHAN WILLIAMS

Jonathan Williams was born in Ashville, North Carolina (birthplace of Thomas Wolfe), in 1929. Buckminster Fuller has called him "our Johnny Appleseed—we need him more than we know". He has been described as a man who "publishes poets, introduces poets to poets, poets to readers, professors to poets, poets to professors and he photographs poets...he is an ambassador for an enterprise that has neither centre nor hierarchy...he is also a traveller, hiker, botanist, antiquarian, epicure and much else". He began his career at Black Mountain College in 1951 where he was a student of Charles Olson. It was in that same year that he founded the Jargon Society in Penland, North Carolina, perhaps the finest and certainly the most energetic of poetry publishers in America. Before we came to know them, he had published Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, Louis Zukofsky, Denise Levertov and Kenneth Patchen.

Williams has some 18 books of his own in print including: THE EMPIRE FINALS AT VERONA (Jargon 13, 1959); AMEN/HUZZA/ SELAH (Jargon 13a, 1961); ELEGIES AND CELEBRATIONS (Jargon 13b, 1962); IN ENGLAND'S GREEN & (Auerhahn, San Francisco, 1962); LULLABIES TWISTERS GIBBERS DRAGS (Jargon 61, 1963); LINES ABOUT HILLS ABOVE LAKES (Roman Books, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 1964); MAHLER (Malborough Fine Art, London, 1967, limited edition with silk-screen prints by R.B. Kitzj, reprinted by Cape Goliard, 1969); 50 EPIPHYTES (Poet & Printer, London, 1967); THE LUCCIDITIES (Turret Books, London, 1967); STRONG OUT WITH ELGAR ON A HILL (Finial Press, Illinois, 1970); BLUES & ROOTS/RUES & BLUETS: A GARLAND FOR APPALACHIANS (Grossman, New York, 1971); THE LOCO LOGODAEDALIST IN SITU: SELECTED POEMS 1968-1970 (Cape Goliard, 1972); and AN EAR IN BARTRAM'S TREE: SELECTED POEMS 1957-1967 (University of North Carolina Press, 1969, reprinted New Directions, 1972). This last book includes poems from JAMMIN' THE GREEK SCENE, 1959, a collection which was in proofs but never got published. Williams also interviewed Basil Bunting for the book, "DESCANT ON RAWTHEY'S MADRIGAL" (Gnomon Press, Lexington, Kentucky, 1968), and edited the tri-quarterly issue, EDWARD DAHLBERG: A TRIBUTE, 1970.

Williams has been referred to as "America's largest open air museum"; "our Nicholas Pevsner of Appalachia"; and "a kind of polytechnic institute". The size, scope and wit of his energising will exhaust the weak. His mentors range from William Carlos Williams to Charles Ives, from Blake to Mahler and include Samuel Palmer, Edward Dahlberg, Thomas Jefferson, William Bartram, Anton Bruckner, Basho, Satie and Frederick Delius. He is a human energy source recharging the batteries of all who connect with his zeal and stamina. He builds communities of the mind wherever he goes—and he goes everywhere, crisscrossing America not just from San Francisco to New York but from Rollinsville, Colorado, to

Highlands, North Carolina. He now has a house in Dentedale, Yorkshire.

The Jargon Society continues—it has rescued Mina Loy and has insisted that we never forget Paul Metcalfe's GENOA—and the motto is 'Onward'.

Writing of his own work he has said:

"I like to catch people speaking 'poems' who never heard the word POET...to try to raise the common to grace, to pay very close attention to the earthy."

His method is 'peripatetic', always on the go, always on the lookout. He quotes John Clare saying, in 1848, "I found the poems in the fields and only wrote them down", and Frederick Sommer, the photographer, said:

"What difference is there between what you find and what you make? You have to make it to find it. You have to find it to make it. You only find things you already have in your mind."

If you meet Williams half-way with your faculties alert, he will prove an eye-opening, ear-opening guide necessitating a revision of all you have long seen but have never known.

'O For a Muse of Fire!'

Date: Tuesday, May 13, 1958—
 a date previously memorable in history for the birth of
 Joe Lewis (1914),
 the Empress Maria Theresa (1717),
 and the beheading of
 Johan Van Olden Barnveldt (1619)

Place: Wrigley Field, Chicago, Illinois

Time: 3:06 p.m.; warm and sunny; breeze steady, right to left

Attendance: 5,692 (paid)

Situation: top of the sixth; Cardinals trailing the Cubs, 3-1;
 one out; Gene Green on 2nd

Public Address: "Batting for Jones, #6, Stan Musial!"

The Muse muscles up; Stan the Man stands in...and
 O, Hosanna, Hosanna, Ozanna's boy, Moe Drabowsky comes in

2 and 2
 "a curve ball, outside corner, higher
 than intended—
 I figured he'd hit it in the ground"

("it felt fine!")

a line shot to left, down the line,
 rolling deep for a double...

("it felt fine!")

Say, Stan, baby, how's it feel to hit 3000?

"Uh, it feels fine"

Only six major-league players in baseball history had hit safely
 3000 times prior to this occasion. The density of the informa-
 tion surrounding the event continues to surprise me, rather belies
 Tocqueville's assertion that Americans cannot concentrate.

('O For a Muse of Fire!', THE EMPIRE FINALS AT VERONA, by Jona-
 than Williams, Jargon 13, 1959)

'Symphony No. 4, in G Major'

"...inter urinas et faeces nascimur." St. Augustine

I. SERENE—WARY, NOT HURRIED

"Happinesses have wings and wheels;
 miseries are leaden legged;
 and their whole employment is to clip
 the wings and take off the wheels
 of our chariots.
 We determine, therefore, to be happy
 and do all that we can, tho' not
 all that we would,"

said William Blake in Felpham, Sussex

And so there are
 mysterious chariots chanting
 charivaris and planting
 'haricots verts'
 in the air
 over Thomas Hariot's Cheviot
 potato patch

Everything should be
 as simple as
 it is,
 but NOT
 simpler,
 agreed Professor
 Einstein, a stone's throw
 away in Chariot

Eight

II. IN A COMFORTABLE MOTION

"like a fiend in a cloud,"
 Death calls the tune,
 plays out of tune and arrives
 in a cloud
 heard only by the catbird,
 who sits in Death's June sunshine
 and sings the tune again

and again

and simply continues singing:

'black eye/blue sky!'
 'black eye/blue sky!'

III. RESTFUL

"I live in a hole here,
but God has a beautiful mansion for me elsewhere."

O grow
a Mountain in Fountain
Court

Sundown over
London

Kate Blake
in black

IV. VERY COMFORTABLY

St. Peter looks on in Heaven,
6 O'clock, Sunday, the 12th of August 1827:

"Lest you should not have heard
of the Death of Mr. Blake
I have written this to inform you...

—Just before he died His Countenance became fair—
His eyes Brighten'd and He burst out in Singing
of the things he Saw in Heaven. In truth He Died
like a Saint as a Person who was standing by Him
Observed..."

No music on earth
is there
that might ever compare
with ours

('Symphony No. 4, in G. Major', MAHLER, by Jonathan Williams,
Cape Goliard, 1969, also in AN EAR IN BARTRAM'S TREE: SELEC-
TED POEMS 1957-1967, by Jonathan Williams, New Directions,
1972)

'Symphony No. 5, in C Sharp Minor'

"How blessed, how blessed a tailor to be!
 Oh that I had been born a commercial traveller
 and engaged as baritone at the Opera! Oh that
 I might give my Symphony its first performance
 fifty years after my death!" Mahler, 1904

I. FUNERAL MARCH

Mahler, from his studio on the 11th floor of the
 Hotel Majestic, New York City, hears the cortege of a
 fireman moving up Central Park West:

one roll of the drum

one road where the wind storms, where
 Cherubim sing birds' songs
 with human faces and hold the world
 in human hands and
 drift on the gold road
 where black wheels smash
 all

one roll of the drum

II. STORMILY AGITATED

to be a block of flowers
 in a wood

to be mindlessly in flower
 past understanding

to be shone on
 endlessly

to be THERE, there
 and blessed

III. SCHERZO

one two three
 one two three

little birds waltz to and fro
 in the piano

at Maiernigg on the
 Würthersee

and up the tree:
cacophony

one two three

IV. ADAGIETTO

one feels
one clematis petal
fell

its circle
is all

glimmer on this pale
river

V. RONDO-FINALE

Schoenberg: "I should
even have liked to observe
how Mahler
knotted his tie,

and should have found that
more interesting and instructive
than learning how
one of our musical bigwigs composes
on a quote sacred subject
unquote

...An apostle
who does not glow
preaches heresy."

his tie was knotted
with éclat
on
the dead run!

('Symphony No. 5, in C Sharp Minor', MAHLER, by Jonathan
Williams, Cape Goliard, 1969, also in AN EAR IN BARTRAM'S
TREE: SELECTED POEMS 1957-1967, by Jonathan Williams, New
Directions, 1972)

'Bea Hensley Hammers an Iron Chinquapin Leaf
 On His Anvil Near Spruce Pine
 & Cogitates on the Nature of Two Beauty Spots'

in the Linville Gorge I
 know this place

now it's a rock wall
 you look up
 it's covered in punktatum all
 the way to Heaven

that's a
 sight!

•
 up on Smoky
 you ease up at daybust
 and see the first
 light in the tops of the tulip trees

now boys that just naturally
 grinds and polishes
 the soul

makes it
 normal
 again

I mean it's really
 pretty!

('Bea Hensley Hammers an Iron Chinquapin Leaf On His Anvil
 Near Spruce Pine & Cogitates on the Nature of Two Beauty
 Spots', *BLUES & ROOTS/RUE & BLUETS: A GARLAND FOR
 APPALACHIANS*, Grossman, New York, 1971, also in *AN EAR
 IN BARTRAM'S TREE: SELECTED POEMS 1957-1967*, by Jonathan
 Williams, New Directions, 1972)

'The Hermit Cackleberry Brown, On Human Vanity:'

caint call your name
but your face is easy

come sit

now some folks figure theyre
bettern
rowflop they
aint

not a bit

just good to hold the world together
like hooved up ground

thats what

'The Nostrums of the Black Mountain Publican'

best thing
for roomatiz,
Homer, is

a great big ol messa
Woolly-Booger

if God
made anything better
he kep it
for Hissef

but, boys, lemme
tell you:

DON'T EAT NO
HAIRPIE
ON FRIDAY!

('The Hermit Cackleberry Brown, On Human Vanity:' and 'The Nostrums of the Black Mountain Publican', *BLUES & ROOTS/ RUE & BLUETS: A GARLAND FOR APPALACHIANS*, by Jonathan Williams, Grossman, New York, 1971, also in *AN EAR IN BARTRAM'S TREE: SELECTED POEMS 1957-1967*, by Jonathan Williams, New Directions, 1972)

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WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535

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HAIKITE
ON FRIDAY!

The Bureau has received information from the
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are active in the area of [illegible]
[illegible] New York, New York
[illegible] New York, New York
[illegible] New York, New York

TED BERRIGAN

SUPPLEMENT FOR MODERN
AMERICAN POETRY CONFERENCE MAY 25-27
POLYTECHNIC OF CENTRAL LONDON.

"Ann Arbor Song" and "People Who Died" from
IN THE EARLY MORNING RAIN (Cape Goliard, 1970).
"Things to do in Providence" and "Frank
O' Hara" from ALL STARS (ed. Tom Clark,
Goliard and Grossman, 1972).
"Many Happy Returns" from MANY HAPPY
RETURNS (Corinth, 1968).

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TED BERRIGAN

Ted Berrigan was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1934. He served for three years in the U.S. army, including 18 months in Korea. He studied at the University of Tulsa from 1955-1960 when he moved to New York. In 1963 he founded C press and magazine with Lorenz Gude. It was the thirteen issues of "C" together with the C publications of books by Ron Padgett, Dick Gallup, Tom Veitch, Kenward Elmslie, Joe Ceravolo, Michael Brownstein and others that provided the focal point for a group of poets, including John Ashberry and Kenneth Koch, that soon became referred to as The New York Poets. He shared a close association with a number of New York painters, an association that was deeply reinforced by the poet Frank O'Hara who was also a curator of the Museum of Modern Art. Berrigan himself worked as a reviewer for ART NEWS from 1966-1967. He has also taught at Yale, Iowa, and now teaches at the University of Chicago.

His first major work was THE SONNETS (C Press 1964; reprinted Grove Press, 1967). His other books include: SEVENTEEN (plays with Ron Padgett, C Press, 1964); LIVING WITH CHRIS (illustrated Joe Brainard, Boke Press, 1965); NOH (with Ron Padgett, Lines Broadsheet No.1, 1965); MANY HAPPY RETURNS (Angel Hair Broadsheet, 1967); BEAN SPASMS (with Ron Padgett and Joe Brainard, Kulchur Press, 1967); 3 Silkscreens with George Schneeman in an edition of 20 (1968); MANY HAPPY RETURNS (Corinth Press, 1968); Assorted collages with words, with Joe Brainard (1961-1968); IN THE EARLY MORNING RAIN (Cape Goliard, 1970); GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE IST TOT (Marz Books, Cologne, 1970); and AN INTERVIEW WITH TED BERRIGAN (Ignu Publications, 1971). IN THE EARLY MORNING RAIN and AN INTERVIEW were both published in England.

Besides publishing in a large number of poetry magazines, including ANGEL HAIR, THE PARIS REVIEW, THE PARK REVIEW, and LINES, Berrigan's work has also appeared in three very important anthologies: AN ANTHOLOGY OF NEW YORK POETS, ed. Ron Padgett and David Shapiro (Vintage Books, Random House, 1970); THE YOUNG AMERICAN POETS, ed. Paul Carroll (Follett Press, 1968); and

ALL STARS, ed. Tom Clark (Goliard and Grossman, 1978). A selection of his latest work will shortly appear in an issue of POETRY REVIEW.

THE SONNETS was a formidable first book, consisting as it does of a number of intricate and interacting poems with a distinct narrative created by the repetition of lines and the threading motifs. Berrigan has described the composition of this book in AN INTERVIEW where he says:

"I had been writing for four, maybe five years, and the rhetoric, the turns at the ends of the lines, the places where one feels one is most oneself, one makes those little movements that are your own movements...they weren't mine, they didn't feel enough mine."

He continues:

"I'd written a series, finally, of six poems...As I finished each one it wasn't by me, not in the way that usually happens... it was something that I'd made but I'd only been able to make it because of what I'd read... In sheer desperation one night, in delirium too I suppose, having been given permission to do this by my readings in Duchamp, John Cage, Bill Burroughs, and John Ashberry and people like that, I took these six poems and put them next to the typewriter and started typing up one line from the first one, one line from the second one and so on until I had six lines. Then I went backwards doing the same thing, through the six again until I had twelve lines. By then I knew what the last two lines would be. I was going after the sonnet, as you can see, and I picked up the lines by quick choice. I mean, I knew the poems thoroughly, I'd written them, I'd worked on them, I knew them through, I picked them by very quick choice, almost random chance. Not really though, I mean there's no such thing, and from those six poems I managed to make seven sonnets, and it scared me, I mean they came so easily and they seemed quite good. They were like nothing I'd seen before, but the rawness and roughness of them seemed to

me to be just like me."

This excerpt illustrates Berrigan's concern with procedures, the setting of a task and its fulfilment. It can also be seen in his interest in numbers and in alliteration, as well as in his use of found material, cut up and rearranged. Although, unlike some poets, what Berrigan has found are his own words and it is these that he cuts up and rearranges visually off the page.

His more recent work shows a tendency towards more open forms which, he says, best befit a city poet. He describes himself as seeking a polarity "between the natural elegance of Frank O'Hara and the naturalism of Paul Blackburn.

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ANN ARBOR SONG

I won't be at this boring poetry reading
 again!
 I'll never have to hear
 so many boring poems again!
 + I'm sure I'll never read them again:
 In fact, I haven't read them yet!

Anne won't call me here again,
 To tell me that Jack is dead.
 I'm glad you did, Anne, though
 It made me be rude to friends.
 I won't cry for Jack here again.

+ Larry + Joan won't visit me here
 again.
 Joan won't cook us beautiful dinners,
 orange + green + yellow + brown
 here again.
 + Thom Gunn + Carol + Don + I won't get high
 with Larry + Joan here again
 Though we may do somewhere else again.

Harris + John + Merrill won't read
 in my class, again.
 Maybe there'll never be such a class
 again:
 I think there probably will, though
 + I know Allen will follow me round the world
 with his terrible singing voice:
 But it will never make us laugh here again.

You Can't Go Home Again is a terrific book:
 I doubt if I'll ever read that again.
 (I read it first in Tulsa, in 1958)
 + I'll never go there again.

Where does one go from here? Because
 I'll go somewhere again. I'll come somewhere again, too,
 + You'll be there, + together we can have a good time.
 Meanwhile, you'll find me right here, when you
 come through, again.

('Ann Arbor Song', IN THE EARLY MORNING RAIN by
 Ted Berrigan, Cape Goliard, 1970).

PEOPLE WHO DIED

- Pat Dugan.....my grandfather.....throat cancer.....1947.
- Ed Berrigan.....my dad.....heart attack.....1958.
- Dickie Budlong.....my best friend Brucie's big brother, when
we were five to eight.....killed in Korea, 1953.
- Red O'Sullivan.....hockey star + cross-country runner
who sat at my lunch table
in High School.....car crash.....1954.
- Jimmy "Wah" Tiernan.....my friend, in High School,
Football + Hockey All-State.....car crash.....1959.
- Cisco Houston.....died of cancer.....1961.
- Freddy Herko, dancer...jumped out of a Greenwich Village
window in 1963.
- Anne Kepler...my girl...killed by smoke-poisoning while playing
the flute at the Yonker's Children's Hospital
during a fire set by a 16 year old arsonist...1965.
- Frank....Frank O'Hara....hit by a car on Fire Island, 1966.
- Woody Guthrie....dead of Huntington's Chorea in 1968.
- Neal....Neal Cassidy....died of exposure, sleeping all night
in the rain by the RR tracks of Mexico...1969.
- Franny Winston....just a girl..totalled her car on the
Detroit-AnnArbor Freeway, returning from the dentist..
Sept. 1969.
- Jack....Jack Kerouac....died of drink + angry sickness...in 1969.
- My friends whose deaths have slowed my heart stay with me now.

('People Who Died', IN THE EARLY MORNING RAIN by Ted
Berrigan, Cape Goliard, 1970).

THINGS TO DO IN PROVIDENCE

Take Valium Crash
 Sleep
 Dream +,
 forget it.

Wake up now + strange
 displaced,
 at home.

Read the Providence Evening Bulletin
 No one you knew
 got married
 had children
 got divorced
 died

 got born
 tho many familiar names flicker
 + disappear.

Sit
 watch TV
 draw blanks

swallow
 pepsi
 meatballs

 give yourself the needle:
 "Shit! There's gotta be something
 to do
 here!"

('Things to do in Providence', by Ted Berrigan, ALL STARS, ed.
 Tom Clark, Colliard and Crossman, 1972).

FRANK O'HARA

Winter in the country, Southampton, pale horse
 as the soot rises, then settles, over the pictures
 The birds that were signing this morning have shut up
 I thought I saw a couple, kissing, but Larry said no
 It's a strange bird. He should know. + I think now
 "Grandmother divided by monkee equals outer space." Ron
 put me in that picture. In another picture, a good-
 looking poet is thinking it over; nevertheless, he will
 never speak of that it. But, his face is open, his eyes
 are clear, and, leaning lightly on an elbow, fist below
 his ear, he will never be less than perfectly frank,
 listening, completely interested in whatever there may
 be to hear. Attentive to me alone here. Between friends,
 nothing would seem stranger to me than true intimacy.
 What seems genuine, truly real, is thinking of you, how
 that makes me feel. You are dead. And you'll never
 write again about the country, that's true.
 But the people in the sky really love
 to have dinner + to take a walk with you.

('Frank O'Hara' by Ted Berrigan, ALL STARS ed. Tom
 Clark, Goliard and Grossman, 1972).

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

to Dick Gallup

It's a great pleasure to
 wake "up"

mid-afternoon

2 o'clock

and if thy stomach think not

no matter...

because
 the living

"it's easy"

you splash the face +
 back of the neck

swig Pepsi

+ drape the bent frame in something
"blue for going out"

. . .

you might smoke a little pot, even
or take a pill
or two pills

.

(the pleasures of prosperity
tho they are only bonuses
and neither necessary nor not)
really

.

+ then:

POOP!

...

Puerto-Rican girls are terrific!
you have to smile but you don't
touch, you haven't eaten
yet, and you're too young
to die...

.

No, I'm only kidding!
Who on earth would kill
for love? (Who wouldn't?)

.

Joanne + Jack
will feed you
today

because

Anne + Lewis are
"on the wing" as
but not like
always...

..

Michael is driving a hard bargain
himself
to San Francisco...

. . .

+
Pete + Linda
+ Katie and George,
Emilio, Blio and Paul
have gone to Maine...

...

Everyone, it seems, is somewhere else.
None are lost, tho. At least,
we aren't!

(GEM'S SPA: corner of 2nd Avenue +
Saint Mark's Place)

I'm right here
sunlight opening up the sidewalk,
opening up today's first black+white,
+ I'm about to be
born again thinking of you

('Many Happy Returns', by Ted Berrigan, MANY HAPPY RETURNS,
Corinth, 1969).

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