# 1960s

## *Love, War, Revolution*

## *“The New American Poetry”*

## *“Beyond Baroque”*

## *“Smokey the B..r”*

*“The light foot hears you and the brightness begins”*

“There comes a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can’t take part, you can’t even passively take part. And you’ve got to put your bodies on the gears, and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you’ve got to make it stop.”

“OH SMIRKING SMILE OH OH MURKY HOLE BE GONE BE LOVE”

*When American abundance seemed almost limitless, as in the 1940s and 1950s, militarization had seemed almost painlessly affordable, even economically beneficial, with both guns and butter readily attainable. When abundance appeared imperiled after the mid-1960s,*

*growing numbers of Americans questioned militarization. Tolerance for its encroachments on Americans' liberties was also limited—sufficient to permit gross abuses but hardly to destroy all constraints on the state's power.*

*Perhaps most of all, but hardest to prove, militarization was quixotic, capricious, and contingent because war itself, in the sense of bombs and bullets and destruction, remained a shadowy presence in the lives of most Americans. They imagined war floridly, they transposed its words and images and emotions to their own struggles in striking ways, and they worried greatly and sincerely about its outbreak in the final cataclysm. But war remained largely an arena not of experience but of imagination, where it could be played out and acted on in lavish ways. In their hearts, Americans longed for war's spirit more than its substance, even though the line between real and imaginary wars often blurred.*

- *Michael S. Sherry,* In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s *(Yale University Press, 1995)*

Important new reading spaces, publishers, and distributors of women's literature appear in the Bay Area. Joanna Griffin and Sande Fini start the Bacchannal reading series, alta begins Shameless Hussy Press, Susan Griffin coordinates a large conference on women poets for UC Extension, and Judy Grahn establishes the Women's Press Collective. In conjunction with the growing feminist movement, many women develop an activist posture in their writing. In addition, as Neeli Cherkovski notes in *Hank: The Life of Charles Bukowski* (Random House, 1991), "a number of mimeographed poetry journals were begun in the mid-sixties...The poor paper stocks the editors used and the careless printing jobs were statements of their disdain for established journals"; this development becomes known as "the mimeo revolution." During this period, many poets, emulating rock stars, attempted to incorporate music and song in their performances. (Michael McClure is emphatically told by friends, "Don't sing, Michael!") A contemporary musician remarks about Bob Dylan, "When [Dylan and I] met during his first SF appearance, he reiterated that the 'poets had it' & that he was a songwriter, a position he holds to this day." Michael McClure and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, the musician goes on, "jumped on the rock-star limo because, like Allen Ginsberg, they wanted to be stars. A big mistake; they both had tin ears, not unlike Allen who initially was rhythm impaired & somewhat tone-deaf."

In the 35th Anniversary issue of *Open City*, Allen Cohen writes,

> In the 1950s, there were intermittent readings, benefits and spontaneous poetry and jazz combos. Regular open readings began in the early '60s and lasted until 1977.
>
> These readings were a kind of trial by fire for the average poet who often faced heckling by a crowd of drunks, tourists and other poets for those who read too long, too loud, too low or too badly.
>
> Sometimes, a bottle or a lit cigarette would come hurtling out of the darkness...
>
> It took a firm and brave referee to M.C. such readings. Prominent among them were Carol Lee Sanchez, Wayne Miller, Tom Cuson, ruth weiss, Blue the Kentucky Lioness, Steve Levine and Luke Breit.

And James Schevill notes in *Breakout! In Search of New Theatrical Environments* (Alan Swallow, 1973):

> In the middle 1960's, when I was directing the Poetry Center and teaching drama and poetry in the writing program at San Francisco State College, I began to realize more and more the theatrical significance of what was happening in the streets.

One talked about dramatic theory and practice in the classroom only to look up, startled, and watch that theory happen outside of your window…Much of this spontaneous activity during the 1960's was influenced by such companies as The San Francisco Mime Troupe, The Bread and Puppet Theatre, and El Teatro Campesino. These three groups, in particular, established national reputations for their performances in the streets, in parks, and in all kinds of buildings from cafeterias to gymnasiums.

*

## *THE VIETNAM WAR (1964-1975): A SHORT DEFINITION*

*A war between Communist North Vietnam and US-backed South Vietnam. Since the partition of Vietnam in 1954 the Communist North had attempted to unite the country as a Communist state, fueling US concern over the possible spread of Communism in SE Asia. After two US destroyers were reportedly fired on in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964, a US army was sent to Vietnam, supported by contingents from South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and Thailand, while American aircraft bombed North Vietnamese forces and areas of Cambodia. The Tet Offensive of 1968 damaged US confidence and US forces began to be withdrawn, finally leaving in 1973. The North Vietnamese captured the southern capital Saigon to end the war in 1975.*

- *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*

*In a 2001 interview conducted by Jack Foley and published in the British magazine,* BEAT SCENE, *Michael McClure remarks, "The war was* everyday life. *Where I lived in San Francisco was beneath a flight pattern for the transport planes carrying materiel to Asia, so we were reminded of it many times a day."*

***1960***

*Student sit-ins protesting segregation take place at Woolworth stores across the country. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is formed in Raleigh, North Carolina. Eight thousand students picket the House Un-American Activities Committee in San Francisco. Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) is formed in New York.*

Donald M. Allen's anthology, *The New American Poetry: 1945-1960* is published by Grove Press. It marks the first time that the Beat, Black Mountain, and San Francisco poets are given a prominent place in a mainstream anthology. Editor Allen writes,

> In the years since the war American poetry has entered upon a singularly rich period. It is a period that has seen published many of the finest achievements of the older generation: William Carlos Williams' *Paterson*, *The Desert Music and Other Poems*, and *Journey to Love*; Ezra Pound's *The Pisan Cantos*, *Section: Rock-Drill*, and *Thrones*; H.D.'s later work culminating in her long poem *Helen in Egypt*; and the recent verse of E. E. Cummings, Marianne Moore, and the late Wallace Stevens. A wide variety of poets of the second generation, who emerged in the thirties and forties, have achieved their maturity in this period: Elizabeth Bishop, Edwin Denby, Robert Lowell, Kenneth Rexroth, and Louis Zukofsky, to name only a few very diverse talents. And we can now see that a strong third generation, long awaited but only slowly recognized, has at last emerged…[This poetry] has shown one common characteristic: a total rejection of all those qualities typical of academic verse. Following the practice and precepts of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams, it has built on their achievements and gone on to evolve new conceptions of the poem. These poets have already created their own tradition, their own press, and their public. They are our avant-garde, the true continuers of the modern movement in American poetry. Through their work many are closely allied to modern jazz and abstract expressionist painting, today recognized throughout the world to be America's greatest achievements in contemporary culture. This anthology makes the same claim for the new American poetry.

Charles Olson's seminal essay, "Projective Verse," written in 1950, is included in the book. In it Olson argues for "COMPOSITION BY FIELD, as opposed to inherited line, stanza, over-all form, what is the 'old' base of the non-projective...From the moment [the poet] ventures into FIELD COMPOSITION - puts himself in the open - he can go by no track other than the one the poem under hand declares, for itself":

> What we have suffered from, is manuscript, press, the removal of verse from its producer and its reproducer, the voice, a removal by one, by two removes from its place of origin *and* its destination.

The anthology includes poetry by (<u>FIRST GROUP: BLACK MOUNTAIN POETS</u>) Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, Denise Levertov, Paul Blackburn, Robert Creeley, Paul Carroll, Larry Eigner (included at the insistence of Robert Duncan), Edward Dorn, Jonathan Williams, Joel Oppenheimer*; (*<u>SECOND GROUP: THE SAN FRANCISCO RENAISSANCE</u>) Helen Adam, Brother Antoninus, James Broughton, Madeline Gleason, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Robin Blaser, Jack Spicer, Lew Welch, Richard Duerden, Philip Lamantia, Bruce Boyd, Kirby Doyle, Ebbe Borregaard; (<u>THIRD GROUP: THE BEAT GENERATION</u>) Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, Peter Orlovsky; (<u>FOURTH GROUP: THE NEW YORK POETS</u>) Barbara Guest, James Schuyler, Edward Field, Kenneth Koch, Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery; (<u>FIFTH GROUP</u>: "*no geographical definition; it includes younger poets who have been associated with and in some cases influenced by the leading writers of the preceding groups"*) Philip Whalen, Gilbert Sorrentino, Stuart Z.

Perkoff, Gary Snyder, Edward Marshall, Michael McClure, Ray Bremser, LeRoi Jones, John Wieners, Ron Loewinsohn, and David Meltzer. This is Loewinsohn's "My Sons":

> I'll teach my sons
> the same as me -- LOOK
> at those girls on the bus to work
> intimations of real
> warm bloodgiving flesh,
> comfortable, moving
> beneath the cloth…
> …to fill our days with beauty
> from whatever faucet's available.
> (1958)

In *The Poetry and Life of Allen Ginsberg: A Narrative Poem* (Overlook Press, 2000), Edward Sanders writes of 1960,

> Beat Political Split:
>
> Kerouac supported Richard Nixon in the fall 1960 elections
> Ginsberg Kennedy

"*Beat*": McGraw-Hill publishes Jack Kerouac's *Lonesome Traveler*, the title an obvious recollection of the phrase "on the road." In the "Author's Introduction," Kerouac says he has "always considered writing [his] duty on earth" and goes on to assert, surprisingly, that he is not "beat." He has, he says, considered it his duty to preach "universal kindness, which hysterical critics have failed to notice beneath frenetic activity of my true-story novels about the 'beat' generation"; he himself is "actually not 'beat' but strange solitary crazy Catholic mystic…."

Twelve years after he coined the term "beat," Jack Kerouac denies its application to himself. In 1948 Kerouac was looking for a word which would characterize his "generation," just as "lost" characterized the Hemingway generation. When Herbert Huncke - a hipster/heroin addict Kerouac knew in New York - said, "Man, I'm beat," Kerouac knew he had found what he wanted. Huncke remarks on his 1994 CD *from dream to dream*, "When I said I was *beat*, I was *beat*, man. I was tired, exhausted, worn out. That's what *I* meant." But Kerouac took the word in a very different sense. "Beat" was even - like "lost" - a four-letter word.

In his essay "About the Beat Generation" (1957), Kerouac insists that the "Beat Generation" was a "vision" he and John Clellon Holmes and Allen Ginsberg had "in the late Forties, of a generation of crazy, illuminated hipsters suddenly rising and roaming America, serious, curious, bumming and hitchhiking everywhere, ragged, beatific, beautiful in an ugly graceful new way." That vision was "gleaned from the way we heard the word 'beat' spoken on streetcorners on Times Square and in the Village, in other cities in the downtown city night of postwar America - beat, meaning down and out but full of intense conviction." Kerouac suggests that Huncke's word was "perhaps brought from some midwest carnival or junk cafeteria. It was a new language, actually spade (Negro) jargon but you soon learned it…By 1948 it began to take shape."

In 1959, Lawrence Lipton in *The Holy Barbarians* - like many journalists of the time—had connected the beat movement to the much-discussed problem of juvenile delinquency.

Kerouac insists that beat "never meant juvenile delinquents, it meant characters of a special spirituality"

> who didn't gang up but were solitary Bartlebies staring out the dead wall window of our civilization - the subterranean heroes who'd finally turned from the "freedom" machine of the West and were taking drugs, digging bop, having flashes of insight, experiencing the "derangement of the senses" [Rimbaud's phrase], talking strange, being poor and glad, prophesying a new style for American culture…The same thing was almost going on in the postwar France of Sartre and Genet."

"Beat" also evoked a world Kerouac loved: the world of jazz -- "a fabulous beat," as he writes in *Desolation Angels*.

But eventually the word conjured up even further implications. Like Kenneth Rexroth, Jack Kerouac was a lifelong Catholic who maintained an extraordinarily deep interest in Buddhism. Kerouac's Buddhism finds expression in works such as *The Scripture of the Golden Eternity* and *Mexico City Blues*. Unlike the journalists who wrote about the beat "phenomenon," Kerouac found religious implications in the word "beat." He was French Canadian and spoke French all his life. In the movement of his myth-making imagination, "Beat" could easily become "*Béat*" -- "Blessed." It is perhaps the word's most startling transformation. The pun is present in *Desolation Angels* (written 1956, 1961) and in the title of *Beatitude* magazine, founded in North Beach in 1959. By the time he writes the introduction to *Lonesome Traveler,* Kerouac clearly feels that the word has gotten away from him, and he wants no more part of it:

> What horror I felt in 1957 and later 1958 to suddenly see "Beat" being taken up by everybody, press and TV and Hollywood borscht circuit to include the "juvenile delinquency" shot and the horrors of a mad teeming billyclub New York and L.A. and they began to call *that* Beat.
>
> ("*Beatific*: The Origins of the Beat Generation," 1959)

The "hippies" who were about to appear on the cultural horizon were a far cry from the "furtive" creatures Kerouac imagined in 1948.

*

"Fellaheen": In Kerouac's work, "fellaheen" (plural of the Arabic "fellah," peasant, husbandman) is a term similar to "beat." "Fellaheen" originated with Oswald Spengler, who used it in *The Decline of the West* to indicate the disenfranchised, the down-and-out. Interestingly, the word "beat" appears in Spengler's discussion of "fellaheen." See the "Cities and People" section: "In race there is nothing material but something cosmic and directional, the felt harmony of a Destiny, the single cadence of the march of historical Being. It is incoordination of this (wholly metaphysical) beat that produces race-hatred, which is just as strong between Germans and Frenchmen as it is between Germans and Jews, and it is resonance on this beat that makes the true love -- so akin to hate -- between man and wife." Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, An abridged edition by Helmut Werner, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson (Alfred A. Knopf, 1962).

Migrant Press in Ventura publishes Ed Dorn's *What I See in the Maximus Poems*.

Neeli Cherkovski (then Neeli Cherry) gives his first public reading in the Venice West Café. Cherkovski writes, "I was standing there reading when my grandmother, with whom I was staying at the time, passed by, saw me in the den of the beatniks and motioned for me to leave, waving her arms in the air frantically. I wrote a poem about the experience which was published in a mimeo journal called *SUN*. 'Once I read in Venice at the stone shop mortuary…' it began."

*Lady Chatterley's Lover* is ruled not obscene by the federal court.

Auerhahn Press publishes Philip Whalen's first book, *Memoirs of an Interglacial Age.*

One hundred students march from San Francisco to San Quentin to protest the execution of Caryl Chessman. Chessman was a criminal with a long record who had spent most of his adult life behind bars. He had been paroled a short time from prison in California when he was arrested near Los Angeles and charged with being the notorious "Red Light Bandit," who would follow people in their cars to secluded areas and flash a red light that tricked them into thinking he was a police officer. When they opened their windows or exited the vehicle, he would rob and, in the case of several young women, rape them. In July, 1948, Chessman was convicted on seventeen counts of robbery, kidnapping and rape and condemned to death. *Wikipedia*:

> Acting as his own attorney, Chessman vigorously asserted his innocence from the outset, arguing throughout the trial and the appeals process that he was alternately the victim of mistaken identity, or a much larger conspiracy seeking to frame him for a crime he did not commit… Chessman was an exceptionally charismatic and intelligent individual who eloquently argued his case in the court of public opinion through letters, essays and books. While on death row, he wrote four books. In *Cell 2455, Death Row*, he clearly implies he once killed a man, though he was never prosecuted or convicted for this. Chessman's memoirs became bestsellers and ignited a world-wide movement to spare his life, while focusing attention on the politics of the death penalty in the United States at a time when most Western countries had already abandoned it, or were in the process of doing so. [Governor Edmund G. "Pat"] Brown's offices were flooded with appeals for clemency from noted authors and intellectuals from around the world, including Aldous Huxley, Ray Bradbury, Norman Mailer and Robert Frost… Exhausting a last-minute attempt to file a writ of habeas corpus with the California Supreme Court, Chessman finally went to the gas chamber on the morning of May 2, 1960. As the lethal gas was rising up in the gas chamber, the phone in the execution room rang; it was the secretary from a U.S. district judge's office calling with a ninth stay of execution (she had misdialed the number on her first attempt). This stay of execution had arisen from a realization that Chessman was in fact still in jail (serving his previous jail term) when the first "Red Light Bandit" attack occurred. By the time the call was received, the hydrogen cyanide gas inside the chamber had reached a lethal concentration; therefore, opening the chamber's door would have been deadly for witnesses and prison officials. Chessman was pronounced dead just a few minutes later. A reporter made an arrangement with him in which he agreed to nod his head if the execution procedure was painful. Chessman vigorously nodded several times before the gas took effect.

Kenneth Patchen's collection of poems and drawings, *Because It Is*, is published by New Directions.

Jerome Rothenberg's Hawk's Well Press publishes his *White Sun Black Sun.* Thinking of Lorca's "cante jondo" (deep song) Rothenberg coins the phrase "deep image" (See David Antin entry, 1972). For Rothenberg, the term describes work by himself, Robert Kelly, Clayton Eshleman, Diane Wakoski, "plus other poets before and after." The term will later be used by Robert Bly -- a very different poet from Rothenberg -- to describe poets such as himself, Galway Kinnell, and James Wright. "The poem," writes Rothenberg,

> is the record of a movement from perception to vision.
> Poetic form is the pattern of that movement through space& time.
> The deep image is the content of vision emerging in the poem.
> The vehicle of movement is imagination
> The condition of movement is freedom.

The book's title comes from Rothenberg's poem, "A Little Boy Lost" -- itself a deliberate echo of William Blake:

> They took me from the white sun and they
> left me in the black sun, left
> me to sleep among long rows of overcoats:
> I was a city boy lost in the country, a
> wound in my hand was all I knew about willows
> Can you understand, do you hear the wide
> sound of the wind against the cow's
> side, and the crickets that run down my
> sleeve, crickets full of the night, with
> bodies like little black suns? try as I will
> there is only this cry in my heart, this cry:
> They took me from the white sun, and they
> left me in the black sun, and I
> have no way of turning now, no door

The touch of the surreal and the deep emotionalism in this poem is characteristic of Rothenberg's work, though he will move in various directions -- many involving highly original modes of translation. Like Robert Duncan -- a powerful influence on his poetics -- Rothenberg will write imitations of Gertrude Stein. "Lorca's Spain: A Homage" is part of his "Steinbook," though the poem has as much to do with Lorca's brand of surrealism as it does with Stein:

> Beginning with olive trees.
>
> Shadows.
>
> Beginning with roosters.
>
> Crystal.
>
> Beginning with castanets & almonds.
>
> Fishes.
>
> This is a homage to Spain.
> This mists dogs.
> This silences rubber.
> This is Saturn.
> Beginning with yellow.
>
> Eclipse.
>
> Beginning with needles.
>
> Insomnia.
>
> Beginning with baskets.
>
> The Moon.

Who is naked? The imagination
(wrote Lorca) is seared.
This is a homage to water.
Beginning & end.

Hawk's Well Press publishes Jess's book of his own poetry and paste-ups, *O!* The book has a "Pre-Face" by Jess's lover, Robert Duncan. In a review written in 1997, Jack Foley writes,

> What do W.C. Fields, the Mona Lisa, an upside down Tarot card, and the capitalized phrase, "GOOD NIGHT, PAPA" have in common? Not much, except that they all grace the cover of an almost unknown masterwork by the San Francisco artist, Jess. *O!*, a pamphlet of Jess's poetry and collages—his preferred word is "paste-up" -- was published by Jerome Rothenberg's Hawk's Well Press in 1960. It sold for $.50. The book must have seemed fresh, even amazing at the time. Thirty-seven years later, out of print and impossible to find except in Rare Book Rooms, it is still fresh and amazing…
>
> Ludwig Wittgenstein answered the famous opening sentence of his *Tractatus*, "The world is all that is the case," with a sentence in *Philosophical Investigations* (I:95): "*Thought* can be of what is *not* the case." Jess's book is a boisterous ride through a mind blissfully open to its endlessly unraveling uncertainties, through what is precisely "*not* the case." It is utterly of its time and utterly beyond it.

In 2000 Jerome Rothenberg once again makes *O!* available. His *A Book of the Book* (co-edited with Steven Clay and published by Granary Books) reprints *O!* in its entirety.

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After seeing Jess's 1977 exhibit, "Translations, Salvages, Paste-Ups" at the University Art Museum at UC Berkeley, Jack Foley begins to hunt for material by and about Jess. Foley finds a number of things at UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library. One of these is a tape recording of an LP, *Jess Reading Songs*. The LP, dated 1968, is "copy 13 from a limited edition of 25 phonograph records issued by The Tenth Muse, 983 Wisconsin Street, San Francisco, CA 94107." Jess reads (and sings) much of the material published in *O!* When, several years later, Foley meets Jess, he discovers that the artist has completely forgotten about the LP. Foley makes a copy of the tape and gives it to him. This is a sample of *O!*:

PATTERND STRUMMING PITCHD IN A SKELTON KEY

What is a poem,
does it sprout
like a potato
inside out?
Shall a bit of water
on the brain
provide seeds of Thoth
the free-est rain?
Should I be buried
and bear it lightly,
would Mother Cary
speak politely
or seek to scan
the inside-show
of a doggrel-faced boy
and a po-tattooed man?
Pitch it at a penny,

edgy it will stick,
enobled to an obol
at the dark Augenblick.
No trouble too terrific,
no heroic act too grand
for bleeding off the traffic
in the bland old under stand.
Queen Victoria as a redhead
might have written as you like it,
where instead she had a bedstead
made of mahorganatic agate.
Myself a Vic T. Oriole
would ride a howdahd elephant
parasol and all, *sic t. gloriole*
*mundi* (the umbrella is irrelevant)!
The Sybil's candelabra,
not sent too late to scintillate,
burn invincible palabras
unwieldy with Fate.
Words illumine Worlds
precisely Unmincible,
too weighty to worry
our Uncertainty Principle.
But try to catch a pebble
when you're riding on a piggy,
and ring around the rebel
just puff upon a ciggy
and again about the middle
with the tuner turning jiguous
and spin with Lizzy Siddal
about a make-believe ambiguous.
So patter me with formulae
with syllables-a-mercy
and tell me that the poem you see
is better late than early,
and draw me that the scene you hear
overestimates the nucleus:
the particles will pester Guenevere
in my heart irregularly igneous.

One can trace Lewis Carroll, Dame Edith Sitwell, and James Joyce (of whose *Finnegans Wake* Jess had a signed copy) in those lines. In his "Pre-Face" Duncan comments that "unavoidably the artist has committed another masterly hodgepodge of a taste that is frightful for those who are afraid there is something funny going on here" -- and, he adds, "in America *funny* means *strange, queer, odd*…."

Collage has been called, by Jerome Rothenberg and others, the defining art form of the twentieth century, and collage by its very nature moves *against* the idea of "private property." Did T.S. Eliot ask permission of all the people he quoted in *The Waste Land*? The possible hazards of the collagist's sometimes cavalier appropriation of materials are demonstrated when Jess sends his "Tricky Cad" -- an homage to/surrealist parody of "Dick Tracy" -- to Dick Tracy's creator, Chester Gould. Gould is furious and threatens legal action. Jess hastily removes the "Tricky Cad" section from *O!* though the sequences will later be shown in museums.

Robert Duncan's *The Opening of the Field* is published by Grove Press. The book is later taken up by New Directions. Its title refers to Charles Olson's "FIELD COMPOSITION," though Duncan also puns on field as "meadow." Duncan's friend Jack Spicer disapproves of a poet's publishing with such a major publisher -- one of many rifts in their relationship. For Spicer, the poem should be privately circulated among select poet friends. The result of this belief is that Spicer remains "unknown" while Duncan begins to be "famous." In *Jack Spicer*, Edward Halsey Foster writes, "With the publication of Duncan's *The Opening of the Field* in 1960, the division between Spicer and Duncan was complete." Duncan's brilliant volume contains, among many fine poems, the break-through "A Poem Beginning with a Line by Pindar." Nature and poetry as a "natural thing," along with magic -- "This is magic. It is passionate dispersion" -- are themes of the entire volume. The Pindar poem declares, "I see always the under side turning, / fumes that injure the tender landscape." It begins,

*The light foot hears you and the brightness begins*
god-step at the margins of thought,
        quick adulterous tread at the heart.
Who is it that goes there?
        Where I see your quick face
notes of an old music pace the air,
torso-reverberations of a Grecian lyre.

In Goya's canvas Cupid and Psyche
have a hurt voluptuous grace
bruised by redemption. The copper light
falling upon the brown boy's slight body
is carnal fate that sends the soul wailing
up from bind innocence, ensnared
        by dimness
into the deprivations of desiring sight.

But the eyes in Goya's painting are soft,
diffuse with rapture absorb the flame.
Their bodies yield out of strength.
        Waves of visual pleasure
wrap them in a sorrow previous to their impatience.

A bronze of yearning, a rose that burns
        the tips of their bodies, lips
ends of fingers, nipples. He is not wingd.
His thighs are flesh, are clouds
        lit by the sun in its going down,
hot luminescence at the loins of the visible.

Note Duncan's careful, deliberate rhyming, sometimes approaching but always avoiding the end rhyme. The poem ends,

On the hill before the wind came
the grass moved toward the one sea,
        blade after blade dancing in waves.

There the children turn the ring to the left.
There the children turn the ring to the right.
        Dancing…Dancing…

And the lonely psyche goes up thru the boy to the king

that in the caves of history dreams.
Round and round the children turn.
London Bridge that is a kingdom falls.

We have come so far that all the old stories
Whisper once more.
Mount Segur, Mount Victoire, Mount Tamalpais…
*rise to adore the mystery of Love!*

(An ode? Pindar's art, the editors tell us, was not a statue but a mosaic, an accumulation of metaphor. But if he was archaic, not classic, a survival of obsolete mode, there may have been old voices in the survival that directed the heart. So, a line from a hymn came in a novel I was reading to help me. psyche, poised to leap -- and Pindar too, the editors write, goes too far, topples over -- listend to a tower that said, *Listen to me!* The oracle had said, *Despair! The Gods themselves abhor his power.* And then the virgin flower of the dark falls back flesh of our flesh from which everywhere…

the information flows
that is yearning. A line of Pindar
moves from the area of my lamp
toward morning.

In the dawn that is nowhere
I have seen the willful children

clockwise and counter-clockwise turning.

The poem's open parenthesis is still another tribute to Charles Olson. In *The Truth & Life of Myth: An Essay in Essential Autobiography* (The Sumac Press, 1968), Duncan discusses the origin of the Pindar poem:

> When in the inception of *A Poem Beginning with a Line by Pindar*, reading late at night the third line of the first Pythian Ode in the translation by Wade-Gery and Bowra, my mind lost the hold of Pindar's sense and was faced with certain puns, so that the words *light, foot, hears, you, brightness, begins* moved in a world beyond my reading, these were no longer words alone but also powers in a theogony, having resonances in Hesiodic and Orphic cosmogonies where the foot that moves in the dance of the poem appears as the pulse of measures in first things. Immediately sight of Goya's great canvas, once seen in the Marquis de Cambo's collection in Barcelona, came to me, like a wave, carrying the vision -- out of the evocation of the fragment from Pindar and out of Goya's pictorial evocation to add their maserly powers to my own -- the living vision, Cupid and Psyche, were there; then, the power of a third master, not a master of poetry or of picture but of story-telling, the power of Lucius Apuleius was there too. In the grand theurgy of picture and story, the living genius of these three stood as my masters, and I stood in the very presence of the story of Cupid and Psyche -- but, in the power of those first Words -- Light, Foot, Hears, You, Brightness, Begins -- He was the primal Eros, and she, the First Soul…I was hard pressed to keep up with the formations as they came. I cannot make it happen or want it to happen; it wells up in me as if I were a point of break-thru for an "I" that may be any person in the cast of a play, that may like the angel speaking to Caedmon command "Sing me some thing." When that "I" is lost, when the voice of the poem is lost, the matter of the poem, the intense information of the content, no longer comes to me, then I know I have to wait until that voice returns.

Czeslaw Milosz moves to the United States to assume the position of visiting lecturer in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of California, Berkeley. In 1961 he receives a permanent appointment as professor and settles permanently in Berkeley.

Al Young (born 1939) emigrates to California. He is twenty-one years old. In a 1996 letter to Jack Foley, Young says, "I…arrived in San Francisco in the summer of 1960 with something like eight bucks in my pocket and guitar":

> I only knew a tiny bit of what was going on. I knew for instance, Bob Detweiler, a tenor saxophonist who had migrated from Ann Arbor. He was working at The Cellar and living in a hot-plate room on Gough Street. He cooked me cabbage and brown rice on that hot plate and spoke of macrobiotic diets, which shook me up a little. Then he said, "I'd like to invite you to stay here with me, man, but there's this chick, a waitress at The Cellar, who's been sleeping here with me. We're both deep off into Subud." Well, excuuuuuuse me!

*The Journal for the Protection of All Beings #1: A Visionary and Revolutionary Review* is published by City Lights. The editors are Lawrence Ferlinghetti, David Meltzer, and Michael McClure.

Madeline Gleason's two-act play, *Why in the World* is performed to large audiences at James Broughton's Playhouse at Beach and Hyde Streets in San Francisco. The play is directed by Kermit Sheets and has music by Ida Hodes.

Bob Alexander comes to San Francisco to remodel the jazz club, the Cellar, which had been damaged in a fire. With assistance from Arthur Richer and George Herms, he reopens the club, which goes bankrupt after four months. Upon his return to Los Angeles, he founds the Temple of Man.

In Venice, California, Rev. Bob Alexander establishes The Temple of Man -- quoting from a line by David Meltzer: "the temple of man is within you." "The temple of Man," writes Alexander,

> was formed in dedication to the conscious, individual, creative man and woman, and for the presentation and preservation of their creative works. The Temple seeks to help broaden perception and increase understanding among all people everywhere, unified by the vital and supreme force of life, and working toward a higher social and spiritual evolution.
>
> The Temple was founded with the knowledge that religion is that which might allow us to liberate ourselves from meaningless dogma and superstitions, to live as free spirits. The essence of all religion is an inner personal experience; an individual relationship with the Divine. This is not worship so much as a quest. It is a way of becoming; a way of liberation. The Temple welcomes all, regardless of faith, to come together and share in the experience of be/coming.

Both the Temple of Man and Venice West Café were important centers for poetry in Southern California during this period.

William J. Margolis, suffering from unrequited passion, leaps from a second-story window and is permanently paralyzed.

Kirby Doyle becomes enmeshed in a drug addiction which lasts for five years.

Auerhahn publishes Lew Welch's *Wobbly Rock*.

*Kush comes to San Francisco.*
In 1960 Brooklyn-born street poet/archivist Kush (Steven Kushner) records his first event: a speech, made in New York City, by Norman Thomas. Kush and Thomas discuss Keats. Kush also meets Carl Solomon, to whom Allen Ginsberg addressed "Howl": Solomon introduces Kush to the Beats. Kush's great uncle, Frank Ephriam Duskis, was, Kush says, "part of the original RCA family of inventors and colleague of Deforrest inventor of the vacuum tube." Duskis introduced Kush "to unobtrusive field recording as a child."

In 1966, Kush attends Bard College, where he is mentored in visual documentation by Hans Namuth. Kush also studies with poet Robert Kelly and associates with poet Paul Blackburn (1926-1971), who mentors him in the art of recording poets. In 1968, as president of the Bard Literature Club, Kush brings Allen Ginsberg to Bard. In 1970, Kush is attending the New School of Social Research and studies with Jerome Rothenberg. While there, he becomes an "apprentice" of poet Jackson MacLow: "I followed him around and recorded him." At this time, Kush opens his "poets sanctuary," CLOUD HOUSE on 72 Thompson Street, Manhattan, and performs poetry with musicians at the nearby 501 Canal St. Collective. The name "CLOUD HOUSE/'Walt Whitman Breathes Here'" is associated with Kush and his projects. It is, he says, a "visionary name" which came to him "at a Paleolithic site along the Hudson above Bard." Its many San Francisco storefront incarnations "have been purely non-commercial to exhibit poetry with recordings and provide real sanctuary for poets." The concept is, he writes, "a shamanic connection resonating and realizing an earlier wave of the Bay Area Renaissance when Jaime de Angulo opened his 1949 KPFA 'Old Time Stories' broadcast with the Pomo Gods of Kuksu and Marumda living in Cloud Houses. The Cloud House took in Bob Kaufman, Gregory Corso, Jack Micheline and others in time of need."

In 1973 Kush completes his masters in anthropology from the New School and hitchhikes from New York City to "a Bolinas Pacificwise treehouse of Gil Ott." At Agate Beach, in a peyote vision, he "makes contact with Lew Welch and experiences his bones ringing." He meets Bob Kaufman and Jack Hirschman, whose translation of Artaud has been "a mainstay of my Bard education." In 1975 Gary Snyder directs Kush to join the Reinhabitory Theatre & Digger community. Kush joins the company, which consists of Peter Coyote, Lenore Kandel, Kent Minault, Peter Berg, and Judy Goldhaft, and performs "indoor/outdoor around California." "The Cloud House from its Bard origins," Kush writes, "was committed to create a 'living record' of the poetic practice by field documentation." Kush becomes an active, indispensable part of the San Francisco scene, recording events first in audio format, then, in the 1980s, in video.

Kush now (2005) proposes to create the POETMUSEUM in San Francisco. It will be "a new order of exhibition space…the opposite of the dead space/conventional museum where artifacts recede from life."

Lawrence Ferlinghetti's second Populist Manifesto, "Adieu à Charlot" (1978), refers to Kush as a "youngblood wildhaired angel poet / one of a spawn of wild poets / in the image of Allen Ginsberg / wandering the wilds of America." Among Kush's few publications is a

play, *The End Befallen Edgar Allan Poe* (Paper Air, 1982); he has many as yet unpublished manuscripts.

Michael McClure writes his first full-length play, *The Blossom*.

McClure's *Dark Brown* is published by Auerhahn Press. The title is a direct reference to the poet's "Peyote Poem" (see entry, 1958). The book is, writes Richard Cándida Smith, "remarkable...for the explicitness of its language and imagery. McClure surreptitiously passed copies to his friends, while City Lights Books sold the volume under the counter only to those known and trusted by the staff" (*Utopia and Dissent*). Various events—Allen Ginsberg's "Howl," the appearance of Henry Miller's *Tropics* (1961), the 1960 overturning of the ban on D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*—give writers permission to explore a new explicitness about sexuality. McClure's poem as well as Lenore Kandel's later *The Love Book* (see entry, 1966) and the explicitly sexual writings of William Everson—are some of what issues from this sense of permission. D.H. Lawrence writes that his hero Mellors approaches Lady Chatterley from behind "and short and sharp he took her, short and sharp and finished, like an animal." In contrast, McClure's far more explicit poem ends,

OH SMIRKING SMILE OH OH MURKY HOLE BE GONE BE LOVE
invented. Be enormous as a fuck. Fucked arm,
fucked mouth and ass. Let me lick salty
water from your belly. Let me run my stiff
cock between your breasts, beneath your arm.
I suck your tits and ears. Tongue your
clitoris. Dream and lie upon your belly, push
my fingers in your hole and feel your ass,
and you lick and suck my
soft cock to make it hard again.
!THIS IS A CLASP!
Hold my balls in your mouth and breathe
upon my ass. Lick come from my fingers. Jack
me off. Smell yourself upon my hands
and prick. I bite the arm you slip beneath
my back.
I plunge within the hole you open
there before me. Feel your cunt pull open
wide.
OH SMIRKING SMILE OH OH MURKY HOLD BE GONE BE LOVE

OH LET OH LIE LOVE SLIP DOWN ON YOUR KNEES AND BLOW ME
See your mouth pushed open spread with the size
of the thing in it. See your lovely face mis-
shapen into new beauty. Feel the hard slick thing
in it. Feel the pink head of it
back in your throat! Down on your knees
before me. Hands held to your cheeks and ears,
your long soft legs folded under you. Only
warm damp wet moist mouth hot hot with my cock
in it. Working to make me come, eyes flashing
upward. Seeing the arms held to your cheeks to feel
the cock pushing inside them. Seeing
my face above. Hearing the groan. Catching

the shot splash of come on your tongue.

LIE OH HUNCH OH LOVE CLIMB OVER ME PUT YOUR ASS OVER
my face put your mouth over my cock. I look up
into your asshole and hole! I feel your lips and teeth
on my cock. Tongue I put against your asshole,
your sweet asscheeks I spread with my hands. Tip
tongue I move over the crease circled hole, feel
you relax and slip it inside. And feel your tense
of shame. Sleek clean inner asshole. Put my tongue
to your cunt and lick upward, the whole crease.
Tongue over hole tongue over asshole. One hand knead-
ing your breast. Feeling your hair
and breath on my toes.

On Feb 19, the UC Regents retract the following question from an English aptitude test for high school applicants: "What are the dangers to a democracy of a national police organization, like the FBI, which operates secretly and is unresponsive to public criticism?" FBI director J. Edgar Hoover has organized a covert public relations campaign and has put pressure on Gov. Brown to retract the question. In March, Hoover receives a 60-page report on the "political complexion" of UC Berkeley.

On May 13, William Mandel is brought before a committee at SF City Hall concerning his broadcasts about press and periodicals of the Soviet Union on KPFA radio and KQED TV. His TV show is cancelled, but he continues broadcasting on KPFA.

City Lights publishes *Hiparama of the Classics* by arch-hipster and performer Richard "Lord" Buckley (1906-1960). Buckley, writes Neeli Cherkovski, "had been performing ever since the speakeasy days of the 1920s. In the night clubs of North Beach and elsewhere he attracted an appreciative younger audience with his translations of the classics into the new Beat and hip jargon" (*Ferlinghetti: A Biography*, Doubleday, 1979). City Lights will reprint *Hiparama of the Classics* in 1980. Buckley's version of Mark Anthony's speech from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* begins,

Hipsters, Flipsters, and Finger-Poppin' Daddies,
Knock me your lobes!
I came here to lay Caesar out,
Not to hip you to him.
The bad jazz that a cat blows,
Wails long after he's cut out.
The groovey, is often stashed with their frames,
So don't put Caesar down.

"You know why they call him 'Willie the Shake'?" Buckley asks. "Because, HE SHOOK EVERYBODY!!...Pen in hand, he was a Mother Superior."

In "Hipsters, Flipsters, and Finger-Poppin' Daddies," (reprinted in *Beat Down to Your Soul*, ed. Ann Charters, Penguin, 2001), Samuel Charters writes,

Even more than the Beats, Buckley was the voice of wonder in the 1950s that changed into the self-conscious, self-proclaiming voice of the 1960s. Since we seem to have a need to establish connections that have a clear identity to satisfy our sense of history, followers of the True Hip know that Bill Cosby

> was performing some of Buckley's material in Greenwich Village clubs when Bob Dylan first came to New York. Dylan encountered Buckley through Cosby. For simpler devotees, it is enough to know that as an expression of Buckley's religious beliefs, His Hipness got around to establishing -- very briefly -- his own church. Charles Tacot, who contributed the notes to an Elektra LP with Buckley, wrote that His Hipness "organized his own brand of religion (The Church of the Living Swing, America's first Jazz church), starring himself and a pair of belly-dancers, which had the distinction of being the only church performance ever raided by the vice squad."

Under the guidance of Timothy Leary, Allen Ginsberg tries psilocybin mushrooms.

Neal Cassady is released from prison.

The Batman Gallery (2222 Fillmore Street, San Francisco) opens in November. The first owners, William and Joan Jahrmarkt, operate the gallery until February, 1962, when they sell it to Michael Agron. With his wife Hazel, Agron operates the gallery until it closes in 1965. In his essay, "O Her Blackness Sparkled" (*O Powerful Western Star*, Pantograph Press, 2000), Jack Foley writes, "The Batman Gallery functioned for only five years, and the artists it presented found other galleries or no galleries. It was the graphic artist's equivalent to what Gertrude Stein called 'those little magazines that died to make verse free.' It was one of the centers for an extremely talented, extremely energetic group of people -- a 'complex scene,' as Michael McClure called it. There are a number of ways to describe the art it presented, but in much of that art one senses, as one senses in a considerable amount of Beat art, *the perception of the infinite capacities of the mind*, and, beyond that, the perception of the joy of exercising those capacities. 'What name shall we give it which hath no name,' asked Jack Kerouac in *The Scripture of the Golden Eternity*, 'the common eternal matter of the mind?…Wait awhile, close your eyes, let your breathing stop three seconds or so, listen to the inside silence in the womb of the world, let your hands and nerve-ends drop, re-recognize the bliss you forgot….'"

One of the earliest presentations of The Batman Gallery was Michael McClure's play, **! The Feast !** The play echoes the Batman's décor -- its black walls. Presented on December 22, 1960, in a reading/performance with the actors wearing tissue-paper beards and punctuated by the roars of McClure's "beast language" ("YEORG!!" "NARGATH!" "RETORP!"), **! The Feast !** constantly repeats the line, "The seen is as black as the eye seeing it"; insists that two of its actors be "Negroes"; features "*a full measure of black wine*"; speaks of "*the black beast within the beast"*; and has the stage direction, "*Lights go out! Blackness! Flare goes off center stage and burns out instantly! Blackness!*" The notion of "blackness" -- suggesting outsider status, the opposite of "light," and many other things -- haunts McClure's work throughout his career.

Jack Kerouac writes "Sea," a poem attempting to transcribe the sound of the waves of the Pacific Ocean as they crash on the beach at Bixby Canyon. Kerouac uses "Sea" as the concluding section of his novel, *Big Sur* (Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1962). These are a few lines from the poem:

> Parle, O, parle, mer, parle
> Sea speak to me, speak

to me, your silver you light
Where hole opened up in Alaska
Gray -- shh -- wind in
The canyon wind in the rain
Wind in the rolling rash
Moving and t wedel
Sea
Sea
Diving sea
O bird -- la vengeance
De la roche
Cossez
Ah

As he listens to the sea, Kerouac discovers, among other things, that "Les poissons de la mer / parle Breton."

Julian and Raye Richardson open Marcus Books in San Francisco. The store's motto is "Books For and About Black people." In 1976 another branch of the store is opened in Oakland. In 1995 Marcus Books receives PEN Oakland's Contribution to Literary Excellence Award.

From 1960 to 1975 Kenneth Rexroth writes regular columns for the *San Francisco Examiner* and *San Francisco* magazine.

Galley Sail Publications publishes *So Many Rooms* by North Beach poet -- later to become a novelist -- Jory Sherman. It is Sherman who, in Los Angeles, introduces Neeli Cherkovski to Charles Bukowski. Sherman tells Cherkovski, "I'm going to introduce you to a man who hides behind dark shades."

Charles Bukowski publishes his first book, *Flower, Fist and Bestial Wail* (Hearst Press, Eureka, California). One of Bukowski's publishers, R. R. Cuscaden, remarks that his aim in publishing Bukowski is "to find a legitimate response to the Corso/Ginsberg/Ferlinghetti syndrome (and imitators) on one side and the tea-cozy *POETRY* mag gang on the other side. Buk obviously was the answer." Roger Gilbert writes in *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Poetry*, "[Bukowski] was born in Germany, and moved to America at the age of 2. For most of his life he has lived in and around Los Angeles, where he worked at a variety of menial jobs before gaining recognition as a writer in the Sixties":

> He stands at the centre of a group of Los Angeles-based writers who glorify a gritty street life that encompasses bars, race tracks, and other seedy urban haunts. Bukowski thus represents the antithesis of the academic poet. Instead he hints at the possibility of a genuinely popular poetry; in the US he has a wide following among readers who do not generally keep up with contemporary poetry, and he is also much admired in Europe. This is undoubtedly to do with the candour and ease of his style, coupled with the raunchiness of his subject-matter; in many ways his work has more in common with rock music than with literature.
>
> Yet Bukowski cannot be dismissed as a poet simply because he is popular, or because his poems are easy to read and full of racy or seamy items from his private life. In a sense his work is a natural culmination of the ongoing revolt against formalism, the

> academic, and the intellectual that has periodically energized American poetry since its inception. For Bukowski the poem is manifestly not sacred….

This is Bukowski's "question and answer" from *The Last Night of the Earth Poems* (Black Sparrow, 1992):

> he sat naked and drunk in a room of summer
> night, running the blade of the knife
> under his fingernails, smiling, thinking
> of all the letters he had received
> telling him that
> the way he lived and wrote about
> that --
> it had kept them going when
> all seemed
> truly
> hopeless.
>
> putting the blade on the table, he
> flicked it with a finger
> and it whirled
> in a flashing circle
> under the light.
>
> who the hell is going to save
> me? he
> thought.
>
> as the knife stopped spinning
> the answer came:
> you're going to have to
> save yourself.
>
> still smiling,
> a: he lit a
> cigarette
> b: he poured
> another
> drink
> c: gave the blade
> another
> spin.

Among Charles Bukowski's many books of poetry are: *Longshot Poems for Broke Players* (7 Poets Press, 1962); *Confessions of a Man Insane Enough to Live with Beasts* (Ole Press, 1965); *Poems Written Before Jumping Out of an 8 Story Window* (Poetry X/Change/Litmus, 1968); *At Terror Street and Agony Way* (Black Sparrow, 1968); *The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills* (Black Sparrow, 1969); *Mockingbird Wish Me Luck* (Black Sparrow, 1972); *Burning in Water, Drowning in Flame: Selected Poems 1955-1973* (Black Sparrow, 1974); *Love is a Dog from Hell: Poems 1974-77* (Black Sparrow, 1977); *Dangling in the Tornefortia* (dedicated to John Fante, Black Sparrow, 1981); *War All the Time: Poems 1981-84* (Black Sparrow, 1984); *Betting on the Muse* (posthumous, Black Sparrow, 1996).

Stone Wall Press publishes *The Collected Poems of Weldon Kees*, edited by Donald Justice. A revised edition of Kees' *Collected Poems* will appear in 1975.

In New York, in an incident that becomes notorious, Norman Mailer stabs his second wife, Adele Morales Mailer, with a penknife at a party. Though placed in the intensive care unit, Morales Mailer makes a full physical recovery. In 1997 she publishes a memoir of their marriage, *Last Party Scenes from my Life with Norm* (Blake Publishing). In her version the penknife is "a dirty three-inch penknife." The incident becomes a focal point for feminist critics of Mailer, who point to themes of sexual violence in his work. In *The Poetry and Life of Allen Ginsberg: A Narrative Poem*, Edward Sanders comments,

> **THE MAILER RULE:**
> (November 19, 1960)
>
> Do not stab your wife
> at the party
> where you
> are set to announce
> your candidacy for mayor

Morales has also had a brief romance with Jack Kerouac.

On Halloween night, Helen and Pat Adam perform *San Francisco's Burning* at poet Ebbe Borregaard's "Museum," a series of readings, lectures, parties and art shows held at Borregaard's home. Among the attendees are Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer, Joe Dunn, Joanne Kyger, and Robin Blaser. In "What Happened: Prelude," published in *Roots and Branches* (1964), Robert Duncan describes the performance:

> [T]he cult of Osiris in San Francisco witnesses and celebrates [the play's] authenticity. [Adam] performs the whole herself, with her sister taking parts here and there, evoking by candlelight, by the manipulation of a fan, and by her marvelous voice, a Theater immediate to the imagination, true to the inner vision of the Underworld. Where the old gods preside.

"But," Duncan goes on, "she who had been the Poet now denies the inspiration of her tunes and next, influenced by certain poetasters and know-betters of the town [James Broughton and Kermit Sheets], seeks to improve the play to suit the dictates of the Stage." See *San Francisco's Burning* entry, 1961.

Yvor Winters wins the Bollingen Award for lifetime contribution to poetry.

Richard "Lord" Buckley dies.

## *1961*

Helen Adam's *San Francisco's Burning*, a combination of music, drama, poetry, and theatrical staging, premieres at James Broughton's Playhouse at Beach and Hyde Streets,

near Aquatic Park in San Francisco. The piece is written by Helen and her sister Pat Adam and in style somewhat resembles James Broughton's verse play, *The Playground* (1949). Music is by Warner Jepson, and the production is directed by Kermit Sheets. The play will have its New York premiere in 1967 at the Judson Poets' Theater, where it is directed by Lawrence Kornfeld and has a new score by Al Carmines. On July 17, 1977, it will be heard on radio station WBAI in New York (KPFA's sister station) with a cast consisting largely of writers, among them Marilyn Hacker, Daniel Haberman, Robert Hershon, and Helen and Pat Adam. This program is available in its entirety at the PENNSOUND web site for the Center for Programs in Contemporary writing at the University of Pennsylvania. A small edition of the play's text, with drawings by Jess, is published by Ebbe Borregard's Oannes Press in Berkeley in 1963. A separate edition of the music is planned at the time but doesn't appear. In 1985 Hanging Loose Press publishes the play "in a complete and updated edition" which includes Jess's illustrations. The text of the Hanging Loose edition contains many changes made over the years by the Adam sisters, and the Carmines music is printed for the first time. Also included are settings of some of the ballads made by the Adam sisters to traditional melodies and themes by earlier composers.

The action of the fantasy play takes place in San Francisco "just before the earthquake of 1906," which functions as an apocalyptic backdrop. The primary themes are *liebestod* and the interpenetration of worlds:

SPANGLER JACK.
This is the love of my midnight dream.
This rises from the deep.
I look for light, but there is no gleam.
This is as dark as sleep.
I know, too well, if I dare such bliss
Black stars will dazzle above.
Death rides on the wings of this.
This is a fatal love.

LAURA.
Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha.
This is a fatal love.

SPANGLER JACK.
My daytime loves were an airy stream
Each fleeting as a spark.
Strong is the love of my midnight dream.
With the strength of doom and the dark.
Gone like ghosts are the loves of day.
Furies of midnight rove.
This is a passion for which men slay.
This is a fatal love!

LAURA.
Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha.
This is a fatal love.

SPANGLER JACK.
No fair moon in the midnight sky.
Though I pay with my breath,
He who claims my lady must die,

And I must be his death.
What I love I'll take.
Every law I'll break.
Black stars over me gleam.
I'll do murder before I wake
Out of a midnight dream.
Murder, murder, before I wake
Out of a midnight dream.

LAURA (triumphantly)
You'll do murder before you wake
Out of a midnight dream.
Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha.
Out of a midnight dream.

*

SUSAN.
There are two worlds, the solid Earth,
And the land of the unseen.
The river of forgetfulness
How black it flows between.

When I'm away
In the world of the day,
I hear my love call low.
"Oh! Come tae me. Oh! Come tae me."
I hear, and I long to go.

But his voice is drowned
Beneath the sound,
The sound of Lethe's stream.
The river of forgetfulness
That guards the world of dream.

SCOTCH SAILOR (SUSAN'S LOVER).
Oh! come tae me. Oh! come tae me.
Come my love and my bride.
Secret and deep between us
The river l' Lethe flows.

Douse, douse your candle
Whaur the great flood comes and goes.
Float over the river o' Lethe tae me
Oh! my snow white rose.

Drop your lighted candle dear.
From the weight o' the flesh win free.
Float airily over the ancient river
The river o' Lethe tae me.

The play ends on a note of hope -- despite the devastation:

San Francisco's burning,
Burning fierce and strong.

From Russian Hill to the Ferry,
Roaring hot and gone.

Powell Street cracking its cables.
Nob Hill low.
North Beach high and reeling
While the whirlwinds blow.

God's most furious angels
Fire this stubborn town.
San Francisco is burning, burning.
San Francisco is burning, burning.
Crackling to the sky and burning.
Crackling to the sky and burning.
Eternally burning down.

Troublesome fire, and earthquake,
But we know that whatever comes,
We'll still have Grace Cathedral,
And crumpets and cream at Blum's.

Broughton's Playhouse production is a success and runs for six months. Robert Duncan denounces it, however. His "What Happened: Prelude," eventually published in *Roots and Branches* (1964), complains that Mr. Fair Speech and his cousin, By-Ends (Broughton and Sheets) turned the Adams' conception into "What-the-Audience-Wants." Initially, Duncan grouses, Adam had performed the piece herself, "with her sister taking parts here and there, evoking by candlelight, by the manipulation of a fan, and by her marvelous voice, a Theater immediate to the imagination, true to the inner vision of the Underworld. Where the old gods preside." Broughton's production is, however, against "magic's orders": "Influenced by certain poetasters and know-betters," Adam is persuaded "that for the sake of Production, the Poet's singing voice will not do and must be given over to a hired hack of the theater-world to render in the musical comedy style of the day":

> As two sisters work in the composition of a musical play, one of them acts as Poet and is inspired by certain angels of the Muse who appear in the work as Puss-in-Boots and Anubis -- "little curtains open to reveal two life-sized automatons, mechanical marvels of the period." The Muse then may be Isis, and the body of the work seen in this dimension is the Osiris, where Bubastis [the main cult center of the cat goddess Bastet] and Anubis attend from the first the putting together of the play. These higher orders have their own music, so that the Poet receives the word throughout, songs and recitative, along the lines of insistent and reoccurring tunes. These themes we recognize as the circulations or rounds of Osiris.
>
> This is the stage where forces of the old mysteries work to transform into meaning again the hackneyd traditions of popular entertainments, to enact the supernatural. The Poet creates the Worm Queen, impersonating the Underworld, and evokes everywhere images of burning and darkness -- "A Ballad Melodrama." Susan the ingénue of the play, engaged by her false or step aunt to the vain Neil Narcissus, does not belong to their world but, sleep-walking, belongs to the orders of dream and longing, where in the shadows she meets her true love, a dead sailor. All the forces of the Worm Queen -- murder, fire and earthquake -- announced by her automatons, move to rescue Susan from the trivial and to unite her in the troth that poetry keeps with the grave…

> But she who had been the Poet now denies the inspiration of her tunes and next, influenced by certain poetasters and know-betters of the town, seeks to improve the play to suit the dictates of the Stage. She turns against the testimony of the cult of Osiris, holding them insincere or stupid in their praise of the true body, the melodies and plots of the original play to the letter and note…
>
> But the Worm Queen is the Poet herself, a mask of Isis. The offended Muse blasts the writer with misfortune and cold, kills her beloved cat and touches her heart and mind with despair…
>
> This is all an old story. We realize that not only in the writing but in the betrayal of the play higher orders contend.

Despite Duncan's complaints that the Adam sisters were "persuaded…to change upon change, against inspiration," the Hanging Loose edition of *San Francisco's Burning* is dedicated by the Adam sisters to James Broughton.

Poet ruth weiss finishes her 40-minute film, *The Brink*. The film is praised by Stan Brakhage as "one of the most important San Francisco films of the period." It is photographed by painter Paul Beattie.

In New York, Diane di Prima and LeRoi Jones (later Imamu Amiri Baraka) begin *The Floating Bear* (1961-1971), a poetry newsletter. Later issues are guest edited by Kirby Doyle and John Wieners. Di Prima and Jones, along with others, found the New York Poets Theater. During a visit to San Francisco during this year, di Prima meets Robert Duncan at Michael McClure's apartment.

James Schevill becomes director of the Poetry Center at San Francisco State, with Mark Linenthal as associate director. Schevill remains until his departure for Brown University in 1968. James Schevill writes me, "Special events sponsored by the Poetry Center during the 1960s included the first west coast reading by Robert Lowell, readings by Robert Duncan, Gary Snyder, and Lew Welch, an exhibit of Kenneth Patchen's art, and what was probably the only American reading by the famous Spanish poet, Luis Cernuda, with English translations read by Beatrice Manley, a leading actor in the Actor's Workshop, and a program of contemporary Polish poetry with Czeslaw Milosz."

*The Real Bohemia: A Sociological and Psychological Study of the Beats* by Francis J. Rigney and L. Douglas Smith appears from Basic Books. Like its predecessor, *The Holy Barbarians* (1959)*, The Real Bohemia* has a glossary of Beat terms ("as of August 1959") and is simultaneously an attempt to *understand* the movement and -- more deeply -- an advertisement for it. One of the selling points on the blurb is the fact that the book contains the participants' "poetry, quoted here *in extenso*." *The Real Bohemia* describes North Beach hang-outs such as The Cellar [576 Green Street] and The Place [1546 Grant Avenue]:

> Poetry readings are a popular scene. By August 1959 as many as three readings a week were being held in the Bread and Wine Mission [510 Greenwich Street], the Coffee Gallery [1353 Grant Avenue], and the Cellar. The Gallery, across the street from the [Co-Existence Bagel Shop, 1398 Grant Avenue, at the intersection of Grant Avenue and Green Street], is a combination bar and art gallery which serves as the community town hall. The walls carry posted notices, public announcements; meetings are held there, and once, a locally produced operetta was performed.

> The Cellar is a small, dark, downstairs, 25-cent cover charge night club on Green Street, just around the corner from the Bagel Shop. The Bread and Wine Mission [510 Greenwich Street], high on Telegraph Hill where Grant Avenue climbs upward, is the medieval church of this community, a refuge for the hunted, a place for craftsmen to gather, and the setting for abstruse theological discussion…
>
> The poetry readings, which began in San Francisco and have since spread to the Bohemian centers of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, are solo performances lasting from one to two hours, with breaks. Attendance is related to reputation or hope of controversy; it runs from one to two hundred. The settings have certain things in common: semidarkness, rows on rows of silent listeners, sometimes candlelight…
>
> Jazz is played at only two places: The Cellar has its own instrumental group; at The Coffee Gallery music is played by impromptu ensembles. Usually the group consists of a drummer, a pianist, a bass player, a saxophonist, and often a trombonist or a trumpeter…
>
> "Blabbermouth Nights" are held every Monday night at a bar called The Place, a tiny hole-in-the-wall on Grant Avenue, a few blocks north of the Bagel Shop. Legally it holds thirty-eight people; on Monday nights there are apt to be seventy-five. The "Nights" are public debates on various themes. The participants, leaning on a box labeled "Soap," address the audience from a balcony. The "official" themes are posted on a blackboard behind the bar. Each speaker is allowed three minutes in which to present his ideas. More commonly, the themes serve as a take-off point for more immediate personal interests. The "formal" address is followed by a question period and a rebuttal, and a winner is declared. Sometimes the debates are real and even violent.

People are also described:

> All [these women] have worn the Black Costume -- sweater, skirts, stockings, and sandals—two almost exclusively. Maggie and another girl, an actress, are usually neat; the other four usually are rather ill kempt. All have long hair, two waist-length. They often do not wear make-up; this gives some of them a slightly ingenue look, despite the slightly rawboned quality they all share. Their pads vary more, from the actress's neat three-room apartment to one poetess's barren cubbyhole.
>
> They all come from lower middle-class homes (typical paternal occupations were telephone installer, carpenter), except for one poetess, whose father is an editor. In contrast to the men, and despite their backgrounds, all but one have had some college…
>
> They are not intellectuals, despite their drive. They are locally more noted for their feelings -- which are seldom held in check. They can be blunt, and when they get angry, there are tears, swearing, "hysteria," and the like.
>
> Their rebelliousness, and also their main source of contact with others, is expressed in their sex lives. They all have had sexual relations; "careless love" is an apt phrase…For them, sex relations equal human relations -- tenderness and love.

New Directions publishes a collection of essays, *Assays* by Kenneth Rexroth.

*Eat a Bowl of Tea*, the first Chinese American novel, is published by Louis Chu. He writes in the dialect of the "Chinamen," presenting an unexoticized male world of San Francisco's Chinatown.

After 27 years as a banned book, Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* is published in the United States by Grove Press.

The California School of Fine Arts changes its name to the San Francisco Art Institute.

Berkeley-born Julia Vinograd enters UC Berkeley and is a student there until 1965. She is arrested in the Sproul Hall sit-in in December, 1964. In 1965 she enters the Iowa Writers Workshop, from which she receives an M.F.A in 1967.

San Francisco's Auerhahn Press publishes Charles Olson's *Maximus from Dogtown I*, with a foreword by Michael McClure. At the time, McClure had recently returned from visiting Olson in Massachusetts.

David Meltzer, Michael McClure and Lawrence Ferlinghetti begin publication of *Journal for the Protection of All Beings: A Visionary and Revolutionary Review*. The publication continues through 1978.

Jack Hirschman arrives in Los Angeles to teach at UCLA. and meets Wallace Berman at a benefit for the magazine, *Coastlines*.

World Pacific Records presents the LP *Poetry & Jazz (Jazz Canto)* -- produced by Lawrence Lipton and William Claxton. (See entry, 1957.) The record presents poetry by Walt Whitman, William Carlos Williams, Dylan Thomas, Lawrence Lipton, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Langston Hughes, and Philip Whalen. The readings are by actors John Carradine, Ben Wright, and Roy Glenn and musicians Hoagy Carmichael and Bob Dorough. Music is by the Jazz Canto Ensemble, the Ralph Pena-Bob Dorough Quintet, the Chico Hamilton Quintet, and the Gerry Mulligan Quartet. In his liner notes Lipton writes,

> Since the advent of Jazz West Coast, nothing has so excited the listening interest of the public, the press and jazz musicians alike as the emergence -- again on the West Coast -- of Poetry and Jazz…To avoid the errors and confusions of such terms as "poetry *and* jazz" and "poetry *with* jazz," background music, accompaniment, etc., which have marked and, I think, marred, the more or less hit-or-miss club, concert and recorded "P&J" of the past, I have decided to call it *Jazz Canto.* Jazz, because it is in the modern American idiom. Canto, because it is poetry, a word derived out of the Latin *cantus*, singing, which in English came to mean verse. *Jazz Canto* derives from the American "talking blues" and is related to the German *Sprechstimme*, the Italian *commedia dell'arte all'improviso*, and similar forms all the way back to the Greek goat-plays ["tragedies," ed.] and primitive ritual word-chant with music…In Bob Dorough's treatment of the poems of Langston Hughes, *Jazz Canto* reveals most clearly its ancestral roots in the talking blues, minstrelsy and *cantus planus*, plane chant. Here we are at the borderline of speech and song, a line that was never sharply drawn in the past when poetry was, as we are now trying to make it again, a living vocal social art.

*President John Kennedy announces the formation of the Peace Corps.*

*April 17. The Bay of Pigs crisis. About 1300 Cuban exiles, armed with U.S. weapons, land at the Bahía de Cochinos (Bay of Pigs) on the southern coast of Cuba. Hoping to find support from the local population, they intend to cross the island to Havana. It is evident from the first hours of fighting, however, that the exiles are likely to lose. President Kennedy has the option of using the U.S. Air Force against the Cubans but decides against it. Consequently, the invasion is stopped by Castro's army. By the time the fighting ends on April 19, ninety exiles have been killed and the rest have been taken prisoner. Ferlinghetti's "One Thousand*

*Fearful Words for Fidel Castro" will appear in* Starting from San Francisco *(New Directions, 1967).*

Students protesting the McCarthy HUAC [House Un-American Activities Committee] hearings ask Professor Thomas Parkinson, as a faculty member of UC Berkeley and potential witness, to monitor their demonstration outside San Francisco City Hall. Parkinson's appearance there -- hard to miss because of his outspokenness and his height: 6 feet, 11 inches -- leads to savage criticism in the far-right-wing press. Armed with pamphlets from that press (with attacks on Parkinson), carrying a sawed-off shotgun, and intending to start "the third world war," a former Berkeley student appears in the doorway of Parkinson's office. The first shot blows off half of Parkinson's face. The second shot kills Abner Dean, the student talking to Parkinson at the time. Despite this incident, Parkinson returns to politics on behalf of the students during the Free Speech Movement. He is a key player in the faculty's successful intervention with the administration. Because of this intervention, some of Parkinson's more conservative faculty colleagues do not speak to him for years.

Parkinson himself describes the shooting incident in his book *Protect the Earth* (City Lights, 1970):

> Eight years ago, in my office at the university, a poor lunatic came to kill me with a sawed-off shotgun because he thought that a liberal Catholic like me must be a Communist. He shot me, he put over sixty pieces of bird shot in my left cheek and jaw. He killed the student who was talking with me about a dissertation he was writing, to be called "The Museum as a Means of Grace." Days later when I could talk, some newsmen came to my hospital room and one of them asked me whether I had changed my feelings about capital punishment. It was a friendly question; this man had known me for some years. I said then, "No, I haven't changed my mind. There has been too much killing already."

H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) dies.

Clark Ashton Smith dies.

## *1962*

Michael McClure and Sterling Bunnell journey to Juatla de Jimenez to bring back psychedelic mushrooms. They are, McClure tells Jack Foley, "the first non-natives to journey into the mountains of Oaxaca after [R. Gordon] Wasson." In the midst of a thunderstorm McClure and Bunnell attend a mushroom cult ceremony conducted by María Sabina. [Note: Seeking evidence of hallucinogenic mushrooms and their use by native people, R. Gordon Wasson went to Mexico in 1953. He too eventually met María Sabina, a Mazatec *curandera* who initiated him into the experience of psilocybin mushrooms. Wasson wrote up his experience in a famous article in *Life Magazine* in 1957.]

Auerhahn publishes Jack Spicer's masterpiece, *The Heads of the Town up to the Aether*. In *Jack Spicer*, Edward Halsey Foster writes, "Spicer's major work at this time, his greatest book in fact, was *The Heads of the Town up to the Aether*, but it was for many years a book

known largely only to poets, particularly those in the Bay Area, and to those who followed new developments in poetry closely. Indeed, compared to Ginsberg, Corso, Duncan, and others, Spicer remained virtually unknown…*Heads of the Town*, like most of Spicer's other books, remained at best a rumor to almost everyone except those who were personally acquainted with the poet. A general recognition had to wait until the publication of the *Collected Books* (1975), ten years after his death." Spicer's tripartate poem ("Homage to Creeley," "A Fake Novel About the Life of Arthur Rimbaud," and "A Textbook of Poetry") ranges enigmatically through realms of hell, purgatory, and heaven. These are some sections from "A Textbook of Poetry." The pun on *logos*/low ghost is fundamental to the book and calls to mind the "spooks" that came to Yeats as he wrote *A Vision*. For Spicer, Christ is "the Logos unbelieved in."

15

The city redefined becomes a church. A movement of poetry. Not merely a system of belief but their beliefs and their hearts living together.

They are angry at their differences -- the dead and the living, the ghosts and the angels, the green parrot and the dog I have just invented. All things that use separate words. They want to inhabit the city.

But the city in that sense is as far from me (and the things that speak through me) as Dante was from Florence. Farther. For it is a city that I do not remember.

But the city that we create in our bartalk or in our fuss and fury about each other is in an utterly mixed and mirrored way an image of the city. A return from exile.

16

It does not have to fit together. Like the pieces of a totally unfinished jigsaw puzzle my grandmother left in the bedroom when she died in the living room. The pieces of the poetry or of this love.

Surrealism is a poem more than this. The intention that things do not fit together. As if my grandmother had chewed on her jigsaw puzzle before she died.

Not as a gesture of contempt for the scattered nature of reality. Not because the pieces would not fit in time. But because this would be the only way to cause an alliance between the dead and the living. To magic the whole thing toward what they called God.

To mess around. To totally destroy the pieces. To build around them.

17

- A human love object is untrue.
  Screw you.
- A divine love object is unfair
  Define the air
  It walks in.

The old human argument goes on with the rhymes to show that it still goes on. A stiffening in time as puns are a stiffening in meaning.

The old human argument that goes ahead with our clothes off or our clothes on. Even when we are talking of ghosts.

- A human love object is untrue.
  Screw you

- A divine love object is unfair
  Define the air
  It walks in.

Imagine this as lyric poetry.

Spicer's attitude towards the Beats can perhaps be inferred from one of the passages in the hell section:

Ferlinghetti

Be bop de beep
They are asleep
There where they like us
It goes
From nose to nose
From stop to stop
Violations are rare
And the air is fair
It is spring
On the thing
We sing.
Beep bop de beep
They are all asleep
They're all asleep

Spicer adds, "Ferlinghetti is a nonsense syllable invented by The Poet."

Auerhahn publishes Diane di Prima's *New Handbook of Heaven*, David Meltzer's *We All Have Something to Say to Each Other* (a tribute to Kenneth Patchen), and Philip Lamantia's *Destroyed Works*; the latter has a cover collage by Bruce Conner.

Joe Dunn's amphetamine use results in his being committed to a hospital for the criminally insane; Graham MacKintosh takes over White Rabbit Press.

Ed Dorn's *The Newly Fallen* appears from Totem-Corinth, New York City. Dorn's *Hands Up!* Will appear from the same press the following year.

Jack Gilbert's *Views of Jeopardy* is selected by Dudley Fitts for the Yale Younger Poets Award. Gilbert's second book, *Monolithos: Poems, 1962 and 1982* appears from Knopf in 1982. In 1994 Knopf brings out Gilbert's *The Great Fires: Poems 1982-1992*. In "Real Nouns," the introduction to his work published in *19 New American Poets of the Golden Gate* (1984), Gilbert writes,

> There is usually a minimum of decoration in [my] best [work]…[I]t has to do with something of my spirit probably. I am reminded of many years ago when Gerald Stern and I lived in Paris, very shortly after the Second World War. It got to be near Christmas and I took him to a yuletide service at the American Church. Something he had never seen. Candlelight and carols and bringing in the yule log and all. When it was over and we were walking back along the Seine, I asked how he liked it. He said it was beautiful and that he was glad I'd taken him. "But you have to understand," he said, "that when we go to the temple, we don't go to have a good time."

This is "On Growing Old in San Francisco":

Two girls barefoot walking in the rain
both girls lovely, one of them is sane
hurting me softly
hurting me though
two girls barefoot walking in the snow
walking in the white snow
walking in the black
two girls barefoot never coming back

and this is "Orpheus in Greenwich Village":

What if Orpheus,
confident in the hard-
found mastery,
should go down into Hell?
Out of the clean light down?
And then, surrounded
by the closing beasts
and readying his lyre,
should notice, suddenly,
they had no ears?

In June, the Poetry Center puts on a four-day poetry festival at the San Francisco Museum of Art. The brochure states, "The theme of the Festival is the relationship of the arts. The poetry readings will be interspersed with musical, dance, dramatic, mime, and film presentations. The Festival is dedicated to the Memory of Dag Hammarskjold and the Cause of World Peace." The directors of the festival are James Schevill and Herb Barman. Schevill writes to me, "I hired Herb Barman, the jazz musician, as co-director of the Festival, and he brought in the now legendary jazz musician, Vince Guaraldi, for several performances. The Festival was also remarkable for two Kenneth Rexroth events and the premiere of a Ferlinghetti play, *The Alligation* [*sic*], directed by Lee Breuer, who became the key figure in the Mabou Mines experimental theater group a few years later; performances by Anna Halprin's dance company; and a memorial poem to Robinson Jeffers by Brother Antoninus for whom I was finally able to get permission to read after his ban by the Catholic Archbishop." Poets reading included Philip Whalen, Madeleine Gleason, Harold Witt, Thom Gunn, Helen Adam, James Broughton, Kenneth Rexroth, Josephine Miles, Jack Gilbert, Muriel Rukeyser, John Thomas, Lynn Lonidier, Tracy Thompson, Gary Sange, Lyman Andrews, Carole Bergé, Michael Miller, Midu Brock, Robert Beloof, Elizabeth Bartlett, Anthony Ostroff, Rosalie Moore, George P. Elliott, James B. Hall, W.D. Snodgrass, George Hitchcock, Eric Barker, Robert Chrisman, Martin Halpern, Stanley McNail, J.C. Waugh, Philip Levine, Lawrence Spingarn, Ann Stanford, Gene Frumkin, Henri Coulette, M.L. Rosenthal, Thomas Parkinson, and Brother Antoninus. David Meltzer read poetry by Michael McClure. Schevill's play, *The Voices of Mass and Capital A* was also performed.

*Accent on Barlow: An Anthology of Activist Poetry* is edited and published by Lawrence Hart in San Rafael. Hart's son John writes, "Robert Barlow died in Mexico, a suicide, in 1951. The story goes that he left on his door a note in Mayan pictographs: 'Do not disturb me. I want to sleep a long time.' In 1962 [Lawrence] Hart published a small memorial book called

*Accent on Barlow*, featuring the dead poet's work but including pieces by the other Activists of the day. By default, and pending a better treatment, this has been considered 'the Activist anthology.'" (See entry, 1951.) This is Barlow's "Letter to My Brother":

In this sector of our years
Who sees but tangled bayonets, the treads
Of iron beetles kicking the sky?
From the Murmansk to the Black Sea of life,
We are woven in conflict,
Knowing not whether our movements are
Advance
Or Retreat.
Guns sigh smoke all day,
But there is no battle
Until the battle is done.
-- Robert Barlow

Robert Sward's *Uncle Dog* is published by Putnam (UK). This is the title poem: "Uncle Dog: The Poet at 9." Dogs will continue to be important figures -- even to act as muses -- in Sward's work throughout his career.

I did not want to be old Mr.
Garbage man, but uncle dog
who rode sitting beside him.

Uncle dog had always looked
to me to be truck-strong
wise-eyed, a cur-like Ford

Of a dog. I did not want
to be Mr. Garbage man because
all he had was cans to do.

Uncle dog sat there me-beside-him
emptying nothing. Barely even
looking from garbage side to side:

Like rich people in the backseats
of chauffeur-cars, only shaggy
in an unwagging tall-scrawny way.

Uncle dog belonged any just where
he sat, but old Mr. Garbage man
had to stop at every single can.

I thought. I did not want to be Mr.
Everybody calls them that first.
A dog is said, *Dog!* Or by name.

I would rather be called Rover
than Mr. And sit like a tough
smart mongrel beside a garbage man.

Uncle dog always went to places

unconcerned, without no hurry.
Independent like some leashless

Toot. Honorable among scavenger
can-picking dogs. And with a bitch
at every other can. And meat:

His for the barking. Oh, I wanted
to be uncle dog -- sharp, high fox-
eared, cur-Ford truck-faced

With his pick of the bones.
A doing, truckman's dog
and not a simple child-dog

Nor friend to man, but an uncle
traveling, and to himself—
and a bitch at every second can.

Jack Foley writes,

I came upon "Uncle Dog" in the early sixties. I was at Cornell University, where Sward was teaching. The poet who wrote that poem had been reading E.E. Cummings -- and one noticed that -- but, at the same time, there was something striking and new about what he was doing. You wouldn't know from that poem (or from the book) that Robert Sward was Jewish -- those themes came later -- but his origins in the North Side of Chicago are right there. The speaker of this poem is clearly a city-dweller -- nothing pastoral in his vision. Who had ever had thought to write a poem about a garbage truck -- and about a mean, "tough" dog, no "friend to man"? Indeed, the speaker identifies himself not with the man but with the animal: "I would rather be called Rover / than Mr." The speaker, a child, has no power, yet he sees power in the figure of that dog, and he wants it. Power is to have "your pick of the bones" and "a bitch at every second can." Power is to be self-sufficient, to belong "any just where / [you] sat." Power is the capacity to be noticed in a situation in which almost everything around you is garbage. The poem is comic but edgy, problematical; mythic but contemporary; alert but accepting: this, it seems to say, is the way the world is. It is not a world of beauty but a world of power, a world in which some people have things and others do not. And it is a world in which power manifests not in the commonly accepted and respectable ("I did not want to be Mr.") but in something else -- something nonhuman. One thinks a little of Robinson Jeffers' vision in "Roan Stallion" -- another poem in which power and animal are to some degree equated:

I say
Humanity is the mould to break away from, the crust to
break through, the coal to break into fire,
The atom to be split.
Tragedy that breaks man's face
and a white fire flies out of it; vision that fools him
Out of his limits, desire that fools him out of his limits,
unnatural crime, inhuman science,
Slit eyes in the mask; wild loves that leap over the walls
of nature....

At the same time, of course, the only genuine power the poet has is the power of words, and “uncle dog” is a symbol of that as well.

*October: The Cuban Missile Crisis. U.S. reconnaissance photographs reveal nuclear missiles under construction in Cuba. The missiles are just ninety miles off the coast of the United States. Wishing to prevent the arrival of any more Soviet defensive weapons on the island, President John Kennedy proposes a naval quarantine around Cuba and announces to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev that any nuclear missile launched from Cuba would be regarded as an attack on the United States by the Soviet Union. Tensions and fear grow during the entire month. At the end of October, the Soviets agree to remove the missiles and the United States offers its guarantee not to invade Cuba.*

Robinson Jeffers dies -- according to the *Modern American Poetry* Chronology, “in his sleep in the bed by the window at Tor House.” In the tenth anniversary edition of *Can Poetry Matter?* (Graywolf Press, 2002), Dana Gioia notes that Jeffers “remains invisible to most critics. California, however, has not forgotten its greatest poet. Stanford University, once home to Jeffers’s harshest critic Yvor Winters, has begun the publication of *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, edited by Tim Hunt, in four elegant, oversized volumes.” William Everson’s memorial to Jeffers, “The Poet is Dead” (“To be read with a full stop between the strophs, as in a dirge”) begins,

In the evening the dusk
Stipples with lights. The long shore
Gathers darkness in on itself
And goes cold. From the lap of silence
All the tide-crest’s pivotal immensity
Lifts into the land.

*

Snow on the headland,
Rare on the coast of California.
Snow on Point Lobos,
Falling all night,
Filling the creeks and the back country,
The strangely beautiful
Setting of death.

*

For the poet is dead.
The pen, splintered on the sheer
Excesses of vision, unfingered, falls.
The heart-crookt hand, cold as a stone,
Lets it go down.

*

The great tongue is dried.
The teeth that bit to the bitterness

Are sheathed in truth.

## *1963*

Random House publishes *The Beginning and the End and Other Poems*, a posthumous collection of Robinson Jeffers' poetry.

In 2007, Jack Foley is told this story, which takes place in 1963: A San Francisco theater owner is showing Jack Smith's homoerotic film, *Flaming Creatures*. The theater owner complains, "This movie's dying. Nobody's coming to see it. I'll go bankrupt." Suddenly, he had an idea. He phones the police department and complains that his theater is showing a pornographic film. The police arrive and close the theater down. The resulting publicity does wonders for his box office.

After receiving four charges for assault, narcotics, and obscenity, Lenny Bruce sends a telegram to City Lights Bookstore, asking that all copies of his self-published collection, *Stamp Help Out and Other Stories* (1961), be immediately destroyed. He writes, "They will hang me if they catch anyone selling that book." *Stamp Help Out and Other Stories* is Lenny Bruce's first book. He sells the book at his comedy concerts and asks his friend Lawrence Ferlinghetti to sell it at City Lights. When Bruce discovers that he is the target of an obscenity prosecution, he crosses out the obscenities and profanities in remaining copies of the book. The front cover of *Stamp Help Out* reads, "See .. actual photos of tortured / marijuanaites. / See .. hookers resort to prosti- / tution / See .. shame / See .. shame sell / See…shame sell sea shells / at the shim sham!" Bruce has been developing his material in Enrico Banducci's North Beach nightclub, "the hungry i" (599 Jackson Street), where Mort Sahl had earlier made a name for himself.

Lew Welch leaves Lenore Kandel and begins to live in isolation in Big Sur, where his alcoholism worsens. A few months later he moves to a cabin in the Trinity Alps.

On May 13, a decree of divorce formally ends the civil marriage of William Everson and Mary Fabilli.

Aya Tarlow's *Marks of Asha* (brought forth under the pseudonym "Idell," her birth name) is published by Bob Alexander's Baza Press in Los Angeles. (Alexander acquired the name "Baza" when, while closing his store "Contemporary Bazaar," he took down the store sign and it broke in half in his hands.)

In New York Diane di Prima founds Poet's Press (1963-1969). The books published include di Prima's own poetry along with books by Californians Kirby Doyle, Robert Duncan, and Michael McClure.

Philip Lamantia moves to Spain, where he studies philosophy and esoterica.

*San Francisco Review*, begun in 1958, folds. James Laughlin at New Directions publishes an anthology of the best work from the magazine.

The Cabrillo Music Festival is begun in Aptos, California. As an annual event, the Festival maintains a dedication to new music while at the same time presenting substantial works from the classical repertory.

Michael McClure begins to teach at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland. In the same year, City Lights publishes his *Meat Science Essays*. In "Phi Upsilon Kappa," he writes,

> In Old English I found a treasury of beauties that we still may see but are without words for. The names are lost and forgotten! The words make them more visible. I found black grottos and cliffs of unremembered meanings and beings. In my state I swallowed them whole and saw new beings and wonders with cleansed eyes. I saw the fields of tiny radiances and color on the bloodied body of a mackerel that I roasted whole and ate. I saw the dead body of the living that I consume -- loving animals and beasts. I saw myself eating them. I felt my stride and chest as I walked. I sat silently in the *dagred-woma* and the *morgen-rot* and listened to a child sing wild wordless songs of her desires. I thrilled with the ecstasy of my spirit's physicality. I knew all of the subtle and gross variations of day and dark. The fear of aelf-scin flew from me in a clap of joy when I discovered that the Anglo Saxons, rich in forest and sea, had seen it.

The essay continues with a consideration of the word "fuck": "Say FUCK! Say I FUCK! Say FUCK because it is a spirit mantra as is any word that moves and vibrates the chest like a roar…My first conscious use of *Fuck* as a mantra to break a barrier that kept me from straight speech and act was in a poem" ["Fuck Ode"]. McClure's *Meat Science Essays* contains, in addition to "Phi Upsilon Kappa" and various other essays, an admiring piece on Antonin Artaud's censored radio drama, *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* (*To End God's Judgment*, 1946). The drama will be broadcast on KPFA in 1967. An expanded edition of *Meat Science Essays* will appear in 1966.

After the death of her husband, poet/novelist Kay Boyle moves to San Francisco and begins to teach at San Francisco State University (then San Francisco State College). She remains on the faculty until 1979. While in California she is deeply involved in political activism. She travels to Cambodia in 1966 as part of the "Americans Want to Know" fact-seeking mission; and, again in 1966, she holds daily vigils in front of the San Francisco California Funeral Service, where bodies returning from Vietnam are being processed. In 1967 she is arrested twice and jailed for thirty-one days for participating in sit-ins at the Oakland Induction Center. Boyle dies in Mill Valley, California in 1992. Her *Collected Poems* is published by Copper Canyon Press in 1991.

Pat Parker gives her first poetry reading. At this time she is married to playwright Ed Bullins. At http://voices.cla.umn.edu/vg/Bios/entries/parker_pat.html#bio, Ilene Alexander writes, "Parker developed a narrative poetry, often taking on a call and response form recognizable in black and working class oral traditions, and often speaking of generations of women and men engaged in human rights battles. Parker's poetry generally escapes didacticism because of her deft use of humor, insistence on frank language, presentations of events and images

long silent, and sharp analysis of injustices. The goal, Parker said in an interview with Kate Rushin, is to 'try to put the poetry in the language that we speak, to use that language, take those simple words and make out of them something that is moving, that is powerful, that is there'…Reading before women's groups beginning in 1968 brought Parker notice and satisfaction, especially as she joined Judy Grahn, a white working class Bay Area poet, to read lesbian poetry in public, arranging readings not only at women's bookstores, but also intermixing poetry with musical performances at local women's bars, coffeehouses and festivals.

"'It was like pioneering,' Parker said…. 'We'd go into these places and stand up to read poems. We were talking to women about women, and, at the same time, letting women know that the experiences they were having were shared by other people ... I was being gay, and it made absolute sense to me that that was what I had to write about.' Critics like Barbara Smith and Cheryl Clarke agree that Parker's poems were designed to be spoken, designed to confront both black and women's communities with, as Clarke notes, 'the precariousness of being non-white, non-male, non-heterosexual in a racist, misogynist, homophobic, imperial culture.'"

Alexander quotes a passage from Parker's *Movement in Black: The Collected Poetry of Pat Parker 1961-1978* (Crossing Press, 1978):

> If I could take all my parts with me when I go somewhere, and not have to say to one of them, "No, you stay home tonight, you won't be welcome," because I'm going to an all-white party where I can be gay, but not Black. Or I'm going to a Black poetry reading, and half the poets are antihomosexual, or thousands of situations where something of what I am cannot come with me. The day all the different parts of me can come along, we would have what I would call a revolution.

Parker's other books include *Child of Myself* (Parker's first book, The Women's Press Collective, Oakland, CA, 1974), *Pit Stop* (The Women's Press Collective, 1975), *Womanslaughter* (Diana Press, Oakland, 1978), and *Jonestown and Other Madness* (Firebrand Books, 1985).

Adrienne Rich's third book, *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law: Poems, 1954-1962* appears from Harper. (A revised edition will appear from Norton in 1967.) Deborah Pope describes the book as "eight years in the writing,…a watershed in [Rich's] poetic development": "For the first time, in language freer and more intimate and contextual, she situates her materials and emotions against themes of language, boundaries, resistance, escape, and moments of life-altering choice. As the poem 'The Roofwalker' states, 'A life I didn't choose/chose me,' while 'Prospective Immigrants Please Note' rhetorically asserts that the safety of enclosures and illusions must be abandoned for the claims of a risky but liberating reality." Rich's next book is *Necessities of Life* (Norton, 1966). Pope writes, "Coinciding with her personal and poetic evolution was the tremendous force of the historical moment. Rich's earlier, inchoate feelings of personal conflict, sexual alienation, and cultural oppression were finding increasing articulation in the larger social/political currents gathering force throughout the sixties, from the civil rights movements to the antiwar movement, to the emergent women's movement."

Jack and Adelle Foley move to the San Francisco Bay Area. Jack (born 1940) is a graduate student in English at UC Berkeley, where he receives an M.A. Foley's undergraduate work has been done at Cornell University, where he has studied with Paul de Man and has absorbed de Man's unconventional notions about William Butler Yeats. A few years later, while sitting in on a course at UC Berkeley in Modern Literature taught by James Breslin, Foley meets poets Ron Silliman and David Melnick, who are also in the course. In the early 1970s, Foley and Silliman are among the winners of Berkeley's Joan Lee Yang Memorial Poetry Prize, a prize judged that year by James Breslin.

William Carlos Williams dies.

November 22: John F. Kennedy is assassinated.

Prompted by the assassination of President Kennedy -- and after watching Kennedy's funeral on television -- Bob Kaufman takes a ten-year Buddhist vow of silence. He doesn't speak again until the end of the Vietnam War. William Everson responds to Kennedy's assassination by writing *Tongs of Jeopardy*, an archetypal meditation on Kennedy and his murder; sections of the poem are published in magazines, but the entire poem remains unpublished to this day.

## *1964*

The National Council on the Arts is established through the National Arts and Cultural Development Act of 1964. The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965 establishes the National Endowment for the Arts. The National Council on the Arts advises the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, who also chairs the Council, on agency policies and programs. It reviews and makes recommendations to the Chairman on applications for grants, funding guidelines, and leadership initiatives. Its first members were appointed by President Lyndon Johnson and included artists Marian Anderson, Leonard Bernstein, Agnes de Mille, Richard Diebenkorn, Duke Ellington, Helen Hayes, Charleston Heston, Harper Lee, Gregory Peck, Sidney Poitier, Richard Rodgers, Rosalind Russell, David Smith, John Steinbeck, and Isaac Stern.

Charles Scribner's Sons publishes Robert Duncan's *Roots and Branches*. The book will be reprinted by New Directions in 1969.

Acadia Press publishes *Ballads* by Helen Adam, illustrated by Jess. In his introduction to the book, Robert Duncan writes,

> At the heart of these poems there is a compulsive beat. It is the pulse the narrative poet contrives in her art to subject the listening intelligence to the story's spell. It is also the feet of ancient dancers tromping around the moon or against the sun. This is a very different mode from that of the poem that has followed the *son*, the song, the sonnet and sonata, to realize an inner music where intricate relationships of sound and stress demand the listener's attention. The melodic invention of the Orphic poem would so move us in the tone leading of its vowels that we escape from the feet that are dancing

> and our intelligence is reborn, awakened by the unexpected shifts of the poem…How near, [however,] how violently near …the most sophisticated poetic comes in its hidden yearning to the first force of the round-dancers. The ballad in our age of increasing aesthetic inhibition has all the force of the return of the repressed.
>
> "Originally, the poet was the leader of a totem-society of religious dancers," Robert Graves tells us in *The White Goddess*: "His verses -- *versus* is a Latin word corresponding to the Greek *strophe* and means 'a turning' -- were danced around an altar or in a sacred enclosure and each verse started a new turn or movement in the dance. The word 'ballad' has the same origin: it is a dance poem, from the Latin *ballare*, to dance."
>
> Not so very long ago, in Scotland there were such dances or balls where witches and their daemons lost their minds, enthralled in iamb and anapest, spondee and caesura, keeping in syncopation the tyrannical insistence of the Devil's beat. Then in dance-songs or ballads, the measures and images of the witch-cult continue. The Old Ones have entered the imagination and set up their Way…[Helen Adams'] ballads take place in an other place and…in an other time; as once in those dread meetings or joyous meetings, men and women sought in delirium to take their place in an other place and their time in an other time.

The notion of poetry as magic, as a "spell" rooted in sound in which the intelligence is "subjected," is fundamental to Duncan's conception of the art; he sees Adam's work as leading the "sophisticated" poet back to poetry's origins in "the first force of the round-dancers," "the feet of ancient dancers tromping around the moon or against the sun": "The ballad in our age of increasing aesthetic inhibition has all the force of the return of the repressed." (The image of the round dancers is extremely important in *The Opening of the Field.*) Duncan's notion of "the tone leading of vowels" -- the *son* pushing the poem forward -- is also one to which he returns often.

This is Adam's "The Hoose o' the Mirror":

Upon the hill my lover stands.
A burning branch is in his hands.
He stamps impatient on the stane
And calls and claims me for his ain.

I bolt my door. I hood my light.
I rin tae slam the shutters tight.
I rug my curtains claise and thick.
I stop my clock lest it should tick.

My hoose is dark. My hoose is still.
He shines and thunders on the hill.
I pace the rooms, and as I pass,
My een glint sidelang towards the glass.

The glass is tall and like a gate.
My image watches while I wait
For him tae loup the hill o' night,
And rive my hoose wi' heavenly light.

The silence and the darkness deep
Me frae my hunter canna keep.
My hoose o' stane is frail as straw,
For at a clap its wa's doun fa.

But wae's my hert, for weel I ken

He seeks a love ne'er found by men.
It is my image in yon glass
That rouses him tae groan and fash.

It is my image, thing o' night,
Withouten sense, or voice, or sight,
For which he rages, mad and blind,
And plunders a' my flesh tae finde.

He dives within my body's deeps
Tae fathom whaur the phantom sleeps.
He shrieks because he canna clutch
What lies beyond the grief o' touch.

Aye, though we strauchle breast tae breast,
And kiss sae hard we cry for rest,
And daur a' pleasures till they cloy,
We find nae peace and little joy.

At his approach I'm like tae dee,
Sae hard my hert belabors me.
I would I were yon eldritch lass
Wha haunts the tall untroubled glass.

My flesh is starvit morn and night
For a' love's horror and delight.
My ghaist apart frae passion stands.
It is my ghaist that love demands.

My blood dunts loud again mine ear.
My sinews ache wi' blissful fear.
Upon the hill my lover manes
For what has neither blood nor banes.

Adam's work has much in common with Stanley McNail's "horror poetry." (The word "eldritch" shows up prominently in the work of horror writer H.P. Lovecraft; it is also used by Lovecraft's friend, Clark Ashton Smith.)

Richard Grossinger and his wife, poet and novelist Lindy Hough, co-found *Io*, an alternative college literary magazine, while they are at Smith and Amherst colleges; the magazine -- the forerunner of magazines such as *Whole Earth Review*, *New Age*, and *Gnosis* -- is a counter-cultural mix of literature, science, and history. The 1971 "Baseball Issue" (*Io* #10) contains one of Stephen King's first print appearances, "Brooklyn August." In 1977 Grossinger and Hough co-found North Atlantic Books. As the grandson of Jennie Grossinger, Richard is heir apparent to the famed Catskill resort, Grossinger's Hotel, the subject of his memoir *Out of Babylon: Ghosts of Grossinger's* (North Atlantic Books, 1997). Grossinger also edits *The Alchemical Tradition in the Late Twentieth Century* (North Atlantic Books,1970) and, with Kevin Kerrane, *Baseball Diamonds: Tales, Traces, Visions & Voodoo from a Native American Rite* (Doubleday, 1980). *Io* issues include: #4: *Alchemy Issue*, 1967; #5: *Doctrine of Signatures,* 1968; #6: *Ethnoastronomy Issue*, 1969; #8: *Dreams Issue on Oneirology*, 1971, with works by Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Robert Creeley, Harvey Bialy, Charles Stein, Charles Olson, Robert Kelly, David Meltzer, Thelma Moss and others; #10: *Baseball*

*Issue,* 1971, with, in addition to Stephen King's "Brooklyn August," significant historical and literary material on the game; #12: *Earth Geography Booklet No. 1,* 1972, with interviews and articles by Gary Snyder, Philip Whalen, Kenneth Anger and others; and #13: *Earth Geography Booklet No. 2,*1972, with works by "Tarn, Metcalf, Byrd, Quasha, Whitman, Melville, Grossinger, et al."

Donald Hall resigns from his position as Poetry Editor of *The Paris Review* and suggests his former student Tom Clark as his replacement. Clark, a 22 year old who has yet to publish a book, finds himself an editor for one of the most prominent literary magazines of the day. Clark prints early work by many of the poets -- Ted Berrigan, Ron Padgett, Bill Berkson, John Ashbery, Anne Waldman, Joe Brainard, and others -- who would later be associated with the New York School. In 1967, Clark settles in New York City, where he becomes part of the emerging Lower East Side poetry scene. In the early 1970s, he is one of the first of many poets to migrate to Bolinas, California.

Joanne Kyger returns to San Francisco from Japan. She begins to write a great deal and to give readings -- and she participates in the 1965 UC Berkeley Poetry Conference. Her first book of poems, *The Tapestry and the Web* is published by Four Seasons Foundation in 1965; her second book, *Places to Go* by Black Sparrow in 1970. Alicia Suskin Ostriker, writing in the *Paris Review*, describes Kyger as "a genius, though a weird one."

Lew Welch returns to San Francisco and moves in with Magda Cregg.

Jim Morrison comes to Los Angeles to attend UCLA's film school. He makes two films while attending UCLA.

William Jahrmarkt ("Billy Batman") gives Wallace Berman a copying machine which Berman uses to create a series of Verifax collages.

The ninth and final issue of *Semina* appears. It contains only Michael McClure's "Dallas Poem" along with a manipulated photograph taken from a television screen of Jack Ruby killing Lee Harvey Oswald.

City Lights publishes Michael McClure's *Ghost Tantras*, poems written in "beast language." McClure announces that "You've never heard anything like this before. These are my personal songs but anyone can sing them. Pronounce them as they are spelled and don't worry about details -- use a natural voice and let the vibrations occur."

"Poetry," McClure goes on, "is a muscular principle and a revolution for the body-spirit and intellect and ear. Making images and pictures, even when speaking with melody, is not enough. There must be a poetry of pure beauty and energy that does not mimic but joins and exhorts reality and states the daily higher vision. To dim the senses and listen to inner energies a-roar is sometimes called the religious experience. It does not matter what it is called. Laughter as well as love is passion…A woman's body might become the sound of worship. A goddess lies coiled at the base of man's body, and pure tantric sounds might awaken her. There are no laws but living changing ones, and any system is a touch of death.

Read these poems as you would Lorca, or Mayakovsky, or Lawrence but READ ALOUD AND SING THEM." This is stanza 31 of *Ghost Tantras*:

BLERM ROOM, I LOVE YOU, CARRY ME
WITH YOU --
bynor groom. Noktathorr rahhr shu graharr
beem loov grayhowr empty empty full wretchedness
becoming joy love cone by lite of heer noooh
reem 'ptah; grooh gaharr goooor grah be emmeeii
THRAH! NOH! BWEM! MORNOO!
THEE ME.
THOU I.
Us heart roar twain oons.
Bhwei!
Shapeful shapeliness noh space sounds droor.
Chair like a darkly varnished butterfly.
Hillside cascade of clear water.
Orange vines. Mattress & velvet.
Solo candle.
Beloved weirdnesses
Escaped from thy boy's mind.

The book's cover is designed by Wallace Berman.

David Meltzer begins the study of the Kabbalah and founds Tree Books, which publishes previously unavailable texts dealing with Jewish mysticism.

Jerome Rothenberg's Hawk's Well Press publishes his *SIGHTINGS*. In 1968 Black Sparrow will publish Rothenberg's *Poems 1964-1967*, a volume which contains "Sightings," "Further Sightings," "A Steinbook & More," "Conversations," and "The Gorky Poems." Rothenberg notes that "The measure of SIGHTINGS involves the creation of an equivalent area-of-silence around each phrase or succession of phrases in the poem":

> To read these, let the spaces between phrases (as marked by the points at the left-hand margin) represent a silence equal or proportionate to the duration of each succeeding phrase.

This is SIGHTINGS 1:

> He hides his heart.
>
> •
>
> A precious arrangement of glass & flowers.
>
> •
>
> They have made a covenant between them, the circumstance of being tried.
>
> •

Who will signal you?

•

It doesn't open to their touch though some wait where it rests.

•

Try sleep.

•

The emblem perhaps of a herd of elephants—as signal for a change in weather.

•

Animal.

•

A pigeon dreaming of red flowers.

Paradoxically, the poem's visual indications of "silence" move us towards performance, in which "a silence equal or proportionate to the duration of each succeeding phrase" can actually be accomplished. The difference between the "silence" of reading with one's eyes and the "silence" of listening to a performance is one which haunts many poets of this time, when assertions of "the media" are constantly intersecting with "literature." Rothenberg becomes, among many other things, a masterful performance poet. In 1975, New Directions will publish Rothenberg's *Poems for the Game of Silence*: *1960-1970*. He explains that "the game of silence" is a Chippewa game: "the poet makes a deliberate assault on the minds of his audience, working his verbal combinations so as to break their silence by laughter or any similarly loud response."

James Schevill's "The Stalingrad Elegies" -- a long anti-war poem adapted from letters written by German soldiers dying in the snow under Hitler's orders to attack Stalingrad in winter -- is published in *Contact* magazine and awarded their William Carlos Williams prize. The poem, Schevill remarks, "came out of my concern about our country entering a new bloody conflict -- Vietnam." In this same year, Alan Swallow will publish *The Stalingrad Elegies* as a book, with illustrations by San Francisco artist Leonard Breger. Schevill's poem is based on the book, *Last Letters from Stalingrad* (Franz Schneider and Charles Gullans, translators, William Morrow & Co., 1962), a compilation of letters from German soldiers who, freezing, starving and facing certain death, were given a chance to write a last letter home. The letters were flown out on the last airlift from Stalingrad, then seized by the German High Command. The addresses and senders' names were removed, and the letters were analyzed in a study of troop morale. The results were so damaging to the Nazi regime that the letters were suppressed and locked away in army archives. *Last Letters from Stalingrad* contains the documents -- letters written by thirty-nine men -- that have survived.

Schevill's book begins with the admission by the Commander-in-Chief of the German Sixth Army, Colonel-General Paulus, that "collapse" is "inevitable"; Paulus then goes on to request that Hitler grant "immediate permission to surrender in order to save lives of remaining troops." Hitler answers,

> Surrender is forbidden. Sixth Army will hold their positions to the last man and the last round and by their heroic endurance will make an unforgettable contribution towards the establishment of a defensive front and the salvation of the Western world.

The poems in *The Stalingrad Elegies* take place at the furthest end of life, with the knowledge that *no possibilities remain*. These are passages from the opening poem:

> We conquered space, time, thousands of quick miles in days,
> weeks by plane, tank, truck, Panzer precision. In Stalin-
> grad we move from large objectives to tiny invisibili-
> ties. We fight for every street, house, door, wall; we
> fight for matches, nails, bits of cement, empty window-
> frames, bottles, scraps of frozen food. Fight above the
> city, below the city. Fight for the stinking sewage
> drains where snipers hide with their periscopes. Block
> the sewage drains with iron girders down the man-
> holes to bury the snipers alive. Fight for every inch
> of rubble that exists only in destruction.
>
> …
>
> In Stalingrad we have no winter clothing. Our warehouses
> encircling the city are heaped with greatcoats, padded
> jackets, thick stockings, balaclavas, mittens, felt shoes;
> our warehouses have superintendents, deputy-superin-
> tendents, bookkeepers with proper forms and proper
> copies for higher authorities, storemen, clerks, guards.
> But the winter clothes cannot be issued without proper
> signatures. The clothes are for proper units which no
> longer exist or cannot be found. Distribution is not for
> the nameless.

These are two complete poems from the sequence:

> THE WIFE OF DEATH
>
> Bury your face in your hands
> in order to forget;
> *You said that*
> *in your last letter…*
> Two months of happiness
> We had as man and wife,
> Then I marched into
> The dark nights of the east,
> My hands slipping
> from your body
> As if it were only a dream of sex
> Not a marriage…I live
> In a sense of space

And time so huge
    that they devour
Every human face.
I can't even imagine your flesh
Any more; too cold…
You are the wife of death.

*

HE IS NOT HERE IN STALINGRAD

God rides in your bells,
Father, you are a minister;
He sings in your hymns and prayers,
In the blessings of priests and pastors,
In the crucifix that glares,
But He is not here in Stalingrad.

A last letter is a drying leaf.
It tells the truth, the end of a season,
The climax of a search for summer love.
No, Father, there is no God…the words
Hold a terrible stillness. They cannot move.
He is not here in Stalingrad.

Because I had no mother,
You raised me to the Bible's sound.
I floated in those thunderous words
Like a message tossing in the sea
Guided to its source by wild sea-birds,
But He is not here in Stalingrad.

I searched for Him in scorched houses,
In every dead mask, in the sky of shells.
I searched for Him in the snow, I never
Found Him. God did not show Himself.
I cannot make up for this letter ever,
But He is not here in Stalingrad.

San Francisco poet and playwright George Hitchcock publishes the first issue of *kayak* magazine and announces that "*kayak* is particularly hospitable to surrealist, imagist and political poems [and] welcomes vehement or ribald articles on the subject of modern poetry." The magazine will flourish for twenty years and will publish many of the country's leading poets. In each issue, the editor (who occasionally is listed on the masthead as "dictator") prints the following: "A kayak is not a galleon, ark, coracle or speedboat. It is a small watertight vessel operated by a single oarsman. It is submersible, has sharply pointed ends, and is constructed from light poles and the skins of furry animals. It has never yet been successfully employed as a means of mass transport." Mark Jarman's article in *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry* calls *kayak* "arguably the preeminent little poetry magazine in the United States":

> During the Vietnam War, *kayak* published some of the strongest anti-war poetry, much of it exhibiting the American brand of surrealism called deep

imagism. Poets who published some of their finest work in *kayak* included Margaret Atwood, Robert Bly, Philip Levine, W.S. Merwin, and Anne Sexton. The magazine also featured surrealist collages by Nanos Valaoritas, John Digby, and Hitchcock himself. Also famous were *kayak*'s graphics, many taken from nineteenth-century wood engravings, and Hitchcock's rejection slips.

In *Neo-Surrealism; or, the Sun at Night* (Black Square Editions, 2004), Andrew Joron adds, "After *kayak* ceased publication in 1984, its commitment to surrealism was inherited most visibly by *Caliban*, a literary magazine edited by Lawrence R. Smith. Fifteen issues of the magazine appeared between 1986 and 1995 and featured work by many of *kayak'*s former contributors, as well as fostering work by post-*kayak* neo-surrealists such as George Kalamaras and Will Alexander."

The first underground paper, *The East Village Other*, is founded by Allen Katzman, Walter Bowart and Ishmael Reed in New York City. It inspires "counter culture" papers to begin publishing in communities throughout the country, including the *Berkeley Barb* and the Los Angeles *Free Press*. They report news of counter culture demonstrations against the war and advocate the rights of people of color, interviewing counter culture heroes (Abbie Hoffman, the Black Panthers, Allen Ginsberg, Timothy Leary, Kate Millett) and investigating counter culture villains (President Johnson, the FBI, the CIA). They start small, with a combined circulation of 5,000 or fewer in 1965, but by 1969 the *Free Press* is averaging 95,000 a week, the *Berkeley Barb* 85,000 and *The East Village Other* 65,000.

In September, John Haag, co-manager of the Venice West Café and, later, co-founder of the Peace and Freedom Party, is arrested for "providing entertainment without a police permit." Various signs appear in the café's window: "GOLDWATER for HALLOWEEN"; "Police Review Board"; "Demonstration Against Police Malpractice"; and

**NO MORE POETRY!**
NO POETRY READINGS HERE UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE DUE TO ACTION BY
THE ART-HATING ANTI-INTELLECTUAL
YAHOOS OF THE L.A. POLICE DEPT. THIS
CASE WILL GO TO THE SUPREME COURT
IF NECESSARY
**POETS, ARISE!**
DEFEND THE ORAL TRADITION

On Sep 14, UC Berkeley officials announce a new policy prohibiting political action at the campus entrance at Bancroft Way and Telegraph. On Oct 1, The Free Speech Movement is launched. Mario Savio (1943-1996), UC Berkeley physics student, leads the movement to fight prohibitions against students distributing political brochures and other materials. The incident triggering the movement begins when police arrest Jack Weinberg for setting up an unauthorized table in Sproul Plaza. Students surround the police car in a standoff that lasts 32 hours. On Dec 2, Mario Savio makes a speech on behalf of the Free Speech Movement that causes hundreds of students to take over UC Berkeley's Sproul Hall. Governor Pat Brown orders police to arrest the students occupying Sproul Hall. Police move in on the next day and arrest 780, an action which prompts a student strike. Savio says, "There comes a time

when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part, you can't even passively take part. And you've got to put your bodies on the gears, and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop." The arrest of the students is the largest mass arrest in US history. Sit-ins, arrests, and general turmoil prompt Clark Kerr to offer the Regents his resignation. The offer is refused. Outside pressure increases to discipline unruly students, but undergraduates rail against the large classes and an atmosphere of anonymity that they say accompanies the multiversity. On Jan 3, 1965, UC Berkeley officials announce a new campus policy that allows political activity on campus.

Ed Bullins moves to the San Francisco Bay Area. While registered in a college writing program, he begins to write plays. Believing that only closed circles of African-Americans read fiction, he decides to turn to drama. Inspired by productions of Amiri Baraka's plays, he along with Bobby Seale, Huey Newton, and Eldridge Cleaver of the Black Panthers create and become active in a militant cultural-political organization called "The Black House." Bullins is purged from The Black House but several months later is appointed Minister of Culture of the Black Panthers by Eldridge Cleaver and Emory Douglas. Bullins soon becomes disenchanted because of differences of ideology. In 1965 Bullins writes and produces *How Do You Do?*, *Dialect Determinism (or, The Rally)*, and *Clara's Ole Man* for the Firehouse Repertory Theatre in San Francisco. From 1973 to 1983 he is playwright-in-residence and producing director at numerous theaters in California while his works are presented around the country.

California Poets in the Schools (CPITS) begins at San Francisco State; originally "The Pegasus Project," it initially places poets in classrooms to read poetry to children but quickly becomes a program to include students' active participation in the writing process.

Poet Lucha Corpi comes to Berkeley from Mexico. She becomes the first Chicana to write mystery fiction. Her mystery novels, all published by Arte Publico Press and all featuring her character Gloria Damasco -- a Hispanic detective living in Oakland -- include *Eulogy for a Brown Angel* (1992), *Cactus Blood* (1995), *Black Widow's Wardrobe* (1999), and *Crimson Moon* (2004). Her poetry books, written in Spanish and translated by Catherine Rodriguez-Nieto, include *Palabras de Medioda/Noon Words* (Fuego de Aztlán Press, 1980; reissued by Arte Publico Press, 1999) and *Variaciones Sobre una Tempsted/Variations on a Storm* (Third Woman Press, 1990). She also writes a children's book, *Ahi Donde Bailan las Luciernagas / Where Fireflies Dance* (Children's Book Press, 1999) and a novel, *Delia's Song* (Arte Publico, 1989).

Critic Marjorie Perloff's first published essay, "Irony in Wallace Stevens's *The Rock*," appears in *American Literature.*

*Open City* begins publication. In the 35th Anniversary issue publisher John Bryan writes,

> It began 35 years ago in the basement of a former stable on Potrero Hill. We used to call it "Pot Hill" for all the obvious reasons...A lot of former North Beach beats moved there in the early 1960s but most residents remained blue-collar workers who were politically progressive...[I]n the fall of '64, I cranked up the Multi-1250...and produced Frisco's first "underground" weekly—about

eight months before Max Scheer put out the *Berkeley Barb* which was modeled on my paper.

## *1965*

The University of California at Berkeley Extension sponsors a Poetry Conference. The Conference is organized by Richard Baker (later Zentatsu Richard Baker, the only formal American successor and dharma heir to Shunryu Suzuki). Through the efforts of Thomas Parkinson and Josephine Miles, UC Berkeley had been presenting poetry readings for some time. Under Parkinson and Miles, Robert Creeley and Langston Hughes had read at the University in 1958; "Activist" poets associated with Berkeley professor Lawrence Hart read there in 1959, as did Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso (billed as "Beatniks at the University"). But the conference marks an expansion of the University's role in the dissemination of poetry. The Poetry Conference takes place in July 1965 and opens with Robert Duncan's lecture, "Psyche-myth and the Moment of Truth." Other participants include Charles Olson, John Wieners, Robert Creeley, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Robin Blaser, Jack Spicer, Ed Dorn, Ron Loewinsohn, Joanne Kyger, Lew Welch, Gene Fowler, Jim Wehlage, Eileen Adams, Doug Palmer, Sam Thomas, Gale Dusenbery, Drum Hadley, Lowell Levant and Jim Thurber. Many of the readings are recorded and available through the UC Berkeley Language Lab.

Student John Thompson is arrested for holding a sign that reads "FUCK." The public -- and the newspapers—begin to refer to The Free Speech Movement as "The Filthy Speech Movement."

Bob Dylan elicits controversy among folk purists by "going electric" at the Newport Folk Festival.

Czeslaw Milosz translates and publishes his influential English anthology of Polish poetry, *Postwar Polish Poetry: An Anthology*. The publisher is University of California Press.

Poet Donald Schenker and his artist wife Alice open the Print Mint (later the Reprint Mint) in Berkeley. Alice runs the store; Donald runs the shop, where he invents the way of displaying posters he calls "mounting." The store evolves into a major publisher of underground comix. In a radio interview, Schenker tells Jack Foley, "I came [to the Bay Area] because of *Howl* and *A Coney Island of the Mind*."

McGraw-Hill publishes *Modern Poetics: Essays on Poetry By: Yeats, Pound, Frost, Eliot, Williams, Hopkins, Ransom, Moore, Stevens, Cummings, Crane, Auden, Thomas, Jones, and Lowell*, edited by James Scully. A revised edition, *Modern Poets on Modern Poetry* will be published by William Collins, Ltd., in 1966.

Dave Haselwood Books publishes *Dream Table, 30 Cards* and *Unto Caesar* by Michael McClure and *Chinoiserie* by John Wieners.

The Actors Workshop produces the first reading of James Schevill's *Stalingrad Elegies*. The reading is broadcast on KPFA. See entry, 1964.

Michael McClure's play, *The Beard* is presented at the Actor's Workshop in San Francisco. The Afterword to the 1967 Coyote Press edition of the play gives a description of some of the play's performance history:

> *The Beard* was presented four times before direct police intervention. First by the Actor's Workshop of San Francisco, where it proved to be too much for that organization: despite the efforts of the director, the author and the actors, the Workshop establishment impeded in every possible way a performance of the play -- including forbidding the presence of newspaper reviewers. Despite this censorship, Michael Grieg's review (heralding the play as the "most effectively upsetting and creatively stimulating work by a local writer that the Workshop has ever presented") slipped into the *San Francisco Chronicle*. *The Beard* was next presented at the huge Rock and Roll Fillmore Auditorium to a wildly enthusiastic capacity crowd, where it was accompanied by Anthony Martin's light projections and a sound system utilizing rock music. The third and fourth performances...took place at San Francisco's North Beach theater night club, *The Committee*. These two performances were surreptitiously tape recorded by the San Francisco Police Department, and at the fifth presentation, again at *The Committee*, police interrupted the ending of the play by filming it with whirring cameras, and then hurried backstage to arrest Mr. Bright (*Billy the Kid*) and Miss Dixon (*Harlow*). Alternately, the actors were charged with "obscenity," then "conspiracy to commit a felony" and finally with "lewd and dissolute conduct in a public place."
>
> Twelve days later, *The Beard*, now represented by the American Civil Liberties Union (after an offer of help from [lawyer] Melvin Belli), was presented in Berkeley by Rare Angel Productions to a capacity crowd, which included more than one hundred expert witnesses. These witnesses, invited by Rare Angel Productions, included Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Alan Watts, members of the academic community, members of the clergy, and photographers and tape-recording crews whose function was to record the police filming and taping of the performance. Seven members of the Berkeley Police and District Attorney's department arrived two hours before the performance, and began harassment of the actors, the author, and the stage crew. Malcom Burnstein of the ACLU and the author forbade any taping or filming of the performance, a directive ignored by the police and DA's office. The evening turned into a "happening," with the audience wildly cheering and applauding the attorneys, the author, the actors, and denouncing the civil authorities. After the performance there were speeches by invited celebrities, and the police left quietly. It was not until five days later that Berkeley also brought charges of "lewd and dissolute conduct in a public place."
>
> After five months of litigation, Marshall Krause, of the ACLU persuaded the San Francisco Superior Court that the charges were inappropriate, and the case was dropped from court -- an important legal precedent having been set. Following the San Francisco court action, the Berkeley court withdrew its charges.

In Los Angeles *The Beard* is shut down -- "busted," McClure says -- by the police for fourteen consecutive nights. The City of Los Angeles tries to pass a law against obscene plays -- naming *The Beard* specifically; the measure loses by one vote. A production of the play in New York City wins two Obie Awards.

After earning a degree in cinematography at UCLA, Jim Morrison leads a Bohemian lifestyle in nearby Venice Beach. *Wikipedia*: "Due to a regimen of little food and copious quantities of drugs, by 1966 the formerly pudgy Morrison had trimmed down to the chiseled rock-god immortalized in the famed series of black-and-white photos taken by photographer Joel Brodsky…Morrison wowed fellow UCLA student Ray Manzarek with a reading of his lyrics for 'Moonlight Drive,' and the two then formed The Doors. They were soon joined by drummer John Densmore. Guitarist Robby Krieger auditioned at Densmore's recommendation, and was immediately added to the lineup." The Doors take their name from the title of Aldous Huxley's book, *The Doors of Perception*. Huxley's title itself alludes to a line in William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (ca. 1790): "If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite."

Bob Kaufman's *Solitudes Crowded with Loneliness* appears from New Directions. The book includes "The Abomunist Manifesto" and "Second April" as well as Kaufman's "Jail Poems." "Jail Poems" is a reminder of the frequency with which Kaufman is arrested. This is one section of the poem:

> Someone whom I am is no one.
> Something I have done is nothing.
> Someplace I have been is nowhere.
> I am not me.
> What of the answers
> I must find questions for?
> All these strange streets
> I must find cities for,
> Thank God for beatniks.

Kirby Doyle's *Sapphobones* is published by The Poets Press. This is the title poem:

> Redfingered I Moon you see
> Sapphobones,
> numbly laughing there
> when Dido fled within the faggots lair…
>
> Forgive Me O Soft Nausea
>
> Whoresong? By God that rattles Love
> I'll sing Whore as Whore
> in no scream was sung before…
>
> Whose Whore? O Sapphobones
> I beg thee, Hand me that Whore!
>
> Beds! O Ye Beds…
> Inexhaustible beds for citizens
> curled in sanity
> but not one Bed for lovers…
>
> Bear Me Beds O Sapphobones!

Sapphobones I beg
Don't, with that iron name, Dido,
suffer my brain in thoughts ghosting
like evil birds across the moon…

Perhaps my love can bear it
(O Soft Nausea!)
but I cannot
Here, seated in a calm afternoon,
I reading a tired Prospero
to her Black Ariel,
an old lust hidden,
apple wine drunken and gone,
mad geraniums grunting in a pot,
the same cigarette staling…

O Dido, Harpie, Assassin, Lover --
My Fear, My Fear
stay east of me!

How dare I yawn confined in this sunny cell
smiled over by this Blackness of Beauty
and not grab her dusky proportions of loveliness
through the paling smoke?

O Her Blackness sparkles!

Dark Ariel…

Jack Foley uses the phrase "O Her Blackness sparkles" as the title of his essay on The Batman Gallery, a place Doyle frequented and at which he performed. (See entry 1960.)

On his fortieth birthday, Toby Lurie gives up his career as a realtor and, encouraged by his wife and three young children, begins to write poetry. Lurie's marriage of poetry and music develops into the contrapuntal form he calls "Word Music." In 1983, he will sketch his first art work by copying a page from his first Word Music Symphony and go on to the next phase of his career. Adding painting to the mix of poetry and music -- expressing his Word Music in vibrant colors, on canvas and paper -- he gives birth to his concept of "Synesthesia":

> synesthesia is my vision of the interlacing of various major art disciplines: music, language, and painting. Each has always influenced and existed within the other. "Synesthesia"—the balance sometimes favors one over the other, but painting for me has become the ultimate synthesis, the mortar which binds all forms together.

Stanley McNail -- described by S.T. Joshi as "a far too little-known weird poet" -- publishes *Something Breathing*, a collection of horror poetry, with Arkham House. The book is reprinted in 1987 by Embassy Hall. Its illustrations are by artists Frank Utpatel and Christopher Chavez. McNail is also active as editor and publisher of *The Galley Sail Review*, a long-running, San Francisco-, then Berkeley-based magazine which publishes a wide variety of poets. (McNail distributes buttons which can be pinned onto the clothing of his contributors: "Another Mad Poet Published in *The Galley Sail Review*"; "Not to Read Verse

is Worse than Perverse.") His poems appear in a wide variety of magazines, including *Weird Tales* and *Nightshade*. This is McNail's "At Tea in the Mortuary":

Of all the corpses around the table,
None had suffered more than Mabel.
We could see from her cheek, where the fat worm fed,
Though she chattered away, she was plainly dead.

Then Rose spoke up with a strident voice,
I suffered too, for I died by choice,
And showed the bruises from the noose
On her twisted neck, where the flesh hung loose.

Thats nothing! snorted Aunt Floss in derision.
Just let me show you my incision.
So, with a flourish, our cries unheeding,
She showed us the stitches, black from bleeding.

And poor old Willie, not to be outshone,
Displayed a piece of splintered bone
Where his chest had crushed under heavy wheels.
Now, how the Hell do you think that feels?

The sorriest sight was old Leprous Lil,
Whose life was snuffed by a cyanide pill.
While she spoke to us, one eye came free
And slid from its socket right into her tea.

With nothing to show and nothing to tell,
I squirmed with shame when a silence fell
And they turned to me. I felt so cheap
To confess I had simply died in my sleep.

Helen and Pat Adam, with the assistance of a $4,000 Merrill Foundation grant to research folk music for *San Francisco's Burning*, take the train to New York City.

Alan Swallow Press publishes Eve Triem's *Poems*.

Alan Swallow publishes Edgar Bowers' *The Astronomers*. The book consists mainly of poems in immaculately constructed, rhymed stanzas, in which the influence of Valéry, and perhaps of Wallace Stevens, is noticeable. This is "Amor Vincit Omnia" ("Love Conquers All")"

Love is no more.
It died as the mind dies: the pure desire
Relinquishing the blissful form it wore,
The ample joy and clarity expire.

Regret is vain.
Then do not grieve for what you would efface,
The sudden failure of the past, the pain
Of its unwilling change, and the disgrace.

Leave innocence,
And modify your nature by the grief
Which poses to the will indifference
That no desire is permanent in sense.

Take leave of me.
What recompense, or pity, or deceit
Can cure, or what assumed serenity
Conceal the mortal loss which we repeat?

The mind will change, and change shall be relief.

Charles Scribner's Sons publishes *Coastlines* poet Henri Coulette's *The War of the Secret Agents and Other Poems. California Poetry* describes Coulette as a "master of meter and formal elegance." "During his lifetime Coulette published only two books. His second, *The Family Goldschmitt* (Scribner's, 1971)…had most of its edition accidentally shredded by the publishing house, never to be reprinted":

> *The War of the Secret Agents and Other Poems*…articulates a fascinating vision of California…While the title poem is about a literal secret agent, much of the book invokes Hollywood's metaphoric ideas of secret agents, spies and spy novels, and ultimately, webs of intrigue and duplicity. Such subjects were, for Coulette, part of what makes California a land of dreams in which the real and the surrogate are endlessly mingled and confused. Noting that he was intrigued by the general idea of double agents -- those who led several lives -- [Donald] Justice and [Robert] Mezey observed that in an age of confessional poets, Coulette understood that the self is composed of multiple identities, that "he saw himself in some respects as an agent, under orders, in disguise, with code name and cover story ready; it was, perhaps, his metaphor for the life of a poet."

This is the epilogue to *The War of the Secret Agents*. Like some of Dylan Thomas's poems, Coulette's is written in syllabics: each stanza is 11 (or 12)-5-7-9-11 (or 12)-7. (Syllabics perhaps provided Coulette with a release -- which nevertheless remained strictly formal -- from the slightly mechanical music of his iambic pentameter: "There are some questions one should know by heart. / A world without them must be shadowless. / Who was it said, Come let us kiss and part?") About *The War of the Secret Agents* Coulette notes, "A lighthouse keeper, a schoolgirl, an alcoholic, and a red-headed ghost -- they were agents of the British in France during World War II. They were betrayed by London (Buckmaster), by their chief (Prosper), by each other, and by themselves. They do not understand this, but they try to, and they speak…."

EPILOGUE: AUTHOR TO READER

Reader, we are getting ready to pull out.
Archambault has packed
the transmitter in an old
suitcase. Denise is combing her hair.
We are meeting Phono and Cinema downtown
in a second-rate bistro.

Prosper has been worrying about Phono;
he has a bad cough.

--And Cinema, I worry
about Cinema, who must insist
on a trenchcoat, of all things. But life goes on,
even here, in its own way.

Reader, you have been as patient as an agent
waiting at midnight
outside a deserted house
in a cold rain. You will ask yourself,
What does it all mean? What purpose does it serve,
my being here in this rain?

Reader (you will be known henceforth by that name),
there is no meaning
or purpose; only the codes.
So think of us, of Prosper, silly
Prosper, of Archambault of the marvelous eyes,
of Denise combing her hair.

Begun in 1964 as a broadsheet at the annual Renaissance Fair, the *Faire Free Press* becomes *The Los Angeles Free Press* newspaper (often referred to as "The Freep"). The paper is edited and published by Art Kunkin and is notable both for its radical politics and for pioneering the emerging field of underground comix by publishing the political cartoons of Ron Cobb. The seed money for the paper is supplied by Steve Allen.

In August, Max Sheer founds *The Berkeley Barb*. In 1970 Sheer sells the paper to Allan Coult, a professor of anthropology. The countercultural newspaper runs until 1980. It is one of the most influential of the counterculture newspapers of the late 1960s and covers subjects such as the anti-war and civil-rights movements as well as the social changes advocated by the youth culture. It is an outspoken advocate of political, social, and sexual revolution. At its peak in 1968, it boasts a weekly circulation of 90,000.

Len Fulton begins the publishing company Dustbooks in Paradise, California. Dustbooks publishes, among other books, *The International Directory of Little Magazines & Small Presses; The Directory of Poetry Publishers; The Directory of Small Press/Magazine Editors and Publishers*; and the magazine, *small press review*. Fulton is one of the founders of the modern small press movement. In "Unknown Diversity: Small Presses & Little Magazines in the West, 1960-1980" (1998), Gerald W. Haslam notes that

> Today more Westerners are writing and being published than ever before. Unquestionably, work that not only would never have seen print in the past, but probably should not have, now filters onto pages as a result of the proliferation of literary "little" magazines and small regional presses. It is also true that important, innovative writers who might otherwise have languished unpublished have enriched western letters as a result of that same proliferation…
>
> The large number of regional publishing outlets that have materialized in the West during the past twenty years constitute the region's most important contemporary literary development. This rush of creative activity may be traced in part at least to the great upsurge of concern and commitment that was born in the civil rights movement of the early 1960s, then continued through that decade's antiwar crusade and ecological awakening, this last being linked closely to a growth in literary regionalism and sense of place, while the former two were avatars of both collectivism and antiestablishment

> impulses that coalesced into independent publishing ventures. Because they buck big business publishing just as they test literary paradigms, lit mags and small presses are counter-cultural in a generative sense, testing what a culture can and should be. As Anania observes, "Throughout the century, American literature has taken its vitality from its own extreme edges, since its center is too often lifeless and boring." Alternative publishing has consistently provided those extreme edges. It is also true that western American writing has itself been considered a kind of edge, not bound by the trends or conventions of either commercial publishing or eastern reviewing. Such major regional voices as Thomas Hornsby Ferril, Frederick Manfred, Jack Schaefer, Charles Bukowski, Ed Dorn, Gary Snyder, Thomas McGrath, Frank Waters and William Stafford, among others, have relied upon small presses to publish various of their works, especially those considered unconventional.
>
> There is nothing new in the fact of small regional presses and magazines–Alan Swallow and Lawrence Ferlinghetti's efforts are legendary– but there is something quite new in their numbers. The initial edition of the International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses, published in 1965, totaled 40 pages and 250 listings; editor Len Fulton's 1982 number runs more than 750 pages with over 4,000 listings….

Gerald Locklin begins to teach English at California State University, Long Beach, where he will remain throughout his career. (He has spent the previous year teaching at California State College, Los Angeles.) In an interview

http://www.lucidmoonpoetry.com/interviews/locklin.shtml

Locklin tells Michael Basinski that his first published poem "in an off-campus magazine, you know, not some student publication, was in *The Wormwood Review* and was called 'Johnny Rigoletto.' It must have been about 1963, I think. I believe I had one accepted before then by a magazine called *Approach* which was at Bryn Mawr College and that was 'Hart Crane.'" Locklin's first book, *Sunset Beach*, will be published in 1967 (Hors Commerce Press, Torrance, CA; Locklin comments that he "just submitted a manuscript blind from an entry in *The Directory of Little Mags and Small Presses*, Dustbooks, which…was much thinner then than today"). Gerald Locklin goes on to become one of the most widely-published authors in the United States. One of his books, *Charles Bukowski: A Sure Bet* (Water Row Press, 1996) collects his writings about his friend and mentor. His selected writings, *Go West, Young Toad* will appear from Water Row Press in 1998; *The Firebird Poems* will appear from Event Horizon Press in 1992. In "Michael Basinski Book Reviews" (http://www.the-hold.com/library/basinskimay2000.html) Basinski writes, "Above Locklin's many qualities stands his strength as an individual. His self stands against the ugly side of the American culture, which is arrogant, trendy and fashionable. This stress is the impetus that fuels the highly focused, designed, meticulously unadorned poetry that Locklin generates with such discipline and proficiency. Locklin's muscular identity has endeared him to many a fan…Locklin is, upon investigation, a very complicated poet and man. He has a multitude of points of view, and they change. He is, above all, human." *California Poetry from the Gold Rush to the Present* has this:

> Locklin has been associated with the Long Beach School style of poetry, which he suggests is loosely described as "accessible, conducive to public reading, and often utilizing humor and autobiography and references to public culture. Some have called it populist poetry or vernacular poetry or talk poetry or conversational poetry." If categorization must be done, he prefers to be allied with the Stand Up School, especially

> with its roots in the Beat movement, "vaudeville, coffeehouses, the oral tradition, American populism…and the new mythology of popular culture."

Other Locklin books include *The Toad Poems* (Runcible Spoon, 1970); *Poop and Other Poems* (Mag Press, Long Beach, 1972); The *Back East Poems* (Liquid Paper Press, 1999); *The Sporting Life and Other Poems* (JVCBooks, 1999); *Hemingway Colloquium: The Poet Goes to Cuba* (Event Horizon Press, 1999); and *New Orleans, Chicago, and Points Elsewhere* (R)v Press, 2006). Here, quoted by permission, is "The Best Year of Her Life":

> When my two-year-old daughter
> sees someone come through the door
> whom she loves, and hasn't seen for a while,
> and has been anticipating
> she literally shrieks with joy.
>
> I have to go into the other room
> so that no one will notice the tears in my eyes.
>
> Later, after my daughter has gone to bed,
> I say to my wife,
>
> "She will never be this happy again,"
> and my wife gets angry and snaps,
> "Don't you dare communicate your negativism to her!"
> And, of course, I won't, if I can possibly help it,
> and, of course, I fully expect her
> to have much joy in her life,
> and, of course, I hope to be able
> to contribute to that joy--
> I hope, in other words, that she'll always
> be happy to see me come through the door--
>
> but why kid ourselves -- she, like every child,
> has a life of great suffering ahead of her,
> and while joy will not go out of her life,
> she will one of these days cease to actually,
> literally, jump and shriek for joy.

*El Teatro Campesino* is founded in the Central Valley of California by Luis Valdez, the son of migrant Chicano farmworkers in Delano, California. It functions as an arm of the United Farm Workers' movement, dramatizing the struggles of the farmworkers to win better working conditions and raising funds to help the UFW's fight against huge agri-businesses. With flatbed trucks serving as stages, they drive into the fields and *barrios* or into the middle of strikes, putting on bilingual "*actos*," their name for their farcical style of brief *commedia*-like sketches. By 1967 the troupe splits off from the Union to focus on theater, setting off a Chicano theater movement, with many *teatro* groups forming throughout the Southwest. To show support for the farmworkers, thousands of Californians refuse to eat grapes.

From 1965 through 1978, poet Norm Moser publishes *Illuminations, Pulse,* and *Gar*, three literary magazines which include work by Charles Bukowski, H.D. Moe, Al Young, Ed Bullins, Ron Silliman, Diane Wakoski, Harold LaVigne, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Gene Fowler, and many others. Like R. R. Cuscaden, Moser intends the magazines to be an

alternative to both mainstream and Beat publications; his work begins to build a foundation for (in Bob Grumman's coinage) the "otherstream," a term Grumman uses to mean street, political, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry, etc. In "THE CALLING: A Moonlit Dance" (*Illuminations 2, 1965-1966*), Moser writes,

> Maker of song, maker of dance, often leader in either or both, go-between for the powers-that-be, possessor of secrets, maker of magic & ritual, purifier of the soul (the mind), & then, the body -- blood & breath. The shaman was all this, some were literally all these. Naturally, they were the makers of myth: of legend; of tale.
>
> What is that I hear on the air? Shrill cries of Superstition! Old Hat! The old shaman is going out, some insist. Anyone can see that. The old shamen [sic] are dying off. But as fast as they die off, new shamen rise up to take their place: to take up the old calling, the ancient calling with something in it akin to birds & birdsong; mating-call, the sway of wind & waves, the glow of the moon & the clarity of sun, the passion of the sorcerer or the torturer, the frenzy or deep peace of a saint or a mystic. New shamen are boldly gripping the reins of the skyhorse, playfully leaping from mountain to mountain in a strange but familiar dance -- Snyder, Welch, Fowler, Hannon, Yensan, Melton. There are others.
>
> Who will take the reins, if we do not? Simpson? Lowell? Auden? Eberhart? Wilbur? Ciardi? The effort exhausts them…There is a new society that is forming, mixing up in the make elements old & new. For the new society there are new shamen, & perhaps they are, themselves, the new society. To bring art at times back to its primeval roots, that is what we desire -- put the **life** back into life, water the crop & harvest, & perhaps, without too much thought on the methods of accomplishing it, revive some of art's magic, bring back to breath the shamen & his [*sic*] secrets, his powers, his vision, his prophecies, his awe, his mystery, all at once & all the time.

Moser's friend, ex-prisoner Gene Fowler, was another "white shaman" (in Ishmael Reed's phrase) and a frequent contributor to Moser's magazine. This is the concluding section of "The Shaman Songs of Gene Fowler":

> I have shown you
> coals in the fire.
>
> Words in the soul.
>
> Look at one coal,
> a single coal taken
>
> up into my fingers,
> safely in the flesh.
>
> Look
> deeply into the coal
> til the eyes sting
> til the eys [*sic*] cry out.
>
> Move close to the coal.
> The flame does not flare
> but it has not cold.
> It has grown in heat.
>
> See
> the deep rooted fires.

See
the dark private places.

Move down into the coal.
Feel the flesh as flame.

Where is this place?
What are the names?

Who are the shapes
moving about you?

Who the live dark spots,
the living white flame?

Whose flesh is flame?
Where is your eye?

See Norman Moser entry, 1990 and Gene Fowler entries, 1971, 1975.

H.D. Moe begins to publish *Love Lights*, a magazine which reflects the poet's deliberately skewed and somewhat surrealistic vision. *Love Lights* continues for fifteen years; it often sports an erotic cover -- bait for the buyer. Moe is sometimes seen as a precursor to L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry, but the connections are rather tenuous, and Moe is never included in L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry anthologies. Moe remains an active figure in the Bay Area poetry community, a "one man experimental movement," as Richard Silberg has called him. This is a short sample of his work from *Birth to Birth* (The Deserted X Press, 2002):

**Ezio Pinza Off The Cuff**

how bat goo
doppleganger doorbell
radium hemlock
viral angel
cobweb milkyway
kamikaze homingpigeons
gold spirits meow
thick pure journey aura bone marrow
skip the moon for the definition of
round caress, Launch form bubbling teams
irrelevance essence, dawn cumquats
uranic shananigans room disengaging
volent away into the dark
hibernating forever childhood liberty
spring over insanity keepsakes
alone
composing
to imaginary
just about
no one

*

In a review of *Birth to Birth* Jack Foley writes,

A close friend of H.D. Moe's once said to me, "Moe eats, drinks and defecates just like the rest of us. After that the resemblance ends." Another friend, herself a poet, said, admiringly, "H.D. Moe, oh, he's a character." Moe is, indeed. What are we to do with a passage like this:

BLUFF TOWING A DESERT  PHILHARMONIC
Titurel urna
yama yaffling
qualalah gimel chokmah ketber tiphareth
viracil lombox marshal macluen fried radar
hitchhiking by lavastone endearments
gypsy filmstar parallelism to our endless out
lineup churchmouse
pussyfoot safari
goosepimples on the tongue of leaves
epicycloid quatrains
tugawar over ashes
mighty liasons pause to report

The answer of course is: *read it*. Or, failing that, listen to it, read it aloud. The passage is exactly what it says it is -- literally *phil-harmonic*, full of the love of music. There are references in *Birth to Birth* to (among other people) Lester Young and Anita O'Day, and they evoke what has often been said of Moe: that he is a great jazz poet. But perhaps, even more than that, he is, as my friend said, "a character," an original -- more like nothing else in the world than like a "jazz poet." The jazz is there, but it seems to be there as a kind of background, an enthusiasm still present but no longer able to account for everything. At this point, Moe seems to be more genuinely -- as he puts it --"PHILHARMONIC," Classical even, and the poem I have quoted ends with the marvelous line, "buggy flight into the sweet unknown."

"Flight into the sweet unknown" is what H.D. Moe is all about, and he is "buggy" in all the senses of that word. The poems are crazy, wacky, all over the place, "buggy" in that sense; and they certainly "bug" (annoy) Moe's critics. (There are people who "don't get" Moe. There are people who "don't get" the Grand Canyon!) But the poems "bug" his admirers too -- stay with us, remind us of an extraordinary openness, a "place" in which an intentionally misspelled "marshal macluen" can hobnob with the likes of "qualalah gimel chokmah kether tiphareth / viracil lombox" and "fried radar." That openness might be called *the fundamental condition of Moe's poetry*, and it is certainly responsible for much of the poetry's enormously attractive flash and glitter, its absolutely terrific *noises*.

At one point in his career, the poet told me, he used to encourage editors to rearrange his verse -- "Surprise me," he would say -- and "surprise" is certainly a characteristic of this poetry. There is a child-like quality throughout ("childlike immensitude," writes Moe).

But if Moe is a child, he is a child who has been amazingly metamorphosed into a sort of encyclopedia as absolutely everything—poetry, people, religions, philosophies, nature,

history, mysticism, all sorts of particulars, and most of all, words words words—finds new and extraordinary uses in his work. I saw him once at one of his poetry readings, and as he continued to read, he began to move his book around in his hands. The poem, it seemed, continued up the side of the page, then (moving again) up to the top... He did not—but I had a sense that he might, magician that he was -- just throw the book away and go on "reading."The poetry of H.D. Moe is an enormously refreshing production of a mind which interests itself in *everything*. "Passage to more than India," wrote Walt Whitman, "...are they not all the seas of God?" They certainly are in the poetry of H.D. Moe! In its brilliance his work is capable of illuminating not only the "world" -- what Ron Silliman once called "the onslaught of disconnected and often horrifying details that make up our experience of contemporary life" -- but its own processes as well. As we read through *Birth to Birth* and enter into its "certain unknown" we become aware again and again of the wide variety of ways in which this poetry presents and fashions itself with extraordinary vim, verve and accuracy: "embellishing just forever an Irish vibecode."

Books by H.D. Moe include *Blindfolded Elephant* (Cherrythumb Press, 1968), *Souls Hairs* (Boustrophedon, 1971), The *Logic of Snowflakes* (Beatitude Press, 1979), *Quarks Heart* (Sleeping Gypsy Press, 1980), *Musical Trees* (Mother's Hen, 1986), *Jazz Pajamas* (Mother's Hen, 1987), *Birth to Birth* (Deserted X Press, 2002) and *How to be God NOW* (Deserted X Press, 2002). Moe is also editor of the *New Now Now New Millennium Turn-On Anthology 2001-3000 & Beyond* (A.M. Fonda, 2001).

Lew Welch's *Hermit Poems* is published by the Four Seasons Foundation; Oyez publishes his *On Out*.

Eighteen years old and troubled, Susanna Rickson comes to Brother Antoninus for counseling. By the next year, they have acknowledged their erotic attraction to each other and he begins "Tendril in the Mesh," dedicated to her. Antoninus nonetheless resolves to remain in the Order rather than marry. In retaliation, Susanna takes a lover by whom she is made pregnant; her son Jude is born in the spring of 1969.

Gary Snyder returns home to participate in antiwar activities in the San Francisco Bay Area. He designs an antiwar poster, joins in Vietnam Day Committee protests at the Oakland Army Induction Center, and organizes Zen-meditation sit-ins at the Oakland harbor against shipments of military material.

In June, Bill Graham presents the San Francisco Mime Troupe in *A Minstrel Show, or Civil Rights in a Cracker Barrel*, written by Saul Landau and R. G. Davis from original, traditional and improvised material. The play is directed by R.G. Davis, with music by Steve Reich. It premieres at the Commedia Theatre in Palo Alto. In November, in San Francisco, R. G. Davis is found guilty of performing in the parks without a permit.

A march, led by the San Francisco Mime Troupe's Gorilla Band and Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters, starts to travel from the UC Berkeley campus to the Oakland Army Base, the point of departure for most U.S. troops going to Vietnam. The march is stopped at the Oakland border, and after bitter debate, it turns around to Provo Park and disperses.

*Watts Riots:* Wikipedia*: The term Watts Riots refers to a large-scale riot which lasted five days in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, California, in August 1965.*

*The riots began on August 11, 1965, in Watts, when Lee Minikus, a California Highway Patrol motorcycle officer, pulled over Marquette Frye, who Minikus believed was intoxicated because of his observed erratic driving. However in this part of town especially traffic stops were not-so routine. While police questioned Frye and his brother Ronald Frye, a group of people began to gather. The mob, fed up with the way law enforcement was treating African Americans, began to throw rocks and other objects and shout at the police officers. A struggle ensued shortly after Frye's mother Rena arrived on the scene, resulting in the arrest of all three family members.*

*Shortly after the police left, tensions boiled over and the rioting began. Over six days, $35,000,000 in destruction of property occurred. The neighborhood was 99% black. The only other non-blacks in the neighborhood were a few people of Hispanic origin, and several Jewish store owners. The community believed racially motivated police brutality was rampant. Only 5 of the 205 police officers assigned to this neighborhood were African American. Police were accused of the rape of black women, epithets, and use of excessive force in arrests. In the Watts area, one out of eight adults had a high school education, and poverty and unemployment were higher in this section of Los Angeles than any other neighborhood.*

*This occurred in the midst of a period of rioting across the nation--having started in Rochester, Philadelphia and New York City the previous year, and continuing throughout the remainder of the decade: San Francisco and Cleveland in 1966; Detroit, Newark, and Baltimore in 1967; and Baltimore, New York, Washington, and Chicago in 1968.*

*As a result of the riots, 34 people were officially reported killed, 1,032 people were injured, and 4,000 people were arrested. Amongst the dead, was [*sic*] a fireman, a deputy sheriff, and a Long Beach police officer. The injured included 90 Los Angeles police officers, 136 firemen, 10 national guardsmen, 23 persons from other governmental agencies, and 773 civilians, out of which 118 were caused by firearms.*

*600 buildings were damaged or destroyed, and an estimated $35 million in damage was caused. Most of the physical damage was confined to businesses that had caused resentment in the neighborhood due to the perception of unfairness. Homes were not attacked, although some caught fire due to proximity to other fires.*

The Watts Writers' Workshop begins in the aftermath of the Watts riots. The Workshop is initiated by Budd Schulberg, a writer whose works include the novel, *What Makes Sammy Run?* and the screen play for *On the Waterfront*. In the introduction to his book, *From the Ashes: Voices of Watts* (New American Library, 1967), Schulberg tells the story of how the Writers' Workshop began. The project grew out of a tour Schulberg took to Watts to view the post-rebellion scene and out of his desire to do something to help the people there. Schulberg announced a "Creative Writing Workshop" by posting a note on the bulletin board of the Westminster Neighborhood Association, a social service agency sponsored by the Presbyterian Church. After various attempts to interest people in the neighborhood, the first recruit, Charles Johnson, appears and the project begins. At

we read,

> The Workshop participants had one thing in common: a desire to write—poetry, essays, and stories based on life experiences. Often their writings laid bare "the angers, fears, frustrations" of the people living in Watts. In less than a year the program outgrew the space at the Westminster building and moved to the Watts Happening Coffee House on 103rd Street, which was an abandoned furniture store converted by area youth into an art center. The success of the program drew the attention of the Los Angeles press, and NBC TV devoted an hour of prime time to present 'The Angry Voices of Watts" on August 16, 1966. Subsequently the Writers' Workshop found a home in the Frederick Douglass Writers' House, named in honor of a runaway slave who became an orator and leading spokesman for abolition. The Douglass House attracted support from prominent academic, literary, entertainment and political figures from across the country. Among the supporters were writers James Baldwin and John Steinbeck, actors Richard Burton and Steve Allen, composer Ira Gershwin, and Senator Robert F. Kennedy. In 1966, Schulberg and Workshop members Johnie Scott and Harry Dolan, were invited to testify before the Ribicoff Committee of the United States Congress, which was investigating urban dislocation and the problems of African Americans living in American cities. Overall the Workshop provided opportunities for Watts writers to develop their skills and present their work, and brought to the attention of the nation a new group of talented American writers…
>
> The physical environment in Watts has changed notably and it has become visually and culturally a desirable community warranting civic pride. This change is in part attributable to the achievements of the artists and community arts projects working in collaboration with the City of Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency and other city agencies. Yet amid the cultural successes and beautification, the social environment in Watts has not changed. The accomplishments of the artists' and writers' projects in Watts from 1965 to the present did not succeed in a radical transformation of the social environment as its leaders had envisioned. Gang warfare continues to plague the Watts neighborhoods where these projects took place, and incidences of racial injustice and recurring police abuses of power against African Americans and others living in Watts have not ceased. The Rodney King affair in 1992 and the incident involving the contested arrest of a young African-American boy in nearby Inglewood in 2001 attest to these on-going problems. Perhaps if there were greater opportunities for participation in alternative arts programs for youth in the community today, as in the "golden years" of Watts after the riots, there would be more creative solutions and greater hope of solving these problems.

Quincy Troupe and Kamau Daáood are among the writers who emerge from the Watts Writers' Workshop.

Jack Spicer gives a series of three lectures in Vancouver, British Columbia—the "Vancouver Lectures." Spicer's remarks center on "poetic dictation" and on "the serial poem":

> I think the problem of Poetic Dictation is perhaps the first problem a poet has. The second problem--one that you really can't get too well without understanding what poetic dictation is or isn't—is the serial poem…The difference between, "We have come to bring metaphors for your poetry" [a paraphrase of the sentence uttered by the "spirits" to W.B. Yeats in *A Vision*] and what I think most poets--who I consider good poets--today believe--and this would include people as opposite in their own ways as, say Eliot on one hand, and [Robert] Duncan on the other--is essentially that there is an outside to the poet--now what the outside is like is described differently by different poets, and

> some of them believe that there's a welling up of the subconscious or the racial memory, or the this or the that, and they try to put it inside the poet. Others take it from the outside--Olson's idea of energy in *Projective Verse* -- something that comes from the outside. I think that the source is unimportant, but I think that for the poet writing poetry, the idea of just what the poet is, in relationship to this outside -- whether it's an id down in the cortex -- which you can't reach anyway, it's just as far outside as Mars -- or whether it is as far away as those galaxies that seem to be sending radio messages to us with the whole galaxy blowing up just to say something to us…The first step is reached, I think, with Yeats' getting the thing -- But the way that it works -- "We have come to bring metaphors for your poetry" -- this is like "We have come to bring fertilizer for your fields" -- that kind of thing. You know, "Well, you've had such nice poetry, Mr. Yeats, the spooks have come down from above to give you metaphors to hang it onto."

Spicer's conception of the poet as a radio -- or radio receiver -- comes in part from Jean Cocteau's film, *Orphée* (1950), in which the poet hero receives mysterious messages on his car radio. In *Jack Spicer*, Edward Halsey Foster comments,

> Spicer was fascinated with such things as baseball, pinball, and cards. He seems to have seen life as a game or as a series of interlocking games or systems -- an order, however, through which it was possible to break much as [Robert] Duncan's parents had done in séances. There were moments when the rules were magically suspended, and it was then that poetry was possible. Nonsense, as he told a young poet, was "A FORM OF MAGIC," and he gave his workshop students various apparently nonsensical assignments (invent a universe, imagine yourself as one of the figures in the Tarot pack) simply as ways to break out of the order of things. The point was to create a kind of disjunction or dissociation, not to manipulate the rules of the game one willingly or unwillingly played but to create a moment in which they simply did not apply.
>
> A *kreis* [Spicer took the term from German poet Stefan George whose *Georgekreis* served as a model] or community of poets was in itself, at least for Spicer, a kind of magic. He began organizing his life around regular patterns, so that he could see his followers as often as possible. About this time he also began to write his first major work, *After Lorca* (1957).
>
> The community and the book arise in effect from the same ideal. *After Lorca* is Spicer's first serial poem…and the serial poem is in effect a community of short works. *After Lorca* can also be seen as a series of dialogues with earlier poets, and in that way, it establishes a *kreis* over time…
>
> The first serial poem was Duncan's *Medieval Scenes*, written…in early 1947. Duncan's adoptive parents held séances when he was a child, and this poem, like spirit voices at a séance, seemed to enter from another reality…
>
> The serial poem as developed by Duncan, Blaser, and Spicer (who named it) is not simply a series of short works linked thematically and formally as in a sonnet sequence, nor is it what M. L. Rosenthal calls "the modern poetic sequence" in his book of that name, for that sequence is always, at least in part, lyrical, while the serial poem, at least in Spicer's case, arises outside the self and is "dictated."

In his statement for Donald Allen's *The New American Poetry,* Robert Duncan writes, "Human learning is not fulfillment but a process, not a development but an activity." The serial poem is such a "process" or "activity," and Duncan's later "Passages" (the name deliberately echoes the idea of the "Cantos") will function in this way. In addition, like Spicer, Duncan insists that the poem is not "self-expression." In a sermon, "Crisis of Spirit in the Word" [*Copy Book Entries*, transcribed by Robert J. Bertholf (Meow Press, 1996)], he remarks,

> Our times believes that the poem is a self-expression. But, what I encounter in language, as early as I know, was a human community. I think I did my own sounding out simply by screaming or whining or doing a wide series of things. I have watched babies command quite a situation without encountering a word. The word is the opening up, the entrance and initiation not of person, individuality, which will remain, but of individuality as revealed anew in its membership of a total community that it enters when it can enter language; and that language did begin in the beginning. I was surrounded with the voices of my parents. I was surrounded with the voices of a human world that I was going to enter. That becomes the deep ground of my poetry.

In "Admonitions" (1958) Jack Spicer comments,

> The trick…is what Duncan learned years ago and tried to teach us -- not to search for the perfect poem but to let your way of writing of the moment go along its own paths, explore and retreat but never be fully realized (confined) within the boundaries of one poem. This is where we were wrong and he was right…There is really no single poem.
>
> That is why all my stuff from the past (except the *Elegies* and *Troilus*) looks foul to me. The poems belong nowhere. They are one night stands filled (the best of them) with their own emotions, but pointing nowhere, as meaningless as sex in a Turkish bath. It was not my anger or my frustration that got in the way of my poetry but the fact that I viewed each anger and each frustration as unique -- something to be converted into poetry as one would exchange foreign money. I learned this from the English Department (and from the English Department of the spirit -- that great quagmire that lurks at the bottom of all of us) and it ruined ten years of my poetry. Look at those other poems. Admire them if you like. They are beautiful but dumb.
>
> Poems should echo and reecho against each other. They should create resonances. They cannot live alone any more than we can.

The concept of the serial poem -- the idea that "There is really no single poem"—becomes important in various ways for poets as different as Adrienne Rich, Michael Palmer, Lyn Hejinian, Ron Silliman, Leslie Scalapino, Ivan Argüelles, and Nathaniel Mackey.

T.S. Eliot dies.

Jack Spicer dies. His last words, delivered to Robin Blaser, are the enigmatic sentences, "My vocabulary did this to me. Your love will let you go on." This is Spicer's "Psychoanalysis: An Elegy" -- one of his deliberately "California" poems and his only heterosexual one. Spicer reads the poem on the *San Francisco Poets* LP (1957).

> *What are you thinking about?*
>
> I am thinking of an early summer.
> I am thinking of wet hills in the rain
> Pouring water. Shedding it
> Down empty acres of oak and manzanita
> Down to the old green brush tangled in the sun,
> Greasewood, sage, and spring mustard,
> Or the hot wind coming down from Santa Ana
> Driving the hills crazy,
> A fast wind with a bit of dust in it
> Bruising everything and making the seed sweet.
> Or down in the city where the peach trees

Are awkward as young horses,
And there are kites caught on the wires
Up above the street lamps,
And the storm drains are all choked with dead branches.

*What are you thinking?*

I think that I would like to write a poem that is slow as a summer
As slow getting started
As 4th of July somewhere around the middle of the second stanza
After a lot of unusual rain
California seems long in the summer.
I would like to write a poem as long as California
And as slow as a summer.
Do you get me, Doctor? It would have to be as slow
As the very tip of summer.
As slow as the summer seems
On a hot day drinking beer outside Riverside
Or standing in the middle of a white-hot road
Between Bakersfield and Hell
Waiting for Santa Claus.

*What are you thinking now?*

I'm thinking that she is very much like California.
When she is still her dress is like a roadmap. Highways
Traveling up and down her skin
Long empty highways
With the moon chasing jackrabbits across them
On hot summer nights.
I am thinking that her body could be California
And I a rich Eastern tourist
Lost somewhere between Hell and Texas
Looking at a map of a long, wet, dancing California
That I have never seen.
Send me some penny picture-postcards, lady,
Send them.
One of each breast photographed looking
Like curious national monuments,
One of your body sweeping like a three-lane highway
Twenty-seven miles from a night's lodging
In the world's oldest hotel.

*What are you thinking?*

I am thinking of how many times this poem
Will be repeated. How many summers
Will torture California
Until the damned maps burn
Until the mad cartographer
Falls to the ground and possesses
The sweet thick earth from which he has been hiding.

*What are you thinking now?*

I am thinking that a poem could go on forever.

## *1966*

Allen Cohen founds the *San Francisco Oracle,* "the best psychedelic newspaper of the 1960s" (Scott Harrison).

The Diggers, a radical community action group of improv actors, is founded by Emmett Grogan, Peter Coyote, Peter Berg, and other members of the San Francisco Mime Troupe including Billy Murcott, La Mortadella, and Butcher Brooks.

*Wikipedia*: "The Diggers took their name from the original English Diggers (1649-50) who had promulgated a vision of society free from private property, and all forms of buying and selling… The Diggers provided a free food service in the Panhandle of Golden Gate Park in Haight-Ashbury every day at 4.00 p.m. generally feeding over 200 people who had no other source of food. They served a stew made from donated and stolen meat and vegetables behind a giant yellow picture frame, called the Free Frame of Reference. On one occasion, at a free concert in the park, people who came for the food were given a two-inch-by-two-inch frame to hang about their neck, called the portable Free Frame of Reference. The Diggers also popularized whole-wheat bread with their Digger Bread, baked in coffee cans at the Free Bakery.

"They opened numerous Free Stores in Haight-Ashbury, in which all items were free for the taking or giving…The stores offered items that had been discarded, but were still in usable condition. The first free store was called the Free Frame of Reference and was later superseded by the Trip Without a Ticket on Frederick Street. They also opened a Free Medical Clinic.

"They threw free parties with music provided by the Grateful Dead, Janis Joplin, Jefferson Airplane and other bands, and created art events like driving a truck of semi-naked belly dancers through the Financial District, inviting brokers to climb on board and forget their work. They created The Death of Hippie event, a parade in the Haight-Ashbury where masked participants carried a coffin with the words "Hippie -- Son of Media" on the side. The event was staged in such a way so that any media that simply described it would be transmitting the Digger message that Hippies were a media invention."

In his memoir, *Sleeping Where I Fall* (Counterpoint, 1998), Peter Coyote (born 1941) writes,

> During the period covered by this book, I was a member of an anarchic West Coast community that had taken as its collective task the rethinking and re-creation of our national culture. Such intentions were not unique; my generation was struggling openly with problems of racism, grossly inequitable distribution of goods and services, dishonorable foreign policies, and the war in Vietnam. Many people, dissatisfied to the point of despair with the available options of being either a "consumer" or an "employee," were searching for new and more liberating social structures. My peers and I were calling in the nation's markers on promises of social justice, and change was in the air.

Random House publishes Oakland-born Rod McKuen's *Stanyan Street and Other Sorrows.*

The California Folklore Society publishes Myrtle R. Rawles' article, "Boontling, or the Strange Boonville Language" in *Western Folklore*, vol. 25. The article is reprinted by the Mendocino County Historical Society in 1967. "Boontling" (the *ling*o spoken by inhabitants of Boonville or "*Boont*own," the largest town of California's Anderson Valley) is a dialect of English which originated in the late 1800s. Charles C. Adams studies the dialect in the 1960s; the University of Texas will publish his book, *Boontling, An American Lingo* in 1971. *Wikipedia*: "Some assert that the dialect was created by the women and children workers in the hop fields as a means of recreation, and that it spread through the community as the children continued using it when they grew up. Myrtle R. Rawles explains that Boontling was started by the children of Boonville as a language game which enabled them to speak freely in front of elders without being understood. It is believed that the language originated from Ed (Squirrel) Clement and Lank McGimsey, in or about the year 1890." This is a passage in Boontling. A man and his wife live in the city (they are therefore "brightlighters"). The car in which they have been traveling has broken down. An inhabitant of Boonville ("Boonter") stops to talk ("harp") to them and gives them a ride back to Boonville; the inhabitant of Boonville, who is a good ("bahl") man, refuses payment for his act of kindness:

> Boonter piked up to harp or help. The bahl Boonter japed brightlighters to Boont with beamer 'n' bohoik, 'n' when Brightlights reached for his ose pocket, Boonter shied before Brights could harp on higgin'.

This is the translation:

> Just then a fellow pulled over to talk to the couple in trouble, and see if he could help. He was a Boonville resident, and a good, kind man, and he gave the visitors a ride back into Boonville with a bright smile and a good natured laugh. Upon being dropped off in Boonville, the city fellow began to reach for his back pocket, where he kept his wallet. The local, realizing what the man intended to do, quickly excused himself and drove away before the tourist could even offer to pay for the ride they had received.

Aya Tarlow's play, *The Edge* is staged at the Open Theater in Berkeley. While in Northern California she is drawn to a Zen Buddhist temple and begins practicing Zen with master Suzuki Roshi.

Unicorn Press publishes Madeline Gleason's *Concerto for Bell and Telephone*. In *Madeline Gleason: Collected Poems 1919-1979* (Talisman, 1999), editor Christopher Wagstaff writes that these poems "are more difficult than Gleason's earlier work because of their compression as well as the disjunctions and quick cuts between her ideas and images." Wagstaff quotes Mary Clarke Greer, whom Gleason met in 1956 and with whom she lived for the next twenty-three years: "They [the Beat poets] were struggling young poets who were getting recognition she *wasn't* getting. To be a poet is always hard, but to be a woman poet was really hard in San Francisco in those days. There were so many males out there shouting. Madeline had to really work to make herself heard among all those strong egos, but she *was* heard."

"Beginnings: Chapter 1 of the H.D. Book Part I" appears in *Coyote's Journal*, 5-6. Other chapters of Robert Duncan's massive study of H.D. appear in various magazines at various

times. This list was compiled by Robert J. Bertholf: "The H.D. Book, Part 1, Chapter 2" appears in *Coyote's Journal*, 8 (1967); Chapters 3 and 4 appear in "Two Chapters from H.D., *TriQuarterly* 12 (Spring 1968); "From the H.D. Book, Part 1: Beginnings, Chapter 5: Occult Matters" appears in *Aion* 1 (Dec. 1964) and in *Stony Brook*, 1/2 (Fall 1968); Chapter 6, "Rites of Participation," appears in *Caterpillar* 1 (Oct. 1967) and *Caterpillar* 2 (Jan. 1968). The first chapter of Part 2, "Nights and Days," appears in *Sumac*, 1 (Fall 1968); Chapter 2 appears in *Caterpillar* 6 (Jan. 1969); Chapter 3 appears in *IO* 6 (Summer 1969); Chapter 4 in *Caterpillar* 7 (April 1969); Chapter 5 in *Stony Brook* 3/4 (Fall 1969) and *Credences* 1.2 (Aug. 1975); Chapter 5 also appears in *Sagetrieb* 4.2/3 (Fall and Winter 1985); Chapter 6 appears in *The Southern Review* 21.1 (Jan. 1985); Chapters 7 and 8 in *Credences* 1.2 (1975); Chapter 9 in the *Chicago Review* 30.3 (Winter 1979); Chapter 10 in *Ironwood* 22 (1983); Chapter 11 in *Montemora* 8 (1981).

"The first draft of the Book," Duncan writes, "was done in 1961, considerable over-lays were written in 1964, with dream material entering into the Book as late as 1964. It had been commissioned by Norman Holmes Pearson as a Book for H.D.'s Birthday, but at the time of the commission I had warnd him that I saw H.D. as the matrix of my finding my work in Poetry itself. 'I askt him for an H.D. book,' Norman Holmes Pearson said sometime in the 1960s, 'and he's writing an LSD book'" (quoted in *Silliman's Blog*, 9/28/04). "Writing these opening pages of a book 'On H.D.' or "For H.D.', a tribute and a study," Duncan writes in Part I: Chapter 2,

> I came at this point to see this first part of movement of the book as relating how I had found my life in poetry through the agency of certain women and how I had then perhaps a special estimation not only of the masters of that art but of its mistresses, so that certain women writers instructed as well as inspired me. Miss Keough reading to us in that high school English class long ago the poem *Heat*, so that there was a voice that I loved in the voice of the poem; Athalie and Lili listening as I read "*I hear an army charging upon the land*," so that there was the voice of my own loving in the voice of the poem -- these had emerged as first awakenings to the informing and transforming powers of Poetry. In the very beginning, in the awakening of childhood back of this later awakening of the man I was to be, there had been my mother's voice reading the fairy tales and myths that were to remain the charged ground of my poetic reality.
>
> I have written elsewhere that I am unbaptized, uninitiated, ungraduated, unanalyzed. I had in mind that my worship belonged to no church, that my mysteries belonged to no cult, that my learning belonged to no institution, that my imagination of my self belonged to no philosophic system. My thought must be without sanction. Yet to be a poet is to be reborn -- to be baptized, initiated, graduated, analyzed. The Muses -- for me, in my adolescent days, these women, my teacher and my companions -- admit the poet to their company. But we are drawn to them, as if in the beginning we were of their kind, kin of Poetry with them.
>
> Back of the Muses, so the old teaching goes, is Mnemosyne, Mother of the Muses. Freud, too, teaches that the Art has something to do with restoring, re-membering, the Mother. Poetry itself may then be the Mother of those who have destroyed their mothers. But no. the iamge Freud projects of dismembering and remembering is the image of his own creative process in Psychoanalysis which he reads into all Arts. Mnemosyne, the Mother-Memory of Poetry, is our made-up life, the matrix of fictions. Poetry is the Mother of those who have created their own mothers…My directive to the Cantos of Ezra Pound, and at the same time a directive to work not from preconceived form but towards creative form, came from another woman, Louise Antoinette Krause. She was a poet, perhaps what is called a poetaster, for nothing came of her writing later, but, importantly, she was an arbiter of the modern. She had taste, an autocratic or egotistic sense of the rights things: Stein,

> Sitwell, Proust, Joyce. "Should he read Eliot?" her paramour, Babby Haas, asked. "No," she announced, addressing me in the third person -- it was as if he had enquired at Delphi of the oracle: "His work is too lurid as it is. He must read Pound."

The H.D. Book is still unfinished when Duncan dies.

Jack Hirschman is fired from UCLA because of his involvement with the anti-war movement. He moves to Venice, California, where he lives until 1972.

John Martin begins Black Sparrow Press in Los Angeles. Its first publication is a group of broadsides by Charles Bukowski. In 1986 Black Sparrow will move to Santa Rosa. Among the authors Martin publishes are -- in addition to Bukowski --Diane Wakoski, Robert Kelly, Jerome Rothenberg, Clayton Eshleman, Paul Bowles, Robert Creeley, Fielding Dawson, Ed Dorn, Paul Goodman, Gerald Malanga, Joyce Carol Oates, Charles Reznikoff, Marsden Hartley, and Tom Clark.

Robert Duncan gives a series of lectures at the San Francisco Art Institute. The lectures are later published as *The Truth & Life of Myth: An Essay in Essential Autobiography* (The Sumac Press, 1968). In these talks, writes Richard Cándida Smith in *Utopia and Dissent*, Duncan suggests "that the self [is] the sum of intersecting forces rather than a distinct, autonomous entity, a conclusion similar to [Gary] Snyder's conception of the ego derived from his studies of Buddhism." Duncan's important essay includes, among many subjects, some recollections of the poet's childhood:

> The meaning and intent of what it is to be a man and, among men, to be a poet, I owe to the workings of myth in my spirit, both the increment of associations gathered in my continuing study of mythological lore and my own apprehension of what my life is at work there. The earliest stories heard, nursery rimes and animal tales from childhood, remain today alive in my apprehensions…The shaping of every spiritual and psychic imagination has its ground in these things that I did not originate but that came to me as an inheritance of what I was, a gift of life meanings…
>
> For my parents, the truth of things was esoteric (locked inside) or occult (masked by) the apparent, and one needed a "lost" key in order to piece out the cryptogram of who wrote Shakespeare or who created the universe and what his real message was. From the theosophy of the 1890s my maternal grandmother had passed from Spiritualism to become an elder in an Hermetic Brotherhood, similar to and contemporaneous with the Order of the Golden Dawn to which Yeats belonged. Not only stories and books, but dreams and life itself, were to be read in terms of contained and revealed messages, even as in our time works of art, dreams and daily life are read by devotees of psychoanalysis, or as the People of the Book -- Jews, Christians and Moslems -- have always read God's intent in the world, in history, and whatever written record. For theosophists, psychoanalysts, and the converts of revealed religions, the story is not primary but the meaning behind the story.
>
> Truth was for my parents primordial and spiritually dangerous. The Gnosis, like Eden and the Original Creation Itself, had once been perfect and complete—a simple sentence -- "good" as *Genesis* testifies. But Gnosis, Eden and Creation, the very Word, had been lost in a Fall from Grace that we know as *knowledge.* The sentence, no longer simple, grows apprehensive of a duplicity. It covers what it is about to say. It rationalizes. It qualifies itself. Noah becomes drunk and bewildered from the fruit of that vine and threatens to say forbidden things.
>
> Modern science, my parents believed, would come upon secrets of Nature, as science had come before in Atlantis upon such secrets, and, spiritually arrogant and ignorant, intoxicated by knowledge, destroy America -- the New Atlantis -- in a series

> of holocausts, an end of Time in my life time that would come in fire-blast, as the end of Atlantean Time had come in earthquake and flood.

Duncan's own language is "duplicitous"; his sentences are anything but "simple." Cf. *Paradise Lost*: language which is everywhere else in the poem highly suspect is, in Eden, without such overtones. Yet Milton is aware that his reader has no choice but to experience such language -- even in the context of Eden -- as "duplicitous." At readings Duncan sometimes speaks of his "Miltonics" -- poems written in a manner he had learned from Milton.

Oyez Press in Berkeley publishes Robert Duncan's *The Years As Catches: First Poems, 1939-1946*. In his introduction Duncan writes of the struggles of his early poetry,

> Laura Riding scolding poets seems, even today, most to be scolding the poet I know myself to be, scolding my very thinking to know and presuming to be. Describing romantics, she described how I felt myself: "They were giant-like by their dreams, prophetically swollen with dreams; instead of writing poems, they drew a swollen outline of poetry…." And in Ben Jonson's *Timbers* it could seem to me mine was what he called "the vicious language"…I seemd to have no authenticity; my most moving poems were not mine at all but sprang from the originals of George Barker or Saint-John Perse, Lorca or Milton or Laura Riding. But I knew too that the wing of the Adversary, the accusation of falseness and the derivations must be then true to what I was, must be terms in which I must work…
>
> I have come not to resolve or to eliminate any of the old conflicting elements of my work but to imagine them now as contrasts of a field of composition in which I develop an ever-shifting possibility of the poet I am -- at once a made up thing and at the same time a depth in which my being is -- the poems not ends in themselves but forms arising from the final intention of the whole in which they have their form and in turn giving rise anew to that intention. Poems…are immediate presentations of the intention of the whole, the great poem of all poems, a unity, and in any two of its elements or
>
> parts appearing as a duality or a mating, each part in every other having, if we could see it, its condition -- its opposite or contender and its satisfaction or twin. Yet in the composite of all members we see no duality but the variety of the one.
>
> Nor is that one myself. It may be my *Self*….

Oyez Press in Berkeley publishes Philip Lamantia's *Touch of the Marvelous*. The book will be reprinted by Four Seasons Foundation in Bolinas in 1974.

Lenore Kandel's erotic poem, *The Love Book* (Stolen Paper Review, San Francisco, 1966) is brought to trial for obscenity; the book draws attention to the fusion of eroticism and mysticism in both the Beat and 60s youth cultures. The opening page of the book contains these lines:

> there are no ways of love but/beautiful/
> I love you all of them
>
> I love you / your cock in my hand
> stirs like a bird
> in my fingers
> as you swell and grow hard in my hand

The central poem of Kandel's book, in three "phases," is "To Fuck With Love"; again the printing of the word "fuck" is an important issue. James Schevill organizes a read-in of the book at San Francisco City Hall. Publicity accompanying the protests eventually leads Police Chief Thomas Cahill to instruct the Juvenile Bureau to cease responding to complaints about obscene books. The 35th Anniversary issue of *Open City* notes that *The Love Book*

> became the instrument San Francisco police used to attack the Bohemian scene in the Haight-Ashbury District. Allen Cohen, *Open City* managing editor, was then editor of the *San Francisco Oracle* and worked at the Psychedelic Shop. The Frisco Vice Squad busted Cohen after buying *The Love Book* from him. They busted City Lights Books in North Beach the next day for also selling *The Love Book*. Cohen's trial lasted five weeks. It ended with a conviction which was eventually reversed by the California Supreme Court.

This is "To Fuck With Love, Phase II":

to fuck with love --
to know the tremor of your flesh within my own --
feeling of thick sweet juices running wild
sweat bodies tight and tongue to tongue

I am all those ladies of antiquity enamored of the sun
my cunt is a honeycomb we are covered with come and honey
we are covered with each other my skin is the taste of you

fuck -- the fuck of love-fuck—the yes entire --
love out of ours -- the cock in the cunt fuck --
the fuck of pore into pore -- the smell of fuck
taste it -- love dripping from skin to skin --
tongue at the doorways -- cock god in heaven --
love blooms entire universe -- I/you
reflected in the golden mirror we are avatars of
Krishna and Radha
pure love-lust of godhead beauty unbearable
carnal incarnate

I am the god-animal, the mindless cuntdeity the hegod-animal
is over me, through me we are become one total angel
united in fire united in semen and sweat united in lovescream

sacred our acts and our actions
sacred our parts and our persons

sacred the sacred cunt!
sacred the sacred cock!
miracle! miracle! sacred the primal miracle!

sacred the god-animal, twisting and wailing

sacred the beautiful fuck

In the Colonial Room of the Saint Francis Hotel there is a "Teach-On LSD," a benefit for the Timothy Leary Defense Fund, with Big Brother and the Holding Company and the Sopwith Camel. David Meltzer, Allen Ginsberg, Michael McClure, Richard Alpert, and Timothy Leary speak on "The Politics and Ethics of Ecstasy." There is also a panel on "Drugs and

Society"; moderated by Ralph J. Gleason, this panel features Richard Alpert, Allen Ginsberg and Patrick Hallinan. In addition, the San Francisco Mime Troupe premieres *Search and Seizure*, a cabaret play written and directed by Peter Berg.

New Directions publishes Kenneth Rexroth's *Collected Shorter Poems*. His *Collected Longer Poems* follows in 1968. The two-part "Andree Rexroth" is one of three poems Rexroth wrote in memory of his first wife, Andree Dutcher Rexroth, whom he had married in 1927. Rexroth divorced Andree in 1940, and she died of complications from epilepsy shortly afterwards :

MT. TAMALPAIS

The years have gone. It is spring
Again. Mars and Saturn will
Soon come on, low in the West,
In the dusk. Now the evening
Sunlight makes hazy girders
Over Steep Ravine above
The waterfalls. The winter
Birds from Oregon, robins
And varied thrushes, feast on
Ripe toyon and madroñe
Berries. The robins sing as
The dense light falls.
                Your ashes
Were scattered in this place. Here
I wrote you a farewell poem,
And long ago another,
A poem of peace and love,
Of the lassitude of a long
Spring evening in youth. Now
It is almost ten years since
You came here to stay. Once more,
The pussy willows that come
After the New Year in this
Outlandish land are blooming.
There are deer and raccoon tracks
In the same places. A few
New sand bars and cobble beds
Have been left where erosion
Has gnawed deep into the hills.
The rounds of life are narrow.
War and peace have past like ghosts.
The human race sinks towards
Oblivion. A bittern
Calls from the same rushes where
You heard one on our first year
In the West; and where I heard
One again in the year
Of your death.

KINGS RIVER CANYON

My sorrow is so wide

I cannot see across it;
And so deep I shall never
Reach the bottom of it.
The moon sinks through deep haze,
As though the Kings River Canyon
Were filled with fine, warm, damp gauze.
Saturn gleams through the thick light
Like a gold, wet eye; nearby,
Antares glows faintly,
Without sparkle. Far overhead,
Stone shines darkly in the moonlight --
Lookout Point, where we lay
In another full moon, and first
Peered down into this canyon.
Here we camped, by still autumnal
Pools, all one warm October.
I baked you a bannock birthday cake.
Here you did your best paintings --
Innocent, wondering landscapes.
Very few of them are left
Anywhere. You destroyed them
In the terrible trouble
Of your long sickness. Eighteen years
Have passed since that autumn.
There was no trail here then.
Only a few people knew
How to enter this canyon.
We were all alone, twenty
Miles from anybody;
A young husband and wife,
Closed in and wrapped about
In the quiet autumn,
In the sound of quiet water,
In the turning and falling leaves,
In the wavering of innumerable
Bats from the caves, dipping
Over the odorous pools
Where the great trout drowsed in the evenings.

Eighteen years have been ground
To pieces in the wheels of life.
You are dead. With a thousand
Convicts they have blown a highway
Through Horseshoe Bend. Youth is gone,
That only came once. My hair
Is turning grey and my body
Heavier. I too move on to death.
I think of Henry King's stilted
But desolated *Exequy*,
Of Yuan Chen's great poem,
Unbearably pitiful;
Alone by the Spring river
More alone than I had ever
Imagined I would ever be,
I think of Frieda Lawrence,
Sitting alone in New Mexico,
In the long drought, listening

> For the hiss of the milky Isar,
> Over the cobbles, in a lost Spring.

August 29. The Beatles give their final concert; it takes place at Candlestick Park in San Francisco. The poster announces, "HERE COME THE BEATLES" and features the British and American flags joined together in an approximation of the Yin/Yang sign. Also on the bill are "The Cyrkle, The Ronettes, The Remains, Plus Two Other Acts To Be Determined."

David Meltzer's band, Serpent Power is "formed in November 1966. Their debut performance, at a benefit concert for the Telegraph Group Neighbourhood Centre, resulted in a recording contract with the prestigious Vanguard label. This experimental ensemble was a musical outlet for David Meltzer, one of several poets active in San Francisco's North Beach enclave. An accomplished guitarist, Meltzer led several bluegrass groups during the early 60s including the Snopes County Camp Followers, which featured his wife, Tina (vocals, autoharp) and J.P. Pickens (banjo). Two former members of the Grass Roots, Denny Ellis (rhythm guitar) and David Stenson (bass), joined David, Tina, John Payne (organ) and Clark Coolidge (drums) for the group's first album [*Serpent Power*, 1968], which successfully amalgamated softer, almost good-time music with the free-association style exemplified on the lengthy 'Endless Tunnel.' A new line-up -- David Meltzer, Bob Cuff, Jim Moscoso, David Moore plus Coolidge -- forged an even more radical direction, but this departure was rejected by their record company. Instead David and Tina recorded *Poet Song* [1969], a haunting collection of poems and songs augmented by a string quartet. However, when a third collection, *Green Morning*, was cancelled [by Capitol, to which Meltzer had switched] , David Meltzer resumed his literary career" (*Encyclopedia of Popular Music*). Meltzer remarks, "David and Tina would not become mega-stars but they did have a very expensive home tape." Other recordings by David and Tina Meltzer include *Just Folks* (Living Room Tapes, 1985) and *Faces: New Songs for Kids* (Folkways Records, 1985). *David Meltzer Reading* was released by Membrane Tapes in 1981.

Lenny Bruce dies of an overdose of morphine.

## *1967 Year of the San Francisco Summer of Love*

On January 14, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Lenore Kandel, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Timothy Leary, and Michael McClure perform at the "Human Be-In and Gathering of all the Tribes" in Golden Gate Park. The event is organized by Snyder, McClure, Ginsberg, Kandel, and The Diggers. McClure reads one poem and sings another to the accompaniment of an autoharp (a "Zimmerman") given to him by Bob Dylan. In *Utopia and Dissent* Richard Cándida Smith writes,

> To speed the "awakening of consciousness" [Gary] Snyder urged those prepared to rebel against the dominant values of United States society to take LSD. As the Jefferson Airplane played, approximately 20,000 people...took LSD or smoked marijuana.

In a January 14, 2007 article appearing in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "…with flowers in your gray hair," Carl Nolte writes, "The Be-In, held on the warmest day of the San

Francisco winter of 1967…was what *Chronicle* columnist Ralph J. Gleason called 'the greatest nonspecific mass meeting in years, perhaps ever'":

> There was no real point. It was a gathering of the tribes, the passing of the baton from the Beat Generation to the hippies. It was the winter before the Summer of Love…LSD was passed around. People sat on the grass making their own music; guitars, harmonicas, tambourines, flutes, sitars. Nobody sold anything to anybody…Timothy Leary made his first public appearance in San Francisco and advised the crowd to tune in, turn on, drop out [*sic*]…When it was over, at sundown, there was no litter. People picked up their own trash…
>
> Some thought the Be-In, which was the idea of Allen Cohen, editor of a paper called the *Oracle*, was the beginning of something, a change, a watershed. "It was the passing of the late-era beatnik, and the beginning of psychedelia," said Bill Belmont, who was 24 in 1967.
>
> "The Haight was just beginning," he said.
>
> Just after the Be-In, the San Francisco music scene flourished, the city was taken over by flower children, by what they called the Summer of Love. "What happened was the creation of an American archetype, like the cowboy—the San Francisco hippie," said *The Chronicle*'s Joel Selvin….

The California Peace and Freedom Party is founded in Venice, California. In "The Venice Peace and Freedom Party," *Free Venice Beachhead*, April, 1978, co-founder John Haag writes,

> The first office of the California Peace and Freedom Party (PFP) was located in Venice at 1415 W. Washington Blvd. There in 1967 a small group of civil rights and anti-Vietnam War activists did much of the work that began the ambitious task of putting a new political party on the ballot.
>
> Convinced that neither the Democrat nor Republican parties would offer an anti-war candidate for president in 1968, the group proposed a new party that would run candidates at every level, who were opposed to war, racism, and poverty. The platform and candidates would be chosen by party members after the party qualified for the ballot.
>
> Beginning with 30 registrations on June 23, 1967, we had to register over 66,000 California voters in the new and unknown party by the end of the year. As the registration drive slowly gained momentum, the Venice office was moved to a more central location in Los Angeles. PFP voter registrars continued to work in Venice, one of the few communities where it proved worthwhile to go door-to-door.
>
> Eventually the "Venice registration drive," as some critics described it, spread throughout California and by December had become a sort of state-wide, floating anti-war demonstration. We qualified for the ballot with over 105,000 voters registered in the PFP, 1,600 of them in Venice.
>
> The Venice PFP's first experience with local issues came early in 1968 when the LAPD Metro Squad was sent to Venice to "clean up the hippies." We organized demonstrations against the scores of unjustified arrests and helped to get legal aid for those arrested. Later that year a new Venice office was set up at 1727 W. Washington Blvd, where we worked on local campaigns for Congress, State Senate, and Assembly, and on the Eldridge Cleaver for President campaign.

Kaye McDonough graduates from UC Berkeley. Interviewed by Charles Ries at

http://halfdrunkmuse.com/current/reviews/kaye_mcdonough.php

she has this to say about her experiences in North Beach in the late 1960s and 1970s. The quotations here are excerpted from the full interview:

> Blue, Kristen, Jackie Baks, Tisa Walden, and my closest friend from that time, Alix Geluardi, would each have quite a story to tell. All the women from that period were just terrific, exciting people -- well -- the men, too! What brought us all there? I'm still trying to sort it all out…
>
> I met my first poets in Berkeley and fell in love with one of the best, Frank Sears. (He was killed when I was 24.) Other than Edna St. Vincent Millay, the only role models among women poets and writers I had heard of by that time were Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, Virginia Woolf -- They had all committed suicide, not something I really looked forward to doing!...
>
> I remember the thrill of going into Vesuvio's all by myself and standing at the bar and ordering a drink just the way a man did. I stood shoulder to shoulder with the men, paid for myself, just like a man, I supported myself in a minimal way, and met some of the most wonderful poets writing in the 20th century as an unforeseen result. Lucky me!
>
> Unlike the circumscribed world of the college poetry workshop now in vogue (as far as I know they didn't even have poetry workshops then -- no one I ever knew or had heard about before I went to California was a poet, let alone a woman poet), literary life in North Beach was open to everyone -- rich, poor, blue, green, red.
>
> Readings at Minnie's Can Do (run by Ruth Weiss) and at the Coffee Gallery were open. The hotels like the New Riv, the Tevere, the Basque, were open to everyone with the price of admission, $25 a week I believe they were then. Even some of the restaurants like the San Remo were communal -- you'd sit at long tables with anyone who wanted to join you, or vice versa. The bars like Spec's, Vesuvio, 1232, certainly were open. What a wild mix of people from all parts of the country -- the whole American spectrum!
>
> The poets in North Beach circles came from all over the place -- What a great brew of surrealists, tough Bukowski types, beats and bibliophiles -- and the range of literature discussed blew away the limited scope of any college course I'd had…You had to read all the time to keep up at all. It was fabulous! Then readings were happening all the time -- exciting.
>
> The bohemian life agreed with me -- I liked the freedom and independence. The only part about it that was upsetting was the difficulty of finding a partner and the near impossibility of having a child and raising him or her with any kind of stability.
>
> Bohemian men don't want to settle down -- and maybe I didn't want to either (whether I could admit it to myself or not), a possible reason why I had a problem finding a mate. Being an alcoholic didn't help either! By my thirties, I had stopped drinking and wanted the whole experience of being a woman. More and more that included having a mate and a child. I fixed on Zelda Fitz as a woman who had tried to do everything: have the husband, the child, be a writer, a dancer, a free spirit -- she and Isadora, another hero of mine, tried for all of it. Even if everything didn't work out perfectly for them (to put it mildly! all that tragedy) at least they embraced life and gave it their best shot -- and they didn't kill themselves. Thank you, Zelda. Thank you, Isadora.

McDonough's *Zelda: Frontier Life in America, A Fantasy in Three Acts* will appear from City Lights in 1978. This is her "After Li Po: The Long Road":

> A good bottle of wine costs ten bucks a pop,
> Those raviolis from the Village? $5.50 a box!
> I don't care about any of it --
> I'm sick of rich food and booze makes me crazy.
> I get out my car keys
> and turn in every direction.

I'd go north to Vermont, but the cold weather's coming,
I'd drive south to New York, but the traffic is crazy,
I'd sit with my son at Sleeping Giant by the stream,
but suddenly I dream of rafting Brown's Canyon,
or climbing Mount Tamalpais in the rain.
The journey is long,
the journey is long,
with many directions.
How do I know which one to follow?
Someday, I will fly away on a great gust of wind,
up and over the broad and turbulent ocean,
on my way to some Paris in the Twenties,
across the deep and uncertain seas.

In *Breakout! In Search of New Theatrical Environments* (Alan Swallow, 1973), James Schevill describes an instance of 1967 street theater, "one spontaneous action, the kind of action that happened throughout the country [during the 1960s]":

> 1967 -- The Marine Corps has come on campus to recruit again. After their last visit, when anti-war student groups surprised and besieged them with pickets and protests, they are prepared…They send in four marines in full-dress uniforms, medals gleaming from spic and span jackets, hands encased in white gloves. Rigid, perfect postures, pride of the corps, racial equality and military justice represented by one Negro in dark glasses closely lined to his Marine pals…*We enforce equality!...Join us and be free!...Freedom is the discipline of formality!...*
>
> Triumph of the Marines claiming their formal power over the territory…Students gaping out the windows, alive suddenly to their audience role…Where is the Public New-Sense, the rituals of release?...Here they come…Here *It* comes…
>
> *It* is a monstrous head of poodle hair eliminating a forehead, almost covering fervent, deep-set animal eyes…*It* is dressed in an immensely over-sized mock uniform topped with motorcycle crash helmet…The mock uniform has fantastic purple-striped pants, golden jacket with enormous sergeant stripes decorated with tinsel stars, high priest-like collar covered with skull and bones insignia, paper medals cut out of cartoons covering the chest down to gut level…
>
> *It* begins to recruit, wailing, chanting, mumbling: "Fellow id-i-ots…En-lissst in sal-vaaa-tion war!...Grrrrrowwwl with meee for freeeeeee-dumb!...Kill Kong! Kill Kong…Grab your frontier gun! Be your own Kit, Kit, Kitty Carson!...Learn how to bloooow up yellow, pink, black peeeepuls in ten eeeeasy l lessons…Sound out the Ala-mo Hello, the Ala-mo Hellll-low…Join your Tex-ass Rangers…Get down in the gritty of the nitty-gritty…Groooooove with ol' Charlie Cong…Prove your right to a tweested man-hood by volunteering for your nearest Air Delivery…Play tick-tack-toe with hell-i-cop-ter clouds…Throw gren-ade toys with gleeful fingerings…Learn how to fuck native girls in luscious jungle bushes…Get your free, shit-proof pants…*Kill Kong!...Kill Kong!..."*
>
> End of inside class [of the sort that Schevill himself is teaching, in "Drama and Poetry"]…Beginning of outside class [the street theater his students are witnessing]…*It* wails on, joined soon by other fantastic mock-uniforms confronting the immobile formalists…Dramatic warfare over the public territory….

Kenneth Patchen receives an award from the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities for "life-long contribution to American letters."

On January 20, the regents vote 14 to 8 to fire Clark Kerr as president of the UC system. FBI director J. Edgar Hoover had mounted a covert campaign to get Kerr fired because bureau

officials disagreed with Kerr's strong defense of academic freedom and other campus policies during the Cold War. The FBI secretly collaborated with Kerr's opponent on the Board of Regents, Edwin Pauley, and other political foes in an effort to undermine his career.

March 21: Charles Manson is released from prison. Insisting that prison had become his home, he requests that he be allowed to stay. The request is denied. He requests and is granted permission to move to San Francisco. With the help of an acquaintance, he finds an apartment in Berkeley. In prison he had been taught to play the guitar by 1930s bank robber Alvin Karpis. Panhandling, he begins to play the instrument outside U.C. Berkeley's Sather Gate. *Wikipedia*: "Manson also took to playing the guru in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury, which, in 1967's so-termed Summer of Love, was emerging as the signature hippie locale. Holding forth with a philosophy that included, among other things, a bit of the Scientology he had studied in prison, he soon had his first group of young followers, most of them female. Before the summer was out, Manson and eight or nine of his enthusiasts piled into an old school bus they had re-wrought in hippie style, with colored rugs and pillows in place of the many seats they had removed. Hitting the road, they roamed as far north as Washington State, then southward through Los Angeles, Mexico, and the southwest. Returning to the Los Angeles area, they lived in Topanga Canyon, Malibu, and Venice."

*Audit/Poetry* magazine (Vol. IV, No. 3) features Robert Duncan. Duncan discusses his quarrel with Robin Blaser over Blaser's translations of Gérald de Nerval's *Les Chimères*, which Duncan heard Blaser read at UC Berkeley's 1965 Poetry Conference. Duncan's own translations of *Les Chimères* appear near the center of his book, *Bending the Bow* (1968). "The basic misunderstanding between Blaser and myself," Duncan writes,

> seems to arise between his poetics in which the poem is to be authentic, i.e. an expression of what is really his own -- the authority of this poetry must be first-hand, and the criterion of its reality is that it be actually his -- and my poetics in which the poem is thought of as a process of participation in a reality larger than my own -- a community of meanings and forms in which my work would be at once derivative and creative. So, I have taken Blake's "The authors are in eternity" as my guide. Blaser as an artist aims at signature or style; I aim at meaning, both in form and in content. But meaning here, for me, is not in what I mean, but in what the language means. I do not express meanings that are my own, I work in meanings which I receive or find in research...
>
> In extreme cases of the artist seeking authenticity -- Jack Spicer's *Language* comes to mind -- the sense of the impossibility of communication takes over; communal meanings are seen as a static, drowning out the idiosyncratic truth of things. A Laura Riding will come to feel that all poets write poetry for reasons improper to poetry.
>
> What I experience on the other hand...is at time[s] a feeling that there is no real me, only the process of derivations in which I have my existence.

This is Blaser's translation of Nerval's "El Desdichado." In his note about the translations Blaser remarks, "I have taken liberties…In my view, these translations required that I become Nerval and yet remain my own poet."

THE SHADOW

I am the Darkness  the Widowed  the Unconsoled,

the Prince of Aquitaine in his broken tower,
my only Star is dead  and my lustrous lute
carries a melancholy black sun

in the night of Death,  You who consoled me,
give back the high hill above the Mediterranean,
the flower which pleased my desolated heart so much,
and the arbor where the vine branch unites with the rose

am I Amor or Apollo?
my forehead is still red from the Queen's kiss
I have dreamed in the Grotto where the Siren swims

I have crossed Acheron twice,  a winner,
Modulating the sighs of a saint and the cries
Of a fairy  turn by turn  on Orpheus' lyre

This is Duncan's translation:

EL DESDICHADO  [THE DISINHERITED]

I am the dark one, - the widower, - the unconsoled,
The prince of Aquitaine at his striken tower:
My sole *star* is dead, - and my constellated lute
Bears the black *sun* of the *Melencolia.*

In the night of the tomb, you who consoled me,
Give me back Mount Posilipo and the Italian sea,
The *flower* which pleased so my desolate heart,
And the trellis where the grape vine unites with the rose.

Am I Amor or Phoebus?...Lusignan or Biron?
My forehead is still red from the kiss of the queen;
I have dreamed in the grotto where the mermaid swims…

And two times victorious I have crosst the Acheron:
Modulating turn by turn on the lyre of Orpheus
The sighs of the saint and the cries of the fay.

In a discussion with Jack Foley, Robin Blaser wryly commented, "Duncan ran me out of town." Blaser leaves the San Francisco area in 1966 to take a teaching position at Simon Fraser University in Canada. Blaser's books include *Apparitors* (Auerhahn Press, 1963); The *Moth Poem* (Open Space, San Francisco, 1964); *Les Chimères* (Open Space, 1964); *Cups* (Four Seasons, 1968); *Image-Nations 1-12* (Ferry Press, London, 1974); *Image Nations 12-14, etc.* (Cobblestone, Vancouver, 1975); *Syntax* (Talonbooks, Vancouver, 1975); *The Faerie Queen & The Park* (Fissure Books, Vancouver, 1988); *Pell Mell* (Coach House Press, Toronto, 1988); and *The Holy Forest* (Coach House Press, 1993).

Grove Press publishes Charles Olson's *Human Universe and Other Essays*, edited by Donald Allen. The collection includes some of Olson's most important pieces, including the essay on "Projective Verse." In "Against Wisdom as Such," an essay written in 1954, he singles out his friend and colleague Robert Duncan for criticism. "Duncan puts it all in this sentence: 'I am a poet, self-declared, manqué,'":

> And I had to write to him that I took it (from poems of his I have admired since I saw one in *Circle* in 1947) that he was neither as balanced as the sentences in this "Notebook" try to be. Nor manqué. And that he chastises himself as either more or less than he is, because of some outside concept and measure of "wisdom." Which is what's wrong with wisdom, that it does this to persons. And that it damn well has to go, at least from the man of language.
>
> (I wanted even to say that San Francisco seems to have become an école des Sages ou Mages as ominous as Ojai, L.A. But I didn't…
>
> One has to drive all nouns, the abstract most of all, back to process—to act…
>
> I take it Duncan, or any writing man who takes it seriously, needn't bother his head with greatness. We are ultimate when we do bend to the law. And the law is:
>
> /whatever is born or done this moment of time, has
> the qualities of
> this moment of
> time /
>
> I urge on Duncan or anyone that a poem is not wise, even if it is: that any wisdom which gets into any poem is solely a quality of the moment of time in which there might happen to be wisdoms.
>
> There are obviously seizures which have nothing to do with wisdom at all. And they are very beautiful…A song is heat.

Olson's criticism haunts Duncan, who responds to it in various ways throughout his career. His last reference to the essay is in the conclusion to "Dante Études" (*Ground Work: Before the War*, New Directions, 1984):

> And a wisdom as such, a loosening
> of energies and every gain! For good.
> A rushing-in place of "God", if it be!
>
> Open out like a rose
> that can no longer keep its center closed
> but, practicing for Death, lets go,
>
> let's go, littering the ground
> with petals of its rime….

Clayton Eshleman founds and edits *Caterpillar*, an immensely influential magazine of the period. *Caterpillar* continues to 1973, with twenty issues appearing. In 1981, while he is Dreyfuss Poet in Residence at the California Institute of Technology, Eshleman initiates *Sulfur.* Forty-six issues will appear; the magazine will end in 2000.

Holt, Rinehart and Winston publishes James Scully's first book of poetry, *The Marches: A Book of Poems*.

Ishmael Reed permanently relocates to California. In 1979 he will move to Oakland.

Benjamin Saltman begins to teach verse writing and contemporary American literature at California State University, Northridge, where he will remain for twenty-five years.

Alfred A. Knopf publishes *Down These Mean Streets* by Piri (the name is derived from "s*piri*t") Thomas, born Juan Pedro Tomás in New York City's Spanish Harlem in 1928 of Puerto Rican and Cuban parents. *Down These Mean Streets* is an autobiography documenting the author's life in Spanish Harlem, his downward spiral, his imprisonment, and his redemption. The *New York Times Book Review* calls the book "a linguistic event. Gutter language. Spanish imagery and personal poetics…mingle into a kind of individual statement that has very much its own sound." In addition to prose, Thomas also writes poetry. His poem "A First Night at El Sing Sing" ends in a characteristically upbeat and inspirational way:

> Hey bro, you're not a number,
> You got a name --
> They only got your body
> not your spirit nor your brain.
> Punto.

Julia Vinograd returns to Berkeley. In her Gale Research *Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series* essay (vol. 26) she writes,

> When I came back to Berkeley in '67, the world had totally changed, and I hadn't heard or seen any of it in Iowa City, Iowa. There'd been politics before I left, but I used to have a picture of all of us arrested in the Free Speech Movement. The girls all looked like secretaries and the boys all looked like law clerks. Now everyone had long hair, bare feet, bright clothes, and looked like they'd just stepped out of a tapestry. Over it all hung Bob Dylan's early lyrics, which were poetry for me. I decided Telegraph Avenue was Desolation Row, and I liked it that way. I was in total culture shock. I scuttled around with my mouth and my notebook both open, staring at what I saw and trying to write everything down at once. I forgot about writing styles and just wrote; I didn't want any of it to get away. I've lived in Berkeley ever since, trying to write the autobiography of the street which keeps changing.

Robert Grenier produces *Dusk Road Games: Poems 1960-1965*, his thesis project under George Starbuck at the University of Iowa.

Charles Bukowski begins a weekly column, "Notes of a Dirty Old Man," in John Bryan's *Open City*.

Lenore Kandel's second book, *Word Alchemy* is published by Grove Press.

Richard Brautigan's *Trout Fishing in America*, dedicated to Jack Spicer and Ron Loewinsohn, is published by Dell. Brautigan is catapulted to international fame and labeled by literary critics as the writer best representative of the emerging San Francisco counterculture. His work becomes identified with the counterculture youth-movement of the late 1960s. *Wikipedia*: "'When the 1960s ended, he was the baby thrown out with the bath water,' said his friend and fellow writer, Tom McGuane. 'He was a gentle, troubled, deeply

odd guy.' Generally dismissed by literary critics and increasingly abandoned by his readers, Brautigan's popularity waned throughout the late 1970s and into the 1980s."

Wallace Berman is included in the collaged group portrait designed by Peter Blake for the Beatle's album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

Harcourt Brace NY publishes Richard Silberg's first book, though it is not a book of poetry: *The Devolution of the People: A Study of Cultural Evolution and the Impact of Technology on Contemporary Society*. "It is axiomatic to the writing of this book," he writes,

> that the structure of contemporary society is becoming inhuman, that it no longer provides the satisfactions, the psychic nutrients of societies of the past. It has become an ocean of technology upon which modern men are becalmed. On its shore twists a hothouse flower, growing hugely, obscuring the sun in an anxious silence.
>
> Humanity thins in our society. For contemporary culture is not so much corrupt as it is diluted, stretched to the point of transparency. In the technological nations of the twentieth century, culture has become, for the first time in human history, an insubstantial film, a veneer on the surface of the impersonal life mode that is the fundament of all those nations. Social life comes to answer the demands of rational systems, bureaucratic, economic, mechanical, rather than the irrational needs of the human mind.
>
> And around this idea the nagging emptinesses of our civilization begin to cluster, to creep into shadowy formation. Culture and its passing, technology and its metallic demands, create the modern…
>
> We have ceased to sleep; we have ceased to dream. For men dreamed once in bright daylight, after the hunt, in dance and song, in the wedded groups that encircled their dreams. They were the People. Described in the stars, the sun, and the moon, echoed in winds, in the earth, veined in the animals and their brethren spirits. Theirs was the primitive unity, the banding together of preurban men…
>
> But dancing circles are gone. They are not figures for concrete and steel, and the People no longer embrace our minds. Our history, our concept of the human, is shaped by cities. For city men are no longer entranced. They grow quick and subtle. In vast aggregates they busy themselves with money and science, they level and build and turn brusque to the gods…
>
> We have begun with a metaphor of primal unity -- the band, the tribe, the People. Clearly this concept is in some sense fictive…Yet primitive men always call themselves "the Men," "the People." They commune vitally in belief, in ritual, and in action, so that they provide for each other the only humanity that they know. They are not individuals but slumberous atoms of a larger psychosocial entity. Each of their groups presents to our alien intelligence a oneness, the pristine community of true culture…The People, our fictive band of human animals, will define for us…a field of operations. We will hold them to the light and explicate their unity. And they will provide for us a touchstone, a center of energy….

The book concludes that "culture is dying, and the divine spark of the gods, the flame that Prometheus stole, recedes from us into a strange, mathematical land. We are no longer the People; starved for culture, we flap like fish in tidal pools on the shores of the Sacred Sea."

Oyez publishes David Meltzer's *Journal of the Birth*, a piece which first appeared in *Journal for the Protection of All Beings*, No. 1, 1961. Meltzer's book begins,

> **29 June**
>
> It seemed so long watching Tina's belly swell until now it seems her belly will stay forever huge, a slope of flesh from breasts to c…
>
> Dinner at the Roscoes' &, as they've had their baby, we talk about insurance-policies. More money for the Void, more protection. Nancy tells us how her agent tried selling her a policy that would insure her against insurance.
>
> Rent, light, water, gas, telephone. No reason to pay for them. This is bribery, a payoff each month to unknown powers, to allow us to live & perpetuate our fears…
>
> *
>
> Tina's c…, the hair shaved around, a slit open slightly, a line going up, balanced by a bunch of hemorrhoids blossoming from her anus. Never have I looked upon this part as I do now. It is a pure living form opening with the contraction revealing a hint of matter that lives inside, behind that flesh. --Pant lightly, says the Nurse. --Pant & rub. Easy. Good. A small drop of blood spreads & makes a trail along her thigh. Tina looks over to me. My eyes look into hers. My breath keeps hitting me in the nose, bouncing off the mask.

Fulcrum Press publishes Larry Eigner's *another time in fragments*. The book has a lengthy blurb from Robert Duncan. Despite Eigner's title, Duncan insists that this poet's productions are "not fragments":

> We wanted not fragments of consciousness or utterance but immediacies set into motion, comparable to the localities of color in which Cezanne built up his visual world, to the instances of impulse in which American action painters workt, to the immediacies of the music in which Webern composed; and here, Larry Eigner, '*against the abyss*' which he knows as a spastic [*sic*, Eigner had cerebral palsy -- ed.], has over the last fifteen years raised the very body of a world whose reality we sought in poetry…Yes, he writes in the mode following Pound's *Pisan Cantos* and William Carlos Williams's later poetry that has been labeled the Black Mountain school but began earlier in the magazine *Origin* in the early 1950s, but Larry Eigner has suggested a new development of Williams's line: his phrasings are not broken off in an abrupt juncture but hover, having a margin of their own -- stanzaic phrases -- suspended in their own time within the time of the poem; as, in turn, each poem, the immediate occasion of Eigner's life consciousness, has a time of its own in the continuity of poems.

Duncan's notion of Eigner's "stanzaic phrases -- suspended in their own time within the time of the poem" has an effect on his own practice in the poems gathered in *Bending the Bow*. The book also has Eigner's own statement made for *The New American Poetry*:

> Born August 1927, Swampscott, Massachusetts (out of nearby hospital in Lynn). Palsied from hard birth, never had a job but got through high school at home, then seven correspondence courses from University of Chicago, a toe-hold of application and hope.
>
> I'm cautious, and come onto things by under-statement. Wary of exaggeration. Sotto voce has resulted in the suppression of words. Don't like to begin

with a big **B**, as if I was at the **B**eginning of all speech, or anything; which may also have something to do with why usually I've had an aversion more or less to going back to the left margin after beginning a poem, but otherwise than in hindsight I just tried to do the best I could, the simplest and most immediate thing being punctuation, once words were forceful enough -- a matter of getting the distances between words, and usage of marks to conform as well as might be to what there was to say, as spoken, then these typographical devices entering themselves into the discovery and the initiation of attention. As with any other detail, after dispensing with a routine duplication device --e.g. a period as well as a capital letter -- a new thing immediately (neither period nor capital results in sentence splice, a poem without very explicit rests, if that's what seems good), then, the availability of the device for vital use in some other connection that may crop up, possibly. Oaks from small acorns. Forests of possibility.

This is Eigner's "the knowledge of death":

the knowledge of death, and now
knowledge of the stars

there is one end

and the endless

Room at the center

passage /in no time

a rail thickets hills grass

And this is his "Letter for Duncan":

just because I forget
to perch different ways
the fish
go monotonous

the
sudden hulks of the trees
in a glorious summer

you don't realize
how mature you get
at 21

but you look back

wherever a summer
continue 70 seasons

this one
has been so various

was the spring hot?

every habit

to read

nothing you've done you have

older

the fish
can't bother screaming

flap by hook

the working pain

jaws by trying a head bodies

you'll always go to sleep
more times than you'll wake

(In regard to this poem, Eigner will later ask his friend Jack Foley, "How *many* more times?" Foley answers correctly, "One.")

Grove Press publishes *Freewheelin Frank Secretary of the Angels* by Hell's Angel Frank Reynolds, as told to Michael McClure. McClure tells the following story in connection with the book (from a 2001 interview with McClure conducted by Jack Foley):

> Frank had "author's paranoia." This is an ordinary thing for someone to have -- but it's not a good thing for your Hell's Angel brother and partner to have! He came to me and said, "You gotta stop the book." I said, "I can't do it, Frank, I can't. We've signed a contract, it's under way." Then Pete Knell, the president of the Hell's Angels, and a couple of brothers came over and they said, "Michael, you've got to stop this book. It's upsetting Frank. And if it's upsetting Frank, it's gonna tip the apple cart all the way through the club, and things are not gonna be happy." I said, "I can't stop it because it's being set up in type now. And you know what: I wouldn't stop it if I could, because I think it's a great book." Which happened to be the right thing to say. At that point, Pete said, "Well, if it is, it'll all be ok. And if it isn't -- god help you!" (Laughing) These were decent guys. You might worry about getting yourself knocked to pieces, but they wouldn't hurt your family or your house or anything. They were not like the Oakland chapter, this was the 'Frisco chapter. When the book came out all was well…Sometimes I'd go around on the Angel bus with them, go to the movies with them. I went to a couple of meetings.

McClure, who enjoyed riding a motorcycle at this point, had still another encounter with Hell's Angels. "After my play, *The Beard* had been cleared of most of its trials," he writes, "I guess I was feeling ebullient. The second play I ever wrote, *! The Feast !* was written in beast language, like my *Ghost Tantras*":

> I thought the Hell's Angels could do it…For the women we could use a couple of "mamas" from the Club. We could just do it! Maybe one rehearsal for tech and lights. And we could pack that place for one night. The Hell's Angels were a big thing in San Francisco at the time. They were "radical chic"! It would be easy for George Montana,

Freewheelin Frank and me to play the music—although I wanted Frank to be in the play. We were playing as a group at the time. We were called Freewheelin McClure Montana. It would be easy to get musicians to play along with us. So I asked Frank, "What do you think the Hell's Angels would think of renting the Orpheum Theater and presenting this play for sixteen hundred people?" So Frank talked to Pete Knell. The question was put on the agenda of one of their meetings. I went to the meeting, and I'd been warned in advance that if only one member blackballed the proposal, they wouldn't do it. So it had to be one hundred per cent agreement. I was playing it hard: I really wanted to do this. The meetings were rough -- people got knocked down. Somebody starts to sit down and somebody else pulls the stool away from him. Kid stuff -- only these are bruisers, strong guys! Some of them are smart, and some of them aren't so smart, and they're all temperamental. At the beginning of the meeting, Pete introduced me and gave them an idea of what I wanted to do. I gave them details, and I read the play to them -- in beast language. There I was standing in front of a basement full of Hell's Angels, some of them drunk -- some of them high on other things. The first thing is that the play's thirteen characters say their names aloud, loud and firmly:

YEORG!!

NARGATH!

RETORP!

SHARACK!

VALETH!

SHEREB!

THANTAR!

AYNAK!

RAYTAR!

OHTAKE!

THAYTOW!

BOONDOO!

DOOBOON!

Then there's a speech by Yeorg, after which the whole thing turns pretty much into beast language. So I was reading it to the Club -- and they were restless. After a while they were standing up, yelling. This was not the usual meeting! Now, when you're there, a guest at a Hell's Angels meeting, you're under the protection of the Brotherhood. Nobody will lay a finger on you. You're protected. Until you get out the door at least! (Laughing) So I knew nobody was going to do anything. They'd have to answer to Pete for it, and he was sitting behind me at a table. I was halfway through the play, and these Brothers started yelling, "Shut up!," "Shut the fuck up!" Just a few of them, but vociferously. Nothing subtle about it! So I read *louder*. And louder. And louder. Finally, one guy said, "Read *faster*, man!" Pete was making them stop. There were only a few guys doing it. The rest were well mannered, according to their sense of manners. I realized that if I skipped a word, a single syllable of it, these guys are very sensitive in their own way, and they'd know it, and I'd lose face. I had to read the *whole thing* from

> beginning to end! I couldn't speed it up; I had to slow it down a little, if anything. I read through the whole play. At the end I was shown out. And the decision was not to do it. I did hear from Frank that I just barely lost: they *were* interested. It would have been an ideal thing for them. I presented the idea as an image. I think what was wrong was that it hadn't been written by an Angel. My feeling is that's what kept it from being done. If Frank had written it, it would have been on stage, I'm sure. I thought we'd make money from it. We would have charged a lot to see it -- probably five dollars a head in sixties' dollars! (Laughs)

Michael McClure writes the song, "Mercedes Benz," which is recorded in a slightly changed version by Janis Joplin.

Emmett Grogan's Digger's Communication Company publishes Kirby Doyle's second novel, *Angel Faint*. Doyle stops writing for thirteen years and lives in solitude in the wilderness.

John Wieners' *Pressed Wafer* is published by the Gallery Upstairs Press in Buffalo, NY. Devastated by a lover's betrayal, Wieners begins enters into a cycle of depression and substance abuse that continues until 1969, when he enters a mental institution.

Philip Lamantia's *Selected Poems* appears as # 20 of City Lights' Pocket Poet series.

Surrealist poet Sotère Torregian comes to California, where he teaches as writer in residence at Stanford University from 1969 to 1973 and assists in launching the Afro-American Studies program there. In *Neo-Surrealism; or, the Sun at Night* (2004), Andrew Joron writes, "[Torregian] has attested to the influence of both the French surrealists and 'the poets of Négritude (Senghor and Césaire).' His two most important publications -- *The Wounded Mattress* (Oyez Press, 1968) and *The Age of Gold* (Kulchur Foundation, 1976) -- reveal a wry absurdist humorousness, a delicate, sometimes fairy-tale-like lyricism, and a lively eroticism…During the eighties, Torregian ceased to publish his work following a succession of personal hardships. In 1999, his chapbook *Always for the First Time* was published jointly by Kolourmeim and Pantograph Press. And three years later the Austin-based press Skanky Possum released a perfectbound edition of Torregian's selected works from 1957 to 1999, entitled '*I Must Go' (She Said) 'Because My Pizza's Cold.'"* This is one of Torregian's "Amtrack Poems":

Good Morning!
If it's ten dollars it's ten dollars don't worry about
It The money will come from somewhere from the golden-
branched arms
Of Daphne perhaps!
Abducted by Apollo screaming
Into mid-night being lit by your sleep
O Woman that I love arbor of golden banners
Being "turned on"
On the far side of the earth's shadow red and gold
Obsessed banners
In the wind being saluted by thousands
In Tien Min Square

"We know what time it is"

We know
When the seasons get their directions
To change
By the hand of the infant in the womb reaching to grasp for
Love raising its hand to the clenched fist salute
Our time of life My Love all we need
To prosper us
We write the Book of Eternal Splendors
Inside ourselves
I take with me
A minute frozen wave called from the Pacific
That turns to a drop of snow on your hair
I take with me the words of my neighbors
Said to me in idleness or in deep thoughts
Isabel and Edwin Cermy exulting in
Their retelling of the story
Of seeing Pablo Neruda's visage on television
On their trip to Peking in 1952
I take their attention given *to* that moment
And offer it to you an old man at 5:00 pm bowing his head on a bench
taking off his *fedora*-style hat swinging it idly in afternoon haze
Good Morning surprise that greets the word "OUI" written in electric
blue on the black sweat-shirt of a young girl strolling by

On December 9 Lawrence Ferlinghetti, along with sixty-seven others -- including Joan Baez and Kay Boyle -- is arrested at a demonstration at the Oakland Army Induction Center. Ferlinghetti tells the judge,

> The purpose of the demonstration was to stop war. Its purpose was to block the entrance to war. The motives of the demonstrators were pure and the action was totally nonviolent. It was a legitimate expression of political dissent and I believe such dissent must not be suppressed and prosecuted in a society that calls itself free...The American people are suffering...from a mass guilt complex as a direct result of the American military action in Vietnam. They know that they are doing evil, but they are confused and don't know how to stop.

Antonin Artaud's censored radio drama, *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* (*To End God's Judgment*) -- both the original and a translation by Victor Corti -- is broadcast complete on KPFA. The original drama, directed by Artaud, featured the author along with Paule Thévenin, Maria Casarès, and Roger Blin. The program was to have been broadcast Feb. 2, 1948, 10:45 p.m. Though a recording was made, *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* was canceled Feb. 1, 1948 by Vladimir Porché, director of the RDF. Porché cited objectionable language as the reason. (Artaud died March 4, 1948.) In 1965, KPFA's version is recorded by the San Francisco Actor's Workshop under the direction of Ken Margolis but, because of its language, the play is not broadcast until two years later. Introduced by Erik Bauersfeld, the play is rebroadcast in 1975. In *Meat Science Essays* (1963), his first book of essays, Michael McClure calls *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* a "great radio broadcast":

> I believed *To Have Done With The Judgement of God* was a vision and parable. I likened it to *Visions Of The Daughters of Albion* by William Blake. Now I

> don't think it is vision or parable. It is the most intelligent book of recent times. Past the thin veil of Artaud's occasional madness is the utter and true individual glimpse of reality. It is the sight of reality of a consciousness wishing to be disembodied (because of its horror of physical being and the corresponding view that our liberties are directed by our organic physicality). Artaud disavows all that is flesh and excrement -- all that we are and produce. The broadcast is like The Sermon On The Mount.

Allen Cohen writes in the 35th Anniversary issue of *Open City*,

> The 1967 Summer of Love was the peak of the Haight-Ashbury experience. More than 100,000 young people came to the Haight followed by reporters, movie-makers, FBI agents, undercover police, drug addicts and agents provocateurs. An equal number of tourists and voyeurs followed in their wake. It was chaotic and wonderful...The police Tac Squad soon raided our streets each weekend. They eventually drove out most of Haight-Ashbury's originators who fanned out all over the world and planted seeds of change.

Langston Hughes dies.

## *1968*

The Tet Offensive*: Wikipedia: The Tet Offensive (January 30, 1968 - June 8, 1968) was a series of operational offensives by the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army during the Vietnam War. The operations are called the Tet Offensive as they were timed to begin on the night of January 30–31, 1968, Tết Nguyên Đán (the lunar new year day). The offensive began spectacularly during celebrations of the Lunar New Year and lasted about two months, although some sporadic operations associated with the offensive continued into 1969. The Tet offensive was a tactical defeat for the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces, but it inflicted severe damage on American civilian morale and contributed to the withdrawal of American forces from the country.*

*Although US public opinion polls continued to show a majority supporting involvement in the war, this support continued to deteriorate and the nation became increasingly polarized over the war. President Lyndon Johnson saw his popularity fall sharply after the Offensive, and he withdrew as a candidate for re-election in March of 1968. The Tet Offensive is frequently seen as an example of the value of media influence and popular opinion in the pursuit of military objectives. That the Communists were able to mount a major, country-wide assault at all was a blow to U.S. hopes of winning the war rapidly, and starkly called into question General Westmoreland's earlier public reports of progress in the War. Likewise, the optimistic assessments of the Johnson administration and The Pentagon came under heavy criticism and ridicule.*

*Seeing the complete collapse of the PAVN/Viet Cong offensive, the lopsided casualty ratio, the lack of a popular uprising in support of the attacks, and the failure of the attacking forces to gain and hold significant territorial assets, Westmoreland considered it an appropriate opportunity for a counteroffensive action. He put together a request for 206,000 additional troops to prosecute the war in the wake of the Offensive, a move that would have required mobilization of the U.S. Reserves.*

*While this was being deliberated, the request was leaked to the press and published across three columns of the Sunday edition of The New York Times on March 10, 1968. Then-Lieutenant Colonel Dave Palmer later wrote in Summons of the Trumpet: "Looked upon erroneously but understandably by readers as a desperate move to avert defeat, news of the request for 206,000 men confirmed the suspicions of many that the result of the Tet Offensive had not been depicted accurately by the President or his spokesmen. If the Communists had suffered such a grievous setback, why would we need to increase our forces by 40 percent?"*

*The My Lai Massacre. On March 16, U.S. soldiers massacre hundreds of unarmed Vietnamese civilians, mostly women and children, in the hamlet of My Lai, during the Vietnam War. The incident prompts widespread outrage around the world and reduces American support at home for the war. US Army Lt. William Calley is convicted in 1971 of premeditated murder in ordering the shootings and initially sentenced to life in prison; two days later, however, President Richard Nixon orders him released from prison, pending appeal of his sentence. Calley serves 3½ years of house arrest in his quarters at Fort Benning, Georgia, and is then ordered freed by Federal Judge J. Robert Elliot. Calley claims he was following orders from his captain, Ernest Medina; Medina denies giving the orders and is acquitted at a separate trial.*

James Schevill leaves California to teach at Brown University in Rhode Island. He will return to California upon his retirement twenty years later.

Diane di Prima moves to San Francisco and becomes well known in the poetry scene, both as a poet and as an editor and publisher of *Floating Bear* and the Poets Press.

Ed Dorn's *Gunslinger, Book I* is published by Black Sparrow Press in Los Angeles. Book II will appear from the same press in 1969.

Harper and Row publishes *House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday (Navarro Scott Mammedaty, born 1934 in Lawton, Oklahoma, Kiowa country in southwestern Oklahoma). The book goes on to win the 1969 Pulitzer Prize and marks a breakthrough of Native American literature into the mainstream. (See entry, 1969.) The book was conceived first as a series of poems, then re-planned as stories, and finally shaped into a novel.

Jim Brodey moves to the West Coast at a time when a number of poets from New York (including Tom Clark) are settling in Bolinas, California -- an area Robert Glück calls "the western outpost" of the New York School. (See entries 1971, 1974.) Brodey spends his time between New York and California for the next several years, finally returning to California permanently in 1991. He will die in San Francisco in July 1993 of complications related to AIDS. In 1978, Brodey's own Jim Brodey Books publishes his *Piranha Yoga*; his *Heart of the Breath: Poems 1979-1992*, edited by Clark Coolidge, will be published posthumously by Hard Press in 1996. Poet David Shapiro writes of him,

> Language is not a magazine or a gang of poets, but a refreshing of life, after all. Certain artists -- one thinks of Joseph Ceravolo, Dick Gallup, Ron Padgett -- have been nearly suppressed and their technical innovations and linguistic turns attributed to later

> dogmatists. Brodey is one of these significant poets. He took Frank O'Hara's empirical personism, collaborated, as it were, with the jazzy autotelic clusters of Clark Coolidge and Ceravolo, and finally emerged before his death from AIDS with synthetic, satirical, muscular elegies of a late turbulence. His poetry is wildly erotic and convincingly strange with an idiosyncratic breadth and violence matched by his themes of loves "fundamentally tender." I hope this dense document [*Heart of the Breath*] begins the work of tearing "language" from any clique or cabal and restoring a sense of the accomplishment of the kind of artists once characterized by Ron [Silliman] as "disappeared poets." With this volume, the independent alarming and expansive Brodey makes a permanent appearance.

James Broughton's 20-minute film, *The Bed,* made during the 1967 Summer of Love, is released. The film features both male and female frontal nudity. When criticized for this, Broughton always answers sweetly, "But the opening takes place in the Garden of *Eden*." P. Adams Sitney writes in *Visionary Film* (Oxford University Press, 1974) that Broughton's film "had unusual success for an avant-garde film" and that it marked "a time of radical change in the situation of visionary filmmakers. They were now teaching; they were distributing their films in cooperatives; some were receiving grants from major foundations; they were making more films than before; the filmmaker had become the artist as hero...."

In *Coming Unbuttoned* (City Lights, 1993), Broughton writes that for a period of his life "I had become obsessed by beds, by the bed as humanity's most enjoyable article of furniture. I had written 'a play in four bedrooms' called *Bedlam*: four undressed dramas occurring concurrently in four Modesto locations. I had even proposed a revue called *Beds* to Herbert Blau at his Actors' Workshop. Neither of these projects had reached production stage. Therefore in considering a film…I devised scenes for a romp of the human comedy enacted on a bed in an open-air Eden…When it was finally edited I could not persuade any commercial laboratory to print it. From Eastman in Rochester to Consolidated in Los Angeles I received curt refusals: it was against official policy to print 'frontal nudity.' Finally I located an illegal pornography outfit which printed much frontal nudity between midnight and dawn in the rear of a building on a back street in East Palo Alto.

"To my astonishment *The Bed* won many prizes at world festivals. Furthermore it broke a taboo: frontal nudity soon populated all avant-garde screens. Only two years later my subsequent project, the totally nude *Golden Positions*, encountered no difficulty with any printer. To my further astonishment, *The Bed* came into widespread use as a relaxing introduction to consciousness-raising seminars and training programs for social, hospital, and psychiatric workers." In *Seeing the Light* (City Lights, 1977), Broughton adds,

> When I made *The Bed* I thought it…was a one and only last picture show. I had not made a film for 13 years and I was prodded into making "just one more" by Jacques Ledoux of the Belgian Film Archive for his international experimental powwow of 1968. All I did was express how life felt to me in my 50's. *The Bed* has no special style, there isn't a trick in it, it is all straight cuts. I wanted to show as directly as possible my vision of the flowing river of existence and I thought of it as a private communication to an old friend in Brussels. The public success of the film astounded me.

The film features, in addition to Broughton himself, many local celebrities including Alan Watts, Gavin Chester Arthur, Imogen Cunningham, Grover Sales, Jean Varda, Herb Beckman, Wes Wilson, Betty Fuller, John Graham, and Roger Somer. Its "argument" is that

“all the world’s a bed, and men and women merely dreamers.” Its script begins, “Descending into a valley, like some Occidental vehicle of the Tao, flows a spry but monumental Bed.”

From late 1968 to February 1969, Richard Brautigan records a spoken-word album for The Beatles’ short-lived record label, Zapple. The label is shut down by Allen Klein before the recording can be released, but it is eventually released in 1970 on Harvest Records as *Listening to Richard Brautigan*.

Oyez Press in Berkeley publishes Mary Fabilli’s *Aurora Bligh & Early Poems*.

Oyez Press publishes Brother Antoninus/William Everson’s *Robinson Jeffers: Fragments of an Older Fury*. Everson also edits editions of various works by Jeffers.

David Antin joins the faculty of the Visual Art Department at UC San Diego.

Kathy Acker receives her B.A. from the University of California, San Diego. At San Diego she meets David and Eleanor Antin and Jerome and Diane Rothenberg. In *Young Lust* (Pandora Press, London, England, 1989) she writes,

> I came out of the poetry world of America. Specifically, I was taught by the second generation of the Black Mountain poets and by Jackson MacLow who was a crossover between that group and Fluxus. Among the many lessons I had learned by the time I was in my early twenties was a practical one: poets never make money and are, as both Rimbaud and Patti Smith said, the white niggers of this earth.

Doubleday & Company publishes *Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poetries from Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania*, edited and with commentaries by Jerome Rothenberg. The book attempts to redefine the range of “primitive poetry,” presenting not only words of songs, but picture poems, sound poetry, naming poems, dreams and visions and scenarios of ritual-events. In his “Pre-Face,” Rothenberg writes,

> PRIMITIVE MEANS COMPLEX
>
> That there are no primitive languages is an axiom of contemporary linguistics where it turns its attention to the remote languages of the world. There are no half-formed languages, no underdeveloped or inferior languages. Everywhere a development has taken place into structures of great complexity. People who have failed to achieve the wheel will not have failed to invent & develop a highly wrought grammar. Hunters & gatherers innocent of all agriculture will have vocabularies that distinguish the things of their world down to the finest details…
>
> What is true of language in general is equally true of poetry & of the ritual-systems of which so much poetry is a part. It is a question 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 artifactual situations) & it becomes apparent what all those people have been doing all those years with all that time on their hands.

*

> Are all of these "lines" (each of considerable duration) separate poems, or are they the component parts of a single, larger poem moving toward some specific (ceremonial) end? Is it enough…if the lines happen in succession & aren't otherwise tied? Will some further connection be needed? Is the group of lines a poem if "we" can make the connection? Is it a poem where no connection is apparent to "us"? If the lines come in sequence on a single occasion does the unity of the occasion connect them into a single poem? Can many poems be a single poem as well? (They often are.)
>
> What's a sequence anyway?
> What's unity?

Rothenerg's provocative assertions and questions apply not only to translations but to poetry in general. After the completion of *Technicians of the Sacred*, Rothenberg directs his attention to "ethnopoetics"—his term—and he begins a study of Senecan Indian songs at the Allegany Reservation in Steamburg, New York.

Jerome Rothenberg receives a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation in Anthropological Research to conduct a two-part experiment in the translation of American Indian poetry. The project involves a collaborative translation between Rothenberg and Seneca songmen and the translation of a series of Navajo horse-blessing songs. In this effort, Rothenberg begins to develop an approach he terms "total translation": in this process, the translator accounts in the English version for every element in the original language, including the so-called "meaningless" vocables, word distortions and redundancies. This close study and involvement with American Indian poetry and ritual prompts Rothenberg to develop the anthology, *Shaking the Pumpkin: Traditional Poetry of the Indian North Americas* (Doubleday, 1972).

Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice* appears from McGraw Hill.

*Wikipedia* on the Manson Family: "The events that would culminate in the [Tate-LaBianca] murders were set in motion in late spring 1968, when Dennis Wilson, of The Beach Boys, picked up two hitchhiking Manson girls and brought them to his Pacific Palisades house for a few hours. Returning home in the early hours of the following morning from a night recording session, Wilson was greeted in the darkened driveway of his own residence by Manson, who emerged from the house. Apparently getting bad vibrations, Wilson asked the stranger whether he intended to hurt him. Assuring him he had no such intent, Manson began kissing Wilson's feet. Inside the house, Wilson discovered twelve strangers, mostly girls. Over the next few months, as their number doubled, the Family members who had made themselves part of Wilson's Sunset Boulevard household cost him approximately $100,000, including a large medical bill for treatment of their gonorrhea and $21,000 in the accidental destruction of an uninsured car of his they borrowed. The upside, such as it was, was that the women were effectively Manson and Wilson's servants. Wilson paid for studio time to record songs written and performed by Manson; he introduced Manson to acquaintances of his who had at least some kind of role in the entertainment business. These included Gregg Jakobson, Terry Melcher, and Rudi Altobelli. Jakobson, who was impressed by 'the whole Charlie Manson package' of artist/metaphysician, also paid to record some Manson material; Melcher was less impressed…

"In late November 1968 [Manson]…paid a visit to a Topanga Canyon acquaintance who played…The Beatles' White Album, then recently released. Although Manson was twenty-nine years old and imprisoned when The Beatles first came to America in 1964, he had been all but obsessed with the group…He had told fellow inmates, including Alvin Karpis, that he could surpass the group in fame; to the Family, he spoke of the group as 'the soul' and 'part of "the hole in the infinite."' Manson had also been telling Family members that racial tension, between blacks and whites, was growing, that blacks would soon rise up in rebellion in America's cities. He had emphasized Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, which had taken place in April 1968.

"On a bitter cold New Year's Eve…the Family members, gathered outside around a large, almost-tribal fire, listened as Manson explained that the social turmoil he had been predicting had also been predicted by The Beatles. White Album songs, he declared, told it all, although in code; in fact, the album was directed at the Family itself, an elect group that was being instructed to preserve the worthy from the impending disaster."

Kirby Doyle publishes his first novel, *Happiness Bastard* (Essex House, North Hollywood, California). Written a decade earlier, the book was done in the manner of Kerouac's *On the Road*, on long sheets of paper pasted together to form a single roll.

David Meltzer begins a series of pornographic novels published by Essex House. He completes ten over the next two years and refers to them as "agit-smut." Later in the year, he and Tina will release their first album, *Serpent Power* (Vanguard Records). See entry, 1966.

Stuart Perkoff is arrested on drug charges and incarcerated at Terminal Island Federal Penitentiary until 1971.

Los Angeles poet Michael C. Ford gives his first poetry reading; the other readers are Jack Hirschman and Jim Morrison. Over the years Ford will appear with Charles Bukowski, Timothy Leary, Michael McClure, Macdonald Carey, Wanda Coleman, Robert Kelly, Ann Stanford, Dave Alvin, Henry Rollins, Edward Field, Gerald Locklin, Jim Carroll, and Jello Biafra.

The community newspaper *The Free Venice Beachhead* is founded as a project of the California Peace and Freedom Party. One of the paper's founders is John Haag, also a founder of the Peace and Freedom Party and proprietor of the Venice West Café. In "The Venice Peace and Freedom Party," *Free Venice Beachhead*, April, 1978, Haag writes,

> Our first project was a community newspaper. The first issue of The Free Venice Beachhead appeared in December, 1968. The paper's 10,000 copies were distributed mainly door-to-door by PFP members on their own streets…
>
> The "Free Venice" idea proliferated. There was a Free Venice Art Festival on the Ocean Front every weekend for several months. There was a Free Venice hot-line, started independently of the PFP [Peace and Freedom Party] and a Free Venice Food Co-op not connected with either the PFP or the Free Venice Organizing Committee. The Beachhead became a collective independent of the other groups.

The Beyond Baroque Literary/Arts Center is founded in Southern California. Located in the old Venice Town Hall building, a 1906 Spanish-style building near Venice Beach, Beyond Baroque is formed by a group of writers who also publish an avant-garde poetry magazine, also called *Beyond Baroque*. The Center provides readings, performances, special events, publication, and ongoing workshops, including the Wednesday Night Poetry Workshop, the longest running poetry workshop in Los Angeles. Beyond Baroque also has a bookstore, a library, an archive, and a gallery. Some graduates of Beyond Baroque include Exene Cervenkova, John Doe, Viggo Mortensen, and Tom Waits. In an article written in 2006, "A Legend to the Legendary Hangs by a Thread"

(http://www.pchpress.com/local/beyondbaroque5-1-06.html),

Kriss Perras writes,

> North and Fred Dewey, the Director of Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center, were standing next to one another in an interview just prior to a huge event at the center with Devo, SPK and RE/Search magazine.
>
> "The readings started in the fall of '68. And, the Wednesday night poetry workshop began on February 26, 1969," North said. "The first workshop was over on Abbott-Kinney, which at that time was called West Washington. George Dewey Smith inherited some money. He bought a building. And, he used the bottom part as the poetry center in the store front… There would be sixty to seventy people there for the poetry Wednesday night workshop. But it was just a godsend, and it still is."
>
> Fred Dewey said that Philanthropy for poetry was hard to stir up.
>
> "We are constantly struggling. It is really an extremely difficult fight to try and keep money coming into the institution. Everybody in the city that knows about Beyond Baroque loves it and reveres the place, appreciates that we've kept at it and fought to keep at it. But, the support is not always there," Fred Dewey said. "We are one of the oldest cultural institutions in the city at this point. We are older than MOCA and we are living absolutely hand-to-mouth, from day-to-day. I often can't meet payroll. So it is very stressful on the staff. All of the staff members, except for myself have other jobs, and sometimes two and three. And it is all part-time. It is a miracle that under those circumstances we are able to keep the doors open."
>
> Fred Dewey continued stating George Dewey Smith ran Beyond Baroque for about ten years, and it gradually became a kind of meeting place, before there were any other meeting places.
>
> "There was Venice West Coffee House in the late 50's and early to mid 60's which was the hang out for the Venice beats. But by the late 60's, all of that had kind of dissipated to some extent. And then George started Beyond Baroque."
>
> "George Smith said the name Beyond Baroque came to him in a dream and he's never elaborated. He refuses to," Fred Dewey said grinning. "Also that is started in '68. So, it is a child of '68 which is very important to the spirit of the place."
>
> Fred Dewey said Beyond Baroque started as a zine.
>
> "George printed 20,000 of the zine and mailed it out to everybody. And, that generated a need for a place to come together and meet, talk, work on poetry and read it. And, things went from there. It started in what is now a surf and snowboard shop over on Abbott-Kinney. And, there is a pagoda at the back which was the original terminus end point of the red line which was then abandoned. And, then George bought it at a certain point. And, that became the printing press for Beyond Baroque."
>
> "It gradually kind of grew with all these people like…Kate Braverman, Wanda Coleman. And, then through what was then called the Venice Poetry Workshop, in 1980 it moved into this building, the old Venice city hall. Which we took over the

responsibility for keeping it up in exchange for being able to hold our programs here and build our archive here and have a bookstore and a gallery."

"We have to keep the building up. That's our responsibility. And that sometimes is more than equal to any rent. And it's a pretty old rickety building," Fred Dewey said. "But that's also part of the beauty of the place. It was a real political finagling to get the building originally. The city did not even want it. They were going to tear it down, we think, because of lack of tax revenue."

Fred Dewey joined the board in 1995 and became director in 1996. He had worked for an avant garde cultural magazine in New York called *Semiotext(e)* which "was involved in cutting edge cultural theory in New York out of Columbia," Fred Dewey said.

"When I came out here in 1984, or mid to late '80's, I met [the man] who was then the literary director Benjamin Weissmann. He was interested in *Semiotext(e)* and asked me to come in and curate some evenings. So I did. I curated three. One on neighborhood councils. One on the legacy of the Black Panthers. And, the third on the relationship between cybernetics and urbanism. Not related to poetry because that was kind of what I was thinking about and dealing with at the time."

But Fred Dewey said he found himself intrigued by the potential of the public space that he applied for the directorship when it came open in 1992. But, Fred Dewey did not get it that time. [Tosh] Berman, son of Wallace Berman, got it and asked Fred Dewey to join the board.

"I was quickly enlisted as board President. We started a search for directors. We hired two people, because there was faction split on the board. That didn't work out at all. And the money had evaporated completely and we were basically prostrate on the ground. So, I stepped in to reconstruct the institution and put it on solid footing. By that time it was early 1996."

Fred Dewey said one of the issues he faced when he came on the board was he had a lot of great people who had done great things but weren't directly involved in the day-to-day help of the institution, which he said has taken quite awhile to fix.

"We've had great people involved on the board level, but not so involved in the institution. And one of the main things I wanted to change was to build a really active board of people that really cared, and not only cared verbally but cared in terms of their actions towards the institution"…

Fred Dewey explained how all the members of the board are poets.

This is a more recent interview with Fred Dewey. Titled "Bye Bye Beyond Baroque?," it appeared in *Free Venice Beachhead*, August 2007, and was written by Rex Butters:

Loving Venice is living with loss. From the loss of the original canals, to the gentrification of the remaining canals, with neighborhood defining businesses and services choked out by unreasonable rent increases, and friendships and communities torn apart by more unreasonable rent increases, we try to reassure ourselves with what remains, but is anything safe in Venice from short sighted meddling?

Apparently not. Recently, internationally acclaimed activist, singer, poet, and rock icon Patti Smith, ran into Fred Dewey at a late night cafe. Dewey directs Beyond Baroque, for four decades Venice's literary lighthouse, known worldwide along with San Francisco's City Lights and New York's St. Mark's, as Holy Temples of the Word. Beyond Baroque regularly hosts appearances by a who's who of acclaimed authors while providing a home and supportive training for neophytes and unknowns. Although she has regularly sold out large rock venues for thirty years, the surprisingly traditionalist Ms. Smith approached Dewey about the possibility of getting a reading in Beyond Baroque's small under-ventilated performance space.

Such a widely recognized and cherished cultural treasure would appear to be beyond the reach of the mundane Monopoly mentality that too often dictates the painful changes afflicting our community. But through cronyism, closed door

meetings, and the bland indifference of its elected representatives, Venice may be on the verge of losing its most envied and recognizable cultural institution.

Fred Dewey bristles and burns with a mission to keep Beyond Baroque in its familiar home in the old Venice City Hall, and took time out from his campaign to explain why Beyond Baroque and Venice are inseparable.

**Fred Dewey:** Los Angeles is so fascinating, because it's always been this tremendous contest between some of the most progressive, innovative thinking and some of the most reactionary, entrenched invisible power in the whole United States. It's been a kind of laboratory. I would love to see Los Angeles, and Venice especially, become a laboratory for public life, and I think the arts are really important to that. That's one of the things I was so proud of with the Poetry Wall, curating that, because to get poetry out into the public realm in a permanent lasting way, to pay tribute to the people who have been part of the history of Venice in the arts, I think is an affirmation of something that's really important in the Venice spirit.

I am so happy those poems went up on the boardwalk. There are tourists from all over the world that see those poems. I love that Exene quote. She was our first librarian. "Part the freeways/let my people go free." And her son, Henry Mortensen, we have his chapbook in the store, he's doing a music night in a couple weeks. That's history, too. To be able to reach multiple generations, to nurture multiple generations.

When the mayor said Venice was at the forefront of arts in the city at Bill Rosendahl's inauguration, I really took that to heart. It was a very encouraging comment. I just wish we had more tools for follow through.

**Beachhead:** How long has Beyond Baroque been in operation?

**Dewey:** We started in a storefront on Abbott Kinney in 68, and then moved to Venice City Hall in 1979. That was a result of Prop 13. The city wanted to get the building off its hands, so we offered to keep it up and make good use of it in exchange for low rent. Since I've been there we've been doing two or three events a week.

One of the great things about that building and Beyond Baroque being there is we have poets, writers, and artists from all over the country coming to Venice. It's the synergy of poetry, and the arts, and the publishing, and the archive, and the gallery, and the building, and the history of the building that makes it such an unusual destination for people. We bring in a lot of people from all over the place. At our workshops, we have people driving sometimes 30 to 50 miles. So, site has always been a really big part of what I think about and what I try and do. Site is crucial. I'm not one of these postmodern nomadic globalistic kind of people. I really think neighborhood is crucial, which is why I was so involved in the neighborhood council movement in the mid-nineties.

Neighborhood, site, history, the history of artists and poets in a community, that's where the identity, that's where the character, the sense of self comes from. I think the artists and writers are the best at helping us to get a sense of who we are and where we are in time and in space.

I was happy to have the first full-fledged public presentation of the imprint, Beyond Baroque Books, present at the hanging of the Venice sign. I don't know frankly how many people walking by the booth could appreciate some of the experimental poetry we publish. But the fact of the matter is, we're there and I'm eager to have the organization generating from a very concentrated point outwards and who knows where it gets picked up and carried on. But to be in that booth at the Venice sign hanging, history is so important and keeping that history is so important.

That is what makes Beyond Baroque so unique. How many presses can say, "Wow, we were really happy to premiere our books in our neighborhood?" You think of these presses as faceless, locationless entities. I think as much as getting away from location is sort of the trend right now with the internet, I think there's also a yearning to go the other way. I think it's important for poets, artists, and writers to have a home, a public home. I don't mean a bed and roof, that helps too. A place where they can gather.

**Beachhead:** How long have you been director of Beyond Baroque?
**Dewey:** I came on the board in ’95, and became director in ’96, so about 11 years.
**Beachhead:** How many directors before you?
**Dewey:** About seven or eight. Yeah, I’ve been there 11 years. We’ve had a lot of really great initiatives come out of Beyond Baroque. We did a couple of citywide festivals involving all kinds of different communities, the World Beyond Series. We’ve been working really hard on the archives trying to document small press work and alternative artwork. The programming has been a lot more aggressive under my tenure, we’re doing a lot more than the center used to do. We’re trying to get more different kinds of voices and groups from around the city, but also community related stuff -- that intersection between community, politics, art, and poetry. It’s really crucial to have a space that is noncommercial, that is committed to emerging work, that can be a home and a refuge for people that don’t always fit into the larger society. Given the present political climate right now, I think not fitting into the larger society is a badge of honor.
**Beachhead:** How big is the archive?
**Dewey:** We probably have about 30-40 thousand items in it. Small press poetry, there’s chapbooks, we’ve been getting donations from all over the place. We got a really wonderful historical thing, the shelves from the Midnight Special Bookstore. They gave them to us, which was really great for me to have that. We’re dependent on donations, so it all comes in donations. Small press poetry, experimental fiction. With chapbooks, there’s very few places to find them, see them, look through them, and be inspired by how easy it is to publish stuff. Archiving that is very important. I believe our chapbook index is online now, most of it. I’ve been deliberately trying to get photos of LA poets and San Francisco poets on the walls so people can see that and realize where they fit in the history.
**Beachhead:** Tell me about the workshops.
**Dewey:** We have five free workshops going on, and they meet in the bookstore surrounded by the chapbooks, surrounded by the photos. It’s all part of feeding a cultural possibility for these people, who as I said, drive sometimes 30 or 40 miles for these free workshops. It’s completely open so anybody who walks in can attend the workshop. It becomes a kind of support structure for people trying to find their voice. We get the elderly, teenagers who can’t stand high school or college, or can’t afford it.

I’m also really glad we’ve had quite a variety of people facilitating the Wednesday night workshop. We’ve been having published authors from LA, who work 2-3 months to help so the workshop participants get exposure to a lot of different kinds of feedback. But again, coming into the building, and having it be a site, a gathering place in a neighborhood, in a 1906 building, that’s the miracle of the place.

Pat Russell, who worked out the deal with us in 78-79, who knows what her motivation was, but I think it was a really great gift. The collaboration between the city and Beyond Baroque has been really really important for the city. I’ve calculated how many people come through the building in the course of a year, people who are affected by the work that happens there, and it’s about 10-15 thousand people. It’s very organic, it happens slowly.

You want to come to the city, you want to come to the center, I think it’s a magnet for a kind of cultural spirit from all over the country. For example, I ran into Patti Smith about a month and a half ago in front of the Novel Cafe in Santa Monica. She was asking me for a reading. Now why would this super mega-star who was on Jay Leno the next night want to come to Venice and Beyond Baroque? Because there’s something very special and unique there.

I was feeling really discouraged because there was this horrendous piece in the *LA Times* magazine about the new cultural order in Los Angeles, and it was a DJ, surf clothing designer, and a real estate broker. A real estate broker! I have nothing against these things, but it said these were the hipster factors in the new cultural order in Los Angeles, and I read this. I grew up in New York, and it would be inconceivable in any really civilized city that this would be called culture. I was ranting, reading this thing out on the sidewalk, shouting, furious, I was livid. I was stunned, I was exhausted, I sat

back in the chair and everyone was clapping, and who would walk up to me at that exact moment but Patti Smith, and she said, “Fred, we were just talking about you and Beyond Baroque. We really want to come back and do something there.”

It has been one of my dreams to have her at Beyond Baroque, but I also think this is a sign that shows you the potential. This is a cultural appeal, it wasn’t just, I want to go to the beach and I love the sun. I just remember seeing Patti and Lenny Kaye at the table signing books and [they] were so happy to be in a literary center that really cared about the kinds of things we care about. It’s so rare. For me to be able to give inspiration to Patti Smith, that’s something I can really be happy about. It’s not about celebrities, it’s about keeping that spark alive so that as the culture becomes more anonymous and more globalized and more impersonal and more commercial, this little spark is fanned and can grow to a full flame and illuminate everything.

I get into that, because I think sometimes people who are dealing with one problem after another day after day don’t realize how important these things are to the strength of a community and its identity. On the other side, we’re working to recuperate Venice poetry history, also to be a new kind of voice in publishing. Our imprint, Beyond Baroque Books, is very experimental, but people up at City Lights were telling us they thought what we were doing was the most interesting stuff in the country. That kind of stuff, I hope and I trust that the politicians can begin to understand why this is important for the future of the city.

There’s all this talk about LA being a cultural capital, but the infrastructure is very weak, and it’s very fragile. Unless it gets some attention, precious things get lost and we can’t ever get them back. That’s why if I have one legacy to Venice, it’s to get a long term lease for this building. I don’t want a temporary home, I want to know Beyond Baroque is safe.

**Beachhead:** How close are you to a long term lease.

**Dewey:** I don’t know. I think the powers that be recognize the concept, but I’m not sure the will is there. There’s a lot of pressures for us to move downtown, to move to other parts of the city that are more centrally located. Well, that pulls out a key strut in the Venice scene. You pull out a key strut in the Venice scene, and Venice ceases to be what it is for the rest of the city, and the rest of the city loses something.

**Beachhead:** You would think that at this point in your history would be powerful people who want you to stay.

**Dewey:** You’d think. They’ve yet to come out of the woodwork. I consider myself a strong advocate for this because of my experience with the building, and the community, and why they love to come to Venice. But people have a very short term perspective in Los Angeles. They’ve seen so many key things disappear that they become numb, they retreat into their private homes, and this privatization of experience is a key aspect of Los Angeles and its great weakness as a cultural capital. Culture is a public thing. It feeds the roots which can be private, but it’s got to be public. And there’s got to be a long term perspective.

Every great cultural city has had people who are really looking to long term. And they’re not just looking at it for their private collections, or their own personal libraries, they’re looking at it for the people, for the citizens, for the public, for the kids, for the old people, 20 years, 30 years, 40 years, 100 years, 200 years from now.

You don’t see people talking about 50 years from now, 100 years from now. People aren’t thinking in those kinds of terms, and they’ve got to start. Venice could be wiped out in 10 years if people don’t think about what it is and how much it contributes to the city.

**Beachhead:** What can you tell me about Venice’s literary history?

**Dewey:** I was really quite happy and stunned to learn that through Stuart Perkoff and various other people, Charles Olson came to Venice and my understanding is he wanted to restart the art school Black Mountain here in Venice. I believe in that complex that Small World Books is in now. It was very rundown, so this would be probably the late fifties, early sixties. I think it was through Stuart Perkoff.

The introduction to Perkoff's book, by Robert Creeley, is very clear about how highly Olson thought of Perkoff and how Perkoff provided a quality to this experimental civic project that Olson was so committed to that had to do with dealing with reality, and dealing with the darkness that people experience. Not just with manic celebratory poetry, but a poetry that is really engaged with the difficulties and the good things in communities. Perkoff's "Venice Poems" are an amazing example of that.

Once I learned this I went back over Perkoff's work, and I can see why Olson felt such an affinity. It's very interesting, because the histories we get from San Francisco and New York don't talk about any of this, and I think that's quite deliberate. Los Angeles has been this unmanageable presence in American culture, and because so many people are focused on Hollywood rather than the other stuff, the fact that we have this really strong, almost counter-Hollywood culture here has always been ignored. Because it turns out in San Francisco and New York, they're interested in Hollywood, too.

The Beats in San Francisco, fantastic, a lot of attention to infrastructure and mentoring from Rexroth and all the others. Ferlinghetti's incredible City Lights. Nonetheless, they didn't seem to understand what was happening here. Venice is very special and unique. One of my commitments to Beyond Baroque has been to culturally revive some of that and focus on it. I've got a few book projects that deal with this. One with Philomene Long and her works with John Thomas talking about some of the intellectual infrastructure that's happening here, that's never been taken seriously.

The history of experiment in Los Angeles is very strong, and really innovative, and very distinctive, a voice that is sorely needed in the general cultural voice of the country. To me, it starts in Venice. It's alternative mentality. I think unbeknownst to even many of us in Venice, the same alternative culture formations that make Venice so distinctive even now, were happening in the cultural realm, but it was happening outside of publicity. The poets in Venice especially were not attracted to publicity the way the poets in San Francisco were. They rejected it. They didn't understand it. They didn't want any part of it, because they're so close to this huge machinery and they see what that machinery is really like.

Everyone else in the country just sees the glittering artifacts, whereas here in Los Angeles, you actually have a day to day experience of what happens to people in the industry, how they behave, etc.

**Beachhead:** In NY and SF, everyone was riding Ginsberg's enthusiasm.

**Dewey:** Ginsberg was really, really important. He was a great organizer. I think everyone at all interested in culture and alternative politics owes him a great deal. He knew how to work the machinery very well. The people down here rejected that machinery, certainly in the fifties and sixties.

And the darkness. You hear that in Morrison. That's why it was so important to get Jim Morrison on the poetry wall. There's a real alternative cultural history that I think is going to emerge over the next few years.

**Beachhead:** Any truth to the rumors that Beyond Baroque may be leaving us?

**Dewey:** I don't think there's any danger of us being forced to move. We've been in discussions with Councilman Rosendahl and his staff for almost three years. I think they're eager to try [to] give us at least a temporary home.

My goal is to secure Beyond Baroque in Venice for the long-term. So 50 years from now, Venice can still have this precious treasure, this national treasure. Venice is the core of this institution, and that core makes people uncomfortable. The same way the Venice Beats made the Beats in NY and SF uncomfortable.

There's a certain unruliness and truth telling, honesty, reality. And who would think that would come out of a city like Los Angeles. San Francisco, New York and all the other cities have a big stake in pretending we're really fake, when in fact there's this whole other tradition.

So, Venice makes the city uncomfortable in the same way its artists and writers make other cities uncomfortable. Certain artists and writers, not all of them. There's

also the contemplatives and the people more tied into the academic structure, but Venice is very specific.

Part of it is reaching out to the community to explain why poetry is important to their identity and future, why being there in the long-term is so important. You know, politicians have a lot of things to worry about, and poetry's kind of low on the list. It's low on the list everywhere. It's not like Europe, Russia, China or Latin America where poetry's published in the papers and is part of the national discourse.

The problems we have in Venice are emblematic of problems all over the country. I have long thought that one of the reasons things are so hard here is precisely because they're so rich and so vibrant and dynamic. It can be very threatening to people. It's a wild energy and I think to bottle it a couple times a week and hold it up carefully in front of people in a reading room where the light is focused on the reader and you can clearly hear the words... How many of us sit and listen to crafted speech for an hour and a half? It's a rare experience. It is like trying to bottle a firefly, and I might bottle them for an hour, but then I open the top and let them fly. And they keep returning!

**Beachhead:** Will the soul of Venice fall under the bulldozer?

**Dewey:** Gentrification is a blight and a killer of culture. I lived in the East Village in NY and saw the first stages of that, and that's really been gentrified. I go back to my old haunts, and the loss to the East Village culturally has been huge. Bless the NY City Council because they basically gave La Mama Theatre the building to try to preserve their infrastructure because they were losing cultural organizations. They were losing the heart and soul of the East Village. Artists go to areas where they can live cheaply and do their work. That's why gentrification is so deadly to culture. This notion of a market is tyrannical. Everyone has to keep moving around, everyone living here moved to Silverlake because they couldn't afford Venice, or now Echo Park, or now Mt Washington, or now San Gabriel. Then they're going to have to live in Arizona. And that's the end of culture here.

This market notion that everything works out, it's just not true. I'm really glad there are so many people fighting to preserve the soul of Venice. But the soul of Venice is really on the line right now.

Brooklyn-born poet Jack Marshall moves to the Bay Area. His first book, *The Darkest Continent* is published by For Now Press, New York City, in 1967. His second book, *Bearings* is published by Harper & Row in 1970.

In the Spring, Carolyn Kizer, literary consultant for the National Council on the Arts, awards *kayak* magazine an unsolicited grant of $10,000 in recognition of its contribution "made in advancing the cause of the unknown, obscure or difficult writer, and in the publication of books visually and typographically distinctive, thereby helping to advance the cause of the best in American art." George Hitchcock, editor of *kayak* magazine, celebrates the unsolicited grant by announcing "The *kayak* 1968 Poetry Prize" for the best poem in English on the subject "The Life and Death of Che Guevara." John Haines, Thomas McGrath, and W.S. Merwin serve as judges.

Michael McClure's *The Beard* is performed at The Magic Theater in San Francisco.

The publication of "Skinny Dynamite," a story by street poet Jack Micheline (*né* Harold Silver, a.k.a. Harvey Martin Silver), results in the arrest of John Bryan, publisher of *Open City* magazine. With the legal assistance of civil rights attorney Stanley Fleischman, the

obscenity case is eventually overturned. The story was chosen for *Open City* by Charles Bukowski.

Kenneth Rexroth moves to Santa Barbara to teach at the University of California campus. He retires in 1972.

*Student Strike at San Francisco State College / S.I. Hayakawa*. Semanticist and English professor S(amuel) I(chiye) Hayakawa is made president of San Francisco State; he will become president emeritus in 1973. *Wikipedia*: "During 1968-69 there was a bitter student strike at San Francisco State…that was a major news event at the time and chapter in the radical history of this country and the Bay Area. The strike was led by the Third World Liberation Front supported by SDS, the Black Panthers and the counter-cultural community, among others. It demanded an end to racism, creation of a Black Studies Department and an end to the War in Vietnam and the university's complicity with it. Hayakawa became popular with mainstream voters in this period after he pulled the wires out from the speakers on a student van at an outdoor rally, dramatically disrupting it." Jack Foley recalls hearing from an activist friend that, while UC Berkeley was making headlines, San Francisco State was the place where things were "really" happening: "One of our people will become president of San Francisco State. He'll go on to be mayor…." S.I. Hayakawa put an end to such ambitions regarding San Francisco State.

Poet-critic-actor Robert Peters begins to teach at the University of California at Irvine. In 1982 he becomes Director of the Creative Writing program there. As critic, Peters becomes well known for books such as his series, *The Peters Black and Blue Guide to Literary Journals* (the first of these is published in 1963), and *The Great American Poetry Bake-Off*--books in which Peters' vigorous opinions are visited upon the poetry scene. ("Linda Gregg, Michael Burkard, and Susan Mitchell are typical of many poets who embroider the trivia of their lives, waving aloft numerous Ego Banners. Mitchell is the worst of this trio…Burkard loves enervated abstractions….") Peters' *Hunting the Snark: A Compendium of New Poetic Terminology* appears from Paragon House in 1989. His memoir, *Crunching Gravel* appears from Mercury House in 1988. Among Peters' many poetry collections are *The Poet as Ice-Skater* (Manroot, 1975), *Gauguin's Chair: Selected Poems 1967-1974* (The Crossing Press, 1977), *Hawker* (Unicorn Press, 1984), *Kane* (Unicorn Press, 1985), *Ludwig of Bavaria* (Cherry Valley Editions, 1986), *The Blood Countess: A Gothic Horror Poem of Violence and Rage* (Cherry Valley Editions, 1987), *Good Night, Paul* (GLB Publishers, San Francisco, 1992) and *Snapshots of a Serial Killer* (GLB, 1992). As actor, Peters often performs his work: one of the most successful of these performances is his rendition, in drag, of "The Blood Countess."

In a review of *Hawker* and *Kane* (*The Connecticut Poetry Review*, Volume 6, Number 1, 1987), poet Diane Wakoski writes,

> Robert Peters is both a traditional and original user of the dramatic monologue. As a Victorian form, it was practiced often to allow the poet to do that most improper of activities -- to talk autobiographically and frankly about oneself -- in proper disguise and with the language and purposes of art. And surely, Peters' training as a Victorian scholar is not to be overlooked when assessing his poetry, for his use of often sentimental language, and dainty or slightly obsolescent words, given the bizarre nature and lives of

> most of the characters he writes about, seems inappropriate until we realize his purposes. But, in fact, this language is natural and beautiful to a Victorian scholar and thus carries with itself, into the poetry, a tone far different than one might expect from an author writing about sexual taboos, and lives filled with often repugnant bodily concerns, scatological, degrading or filled with pain and torture…In using the dramatic monologue form, he balances the taboo nature of his characters and their actions with the orderly and harmonious and old-fashioned language of Victorian poetry.

This is Peters' "Games," a poem which appears to be in a more autobiographical mode but which is nonetheless as edgy as his dramatic monologues:

1.
My sister had a tiny room under the eaves
where she pretended we were hidden in willow leaves.

A moose chomped pickerel grass and yellow water lilies.
We inched forward on our bellies.

2.
We played family -- she was always the mother.
I wanted the kids. I was tired of being the father.

"You can drive to work," she said, "and bring home flour and bacon.
I'll cook the meals, milk, and toss down the fodder.
Too bad, the mother's taken."

3.
I played her way, afraid she might not play at all.
She said "no" when I suggested *gnome* or *troll* or *ball*.

We'd quarrel. She vowed she'd run to the lake and drown herself.
I saw her gingham dress flash down the path, as death.

4.
I slept in a strawberry patch.. I hoed some corn.
I pumped cold draughts of water from the well, caught the forlorn

Clang and tinkle of cattle bells. The lake was calm.
Footprints by the shore. No cloth-scraps to show that she had gone

Into the deep, chill, ochre-tinted water. Minnows flashed
around an old boat pier. I dashed towards home.

Halfway to the pasture gate I reached an old hayrick.
My sister's sudden laughter made me sick.

5.
I flung her to the sand.
She yelled that I had sprained her hand.

I knew she'd tell our dad.
I hid until they'd gone to bed.

I crept upstairs, lay down

and drew a blanket over my head.

New Directions publishes Robert Duncan's *Bending the Bow*. In his introduction to *Bending the Bow*, Duncan asserts that "The artist, after Dante's poetics, works with all parts of the poem as *polysemous*,"

> taking each thing of the composition as generative of meaning, a response to and a contribution to the building form. The old doctrine of correspondences is enlarged and furtherd in a new process of responses, parts belonging to the architecture not only by the fittings -- the concords and contrasts in chronological sequence, as in a jigsaw puzzle -- by what comes one after another as we read, but by the resonances in the time of the whole in the reader's mind, each part as it is conceived as a member of every other part, having, as in a mobile, an interchange of roles, by the creation of forms within forms as we remember...Every particular is an immediate happening of meaning at large; every present activity in the poem redistributes future as well as past events.

The remarkable photograph of Duncan on the cover of *Bending the Bow* is taken by San Francisco photographer, Nata Piaskowski.

This is "My Mother Would Be a Falconress" from that book. In reading the poem, one needs to remember that, during the Vietnam War, proponents of the war were called "hawks."

My mother would be a falconress,
And I, her gay falcon treading her wrist,
would fly to bring back
from the blue of the sky to her, bleeding, a prize,
where I dream in my little hood with many bells
jangling when I'd turn my head.

My mother would be a falconress,
and she sends me as far as her will goes.
She lets me ride to the end of her curb
where I fall back in anguish.
I dread that she will cast me away,
for I fall, I mis-take, I fail in her mission.

She would bring down the little birds.
And I would bring down the little birds.
When will she let me bring down the little birds,
pierced from their flight with their necks broken,
their heads like flowers limp from the stem?

I tread my mother's wrist and would draw blood.
Behind the little hood my eyes are hooded.
I have gone back into my hooded silence,
talking to myself and dropping off to sleep.

For she has muffled my dreams in the hood she has made me,
sewn round with bells, jangling when I move.
She rides with her little falcon upon her wrist.
She uses a barb that brings me to cower.
She sends me abroad to try my wings
and I come back to her. I would bring down

the little birds to her
I may not tear into, I must bring back perfectly.

I tear at her wrist with my beak to draw blood,
and her eye holds me, anguisht, terrifying.
She draws a limit to my flight.
Never beyond my sight, she says.

She trains me to fetch and to limit myself in fetching.
She rewards me with meat for my dinner.
But I must never eat what she sends me to bring her.

Yet it would have been beautiful, if she would have carried me,
always, in a little hood with the bells ringing,
at her wrist, and her riding
to the great falcon hunt, and me
flying up to the curb of my heart from her heart
to bring down the skylark from the blue to her feet,
straining, and then released for the flight.

My mother would be a falconress,
and I her gerfalcon, raised at her will,
from her wrist sent flying, as if I were her own
pride, as if her pride
knew no limits, as if her mind
sought in me flight beyond the horizon.

Ah, but high, high in the air I flew.
And far, far beyond the curb of her will,
were the blue hills where the falcons nest.
And then I saw west to the dying sun --
it seemd my human soul went down in flames.

I tore at her wrist, at the hold she had for me,
until the blood ran hot and I heard her cry out,

far, far beyond the curb of her will •

to horizons of stars beyond the ringing hills of the world where the falcons nest
I saw, and I tore at her wrist with my savage beak.
I flew, as if sight flew from the anguish in her eye beyond her sight,
sent from my striking loose, from the cruel strike at her wrist,
striking out from the blood to be free of her.

My mother would be a falconress,
and even now, years after this,
when the wounds I left her had surely heald,
and the woman is dead,
her fierce eyes closed, and if her heart

were broken, it is stilld •

I would be a falcon and go free.
I tread her wrist and wear the hood,
talking to myself, and would draw blood.

New Directions publishes *The Collected Poems of Kenneth Patchen*.

New Directions publishes Gary Snyder's *The Back Country*. The book is dedicated to Kenneth Rexroth. It opens with a poem Snyder read at the Six Gallery: "A Berry Feast." The five sections of the book are "Far West," "Far East," "Kali," "Back," and "Miyazawa Kenji" -- the latter translations of the Japanese poet who lived from 1896 to 1933. The concluding poem of the book, a translation, is "Thief":

> About when the stars of the Skeleton
> were paling in the dawn:
> Striding the crackly glitter
> -- frozen mud --
> The thief who had just stolen a celadon vase
> from the front of a store
> Suddenly stopped those long black legs
> Covered his ears with his hands
> And listened to the humming of his mind.

Composer Lou Harrison sets Robert Duncan's "Up Rising, Passages 25" from *Bending the Bow*. The piece is performed August 17th at the Cabrillo Music Festival. In *Lou Harrison: Composing a World* (Oxford University Press, 1998), Leta E. Miller and Fredric Lieberman write,

> Never hesitant to espouse controversial positions, Harrison chose for *Peace Piece 1* a Buddhist prayer ("Invocation for the Health of All Beings") during a time when the United States was at war with a primarily Buddhist country, and for *Peace Piece 2* a shrill inflammatory antiwar poem by Robert Duncan. Duncan's "Up Rising, Passages 25," was a no-holds-barred indictment of the Vietnam War...
>
> Lou set Duncan's tirade as a six-and-a-half minute "fiery non-stop recitative...writhing in a series of impassioned crescendos." As tenor Erik Townsend drew to a close, the tension in the hall became palpable. A woman in the audience broke the silence that followed with a timid "Boo"; to which a member of the bass section of the orchestra responded, "Shame." (Critics were left wondering about the source of the latter; Arthur Bloomfield wrote in the *San Francisco Examiner*, "While I interpreted this as a further bit of castigation aimed at Harrison, I'm told that someone on stage was taking a dim view of the boo.") Then the audience "burst like a wave" with its spirited endorsement. The outburst was headlined in all of the major San Francisco and Monterey Bay newspapers.

Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated in Birmingham, Alabama.

Robert Kennedy is assassinated in Los Angeles during his presidential campaign. Lawrence Ferlinghetti will read "Assassination Raga" to an evening raga at "The Incredible Poetry Reading," Nourse Auditorium, San Francisco, June 8, 1968, the day Kennedy is buried.

Neal Cassady dies in Mexico.

Yvor Winters dies. He is survived by his wife, author Janet Lewis.

***1969***

Wikipedia*:" The first moon landing by a human was that of the United States Neil Armstrong, commander of the Apollo 11 mission, accompanied by Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin. On July 20, 1969, while their teammate Michael Collins controlled the command module Columbia, Armstrong landed the lunar module* Eagle *on the surface of the moon at 4:17:42 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time." Aldrin, the first person to walk on the moon's surface, remarks, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." During the 1960 election, John F. Kennedy had spoken of a "missile gap" between the United States and the U.S.S.R. The* Wikipedia *article quotes Kennedy's remarks to NASA's leader, James E. Webb: "Everything we do ought to really be tied in to getting on to the moon ahead of the Russians [...] otherwise we shouldn't be spending that kind of money, because I'm not interested in space [...] The only justification for [the cost] is because we hope to beat [the USSR] to demonstrate that instead of being behind by a couple of years, by God, we passed them."*

Wikipedia: *"In early January, 1969, [the Charles Manson Family established a base] at a canary-yellow home in Canoga Park…. Because this locale would allow the Family to remain 'submerged beneath the awareness of the outside world,' Manson called it [in a Beatles reference] the Yellow Submarine…There, they prepared for the impending apocalypse, which, around the campfire, Manson had termed Helter Skelter, after the [Beatles']White Album song of that name…By February, Manson's vision was complete. The Family would create an album with songs as subtle as those of The Beatles. This would draw 'the young love,' America's youth, to the Family; most notably it would draw the young, white female hippies out of Haight-Ashbury. Black men, thus deprived of the white women whom the political changes of the 1960s had made sexually available to them, would be without an outlet for their frustrations and would lash out in violent crimes against whites. After a resultant murderous rampage against blacks by frightened whites would be exploited by the Black Muslims to trigger a war of mutual near-extermination between racist and non-racist whites over the treatment of blacks, the Black Muslims would arise to finish off sneakily the few whites they would know to have survived; indeed, they would kill off all nonblacks. In this epic sequence of events, the enlarged Family would have little to fear; they would wait out the war in a secret city that was underneath Death Valley and that they would reach through a hole in the ground. As the actual remaining whites upon the war's true conclusion, they would emerge from underground to rule the now-satisfied blacks, who, as the vision went, would be incapable of running the world…In June, Manson told a male Family member Helter Skelter was "ready to happen.' Remarking that 'blackie never did anything without whitey showin' him how,' he said, '[I]t looks like we're gonna have to show blackie how to do it'…*

*"On the night of August 8, 1969, Manson directed Tex Watson to take Family members Patricia Krenwinkel, Susan Atkins, and Linda Kasabian to 10050 Cielo Drive [the home of filmmaker Roman Polanski and his wife Sharon Tate] and kill whoever was on the premises. He told the girls to do as Tex would instruct them...The quotation, 'I am the devil, and I have come to do the devil's work' has been attributed to Watson when Wojciech 'Voytek' Frykowski awoke from his slumber on the living room couch… Tate, eight months pregnant,*

*begged for the life of her unborn child and was rebuffed by Atkins, who coldly replied, 'Look bitch, I have no mercy for you' before stabbing the actress sixteen times. Before the killers left the scene, Atkins wrote 'Pig' on the house's front door, in Sharon Tate's blood…*

*"The following night in the Los Feliz section of Los Angeles, California, wealthy supermarket executive Leno LaBianca and his wife Rosemary were killed in their home, once again by members of the Family (Watson, Krenwinkel and Leslie Van Houten). On this occasion, Manson apparently went along to 'show them how to do it' with less tumult, and pacified the victims, tying them up before returning to the car to tell his followers to commit the killings. Watson apparently killed Mr. LaBianca, and Krenwinkel and Van Houten took turns stabbing Mrs. LaBianca when she began to struggle. Between them, the two girls stabbed Mrs. LaBianca 41 times, including more than 20 stab wounds made after the woman was dead. Krenwinkel then added to the butchery, using a carving fork to cut the word 'War' into Mr. LaBianca's chest. She then left the fork embedded in his stomach, soaking up some blood on a piece of paper and writing the phrases 'Rise' and 'Death to Pigs' on the walls, as well as 'Healter [sic] Skelter' on the refrigerator…*

*"Barker Ranch, on the outskirts of California's Death Valley, is known as the last hideout of Manson and his 'family' after the gruesome Los Angeles murder spree. The local county sheriff's department and National Park Service officers had arrested Manson and his group…on suspicion of trespassing and vandalism. Some of the members of the organization were seen burning a mass of road-grading material and arson investigators suspected the crime to have come from Manson. At the time of the Manson arrests, the officers were unaware of other criminal actions by those they had in custody. They wanted to apprehend and prosecute the persons responsible for vandalizing road repair equipment in Death Valley National Monument farther north, not knowing that they had Manson and his followers. Manson was ultimately discovered hiding beneath a sink in the Barker Ranch bathroom…At the trial, which began June 15, 1970, the prosecution's main witness was Kasabian, who, along with Manson, Atkins, and Krenwinkel, had been charged with seven counts of murder and one of conspiracy. Not having participated in the killings, she was granted immunity in exchange for testimony that detailed the nights of crime.*

*"The prosecution placed the triggering of Helter Skelter as the main motive. The crime scenes' bloody White Album references -- pig, rise, helter skelter -- were correlated with testimony about Manson predictions that the murders blacks would commit at the outset of Helter Skelter would involve the writing of 'pigs' on walls in victims' blood. Testimony as to Manson's having declared 'now' the time for Helter Skelter was supplemented with Kasabian's testimony that, on the night of the LaBianca murders, Manson considered discarding on the street a wallet he apparently obtained in the LaBianca house; he 'wanted a black person to pick it up and use the credit cards so that the people, the establishment would think it was some sort of an organized group that killed these people.' 'I want to show blackie how to do it,' Manson had said as the Family members had driven along after the departure from the LaBianca house.*

*"On January 25, 1971, guilty verdicts were returned against the defendants on all counts…In February 1972, the five convicts' death sentences were automatically reduced to life in prison by California v. Anderson 64 Cal.2d 633, 414 P.2d 366, (Cal. 1972), in which the Supreme Court of California abolished the death penalty in that state."*

George Oppen (born 1908) becomes the first California poet to win the Pulitzer Prize. It is awarded for his fourth book, *Of Being Numerous*, published by New Directions. Oppen's first book, *Discrete Series*, was published in 1934 and had a foreword by Ezra Pound. Involving himself in the world of politics, Oppen did not publish any more poetry until 1962, when he produced *The Materials* (New Directions/San Francisco Review).

N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (Harper & Row, 1968) wins the Pulitzer Prize.

The University of New Mexico Press publishes N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. The book deals with the legends, mythology and history of the Kiowa Indians. This is a passage from "The Going On":

> Forty years ago the townspeople of Carnegie, Oklahoma, gathered about two old Kiowa men who were mounted on work horses and armed with bows and arrows. Someone had got a buffalo, a poor broken beast in which there was no trace left of the wild strain. The old men waited silently amid the laughter and talk; then, at a signal, the buffalo was let go. It balked at first, more confused, perhaps, than afraid, and the horses had to be urged and then brought up short. The people shouted, and at last the buffalo wheeled and ran. The old men gave chase, and in the distance they were lost to view in a great, red cloud of dust. But they ran that animal down and killed it with arrows.

The book ends with a beautiful, formal poem. One remembers that Yvor Winters was one of Momaday's teachers.

RAINY MOUNTAIN CEMETERY

Most is your name the name of this dark stone.
Deranged in death, the mind to be inheres
Forever in the nominal unknown,
The wake of nothing audible he hears
Who listens here and now to hear your name.

The early sun, red as a hunter's moon,
Runs in the plain. The mountain burns and shines;
And silence is the long approach of noon
Upon the shadow that your name defines --
And death this cold, black density of stone.

Among Momaday's books are *Angle of Geese and Other Poems* (D.R. Godine, 1974); *The Gourd Dancer* (Harper & Row, 1976); *In the Presence of the Sun: Stories & Poems 1961-1991* (St. Martin's Press, 1992); and *In the Bear's House* (St. Martin's Press, 1999).

Trigram Press publishes Jack Hirschman's *Black Alephs: Poems 1960-1968*. The cover illustration is by Wallace Berman.

Wallace and Shirley Berman and George Herms appear in *Easy Rider*, a film directed by their friend, Dennis Hopper.

Four Seasons Foundation in San Francisco republishes Michael McClure's *Ghost Tantras*, with its "beast language"; Frontier Press publishes his *The Surge*.

Long Hair Books in London prints Diane di Prima's *Revolutionary Letters*. The first American printing will be by City Lights in 1971.

*Penguin Modern Poets 13* appears from Penguin Press in England. The three featured poets are Californians Charles Bukowski, Philip Lamantia, and Harold Norse. This is Norse's "Between Two Fires":

a fire in my brain
burns
the slag & trash deposits
of my century
i walk out the window
i fly in fresh dawns of gray walls
cats are dreaming fish heads
the monastery floats in the sky
& i am
free
of stupid laws

above a thousand islands above water above crowded
pleasure boats
monasteries mountains cities prisons cemeteries
shipowners & communists panorama of all Greece
above the sweet eyes of donkeys
faster than jetplanes
my sixth sense immune to dimension
i zoom thru frontiers without visa
i visit sleeping bodies & whisper in their dreaming ears
kiss me
break the evil charm
you who are bewitched by bread
enthralled by scraps of paper
time has shut your skull
from your mouth stones fall
& truth is a bloodsmeared ikon

ah quit flying
come off it

i'm really sitting on a terrace
& the scrubwoman has stolen my pen
her nearsighted child is crying
& now she is stealing my razorblades
her lazy husband beats her
for not stealing more
tho she has left me very little
i am free of these minor matters
only when free of myself

& now from a balcony a housemaid is shaking
handkerchiefs & dishtowels

over the railing
where her bare legs gleam
above eyelevel
she is young & hot
‘you don’t need a wall of words to raise your truth’
truth
has just now
raised
its burning head

And this is Lamantia’s “The Diabolic Condition”:

As the women who live within each other’s bodies
descend from their polar regions
to the circle of demons
I become ready to offer myself to the smooth red snakes
entwined in the heads of sorcerers

Between the black arms coming over the swamp
rushing to embrace me
and the distant sun in which abide the men who hold
within their fists the Evil Eyes
between the tombs and beds of boneless magicians
who have worked in the secrecy of abandoned towers
despite my body flying away
despite the lizards who crawl into the altars where
the portents are being prepared
despite the intrusion of doctor’s maids
and egyptologists
despite the old Doric temple carried in by the art lovers
despite the nest of mad beggars
the chant is heard
and the words of the chant are written in oceanic gardens

The flat walls are singing good-bye
we have entered the city where the dead masters speak to us
of catacombs and the horned enchantress of Africa
The incantation is following us into the streets
and into the sky
We are ascending to the limitless cosmos of architecture
we are crawling backward to enormous hearts
that leap over the snow to climb into our bodies
Come my ritual wax and circles
my rose spitting blood
When the day is lit up by our magic candles
and the hours yell their sadistic songs and suck hard
into the night when the cats invade our skulls
then we will know the destructive ones have gone
out into the world to watch the cataclysm begin
as the final wave of fire pours out from their hearts

Random House publishes *Snaps* by Puerto-Rico-born Victor Hernandez Cruz.

Gary Snyder writes “Smokey the Bear Sutra.” The poem deals with environmental concerns in the form of a Buddhist sutra and presents Smokey as the reincarnation of Vairocana Buddha. Snyder composes the poem in one night for a February 1969 Sierra Club Wilderness Conference in San Francisco, at which he distributes the first copies. The poem “may be reproduced free forever”:

> Once in the Jurassic about 150 million years ago, the Great Sun Buddha in this corner of the Infinite Void gave a discourse to all the assembled elements and energies: to the standing beings, the walking beings, the flying beings, and the sitting beings—even the grasses, to the number of thirteen billion, each one born from a seed, assembled there: a Discourse concerning Enlightenment on the planet Earth
>
> “In some future time, there will be a continent called America. It will have great centers of power called such as Pyramid Lake, Walden Pond, Mt. Rainier, Big Sur, Everglades, and so forth; and powerful nerves and channels such as Columbia River, Mississippi River, and Grand Canyon. The human race in that era will get into troubles all over its head, and practically wreck everything in spite of its own strong intelligent Buddha-nature.
>
> “The twisting strata of the great mountains and the pulsings of volcanoes are my love burning deep in the earth. My obstinate compassion is schist and basalt and granite, to be mountains, to bring down the rain. In that future American Era I shall enter a new form; to cure the world of loveless knowledge that seeks with blind hunger: and mindless rage eating food that will not fill it.”
>
> And he showed himself in his true form of
>
> SMOKEY THE BEAR
>
> A handsome smokey-colored brown bear standing on his hind legs, showing that he is aroused and watchful.
>
> Bearing in his right paw the Shovel that digs to the truth beneath appearances, cuts the roots of useless attachments, and flings damp sand on the fires of greed and war;
>
> His left paw in the mudra of Comradely Display --indicating that all creatures have the full right to live to their limits and that of deer, rabbits, chipmunks, snakes, dandelions, and lizards all grow in the realm of the Dharma;
>
> Wearing the blue work overalls symbolic of slaves and laborers, the countless men oppressed by a civilization that claims to save but often destroys;
>
> Wearing the broad-brimmed hat of the west, symbolic of the forces that guard the Wilderness, which is the Natural State of the Dharma and the True Path of beings on Earth -- all true paths lead through mountains --
>
> With a halo of smoke and flame behind, the forest fires of the kali yuga, fires caused by the stupidity of those who think things can be gained and lost whereas in truth all is contained vast and free in the Blue Sky and Green Earth of One Mind;
>
> Round-bellied to show his kind nature and that the great Earth has food enough for everyone who loves her and trusts her;
>
> Trampling underfoot wasteful freeways and needless suburbs; smashing the worms of capitalism and totalitarianism;
>
> Indicating the Task: his followers, becoming free of cars, houses, canned foods, universities, and shoes, master the Three Mysteries of their own Body, Speech, and Mind; and fearlessly chop down the rotten trees and prune out the sick limbs of this country America and then burn the leftover trash.
>
> Wrathful but calm, Austere but Comic, Smokey the Bear will illuminate those who would help him; but for those who would hinder or slander him,
>
> HE WILL PUT THEM OUT.

Thus his great Mantra:

Namah samanta vajranam chanda maharoshana
Sphataya hum traka ham mam

"I DEDICATE MYSELF TO THE UNIVERSAL DIAMOND --
BE THIS RAGING FURY BE DESTROYED"

And he will protect those who love the woods and rivers, Gods and animals, hobos and madmen, prisoners and sick people, musicians, playful women, and hopeful children;

And if anyone is threatened by advertising, air pollution, television, or the police, they should chant SMOKEY THE BEAR'S WAR SPELL:

DROWN THEIR BUTTS
CRUSH THEIR BUTTS
DROWN THEIR BUTTS
CRUSH THEIR BUTTS

And SMOKEY THE BEAR will surly appear to put the enemy out with his vajra-shovel,

Now those who recite this Sutra and then try to put it
in practice will accumulate merit as countless as the
sands of Arizona and Nevada,
Will help save the planet Earth from total oil slick,
Will enter the age of harmony of humans and nature,
Will win the tender love and caresses of men, women, and beasts,
Will always have ripe blackberries to eat and a sunny
spot under a pine tree to sit at,

AND IN THE END WILL WIN HIGHEST PERFECT
ENLIGHTENMENT.

Thus we have heard.

(*may be reproduced free forever*)

Snyder comments, "It's hard not to have a certain amount of devotional feeling for the Large Brown Ones, even if you don't know much about them. I met the Old Man in the Fur Coat a few times in the North Cascades -- once in the central Sierra -- and was suitably impressed…In the light of meditation once it came to me that the Old One was no other than that Auspicious Being described in Buddhist texts as having taught in the unimaginably distant past, the one called 'The Ancient Buddha'":

So I came to realize that the U.S. Forest Service's "Smokey the B__r" publicity campaign was the inevitable resurfacing of our ancient benefactor as guide and teacher in the twentieth century, the agency not even knowing that it was serving as a vehicle for this magical reemergence…

I got it printed overnight. The next morning I stood in the lobby of the [Sierra Club Wilderness] conference hotel in my old campaign hat and handed out the broadsides, saying, "Smokey the B__r literature, sir." Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service officials politely took them. Forest beatniks and conservation fanatics read them with mad glints and giggles. The Underground News Service took it up, and it went to the *Berkeley Barb* and then all over the country. *The New Yorker* queried me

about it, and when I told them it was both free and anonymous, they said they couldn't publish it. It soon had a life of its own, as intended.

-- *The Gary Snyder Reader* (Counterpoint, 1999)

Gary Snyder's volume of essays and selections from his journals, *Earth House Hold: Technical Notes & Queries To Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries* appears from New Directions. The book's title plays upon the root meaning of "ecology." Snyder visits environmental activists around the U.S. and distributes his "Smokey the Bear Sutra." These are some passages from *Earth House Hold*:

"Poetry" as the skilled and inspired use of the voice and language to embody rare and powerful states of mind that are in immediate origin personal to the singer, but at deep levels common to all who listen. "Primitive" as those societies which have remained non-literature and non-political while necessarily exploring and developing in directions that civilized societies have tended to ignore. Having fewer tools, no concern with history, a living oral tradition rather than an accumulated library, no overriding social goals, and considerable freedom of sexual and inner life, such people live vastly in the present…The archaic and primitive ritual dramas, which acknowledged all the sides of human nature, including the destructive, demonic, and ambivalent, were liberating and harmonizing. Freud said *he* didn't discover the unconscious, poets had centuries before. The purpose of California Shamanism was "to heal disease and resist death, with a power acquired from dreams"…

The contemporary decline of the cult of romance is linked to the rise of the sense of the primitive, and the knowledge of the variety of spiritual practices and paths to beauty that cultural anthropology has brought us. We begin to move away now, in this interesting historical spiral, from monogamy and monotheism…

The muse remains a woman. Poetry is voice, and according to Indian tradition, voice, väx (vox)is a Goddess…Modern poets in America, Europe, and Japan, are -- discovering the breath, the voice, and trance. It is also for some a discovery to realize that the universe is not a dead thing but a continual creation….

("Poetry and the Primitive: Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Technique")

*

*White Indians* [cf. Norman Mailer's phrase, "The White Negro" -- ed.]

The modern American family is the smallest and most barren family that has ever existed. Each newly-married couple moves to a new house or apartment -- no uncles or grandmothers come to live with them. There are seldom more than two or three children. The children live with their peers and leave home early. Many have never had the least sense of family.

I remember sitting down to Christmas dinner eighteen years ago in a communal house in Portland, Oregon, with about twelve others my own age, all of whom had no place they wished to go home to. That house was my first discovery of harmony and community with fellow beings. This has been the experience of hundreds of thousands of men and women all over America since the end of World War II….

("Passage to More Than India")

*

The Revolution has ceased to be an ideological concern. Instead, people are trying it out right now -- communism in small communities, new family organization. A million people in America and another million in England and Europe. A vast

> underground in Russia, which will come out in the open four or five years hence, is now biding. How do they recognize each other? Not always by beards, long hair, bare feet or beads. The signal is a bright and tender look; calmness and gentleness, freshness and ease of manner. Men, women and children -- all of whom together hope to follow the timeless path of love and wisdom, in affectionate companyh the sky, winds, clouds, trees, waters, animals and grasses -- this is the tribe.
>
> ("Why Tribe")

The Berkeley Poets' Cooperative, a free weekly writing workshop, is founded by Charles Entrekin and Ted Fleischman.

Small Press Distribution is founded in Berkeley. To quote from its web site, SPD is "the only wholesaler in the country dedicated exclusively to independently published literature. SPD gives the public access to the broad spectrum of literature published today by distributing books to bookstores, libraries, and readers. We take risks on exciting new writers, enabling their work to develop an audience and gain recognition in the marketplace":

> Small Press Distribution is a non-profit (501(c)3) literary arts organization located in Berkeley, California. Our mission is to nurture a cultural context in which the literary arts are valued and sustained, and we accomplish this mission by providing wholesaling services to independent presses and through our public programs and advocacy efforts. We believe that the written word, in its most eloquent form, deserves the broadest possible distribution.
>
> *
>
> The SPD Bestseller List looks like no other bestseller list in the country. Currently our top twenty titles include books by African American, Latino, Asian American, gay, lesbian, and Native American writers.
>
> In the top 25, all the writers are living, and half of the titles are poetry. No other book distributor or wholesaler of books in the U.S. can make such a claim.

British-born Adam Cornford arrives in the U.S., enrolling at the University of California at Santa Cruz. "There," writes Andrew Joron in *Neo-Surrealism; or, the Sun at Night* (2004), "he attended George Hitchcock's writing workshop and fell under the spell of the neo-surrealist synthesis that Hitchcock was forging between American imagism and European surrealism. Some of Cornford's workshop poems in this style were selected by Hitchcock to appear in *kayak*. Cornford came to regard Hitchcock as a mentor; he briefly served as assistant to the editor, helping to sift through unsolicited submissions." In 1973, Cornford enters the graduate writing program at San Francisco State. Here he discovers another mentor: surrealist Nanos Valaoritis.

Philip Whalen's *On Bear's Head* is published by Harcourt, Brace & World—a press referred to by Alastair Johnson in *BEAT SCENE* #51 as "Hardcore Basement": the book, Johnson goes on, was "notable at the time because no one could afford it at $18." *On Bear's Head* is a compilation of Whalen's early work. It opens with "*Plus Ça Change…,"* the poem Whalen read at the Six Gallery. The humor of "*Plus Ça Change…,"* its sudden interplay of voices, odd elegance, and spontaneous, casual quality will remain hallmarks of Whalen's style.

Johnson calls Whalen a "trickster and a scholar": "His erudition occasionally obscuring his wild sense of humour…His voices are a chorus of characters bickering inside his cranium…"

The opening of "*Plus Ça Change…"* suggests that both the poem and the poet are wondering what direction the poem will take ("Tell me what we're going to do"); its movement documents the poet's increasing involvement with the poem -- as he moves away from "coldly calculating" -- and finally his excitement about writing it: "Ah! Sunflower seeds!" Another poem from the same period insists on poetry's sheer *presence*: "THIS / Being made here and now." The stage-direction "silences" of "*Plus Ça Change…"* are like the silences that haunt the two tramps in *Waiting for Godot* and play against the talk/chatter of the poem's lines:

> What are you doing?
>
> I am coldly calculating.
>
> I didn't ask for a characterization.
> Tell me what we're going to do.
>
> That's what I'm coldly calculating.
>
> You had better say "plotting" or "scheming"
> You never could calculate without a machine.
>
> Then I'm brooding. Presently
> A plot will hatch.
>
> Who are you trying to kid?
>
> Be nice.
>
> (SILENCE)
>
> Listen. Whatever we do from here on out
> Let's for God's sake not look at each other
> Keep our eyes shut and the lights turned off --
> We won't mind touching if we don't have to see.
>
> I'll ignore those preposterous feathers.
>
> Say what you please, we brought it all on ourselves
> But nobody's going out of his way to look.
>
> Who'd recognize us now?
>
> We'll just pretend we're used to it.
> (Watch out with that goddamned tail!)
> Pull the shades down. Turn off the lights.
> Shut your eyes.
>
> (SILENCE)
>
> There is no satisfactory explanation.
> You can talk until you're blue

Just how much bluer can I get?

Well, save breath you need to cool

Will you please shove the cuttlebone a little closer?

All right, until the perfumes of Arabia

Grow cold. Ah! Sunflower seeds!

Will you listen, please? I'm trying to make
A rational suggestion. Do you mind?

Certainly not. Just what *shall* we tell the children?

The book also has wonderful passages like these "TAKES" from "*Soufflé":*

TAKE VIII

I drank myself into a crying jag face down
On Ginsberg's woolly green rug
Roaring, "Gone, everything gone,
Cold, cold, cold, cold, cold!"

A nearly perfect vacuum at minus 278 degrees
Absolute
HORREUR DU VIDE

The Messrs. Ginsberg & Kerouac, also juiced,
Wrapped me in blankets while I froze & squalled

TAKE XIII

Don't you ever get tired
of your own sunny disposition?

TAKE XIV

I know perfectly well what became of old Mr. Daigler
Greatly advanced in years he removed from Mt. Pisgah
To the Odd-Fellows Home in Portland where he died
Of malnutrition and the radio.

"*Soufflé"* ends,

Light

Hard radiation (cosmic particles, beta & gamma rays)

A few vagrant atoms of hydrogen, scatterings
of metallic &/or mineral dust shoved along
by the pressure of the

Light

Absolute

Richard Baker receives dharma transmission from Shunryu Suzuki. This makes Baker Suzuki's only formal American successor and dharma heir. Organizer of the Berkeley Poetry Conference in 1965, Baker goes on to become one of the most active members and leaders of the San Francisco Zen Center. He plays a leading role in purchasing and building Tassajara Zen Mountain Center, the first Buddhist training monastery outside of Asia (established 1966), and Green Gulch Farm, a highly successful communal and family practice center in Marin County, north of San Francisco (acquired 1972). Green Gulch is the first Zen center in the west that combines monastic practice, community life, and the study of the interrelationship of Asian and Western cultural practices. Another Zen Center business, Greens restaurant at Fort Mason, was probably the first nationally-recognized vegetarian restaurant; it was established in 1979.

Composer Charles Amirkhanian becomes Music Director at KPFA. He retains that position until November 1992. Amirkhanian's "Ode to Gravity" program begins in March 1970 and continues through July 1995. During his time at KPFA, Amirkhanian plays a wide selection of new music and avant-garde poetry which allows many to experience work they would otherwise never have encountered. Among Amirkhanian's poetry programs is a 1969 thirteen-program series called "Words"; it is produced by poet/musician Clark Coolidge. Amirkhanian also produces the first extended series of programs on text-sound composition on U.S. radio. The text-sound compositions he plays are from a wide variety of countries, and they include Amirkhanian's own work in that genre.

Julia Vinograd's first book, *Revolution and Other Poems* is put out by Robert Hawley's Oyez Press. In her Gale Research *Autobiography* she writes that the book "cost five dollars, and didn't sell." Her second book, however,

> was a chapbook put out by Fred Cody called *The Berkeley Bead Game* [1970] and priced at a dollar. I rescued my book from the elegant mortuary of the poetry section and sold it on the street and in coffee shops. I traded with the vendors and the deadheads; I got half my holiday presents trading. I sold 3,500 copies and could have sold 4,000 but my feet gave out.

In a note written for Anne Moose's *Berkeley USA* (Alternative Press, 1981) Vinograd adds that she "likes the ambiguous values of the street -- "

> because of their ambiguity. They're certainly not more moral. I don't think that would attract me anyway. But it's like they're more paradoxical, and this is fun. Middle-class values are boring. It's not a moral rejection, it's simply, who wants to live in something where you fall asleep? The street is alive. I like the changeability, the unpredictability. And I like the characters. It's like living in a circus.

In May and June demonstrations are held at "People's Park." In *A Companion to California* (Oxford University Press, 1978) James D. Hart writes that "People's Park" is the "name given to a square block of unused University of California land near the Berkeley campus which had been intended for a dormitory and playing fields, but was seized by students and 'street people' for their own use. Their ouster and attempt to retake the heavily fenced land led to a battle (May 1969) with National Guard troops and sheriff's deputies in which one

person was killed and another blinded." When I read that passage to Berkeley street poet Julia Vinograd she said, "That's inaccurate." She supplied the following information:

> There were old houses with hippie-activists living in them in the block behind the Café Med. The University pulled the houses down, claiming it was going to build a parking lot. The land just sat there thru a very rainy winter and turned into a swamp, complete with mosquitoes.
>
> In the spring a spontaneous hodgepodge of the dispossessed -- hippies, street people, community people and students -- started building a park. The rest is history.
>
> P.S. There was no mention of a dorm there in all the years from 67 until the past few months in 99 when some chancellor tried to float the idea. It sank to the bottom.

People's Park marks the beginning of Vinograd's career as Berkeley's "Bubblelady." In her Gale Research *Autobiography* she writes,

> There was going to be a riot the next day, but I was a pacifist and didn't want to throw stones and besides I'd probably miss. At the same time I was angry and wanted to throw something. I decided I'd blow soap bubbles all night in the park, and if they wanted to arrest me for it, fine. I brought two large bags full of bottles...Pretty soon I always had bubbles and wound up a lot more famous as the Bubblelady than I was as a poet.

In *Protect the Earth* (City Lights, 1970), poet and professor at UC Berkeley Thomas Parkinson writes about the People's Park incident,

> On Tuesday, May 20, 1969, Berkeley, a city in the United States, a university town with many suburban dwellers as well as the faculty, staff, and students of the university, was attacked from the air by toxic gas from a helicopter. It was the first city within the continental limits of the United States to be assaulted by a helicopter flown by a member of the National Guard and under the orders of an elected official, the sheriff of the county. The gas was sprayed into an area where seven hundred people were confined by the National Guard in close formation. These people, these American citizens, had no means of escape from the gas that is used in Viet Nam to flush suspected Viet Cong from tunnels and dug-outs and caves. This chemical weapon is not mild in its effects: it irritates the eyes, it can burn exposed areas of the skin, and it induces projectile vomiting and instant diarrhea.
>
> Less than a week before, the citizens of this city were fired upon by police officers, using bird-shot and buck-shot, and perhaps .38 caliber revolvers, the standard side-arm of policemen. One man was killed; one man suffered damage that has caused blindness that will be permanent. The blinded man was the assistant manager of a repertory theatre of the cinema. Many others, more than a hundred, were wounded, some very seriously.
>
> How could this happen? How could an American city be attacked from the air by an arm of its own government?…One black reporter told me that he had once written that such force would never be used against groups of white people, but he had forgotten that in the eyes of many public authorities a large segment of the population, including professors, students, and young people generally, are white niggers. What is more, they know that these white niggers won't fire back.
>
> So Berkeley has achieved another distinction -- the first city in the continental United States attacked from the air; the first predominantly white university to have its students fired upon by police…One terrible irony in the entire rotten catastrophe is that *by law* the police of Berkeley are not permitted to fire upon any one unless he is armed

> and threatening the life of the police officer or some other citizen. But the police from outside Berkeley, who had been invited under a mutual aid pact to help control crowds in Berkeley, were not inhibited by any such niceties. They shot people in the back as they fled, unarmed, and a remarkable photograph in the San Francisco Chronicle shows clearly a policeman doing exactly that, shooting down an unarmed man who was some thirty feet away from him and running away from him…Who needs surrealism when events like this are available? Who needs a modern Jonathan Swift when events outrun even his fertile inventiveness? The kind of madness that we are dealing with promotes manic bewildered appalled laughter that exists only to relieve the congested heart.

At UC Berkeley, Marsha Hudson posts notices across campus proposing a feminist literary salon. The purpose of the salon is to discuss women's literature: a few female writers are receiving notice in the classroom, but the multitude is either ignored or forgotten. The informal gatherings continue for years, growing into an activist movement that establishes the first Women's Studies major at Berkeley, helps produce the first major anthologies of women's poetry, and fights for equality and recognition in every area of the educational system. The group breaks up as its members get degrees and move on, but they hold a reunion in 1999 and decide to produce a history of the phenomenon through a series of memoirs. See entry 2005.

Big Table Publishing publishes *The Young American Poets*, edited by Paul Carroll. Among the poets included are Charles Simic, James Tate, Louise Gluck, Ted Berrigan, Ron Padgett, Diane Wakoski, Anne Waldman, Robert Hass, Kathleen Fraser, Clark Coolidge, Tom Clark, Kenward Elmslie, Marvin Bell, and Mark Strand.

California poet Paul Mariah founds ManRoot Press, the nation's first gay literary press. Among the authors published by ManRoot are Janine Canan, Jean Cocteau, Jean Genet, Lynn Lonidier, Richard Maitland, Clive Matson, Sam Steward, Will Inman, James Broughton, David Fisher, Stephen Jonas, Stephen Kessler, and Helen Luster.

Shameless Hussy Press is started in Oakland by Alta (Gerrey), a poet and prose writer. It is the first feminist press in America and influences several other presses and publishers such as Diana Press, Women's Press Collective of Oakland, and Daughters, Inc. For a time, alta, a single mother with two children, runs the press out of her garage; the press's first book is an anthology of women's poetry, *Remember Our Fire*. Alta publishes three of her own books as well as the first poems of influential writers such as Susan Griffin, Pat Parker, and Mitsuye Yamada; she also publishes the first edition of the poem which later becomes an award-winning play, Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide, When the Rainbow is Enuf.* Shameless Hussy Press prints books by George Sand as well as children's books. The press closes in 1989 after over fifty titles are published.

In Los Angeles, Charles Bukowski and Neeli Cherkovski (then Neeli Cherry) co-found and co-edit *Laugh Literary and Man the Humping Guns*, a literary magazine named by Bukowski. In the first issue Bukowski writes, "IN DISGUST WITH POETRY CHICAGO, WITH THE DULL DUMPLING PATTY CAKE SAFE CREELEYS, OLSONS, DICKEYS, MERWINS, NEMEROVS AND MEREDITHS -- THIS IS ISSUE ONE OF VOLUME ONE OF LAUGH LITERARY AND MAN THE HUMPING GUNS." The magazine features Bukowski's drawings and poets such as Paul Vangelisti, Ben Goldberg, Gerda Panfold, A.P.

Russo, David Engel, Roger Margolis, Donald Schenker, E. Rosenthal, Tony Quagliano, Steve Richmond, and Albert Masarik. Volume 1, Issue 3 (Febuary, 1971), the last issue, boasts a photograph of Bukowski and Cherry on its cover; Bukowski is holding a beer can in one hand and a cleaning pail in the other. Here, in the order published, are excerpts from some letters from Bukowski to Cherry from that issue:

> 9-1-70
>
> Neeli, you gross slob:
>
> I figured some woman was boggling yr arse. well, that's all right. I think a wife would do you good—give you a sense of balance..all that shit. Women don't work for me, but everybodys different; in fact, theres nobody like Bukowski…..
>
> Lately people have been telling me I'm famous. A shit hell lot of good that does --- the money is slipping away and I'm on the skids. I'm still hustling for pennies on the poetry circuit---I thought the life of a writer would really be the thing. It's simply hell. I'm just a cheap, twittering slave…..
>
> get sucked, Bukowski
>
> 6-4-70
>
> Neeli:
>
> I can't beat the horses anymore. I must stay away. I wish I were back in the Post Office. at least they dulled my mind and tired my body. now everything comes at me with knives out, theres no rest, no relenting. its balls away. I'm on the cross.
>
> In fact, I'm tired of writing. whats the use?
>
> Hank
>
> 4-13-70
>
> Yes, Neeli,
>
> Jan. and Feb. were good months for keeping even but March and April have been nil..hope this cheers you. I know there is something cheerful about seeing the other guy get it. Lets admit it. if we admit we are beasts instead of pretending we are something else, we might see better….how the hell yah gonna keep outta the bread line?

And this untitled poem by Steve Richmond is the last poem in the issue:

> I wanted Shostokovich
> so I turned the Doors
> off
> and now he is on.
> I've read through these pages of lies --
> my lies
> and I'm disappointed
> deeply deeply pissed at myself.
> Why have I wasted all of this time
> writing poetry
> when I could have
> slain every damsel who
> came to me?

wrapped my purple
rubber flesh
my rubber hose
my dick my cock me
around her neck
& tied it in place
to dry?
her neck dry like a candle!
still fragile elegant dead neck!
frozen eyes! cold nose!
grey face! dead face! oh bless her holy dead face
that it shines on this page
like a tomato! a freshly licked apple! her
green face
& white hair! her brown nose
and white hair!
my rope! my holy writing tightening hose!

I wanted shostokovich.
I want to tell you what I see.
Groups fail. Individuals succeed.
then they die.

Jim Morrison self-publishes two volumes of poetry, *The Lords / Notes on Vision* and *The New Creatures*. Morrison's friend Michael McClure describes *The Lords / Notes on Vision* as Morrison's deconstruction of his UCLA thesis on film. These are the only volumes of Morrison's poetry to be published during his lifetime, though more poems will appear posthumously. This is "THE OPENING OF THE TRUNK":

Moment of inner freedom
when the mind is opened and the
infinite universe revealed
& the soul is left to wander
dazed & confus'd searching
here & there for teachers & friends.

---

Moment of Freedom
as the prisoner
blinks in the sun
like a mole
from his hole

a child's 1st trip
away from home

That moment of Freedom

---

LAmerica
Cold treatment of our empress
LAmerica
The Transient Universe
LAmerica
Instant communion and
communication
lamerica
emeralds in glass
lamerica
searchlights at twi-light
lamerica
stoned streets in the pale dawn
lamerica
robed in exile
lamerica
swift beat of a proud heart
lamerica
eyes like twenty
lamerica
swift dream
lamerica
frozen heart
lamerica
soldiers doom
lamerica
clouds & struggles
lamerica
Nighthawk
doomed from the start
lamerica
“That's how I met her,
lamerica
lonely and frozen
lamerica
& sullen, yes
lamerica
right from the start”

Then stop.
Go.
The wilderness between.
Go round the march.

---

he enters stage:

Blood boots. Killer storm.
Fool’s gold. God in a heaven.
Where is she?
Have you seen her?
Has anyone seen this girl?
snap shot (projected)

She’s my sister.
Ladies & gentlemen:
please attend carefully to these words & events
It’s your last chance, our last hope.
In this womb or tomb, we’re free of the swarming streets.
The black fever which rages is safely out those doors
My friends & I come from
Far Arden w/ dances, &
new music
Everywhere followers accrue
to our procession.
Tales of Kings, gods, warriors
and lovers dangled like
jewels for your careless pleasure

I’m Me!
Can you dig it.
My meat is real.
My hands --how they move
balanced like lithe demons
My hair -- so twined and writhing
The skin of my face -- pinch the cheeks
My flaming sword tongue
spraying verbal fire-flys
I’m real.
I’m human
But I'm not an ordinary man
No No No

---

What are you doing here?
What do you want?
Is it music?
We can play music.
But you want more.
You want something & someone new.
Am I right?
Of course I am.
You want ecstasy
Desire & dreams.
Things not exactly what they seem.
I lead you this way, he pulls that way.
I’m not singing to an imaginary girl.
I’m talking to you, my self.
Let’s recreate the world.
The palace of conception is burning.

Look. See it burn.
Bask in the warm hot coals.

You’re too young to be old
You don’t need to be told
You want to see things as they are.

You know exactly what I do
Everything

---

I am a guide to the Labyrinth

Monarch of the protean towers
on this cool stone patio
above the iron mist
sunk in its own waste
breathing its own breath

The Altamont Free Concert is held on December 6 at the then unused Altamont Speedway in Northern California. The concert features The Rolling Stones and other bands such as Santana; Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young; The Jefferson Airplane; Ike and Tina Turner; and The Flying Burrito Brothers. It was originally to be held in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, but when The Rolling Stones announced in a press conference that they would be performing, San Francisco officials feared that the crowd control problems which had occurred at the Woodstock concert -- which had taken place that same year from Friday, August 15 through Monday, August 18 -- would be repeated. The venue was changed to the Sears Point Raceway, but after a dispute with the owner of Sears Point, the venue was changed again to Altamont Speedway. The concert was to take place on Saturday, December 6; the location was switched on the night of Thursday, December 4th. At the new location there were not enough facilities such as portable toilets and medical tents, and the sound system was insufficient. The Hells Angels, led by Oakland chapter head Ralph "Sonny" Barger, were to act as bouncers. (The Hells Angels had provided security at Grateful Dead shows in the past.) Crowd management was a disaster. Many spectators were injured and four were killed. The most discussed death was that of Meredith Hunter, a young African-American man who became involved in an altercation with some Hells Angels and drew a long-barrelled revolver. *Wikipedia* writes, "It is disputed whether or not Meredith drew his weapon before or after he was stabbed the first time. He was stabbed eighteen times in total and kicked to death during The Rolling Stones' performance. His graphic death near the stage was clearly captured on film by three separate cameras [under the direction of filmmakers Albert and David Maysles, who with Charlotte Mitchell Zwerin assembled the concert footage into the 1970 documentary, *Gimme Shelter*]. The killer, Alan Passaro, was arrested and tried for murder in the summer of 1972, but was acquitted after a jury concluded he acted in self-defense because Hunter was carrying a handgun, drew it, and allegedly pointed it at the stage. It was also alleged that Hunter was under the influence of methamphetamines." In his book, *Sleeping Where I Fall* (Counterpoint, 1998), actor/activist Peter Coyote remarks, "If you were forced to select an event that 'ended' the optimistic promise of the Haight-Ashbury era, Altamont would be as good as any."

On December 7, at a poetry reading given at UC Davis, Brother Antoninus presents the love poem, "Tendril in the Mesh" and announces his intent to resign from the Dominican Order and to marry Susanna Rickson. At the conclusion of the performance, he removes his Dominican robes and exits. He and Susanna are married in a civil ceremony in Mendocino on

December 13 and move with her son Jude to Stinson Beach. A priest friend blesses the marriage. “Tendril in the Mesh” ends with a “Hymn to the Cosmic Christ”:

> Dark Eros of the soul, Christ of the startled flesh,
> Drill through my veins and strengthen me to feed
> On the red rapture of thy tongueless need.
> Evince in me the tendril in the mesh,
> The faultless nerve that quickens paradise afresh.
>
> Call to me Christ, sound in my twittering blood,
> Nor suffer me to scamp what I should know
> Of the being’s unsubduable will to grow.
> Do thou invest the passion in the flood
> And keep inviolate what thou created good!

Jack Kerouac dies.

---

In 2008, *Big Bridge* (http://www.bigbridge.org/index2.htm) will publish Rychard Denner’s compendium of recollections of Berkeley in the 1960s, *BERKELEY DAZE.* In his “Foreword & Beyond,” J. Poet (John Thomson) writes,

> What can I say about Berkeley, San Francisco and the Bay Area in the 1960s? How to convey the giddy sense of infinite possibility that hung in the air? You didn’t need pot, hash, or acid to get high. There was a feeling of weightlessness permeating the air. Every day was sunny, everybody smiled, students at UC Berkeley almost danced down the street on the way to class. The air was cleaner, purer, sweeter. The streets were litter free -- this is actually true. People didn’t lock their doors, strangers began talking on a street corner and became life long friends, poets and musicians were everywhere, soon to reinvent the way America produced art and made music. Hair was getting longer, morals were getting looser, women were getting stronger, men were getting gentler, non-violence was the word, even as the police beat down anti-war and Civil Rights protesters. In 1964, I had just come out from New York City and couldn’t believe how friendly, laid back and open my peers were. Everything was possible, love was all around us, the world was changing fast and my new student and political and street friends (soon to be called hippies) were making those changes happen.

In “The Invisible Circle,” her introduction to Denner’s book, Gail Chiarello writes,

> This group, this circle, presented here by Richard Denner, is a collection of poets who occupy a specific place in time and in geography. We knew one another as students UC Berkeley or San Francisco State or the San Francisco Zen Center; or we met for the first time at the 1965 Berkeley Poetry Conference; or we met on “the Av,” Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, or on Fell Street in San Francisco. We were changed by the Free Speech Movement. We walked in antiwar marches and read in antiwar poetry readings often one and the same event. Some of us are hyper-educated, others have rambled and roamed; their learning has been on the fly, on the sly, in the hoosegow. And this highly uneven group. Of all of us, this “motley crew” of storytellers, is part of a literary tradition, going all the way back to the Canterbury Tales. We are an uneven lot, a motley crew, and each with a tale to tell…

I tease Richard by referring to this collection as "Minor Berkeley Poets of the Mid-Sixties." None of us has achieved the worldwide renown of a Ferlinghetti or a Ginsberg, although we have our Poet Laureates of Sonoma County, our Directors of California Poets-in-the-Schools, our Idaho State Distinguished Alumnae; even our James Joyce, since Charlie Potts' *Valga Krusa* is known as the "Ulysses" of the Walla Walla School of North American Writers. We are not without recognition. But none of us are truly "major"…

There is nothing new under the sun -- and yet each generation has to re-invent its art. A unique awareness looks out from behind our eyes. We experience ourselves as immediate in a way we cannot experience anyone else. Each ego, psyche, soul, self-- each kernel of immediacy -- needs to explain "what is" to itself, make some sense of this one-time-only experience of being "me," answer its own dark questions; sing out its song, put forth its design, its view of things. And yet the "me" is an illusion. And so, like a group of springtime peeper frogs, we are all singing at once, putting out *our* song, *our* design, *our* view of things.

The older art, the better art, the other art, the more accomplished art -- which came before -- can never speak in *this* voice which is *my* voice, and *ours.*

In the most immediate sense, this book is written by us, for one another.

So we do it for ourselves. To make sense of ourselves.

Contributors to *BERKELEY DAZE* include Luis Garcia, Belle Randall, Helen Breger, Ron Loewinsohn, David Bromige, Gail Dusenberry (Gail Chiarello), Gene Fowler, Jim Thurber, David Meltzer, Doug Palmer, John Thomson (J. Poet), Julia Vinograd, Rychard Denner, Charles Potts, Joel Walderman, Harold Adler, and Richard Kretch. Kretch provides the following reminiscence of Berkeley in the 1960s:

Berkeley has had a vibrant poetry scene since the 1940's with the "Berkeley Renaissance" a circle of poets that came to include Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer, Robin Blaser and Landis Everson, among others. These poets had connections to the University but much of their poetry enterprise was conducted in private homes. One of the best known publications of this period was *Circle* edited by George Leite and Bern Porter. This Berkeley based poetry magazine began in 1944 and had ten issues. Contributors included Henry Miller, Kenneth Patchen, e.e. cummings, Kenneth Rexroth, Philip Lamantia (then 16 years old), Duncan, and others. Another early poetry magazine was the short-lived (1947-48) *Contour,* edited by Christopher McClaine, which published work by James Scheville [*sic*], Denise Levertov, Porter, Spicer, Duncan, Rexroth and Lamantia. There were subsequent publications ranging from *The Berkeley Miscellany* edited by Duncan which had two issues in 1948-49 and included work by Duncan, Spicer, Mary Fabilli and Gerald Ackerman to *The Berkeley Bussei* published by the Berkeley Young Buddhists Association which included poetry by Gary Snyder and Jack Kerouac in their 1958 issue. The Free Speech Movement of 1964 led to the non-student outside-agitator magazine *SPIDER* [Sex Politics International-communism, Drugs, Extremism, and Rock & roll] whose six issue run was complicated by numerous arrests for selling the magazine on campus.

In sincere flattery of my then-favorite publication, *Liberation*, edited by Dave Dellinger (to whom I would become related by marriage some 35 years later), in May of 1965, I put out the first (and only) issue of a mimeographed magazine, *The Community Libertarian*, which was dedicated to politics and poetry. In it I published poems by the only three poets I knew at the time: Jim Shipounoff, Ron Silliman and myself. Ron was from the adjacent town of Albany and Jim had grown up on the same street I did in Berkeley.

At the much celebrated Berkeley Poetry Conference held at the University of California in July of 1965, I met more poets. On the first day of the Conference I met Richard Denner (then spelled Rychard) also from Berkeley and a day or so later met John Sinclair, guiding light of the Detroit Artists' Workshop Press. I took a 25-cent

brown spiral-bound notebook with me to the readings and lectures by such luminaries as Robert Creely [*sic*], Ed Dorn, Allen Ginsberg, Denise Levertov, Charles Olson, John Weiners, Duncan, Snyder, and Spicer. In my note book I made notes to the effect that: "Poetry is like it is today because of LSD, the Beatles, racial integration and Red China is a world power -- Gary Snyder"; and Charles Olson's projected verse is "belly verse." Quoting him as saying "The poem is in the style of the poet's body" and "the muse is very jealous" -- Charles Olson. I also drew a picture of Robert Creely and wrote poems starting in the back of the notebook. In addition to the daily lectures and nightly readings there were other unofficial gatherings and infamous parties. One of which has been immortalized in Richard Denner's *Xito*.

In the winter of 1965 I went to New York briefly where I met Will Inman, read at the Bowery Poet's Co-op, and was impressed with the copies of *Yugen* magazine, published by Amiri Baraka, then known as Leroi Jones, which I found in bookstores in the Village.

I decided to move back to Berkeley and start a poetry magazine. I formed the *Undermine Press* which published *the Avalanche* magazine from 1966 to 1969, as well as seven chapbooks. We also held unstructured sign-up-sheet based free open Sunday afternoon poetry readings at Shakespeare & Company Bookstore from 1966 into 1969.

Other contemporaneous poetry magazines were published including *Aldebaran Review* started by John Oliver Simon in 1967 and *Litmus*, edited by Charles Potts, who moved from Seattle and started publishing in Berkeley in 1968. John and I became partners in a small commercial printing shop, *Noh Directions Press*, where we did outside work to support ourselves as well as our poetry. Ultimately all *Undermine Press* publications were printed at *Noh Directions Press* on an old A.B.Dick 360 offset press.

In May of 1968 the Conference Of Small Magazines, Editors and Pressmen [COSMEP] was held at U.C. There were open poetry readings associated with the conference and John and I solicited poems from each participant in the readings and we produced an "open" anthology of the COSMEP readings.

We produced anonymous poetry free sheets, the most notorious being the *Grass Profit Review* which lasted ten issues…

Many of the poets I published were residents of Berkeley. Although Luis Garcia was born in Berkeley, most came from somewhere else: Martin P. Abramson came from Venice, California, and squatted in a house on Regent Street with his small family for several years in Beat non-pecuniary splendor; Norm Moser, originally from the South, was the publisher of *Illuminations*, a beautiful large-format publication he put out with his wife Hadassah in Marin County before moving to Berkeley where he lived until the 90's when he died in his eighth decade; John Thomson grew up in Brooklyn and gained some notoriety by getting arrested for sitting on the steps of the Student Union Building on U.C. Campus with a sign saying "fuck" and in smaller letters the word "verb." He now lives in San Francisco and is known as johnthepoet and writes music reviews in the alternative press; Michael Upton, an artist (oils and pen & ink) as well as a poet, came to Berkeley from Oregon with his brother David, and lived here for many years before moving to a cabin in White Thorn in Humboldt County, in the far woods of Northern California. The pages of *the Avalanche* also contained material by non-local writers including Charles Bukowski (five poems and a small drawing); Malay Roy Choudhury, a Bengali and English Language poet prosecuted for "obscenity" and a leading proponent of the "Hungry Generation" in India; d.a. levy, also prosecuted for "obscenity" and one of the leading proponents of the "mimeo revolution" from Cleveland; John Sinclair; Tuli Kupferberg of The Fugs contributed a song and an article to the special "Rock and Roll" issue; an interview with Andy Warhol and Gerard Malanga conducted while they were in bed with "Bruce" in the Chelsea Hotel in San Francisco touring with the Velvet Underground; and others

Of course, many other poetry enterprises were underway during the mid-late sixties in Berkeley including the poets associated with the *R.C. Lion*, which was

> University based, *the Hepatitis Indians* (a decidedly non-University group of individuals) and many others…These Berkeley poets were not found at the University; they read in bookstores or private homes, their publications were mimeo or short run photo-offset. Their electronification and wider circulation is long overdue.

This is Richard Denner's Robert-Creeley-like "Flower Star":

it begins
like this

and ends
like this

and continues

.

in the
beginning
it was

done on
a blank
page --

white
on
white

on the
day of
creation

.

hear
here

is a bird
in the
window

is a bee
a flower

a garden
in the
mind

.

dilute the
potion

pour in
water
with the
hemlock

open the
windows

look for
patterns
in this
dream

.

a new
dimension?
shaped
words,
canvases
of space

.

song
bird

word
word

heard
third

.

we are
running
we are
mad

stars
point out
the way

we are
naked

we are
free

there are
flowers on
the path

.

I was
told

I was
shown

it was
pointed out --

the narrow path
the word's wisdom

.

so
intricate

so
complex

so amazing

dead
leaves

on the
sidewalk

a dog
barking

a man
scratching

.

what's out
side is
within

is there
emptiness
without
awareness?

.

word

wise
will

word

weed
worm

word

were
wood

word

weld
wink

word

wild
wing

word

wall
war

.

construct
something
out of
clay
dirt

obscene
words
in the
wash
room
stall

VietnamVietnamVietnamVietnam
ietnamVietnamVietnamVietnamV
etnamVietnamVietnamVietnamVi
tnamVietnamVietnamVietnamVie
namVietnamVietnamVietnamViet
amVietnamVietnamVietnamVietn
mVietnamVietnamVietnamVietna

no time
no place
no mind
for it --

a dark
sentence,
a joke on
the wall

.

island
city

one can
loose

oneself
in any

pattern
any tree

star
cloud

mountain
field

.

a problem today
is to put down
the black-white
marble of mind

draw a circle
take your shot
feed daffodils
to crocodiles

.

there
is a
cemetery

in the
heart
tombstoned

we look
for it
the door

that
opens
onto

gardens
and
graveyards

.

there
are stars
in the
branches
of the
trees

all the
windows
of the

moon
open and
close

.

the count
and how
to count
the count

.

how is it
sir?

how
is it?

it is
how
it is

is
how
it
is

down
that
road

soften
it up

how
it
sir

.

Spring
do not

mistake
me for

a flower
or a tree

Death
knows

there's
music

in the
air

## *Late 60s and Early 70s*

In *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and Community at Mid-Century* (1991), Michael Davidson writes,

The ability to read Joanne Kyger's or Helen Adam's work in feminist terms has been aided by a more activist posture developed among women writers during the late 1960s. In the San Francisco Bay Area, this period saw the appearance of important new reading spaces, publishers, and distributors of women's literature: Alta began Shameless Hussy Press, the first women's press in the area; Susan Griffin coordinated a large conference on women poets for the University of California Extension; Joanna Griffin and Sande Fini opened a series of readings and performances at a Berkeley bar called The Bacchanall; the San Francisco State College Women's Caucus began to hold readings in the Noe Valley; and perhaps most important, the Women's Press Collective was established by Judy Grahn in 1969…

If the literary formation of Judy Grahn's work rests in the populist mode of the Beats, its social formation rests in the women's movement and, more specifically, in San Francisco's long homophile tradition, going back to the prewar years. The city had long been a haven for

homosexuals and lesbians, and although the community was often threatened by the homophobic public, it always had a social and even political force in the larger demographics. Important gay political groups like the Matachine Society, the Daughters of Bilitus, and (later) The Alice B. Toklas Democratic Club had substantial memberships in San Francisco from their inception, and with the emergence of a gay liberation movement in the post-Stonewall era, the city became, as John D'Emilio says, "for gay men and for lesbians ... what Rome is for Catholics."

To a large extent, the permission for the San Francisco gay community to come out of the closet and become an active force in the city was granted during the period that this book [*The San Francisco Renaissance*] covers and by many of the same literary events. The fact that many San Francisco poets were openly homosexual created the illusion -- if not the fact -- of tolerance in the city. Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" censorship trial, publications by Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer, James Broughton, and Robin Blaser, and even Jack Kerouac's novels brought national attention to a city where variant sexual modes were possible. But…such permission was given within a largely male, homosexual community that remained closed or even hostile to women. Denise Levertov's "Hypocrite Women" was written in response not only to Jack Spicer's misogyny, but to the closed, homosexual circle he supported. It remained for the women's movement and its lesbian feminist component to open a new possibility for a gay women's poetry. Judy Grahn as much as anyone helped to create this possibility.

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*Performance and Language*: The City Lights Poets Theatre produces several poetry events, including the 1972 Ezra Pound Memorial Poetry Reading that features readings by William Everson, Robert Creeley, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Michael Palmer, among others. In addition, the San Francisco Zen Center sponsors readings by poets, often poets interested in various forms of Buddhist practice, including Philip Whalen. Gary Glazner combines poetry with music, dance, and costume, organizing performances at Sonoma State University, Cinnebar, Artists' Television Access, Club Nine (now defunct), and the Art Motel. These events mark the beginnings of poetry slams in San Francisco. Finally, to quote again from *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and Community at Mid-century*, the early 1970s witness "the emergence of bilingualism in Chicano poetry":

Poets like Victor Cruz, José Montoya, Roberto Vargas, and Alurista began employing a mixture of English and Spanish in an attempt to render the bicultural nature of Hispanic experience. Switching back and forth between the two languages, these “interlingual” poets pun and play with cognates (true and false) while establishing complex rhythms out of the interchange. And because the two languages are linked in a relationship of dominant to minority culture, the interchange often illustrates relations of power within the community at large. Rather than trying to reach a broad, monolingual (English-speaking) audience, the poet speaks to a specific, culturally defined audience, allowing the untranslated Spanish to stand for the Hispanic’s marginal status.