

A Little History of the  
Mimeograph Revolution

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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."<sup>1</sup>

Allen's anthology was prophetic in another way. It assigned poets to large overall group-

ings that have persisted for nearly forty years and have entered the critical nomenclature: Black Mountain, San Francisco Renaissance, Beat Generation, and New York Poets – as well as identifying a group of younger poets "who have been associated with and in some cases influenced by the leading writers of the preceding groups" (p. xiii). Allen was circumspect to a

There was no more significant poetry anthology in the second half of the twentieth century than **The New American Poetry, 1945–1960**, edited by Donald M. Allen and published by Grove Press in 1960. Poised almost at mid-century, it provides a summing up of a very particular situation in poetry as it looks back to the achievements of the 1950s and ahead to the possibilities of the 60s.

Allen's anthology was a self-conscious counter to *New Poets of England and America*, edited by Donald Hall, Robert Pack, and Louis Simpson and published by Meridian in 1957. It was to prove prophetic (the two anthologies have not one poet in common) and to serve as both a calling for and a permission to younger writers. The goal, according to Allen, was to present poetry that "has shown one common characteristic: a total rejection of all those qualities typical of academic verse. Following the practice and precepts of Ezra

fault concerning his classifications: "Occasionally arbitrary and for the most part more historical than actual, these groups can be justified finally only as a means to give the reader some sense of milieu . . ." (p. xiii).

When the Allen anthology came out, several of the featured poets had barely been published. Of necessity, they existed on the margins, outside mainstream publication and distribution channels. Of necessity, they invented their own communities and audiences (typically indistinguishable), with a

1. Donald Allen, *The New American Poetry* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), p. xi.



Donald Allen, San Francisco, 1969. Photograph by Ann Charters.

small press or little magazine often serving as the nucleus of both.

Direct access to mimeograph machines, letterpress, and inexpensive offset made these publishing ventures possible, putting the means of production in the hands of the poet. In a very real sense, almost anyone could become a publisher. For the price of a few reams of paper and a handful of stencils, a poet could produce, by mimeograph, a magazine or booklet in a small edition over the course of several days. Collating, stapling, and mailing parties helped speed up production, but, more significantly, they helped galvanize a literary group. The existence of independent bookstores meant that it was actually possible to find these publications in all their raw homemade beauty. In several instances (for example, Wallace Berman's *Semina* and LeRoi Jones and Diane di Prima's *The Floating Bear*), the magazines were available only to a mailing list; they were produced for a community of kindred spirits as a literary newsletter – a quick way to get new work out. And they were the cutting edge of new explorations in and through language. As Ron Loewinsohn noted, "[M]ore important than the quality of their contents was the fact of these magazines' abundance and speed. Having them, we could see what we were doing, as it came, hot off the griddle. We could get instant response to what we'd written last week, & we could respond instantly to what the guy across town or across the country had written last week."<sup>2</sup>

At the other pole were magazines like *Evergreen Review*, which published equally subversive material – but with the financial backing and distribution of a large publishing house.

2. Ron Loewinsohn, "Reviews: After the (Mimeograph) Revolution," *TriQuarterly* 18 (Spring 1970): 222.

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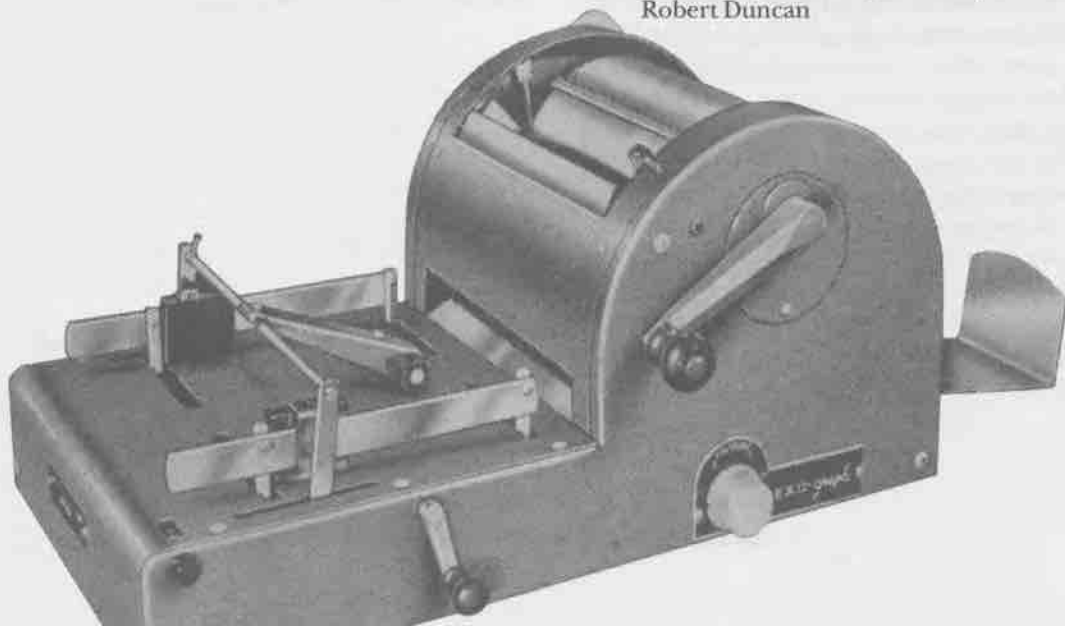
eograph)  
222.

Comparatively slick and "professional," it helped to bring new writing and new thinking to a much larger and geographically diverse audience.

These extremes of production quality and availability are comfortably subsumed under the concept of the "mimeo revolution," the unprecedented outpouring of poetry books and magazines that took place roughly between 1960 and 1980; the writing and publishing with which this survey is concerned are those which emerged precisely at the point at which the New American Poetry met the mimeo revolution. The "mimeo revolution," as a term, is a bit of a misnomer in the sense that well over half the materials produced under its banner were not strictly produced on the mimeograph machine; however, the formal means of production are not as important in identifying the works of this movement as is the nature of their content. Looking back at them now, the books and magazines of the mimeo revolution appear imbued with a vivid purity of intention which it is nearly impossible to conceive of creating in today's publications.

### *Loomings: Waldport and Berkeley*

- 1940 *The Experimental Review*, edited by Robert Duncan and Sanders Russell
- 1940 Kenneth Rexroth's *In What Hour* published by Macmillan
- 1943 *The Untide* published at the Conscientious Objectors' Camp, Waldport, Oregon
- 1943 William Everson's *X War Elegies* published by the Untide Press
- 1946 Philip Lamantia's *Erotic Poems* published by Bern Porter (the poet is nineteen years old)
- 1947 *The Ark*, edited by Sanders Russell, Philip Lamantia, and Robert Stock
- 1947 Robert Duncan's *Heavenly City, Earthly City* published by Bern Porter
- 1948 *The Berkeley Miscellany*, edited by Robert Duncan



Although the earliest mimeographed literary item we have been able to identify is Yvor Winters's *Gyroscope* (published for his classes at Stanford in 1929 and early 1930), we'll start our story in 1943 in the conscientious objectors' camp at Waldport, Oregon. There, William Everson published poems in an unofficial newsletter, *The Untide*, and helped run the mimeograph machine to produce his own *X War Elegies*, among other small volumes. The last book produced at the Untide Press in Waldport was Kenneth Patchen's *An Astonished Eye Looks Out Of the Air*, which Everson printed via letterpress in 1945 as the war was ending. Everson was soon to move down to Berkeley and purchase a Washington hand press to continue his printing. His poems from this period, including those originally written in Waldport, were collected by James Laughlin and published by New Directions in 1948, as *The Residual Years*.

In 1947, the first issue of *The Ark*, strongly committed to literary and political writings influenced by anarchist and pacifist principles, appeared in San Francisco. Contributors included Kenneth Rexroth, Richard Eberhardt, Paul Goodman, and William Everson. Another contributor was Robert Duncan, whose essay "The Homosexual in Society," published in Dwight MacDonal's *Politics* in August 1944, had occasioned John Crowe Ransom to renege on publishing Duncan's previously accepted "African Elegy" in *The Kenyon Review*. Despite his feeling that the article was courageous, Ransom felt the poem was a "homosexual advertisement." On a sojourn to the East Coast, Duncan had co-edited with Sanders Russell *The Experimental Review*—a formal beginning to his long experience with small presses and little magazines. In California, he produced two issues of *The Berkeley Miscellany* (in 1948 and 1949),

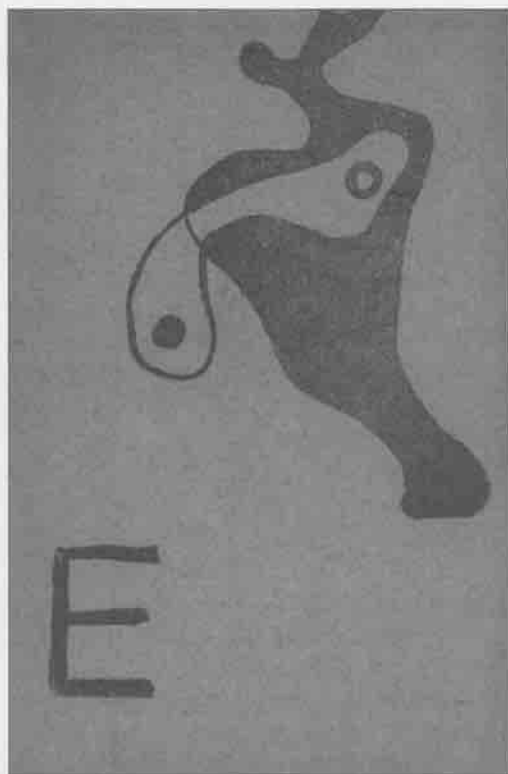
as well as his own *Poems 1948–1949* under the imprint of Berkeley Miscellany Editions. In the two issues of the magazine, Duncan published his own work as well as that of Mary Fabilli, Jack Spicer, and Gerald Ackerman.

Spicer, like Duncan and Robin Blaser, was then a student at the University of California at Berkeley. These three were the center of the "Berkeley Renaissance," a group heavily influenced by the study of medieval and Renaissance culture. The Duncan-Spicer-Blaser circle created "a spiritual and artistic brotherhood out of shared homosexual experience, occultism, and the reading of modern literature."<sup>3</sup> The Berkeley group held regular meetings for discussions and readings influenced in part by Kenneth Rexroth's evenings in San Francisco. Spicer went on to produce his own magazine, *J*, in 1959, and was influential on Stan Persky's beginning *Open Space* in 1964. Both of these magazines were produced via mimeograph in San Francisco. In 1957, Spicer conducted the Poetry as Magic Workshop attended by, among others, John Wieners, then in the middle of producing his own little magazine, *Measure*. The Berkeley group consolidated important shared tendencies and were to exert a considerable force as they moved to San Francisco in the early 1950s.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Davidson, *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and Community at Mid-century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 40.

*The Experiment*  
Cover by Sanders Russell

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*The Experimental Review* (1940).  
 Cover by Robert Duncan and  
 Sanders Russell.

## *The San Francisco Renaissance and California*

- 1951** The Jargon Society founded by Jonathan Williams in San Francisco
- 1953** City Lights Bookstore opens in North Beach
- 1955** Six Gallery reading, the first public reading of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*
- 1955** *Semina*, edited by Wallace Berman
- 1956** Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* published by City Lights
- 1957** *Howl* confiscated by customs; Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Shigeyoshi Murao arrested
- 1957** Jack Spicer's Poetry as Magic Workshop, San Francisco Public Library
- 1957** Charles Olson reads and lectures in San Francisco
- 1957** First book from White Rabbit Press, Steve Jonas's *Love, the Poem, the Sea & Other Pieces Examined*
- 1958** First book from Auerhahn Press, John Wieners's *The Hotel Wentley Poems*
- 1958** Richard Brautigan's *The Galilee Hitchhiker* published by White Rabbit Press
- 1958** George Stanley's *The Love Root* published by White Rabbit Press
- 1959** Philip Lamantia's *Ekstasis* published by Auerhahn Press

### 6 POETS AT 6 GALLERY

Philip Lamantia reading mss. of late John Hoffman-- Mike McClure, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder & Phil Whalen--all sharp new straightforward writing-- remarkable collection of angels on one stage reading their poetry. No charge, small collection for wine and postcards. Charming event.

Konneta Roxroth, M.C.

8 PM Friday Night October 7, 1955

6 Gallery 3119 Fillmore St.  
San Fran

Allen Ginsberg's postcard announcing the Six Gallery reading, 1955.

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| 1959 | Bob Kaufman's <i>The Abomunist Manifesto</i> published by City Lights                      | 1966 | Lenore Kandel's <i>The Love Book</i> published by Stolen Paper Editions          |
| 1959 | <i>J.</i> edited by Jack Spicer  | 1966 | Philip Lamantia's <i>Touch of the Marvelous</i> published by Oyez Press          |
| 1959 | Cid Corman's Origin Press publishes Gary Snyder's first book, <i>Riprap</i>                | 1966 | John Martin's Black Sparrow Press begins in Los Angeles                          |
| 1960 | Gary Snyder's <i>Myths and Texts</i> published by Corinth Books                            | 1967 | <i>The Pacific Nation</i> , edited by Robin Blaser in Vancouver                  |
| 1960 | Lew Welch's <i>Wobbly Rock</i> published by Auerhahn Press                                 | 1968 | Janine Pommy-Vega's <i>Poems to Fernando</i> published by City Lights            |
| 1960 | William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin's <i>The Exterminator</i> published by Auerhahn Press | 1969 | Gary Snyder's book of essays <i>Earth House Hold</i> published by New Directions |
| 1963 | Vancouver Poetry Conference  | 1975 | Jack Spicer's <i>Collected Books</i> published by Black Sparrow                  |
| 1964 | Open Space publishes Robin Blaser's first book, <i>The Moth Poem</i>                       |      |  |
| 1965 | Berkeley Poetry Conference   |      |  |
| 1965 | Joanne Kyger's <i>The Tapestry and the Web</i> published by the Four Seasons Foundation    |      |  |
| 1965 | Lew Welch's <i>Hermit Poems</i> published by the Four Seasons Foundation                   |      |  |
| 1965 | Jack Spicer's <i>Language</i> published by White Rabbit Press                              |      |  |
| 1965 | Jack Spicer dies   |      |  |

Meanwhile, across the bay in San Francisco, the commingling of several activities helped to prepare the ground for the remarkable literary explosion that was soon to take place. The Libertarian Circle held regular literary events; poet members included Kenneth Rexroth, Muriel Rukeyser, William Everson, Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer, and Thomas

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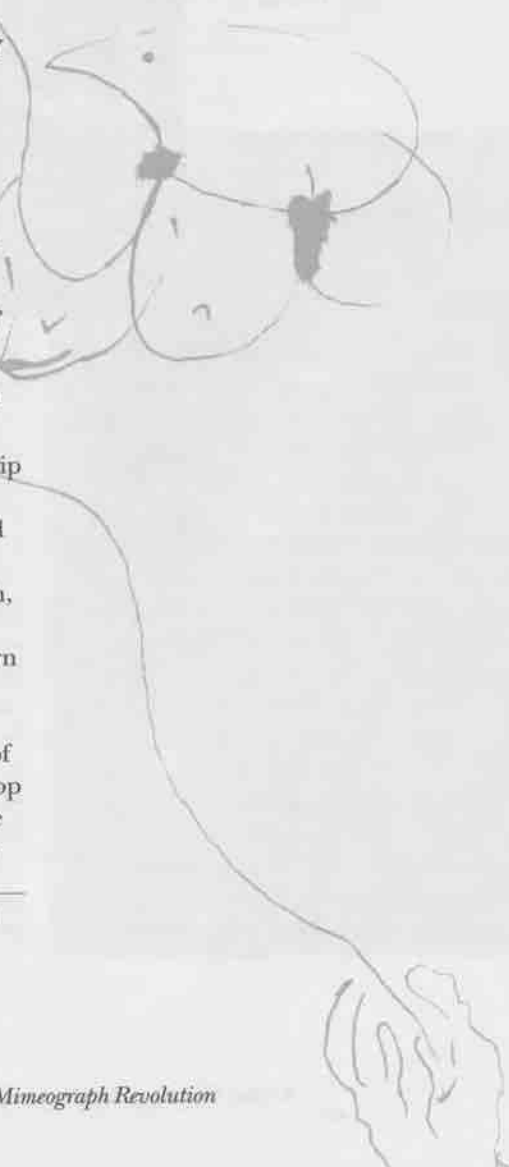
4 Kenneth  
(New York  
5. Ibid.

Parkinson. Rexroth also ran a literary program on KPFA, the country's first listener-sponsored radio station. Madeline Gleason (assisted by Rexroth and Duncan) founded the San Francisco Poetry Center, housed at San Francisco State College and managed by Ruth Witt-Diamant. The magazines *Circle*, *Ark*, *City Lights*, *Goad*, *Inferno*, and *Golden Goose* helped to consolidate the growing literary underground.

The famous reading at Six Gallery on Fillmore Street was publicized by Allen Ginsberg (via a hundred mailed postcards and a few flyers) thus: "6 POETS AT 6 GALLERY Philip Lamantia reading mss. of late John Hoffman - Mike McClure, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder & Phil Whalen - all sharp new straightforward writing - remarkable collection of angels on one stage reading their poetry. No charge, small collection for wine and postcards. Charming event. Kenneth Rexroth, M.C. 8 PM Friday Night October 7, 1955 6 Gallery 3119 Fillmore St. San Fran." On October 7, 1955, in a room measuring 20 x 25 feet with a dirt floor, Ginsberg "read *Howl* and started an epoch."<sup>4</sup> Gary Snyder, Philip Lamantia, Michael McClure, and Philip Whalen shared the bill and, by all reports, also read brilliantly. Aside from Rexroth and Whalen, all the readers were in their twenties. Again, in the words of Kenneth Rexroth, "What started in SF and spread from there across the world was public poetry, the return of a tribal, preliterate relationship between poet and audience."<sup>5</sup>

These events, along with the flourishing of Lawrence Ferlinghetti's City Lights Bookshop and publishing house, helped to inaugurate and consolidate what has become known as

Fran Herndon's drawing for the cover of Jack Spicer's *Heads of the Tonon up to the Aether* (San Francisco: Auerhahn, 1962).



4. Kenneth Rexroth, *American Poetry in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), p. 141.

5. *Ibid.*



Jess Collins and  
Robert Duncan,  
San Francisco,  
1958. Photograph  
by Harry Redl.



the San Francisco Renaissance. City Lights published *Howl* in 1956 (Ferlinghetti asked Ginsberg for the manuscript the same night it was read at the Six Gallery) as Number Four in the Pocket Poets Series. (It had been preceded by an extremely rare mimeographed edition, typed by Martha Rexroth and mimeographed by none other than Robert Creeley. Ginsberg's *Siesta in Xbalba* had been mimeographed by the man himself on a freighter in the Alaskan Ocean.) Among the audience members that night was one who added his own chant, the young novelist Jack Kerouac, whose *On the Road*, published in 1957, was to make this reading and its readers legendary.

It was also in 1957 that Charles Olson, rector of the experimental Black Mountain College, visited San Francisco and gave a series of lectures on Alfred North Whitehead at

the Portrero Hill home of Robert Duncan and his companion, the painter Jess Collins. Among the attendees at the lectures were, of course, Duncan himself, but also Michael McClure, Gary Snyder's Reed College friend Philip Whalen, Jack Spicer, and Richard Duerden. The same year saw the "San Francisco Scene" issue of *Evergreen Review*. Poet Helen Adam's flamboyant 1961 ballad opera, entitled *San Francisco's Burning*, epitomized the time, outrageous both aesthetically and socially. Other writers associated with the San Francisco Renaissance included James Broughton, Lew Welch, Ron Loewinsohn, Madeline Gleason, David Meltzer, Kirby Doyle, and Lenore Kandel.

Experimentation with forms of literature and lifestyle had long been an attractive characteristic of life in San Francisco. But

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the tolerance felt in Northern California was not as evident in Los Angeles. In 1957, an exhibit of work by assemblage artist Wallace Berman at the Ferus Gallery was closed by the Los Angeles Police Department, and Berman was jailed on charges of exhibiting "lewd and lascivious pornographic art." Found guilty (by the same judge who ruled against Henry Miller), Berman and family left L.A. for San Francisco that year. Berman edited and published a fascinating assemblage magazine called *Semina*. After the raid of his exhibit at Ferus, he announced in *Semina 2* that "I will continue to print *Semina* from locations other than this city of degenerate angels." Berman's friend, artist George Herms, designed his own books and provided the artwork for others, including Diane di Prima. Herms had likewise found the political climate in L.A. intolerable and had preceded the Bermans to Northern California.

In the mid-1960s, John Martin's Black Sparrow Press began publishing broadsides and booklets and has, over the years, published a wide variety of experimental and alternative poetry and prose, including work by Duncan, Olson, Spicer, and Creeley among very many others. Black Sparrow continues to publish in 1998 from Santa Rosa, California.

Because of the previous associations of house printer/designer Graham Mackintosh, Black Sparrow is linked to earlier literary small presses of Northern California, particularly White Rabbit Press (at the urging of Jack Spicer, Mackintosh resurrected the press in 1962, printing Spicer's own *Lament for the Makers*); Robert Hawley's Oyez Press (Mackintosh had printed its first book in 1963); and Dave Haselwood's Auerhahn Press, which flourished during the 1960s and early 70s in San Francisco. Auerhahn

Poster for Wallace Berman's July 1977 retrospective exhibition at the Timothea Stewart Gallery, Los Angeles.





Left to right: Jack Spicer, Robin Blaser, Carolyn Dunn, Joe Dunn, Robert Duncan, Dick Bratset, probably in Newburyport (on the way from Boston to Cape Ann), probably Spring 1956. Photograph by Kent Bowker.

published a wide variety of well-designed books, including *The Exterminator*, an early example of William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin's cut-up technique, in 1960. Auerhahn also published John Wieners's first book, *The Hotel Wentley Poems*. Oyez published many memorable volumes including Philip Lamantia's *Touch of the Marvelous*. Joe Dunn's White Rabbit Press, which had begun publishing in 1957 with Steve Jonas's rough work *Love, the Poem, the Sea & Other Pieces Examined*, produced books somewhat less elegant than Auerhahn's or Oyez's but with a beauty all their own.

The editorial genius behind White Rabbit was the irrepressible Jack Spicer, who published his own remarkable mimeographed magazine, *J*. Spicer emphasized the inclusion of writers who were not well published elsewhere, and accepted contributions for consideration in a box that was kept in one of three bars in the North Beach area of San Francisco. *J* is representative of the best of the mimeograph revolution: an uncompromising editorial stance combined with a playful, even colorful, formal character thanks to Fran Herndon, who edited the

artwork for the magazine. Spicer's model for *J* was *Beatitude*, which had begun publication in San Francisco slightly before *J*. And a recalcitrant model it was, since Spicer was not a fan of the Beats and carried on a running war against Ferlinghetti in particular. He imagined Ferlinghetti had become commercial and financially successful, thereby, in Spicer's mind, "selling out" to the establishment. Magnificently consistent with his principles, Spicer never copyrighted his own work, anticipating the "no copyright, no nuthin'" statements of Tom Clark's London-based *Once* series. The performative aspects of Spicer's poetics as well as his personality also prefigured the rise of poetry readings in the 1950s, particularly those sponsored by the Poetry Center at San Francisco State, which featured mimeographed programs and booklets printing selections from the poets who were reading, among them, Charles Olson, Denise Levertov, and Louis Zukofsky.

Although Spicer's *J* didn't publish the works of "established" poets, Spicer did include the work of Robert Duncan in four issues of his magazine. Duncan and

Jess Collins (of many mag including *Oyez*, *Flouting Beats*, the literary a cisco in the published (his *Song of by the Black a cover by Cl her works w *Disordered D or mimeogr of *Faust Fm can himsel act of the pl of White Ra ment, the C Francisco). of *Faust Fm Dunn, was p imprint, Ea Beach. Dun an amazing ers, includi Rabbit, Bla Perishable New Direc Slightly some of hi *J* was Don tion of *The and before fished the Francisco, number o including Loewinsol McClure, Robert Ca*****

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Jess Collins (whose work adorned the cover of many magazines and books of the period, including *Open Space*, *Caterpillar*, and *The Floating Bear*) were important influences on the literary and artistic scene in San Francisco in the 60s. Duncan's early work was published in Berkeley or North Carolina (his *Song of the Borderguard* was published by the Black Mountain College Press with a cover by Cy Twombly in 1952). Other earlier works were multilithed (*Fragments of a Disordered Devotion* in San Francisco in 1952) or mimeographed (the first hundred copies of *Faust Foutu* were mimeographed by Duncan himself, and the next 150 or so of one act of the play were multilithed by Joe Dunn of White Rabbit Press at his place of employment, the Greyhound Bus offices in San Francisco). The multilithed third edition of *Faust Foutu*, although also produced by Dunn, was published under Duncan's own imprint, Enkidu Surrogate, of Sünson Beach. Duncan's work was published by an amazing variety and number of publishers, including Oyez, Auerhahn, White Rabbit, Black Sparrow, Divers Press, Jargon, Perishable Press, City Lights, Grove Press, New Directions, and Scribners.

Slightly outside the Spicer circle (although some of his own poems were published in *J*) was Donald Allen, who, after the publication of *The New American Poetry, 1945-1960* and before his removal to New York, established the Four Seasons Foundation in San Francisco, which published the work of a number of the writers from the anthology, including Charles Olson, Ed Dorn, Ron Loewinsohn, Philip Lamantia, Michael McClure, Joanne Kyger, Robin Blaser, and Robert Creeley. Among the early Four

*Beatitude* 17 (1960-1961).  
Cover photograph by  
Fortunato Clementi.

# BEATITUDE



NUMBER 17



# CITY LIGHTS JOURNAL



*City Lights Journal 3* (1966).  
Front cover: Poets at City  
Lights Bookstore, Decem-  
ber 5, 1965 (photo by Larry  
Keenan, Jr.). *Back row, left to  
right:* Stella Levy, Lawrence  
Ferlinghetti (with umbrella).  
*Next row, left to right:* David  
Meltzer (with scarf over  
shoulder), Michael McClure,  
Allen Ginsberg, Daniel  
Langton, Steven Bornstein,  
Richard Brautigan, Gary  
Goodrow in jester hat.  
*Front row, sitting down, left  
to right:* Robert LaVigne,  
Shigeyoshi Murao, Larry  
Fagin, Lelan Meyzove (in  
Larry Fagin's lap), Lew  
Welch, Peter Orlovsky.

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Seasons publications were two important works by poet Gary Snyder (the Reed College roommate of Lew Welch and Philip Whalen and the "Japhy Ryder" of Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums*): *Six Sections from Rivers and Mountains Without End* and *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems*, both published in 1965. *Riprap*, it should be noted, was originally published in 1959 as a booklet by Cid Corman's



Tom Clark (left) and Lewis Warsh on the beach at Bolinas, California, 1968. Photograph by Anne Waldman from *Bustin's Island '68* by Lewis Warsh (New York: Granary Books, 1996).

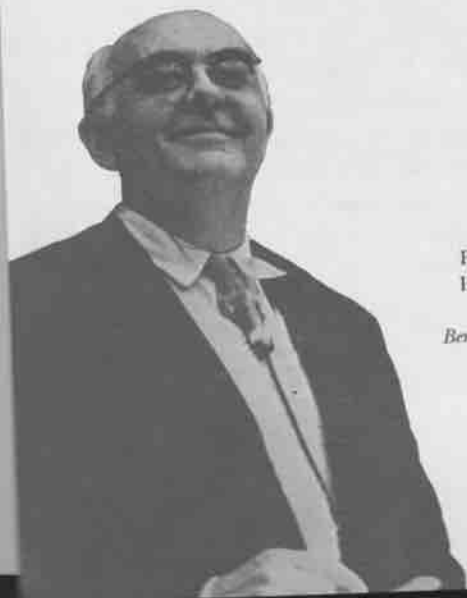
Origin Press. Snyder's *Myths and Texts* was published in 1960 by Corinth Books. Snyder was out of the country on an extended stay in Japan, and the text used for the Corinth publication was probably from a manuscript that LeRoi Jones had hand-copied from one that Robert Creeley had received from Snyder in 1955 or 1956. Snyder's poetry was extremely popular in the 60s and was often used as text for broadsides by small presses, particularly those whose owners were ecologically minded. For instance, Snyder's poem "Four Changes" was published in 1969 by Earth Read Out, a Berkeley environmental protection group, as four mimeographed pages, as well as in a folded, printed version in 200,000 copies by environmentalist Alan Shapiro for free distribution to schools and citizens' groups.

Literary scenes with strong affiliations to the New American Poetry were in evidence elsewhere in California – most notably Bolinas in the 1970s, when that somewhat remote hippie village north of San Francisco became home to many poets. In particular, the transplanted easterner and Poetry Project veteran Bill Berkson and his press Big Sky flourished there in the decade, publishing both a magazine and a series of books. Bolinas residents of the period also included Robert Creeley, Bobbie Louise Hawkins, David Meltzer, Lewis Warsh, Tom Clark, Lewis MacAdams, Philip Whalen, Aram Saroyan, Joanne Kyger, Jim Carroll, and Duncan McNaughton, among others. Ted Berrigan, Alice Notley, and Joe Brainard were among many occasional visitors, with Joe Brainard's *Bolinas Journal* providing an interesting record of one such extended stay.



*The Poetry Conferences at  
Vancouver and Berkeley*

Poetry conferences at Vancouver (1963) and Berkeley (1965) were significant events that brought together and introduced a range of poets from diverse locations and temperaments. Warren Tallman was the man behind the conference in Vancouver, an event Robert Creeley described as "landmark" in that it brought "together for the first time, a decisive company of then disregarded poets such as Denise Levertov, Charles Olson, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Duncan, Margaret Avison, Philip Whalen and myself, together with as yet unrecognized younger poets of that time, Michael Palmer, Clark Coolidge and many more." The conference at Berkeley in July of 1965 further galvanized the gains made by the Allen anthology and the Vancouver event. Mostly organized and emceed by Thomas Parkinson and Robert Duncan, it featured readings and lectures by, among many others, Charles Olson, Jack Spicer, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Ed Dorn, Robert Creeley, John Wieners, Ed Sanders, Ted Berrigan, Joanne



Charles Olson.  
Photograph by Jim  
Hatch from *Charles  
Olson Reading at  
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Robert Creeley in the audience at the Berkeley Poetry Conference, 1965.

Kyger, Lew Welch, Ron Loewinsohn, John Sinclair, and Victor Coleman. For the senior poets, the Berkeley conference was at once a triumphant victory and the beginning of the end. In the years immediately following the conference, a general emigration of spirits took place. Jack Spicer's lecture on poetry and politics was to be his last public appearance; he died a month later. Within the next couple of years, a great many of the participants in the San Francisco Renaissance had moved from the area or passed away. Yet for many of the younger poets in attendance, the Berkeley Poetry Conference was the flash point of the mimeo revolution, the place from which much of the writing and publishing just ahead was to locate its identity and its momentum.

## The Beats

- 1955 City Lights Pocket Poets series begins with Lawrence Ferlinghetti's *Pictures of the Gone World*
- 1957 "San Francisco Scene" issue of *Evergreen Review*
- 1957 Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* published by Viking
- 1958 Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums* published by Viking
- 1958 Beat article in *Esquire*: Jack Kerouac on the term "Beat"
- 1958 *Yugen*, edited by LeRoi Jones and Hettie Cohen
- 1958 *The Beat Generation and the Angry Young Men*, edited by Gene Feldman and Max Gartenberg, published by Citadel
- 1959 Jack Kerouac's *Mexico City Blues* published by Grove Press
- 1959 Gary Snyder's *Riprap* published by Origin Press
- 1959 William S. Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* published by Grove Press
- 1960 Selections from Jack Kerouac's *Visions of Cody* published by New Directions
- 1960 Gary Snyder's *Myths and Texts* published by Corinth Books
- 1960 William S. Burroughs, Brion Gysin, Gregory Corso, and Sinclair Beiles's *Minutes to Go* published in Paris by Two Cities



- 1960 Fred McDarrah's *The Beat Scene*, edited by Eli Wilentz, published by Corinth Books
- 1961 January, first issue of *The Floating Bear*, edited by Diane di Prima and LeRoi Jones
- 1961 October, LeRoi Jones arrested for *The Floating Bear*
- 1965 Gary Snyder's *Six Sections from Rivers and Mountains Without End* published by the Four Seasons Foundation
- 1967 The Gathering of the Tribes for a Human Be-In, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco
- 1967 *San Francisco Earthquake*, edited by Jacob Herman, Claude Peliau, and Norman Mustill
- 1968 Diane di Prima's *Revolutionary Letters* published by Communications Co.
- 1969 Jack Kerouac dies
- 1971 Jack Kerouac's *Scattered Poems* published by City Lights
- 1973 Jack Kerouac's *Visions of Cody* published by McGraw-Hill



Allen Ginsberg,  
New York City, 1960.  
Photograph by  
Fred McDarrah.

Among those writers at the 1955 reading at the Six Gallery in San Francisco were, of course, both Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. Both were to become literary idols of a generation, and both were heavily connected to life in the West. Ginsberg's poem *Howl* had been written on Montgomery Street in San Francisco, where he was to meet his lover and companion Peter Orlovsky. Kerouac's most famous books all deal in one way or another with the myth of the West and its place in the American imagination. However, Kerouac and Ginsberg, who, with William S. Burroughs and Gregory Corso, were to form the nucleus of the Beat writers, had met in the 1940s in New York City, where they had begun their writing as well. New York was to become a Beat capital in the 1950s, with its plethora of coffeehouses and jazz bars, where poetry was occasionally performed, with or without musical accompaniment. One enterprising young man, Dan Saxon, collected the manuscripts that poets read in the East Seventh Street coffeehouses and published an early mimeographed magazine, *Poems Collected at Les Deux Mégots*, and its continuation, *Poets at Le Metro*, directly reproducing the original handwritten manuscript or typescript. In 1960, Corinth Books published the defining anthology, *The Beat Scene*, edited by Eli Wilentz, with spectacular and intimate photographs by Fred McDarrah. That same year, Corinth also published (sometimes in association with Totem Press) Jack Kerouac's *The Scripture of the Golden Eternity*, Philip Whalen's *Like I Say*, and Gary Snyder's *Myths and Texts*. In 1961, Corinth published Diane di Prima's *Dinners and Nightmares*, Ginsberg's early poems in *Empty Mirror*, and LeRoi Jones's breakthrough *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note*.

LeRoi Jones started the little magazine *Yugen* in 1958 with Hettie Cohen, and its pages were full of writings by core Beat writers, including Kerouac, Burroughs, Orlovsky, Snyder, and



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*San Francisco Earthquake*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Spring 1968).

Whalen, as well as Jones himself. In 1961, Jones and Diane di Prima started the mimeo magazine *The Floating Bear*, early issues of which were typed up by di Prima and produced on the mimeograph machine at Robert Wilson's Phoenix Bookstore in New York in exchange for finished copies of the magazine. Jones and di Prima intended their "newsletter" to be an engine for quick and informal communication, particularly for younger and unpublished experimental poets who practiced "the open and implied rebellion – of form and content." *The Floating Bear* 9 (October 1961) was apparently a little too rebellious for the authorities, as it contained an excerpt from Jones's *The System of Dante's Hell* and Burroughs's *Routine*. Jones was arrested and charged with sending obscene material through the U.S. mails. But he was not indicted by the grand jury, who listened patiently to his reading of great literature of all types, once deemed obscene. *The Floating Bear* had a bold and colorful editorial style, and a simple design. It emphasized the publication of new work from a variety of sources, be they Black Mountain, Beat, San Francisco Renaissance, or New York School.

### *Black Mountain, Intermedia, Deep Image, Ethnopoetics*

- 1947 Charles Olson's *Call Me Ishmael* published by Reynal & Hitchcock
- 1948 Charles Olson's *Y & X* published by Black Sun Press
- 1951 *Origin*, edited by Cid Corman, begins life near Boston; the first issue features Olson, the second, Robert Creeley
- 1951 Charles Olson arrives at Black Mountain College as Rector
- 1951 *The Dada Painters and Poets*, edited by Robert Motherwell, published by Wittenborn, Schultz
- 1953 Charles Olson's *Mayan Letters* published by the Divers Press
- 1954 *The Black Mountain Review*, edited by Robert Creeley
- 1956 Black Mountain College closes
- 1957 John Cage begins teaching classes on experimental music composition at the New School; classes continue to 1960
- 1958 *The Fifties*, edited by Robert Bly
- 1959 *Poems from the Floating World*, edited by Jerome Rothenberg
- 1959 Charles Olson's *Projective Verse* published by Totem Press
- 1959 Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* performed at the Ruben Gallery

- 1960 Performance events held at Yoko Ono's loft on Chambers Street, 1960-1961
- 1960 Ed Dorn's *What I See in The Maximus Poems* published by Migrant Books
- 1960 *Trobar*, edited by George Economou, Joan Kelly, and Robert Kelly
- 1961 John Cage's *Silence* published by Wesleyan University Press
- 1962 *El Corno Emplumado*, edited by Margaret Randall
- 1962 Robert Creeley's *For Love* published by Scribners
- 1962 George Oppen's *The Materials* published by New Directions
- 1963 *Wild Dog*, edited by John Hoopes and Ed Dorn
- 1963 *An Anthology of Chance Operations*, edited by La Monte Young, published by Young and Jackson Mac Low
- 1963 *Matter and Matter Books*, edited and published by Robert Kelly
- 1966 *Maps*, edited by John Taggart
- 1967 *Caterpillar*, edited by Clayton Eshleman
- 1968 Jerome Rothenberg's *Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poetries from Africa, America, Asia, & Oceania* published by Doubleday Anchor
- 1969 Celia and Louis Zukofsky's *Catullus* translations published by Cape Goliard/Grossman
- 1970 *Alcheringa*, edited by Jerome Rothenberg and Dennis Tedlock
- 1972 *Shaking the Pumpkin: Traditional Poetry of the Indian North Americas*, edited by Jerome Rothenberg, published by Doubleday Anchor
- 1973 *America: A Prophecy. A New Reading of American Poetry from Pre-Columbian Times to the Present*, edited by Jerome Rothenberg and George Quasha, published by Random House

- 1975 George Oppen's *Collected Poems* published by New Directions
- 1975 Paul Blackburn's *Journals* published by Black Sparrow Press
- 1977 *New Wilderness Letter*, edited by Jerome Rothenberg
- 1978 Louis Zukofsky's "A" (complete version) published by the University of California Press
- 1980 Volume 1 of Charles Olson's and Robert Creeley's correspondence published by Black Sparrow Press
- 1981 *Sulfur*, edited by Clayton Eshleman

### Black Mountain

Among the several streams which made up the New American Poetry was a group known as the Black Mountain poets, so named for the experimental college in North Carolina where many of them taught or attended classes in the 1950s. The most prominent of these poets were of course Charles Olson, rector of the college in its last five years, and Robert Creeley, who edited *The Black Mountain Review*. The work of both has exerted an extraordinary influence on the course of American poetry in the latter half of this century. Closely allied with many of the Black Mountain writers, but especially influential on Creeley, were the poets occasionally known as the Objectivists, such as Louis Zukofsky, George Oppen, and Charles Reznikoff, who were in fact too individualistic to be part of any school. Still, the spare lyricism, historical knowledge, and social conscience found in all three poets were highly regarded in the camps of the New American Poetry.

Those who taught or listened at Black Mountain constitute a veritable roll-call of the American avant-garde; among those

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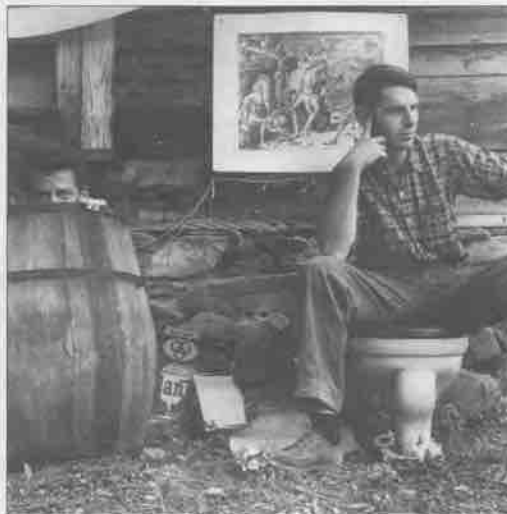
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most relevant to our literary purposes are John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Fielding Dawson, Ed Dorn, Robert Duncan, Buckminster Fuller, Basil King, Joel Oppenheimer, M. C. Richards, Michael Rumaker, John Wieners, and Jonathan Williams. *The Black Mountain Review* was founded to supplement allied magazines such as *Origin* (Olson succinctly described the importance of *Origin* when he told editor Cid Corman, "The thing is, because *Origin* exists, I write better, I write more . . .")<sup>6</sup> and attempted to extend this work by creating a critical grounding for the new writing through the publication of theoretical writings. The magazine also acted as a bridge to writers outside the Black Mountain milieu, publishing work by Lorine Niedecker, James Purdy, Allen Ginsberg, Hubert Selby, Jr., and Jack Kerouac, among others. Jonathan Williams returned from San Francisco to his home-state to study photography with Aaron Siskind and Harry Callahan at Black Mountain College. Williams's nascent Jargon Society flourished in part as a result of his stay at the college — books published during and just after this period include Olson's *The Maximus Poems*, Creeley's *A Form of Women*, Louis Zukofsky's *Some Time*, Larry Eigner's *On My Eyes*, Duncan's *Letters*, Denise Levertov's *Overland to the Islands*, Paul Metcalf's *Genoa*,

6. Sherman Paul, *Olson's Push: Origin, Black Mountain and Recent American Poetry* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 32.

and Williams's own *Empire Finals at Verona* (illustrated by Fielding Dawson), to name just a few. *The Black Mountain Review* had a distinctive squat format and was very well produced. Published in part as an attempt to draw attention to the college in a last-ditch effort to increase enrollment, the edition size never exceeded 750 copies.

The bringing together of unusual talents from diverse arts in the cloistered setting at Black Mountain played a crucial role in the development of postmodernism later in the 1960s. Having the likes of Buckminster Fuller, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg, Willem de Kooning, David Tudor, Stephen Volpe, Paul Goodman, and Cy Twombly (along with the poets mentioned above) under one roof pinpoints the location of one of several influential force fields in America that surely extended the boundaries of the various arts into new kinds of expression and new ways of making art.



Robert Creeley and Dan Rice at Black Mountain College, 1955. Photograph by Jonathan Williams.

## Intermedia

New York in the late 1950s saw the emergence of radical changes in dance, painting, film, sculpture, and theater as well as in writing. Indeed, writing or "text" was foregrounded in much of the new art. Language was newly seen as a material form, and could thus be worked with as one would work with paint or movement or sound. Concrete and sound poetry flourished. Conceptual and minimal artists began publishing their works in the form of books (later to be called "artists' books") – Edward Ruscha's early published booklets (for example, *Twenty-six Gasoline Stations*) were important extenders of the book as an art form. Other artists, such as Dan Graham, Adrian Piper, Sol LeWitt, Vito Acconci, Lawrence Weiner, and Carl Andre, were publishing both artists' books (i.e., books as works of art) as well as poetry and other writings, sometimes in the same places as those writers most easily identified as poets. Painter Carolee Schneemann was (and continues to be) crucial in highlighting the value of the ecstatic body as a source of knowledge. Her early performances and films are the source books for much of the performance art that followed in the 70s. *Parts of a Body House Book*, published by Beau Geste Press in 1972, connects text and image to ritual, performance, and dream and links her work to that of the writers working in ethnopoetics.

John Cage's influence, in part disseminated through his class in "Composition of Experimental Music" at the New School for Social Research, was crucial in the development of both Happenings and Fluxus. In the summer of 1958, class members included Dick Higgins, Jackson Mac Low, Jim Dine, Allan Kaprow, and George Brecht. Cage's collection of lectures and writings, entitled *Silence*,

was published in 1961 by Wesleyan University Press. George Maciunas met La Monte Young in Richard Maxfield's New School class in electronic music. In early 1961, Young and Maciunas hosted a series called "Literary Evenings and Musica Antiqua et Nova" at the latter's AG Gallery. Participants included Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer, Jackson Mac Low, Dick Higgins, and Ray Johnson. In 1960, Young was invited to guest edit an issue of *Beatitude East* focusing on performance and poetry. The project for *Beatitude East* was canceled but was resurrected as *An Anthology of Chance Operations*, edited by Young, designed and produced by Maciunas, and published by Young and Mac Low in 1963. The anthology, a collection of music and performance scores, essays, stories, and poems, included work by Emmett Williams, George Brecht, Henry Flynt, Robert Morris, Terry Riley, Yoko Ono, Simone Forti, Jackson Mac Low, and others. Mac Low's own work as a writer dates to 1937; he stands, in the words of Jerome Rothenberg, alongside John Cage as "one of the two major artists bringing systematic chance operations into our poetic & musical practice since the Second World War."<sup>7</sup> His first book, *The Twin Plays*, was mimeographed in 1963, and was soon followed by *The Pronouns* in 1964, which was mimeographed at the Judson Memorial Church.

The year 1964 saw the founding of one of the most interesting presses of the period: Dick Higgins's Something Else Press. As an editor, Higgins seemed to be interested in everything having to do with the new arts – his interest in and knowledge of the

7. Jerome Rothenberg, Pre-Face to Jackson Mac Low, *Representative Works: 1938–1985* (New York: Roof, 1986), p. v.

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Jackson Mac Low, The  
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 Photograph by Gerard  
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history of bookmaking, printing, design,  
 and typography helped him to accomplish  
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 tioned publishers ever managed to achieve:  
 distribution. One of the most radical achieve-  
 ments of the Something Else Press was to slip  
 avant-garde content into what looked like  
 “regular books” and then to get those books  
 into bookstores and libraries around the  
 world. The list of titles published by Some-  
 thing Else in its regular series as well as the  
 series of Great Bear Pamphlets is astonishing  
 for its range and depth. A few examples are  
 Daniel Spoerri’s *An Anecdoted Topography of  
 Chance*, *Notations* by John Cage with Alison  
 Knowles, *An Anthology of Concrete Poetry*, edited  
 by Emmett Williams, *Breakthrough Fictioneers*,  
 edited by Richard Kostelanetz, *Store Days* by  
 Claes Oldenburg, and *Stanzas for Iris Lezak* by  
 Jackson Mac Low. It is interesting to note that  
 Higgins’s own first book, *What Are Legends*,  
 was published by Bern Porter in 1961. Porter,  
 himself an important writer and visual artist,  
 also published the first books of Philip  
 Lamantia and Robert Duncan.

### The Deep Image and Ethnopoetics

In the late 50s and early 60s, another group  
 important to the New American Poetry was  
 emerging, primarily in New York. They were  
 a sort of “in-between” generation – younger  
 than most of the poets in the Allen anthology  
 but older than the second-generation New  
 York School or the Language poets. This  
 group began publishing in magazines such  
 as *Some/thing*, *Poems from the Floating World*,  
*Trobar*, *Matter*, and *Caterpillar*. Poets most  
 closely allied with this group include Jerome  
 Rothenberg, Robert Kelly, Clayton Eshleman,  
 Diane Wakoski, David Antin, Paul Blackburn,  
 Frank Samperi, Armand Schwerner, and  
 George Economou. The basic sense of deep  
 image poetry, as distinct from Imagism, was,  
 according to Robert Kelly, to “generate a  
 kind of poetry not necessarily dominated  
 by the images, but in which it is the rhythm  
 of images which forms the dominant move-  
 ment of the poem.”<sup>8</sup> Jerome Rothenberg  
 would later describe the “deep image” as  
 “a power, among several, by which the poem  
 is sighted & brought close.” Investigations

8. *The Little Magazine in America: A Modern Documentary  
 History*, edited by Elliott Anderson and Mary Kinzie  
 (Yonkers, N.Y.: Pushcart Press, 1978), p. 400.

into deep image existed alongside and resonated with work in translation, performance, and an awareness of earlier avant-gardes and poetry from "those anonymous tribal & subterranean predecessors." Consequently, these poets were keenly aware of the need to build on the insights and discoveries of Dada and Surrealism. Ethnopoetics developed, in part, out of a growing awareness "that we weren't just doing something new (which we were) but were getting back in our own terms to fundamental ways of seeing & languaging from which we (the larger 'we' of the Western enterprise) had long been cut off."<sup>9</sup> Thus, Ethnopoetics is a recognition of the "primitive" as a way to ease ourselves into the future. *Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics*, "a first journal of the world's tribal poetries," edited by Jerome Rothenberg and Dennis Tedlock, published five numbers in its first series (1970-1973) and continued forward with a second series in 1975. Several of the issues contained phonograph records, including readings by Jaime de Angelo, Jackson Mac Low, and Anne Waldman. *New Wilderness Letter* (edited primarily by Jerome Rothenberg but with the help of co- and guest editors) extended the ethnopoetics project into an exploration of the relation between old and new forms of art-making across the full spectrum of arts. One of the most interesting issues was *New Wilderness Letter* 11 (1982), entitled *The Book, Spiritual Instrument*, which Rothenberg co-edited with anthropologist/poet David Guss. A significant contribution to the ethnopoetic project is to be found in the collection of anthologies edited by Rothenberg, including *Technicians of the Sacred*, *Shaking the Pumpkin*, *America: A Prophecy* (with George Quasha), and *A Big Jewish Book*.

9. Jerome Rothenberg, *Pre-Faces and Other Writing* (New York: New Directions, 1981), pp. 52, 139.



*Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poetries from Africa, Asia, & Oceania*, edited with commentaries by Jerome Rothenberg (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1969). Cover design by Richard Mantel.

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### *The New York School: The First Generation*

- 1949 John Ashbery, as editor of the *Harvard Advocate*, publishes stories and poems by Frank O'Hara
- 1953 *Folder*, edited by Daisy Alden
- 1953 John Bernard Myers of Tibor de Nagy Gallery publishes Frank O'Hara's *Oranges* as well as other books
- 1953 Frank O'Hara teaches at the New School
- 1957 Frank O'Hara's *Meditations in an Emergency* published by Grove Press
- 1958 James Schuyler's *Alfred and Guinevere* published by Harcourt, Brace
- 1959 Kenneth Koch's *Ko: or, A Season on Earth* published by Grove Press
- 1960 Barbara Guest's *The Location of Things* published by Tibor de Nagy
- 1962 John Ashbery's *The Tennis Court Oath* published by Wesleyan University Press
- 1962 Kenneth Koch's *Thank You and Other Poems* published by Grove Press
- 1965 Frank O'Hara's *Lunch Poems* published by City Lights
- 1966 Frank O'Hara dies
- 1966 John Ashbery's *Rivers and Mountains* published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston
- 1966 James Schuyler's *May 24th or So* published by Tibor de Nagy
- 1968 Barbara Guest's *The Blue Stairs* published by Corinth Books

- 1969 Kenneth Koch's *When the Sun Tries to Go On* published by Black Sparrow Press
- 1970 Kenneth Koch's *Wishes, Lies and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry* published by Chelsea House Publishers
- 1971 Frank O'Hara's *Collected Poems*, edited by Donald Allen, published
- 1972 *49 South*, an anthology/one-shot magazine edited by James Schuyler
- 1973 Barbara Guest's *Moscow Mansions* published by Viking
- 1974 ZZZ publishes *Play*, a play by Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Koch, and John Ashbery, the first act originally written at Koch's apartment in 1953
- 1978 *Big Sky* 11/12 presents an homage to Frank O'Hara (later published by Creative Arts Press in Berkeley in an expanded edition)

The New York School really began, strangely enough, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at Harvard University where several of its most famous members were students along with other postwar poets Robert Bly, Robert Creeley, Donald Hall, Adrienne Rich, and Richard Wilbur. It was at Harvard that Kenneth Koch met John Ashbery and that John Ashbery published Frank O'Hara, later meeting him in the flesh at an opening of a show of Edward Gorey's watercolors (Gorey was Ashbery's roommate). All three eventually ended up in New York City, where they became involved with each other and with a number of painters, including Jane Freilicher, Nell Blaine, Larry Rivers, and Fairfield Porter.

Everyone, it seems, wrote for *Art News* or worked at the Museum of Modern Art, except for Koch who taught and pioneered the teaching of poetry to children. The poetry and art worlds were deeply intertwined, and collaboration between visual artists and



writers continues to be a salient characteristic of the New York School. In 1953, for instance, John Bernard Myers of the Tibor de Nagy Gallery published O'Hara's *Oranges* in an edition of about twenty mimeographed copies. Issued in gray "three-clasp binders," some of the copies contained oil paint sketches by Grace Hartigan (the publication was in fact to accompany the exhibition of her work at the gallery). In 1952, Myers had produced, somewhat more "professionally," O'Hara's *A City Winter*, with some copies containing drawings by Larry Rivers. This was followed in 1953 by Koch's *Poems*, with prints by Nell Blaine, and Ashbery's *Turandot*, with plates by Jane Freilicher. These volumes were all printed letterpress with decorative covers. In 1969, Myers published an anthology, *The Poets of the New York School*, which included O'Hara, Koch, and Ashbery as well as James Schuyler, Barbara Guest, Joe Ceravolo, Kenward Elmslie, Frank Lima, and Tony Towle. James Schuyler, whose *May 24th or So* was published (unaccompanied by art) by Tibor de Nagy in 1966, had arrived on the scene (he was to become one of the most famous of the residents of New York City's Chelsea Hotel) and, in 1972, had published the mimeographed anthology *49 South*. His *Freely Espousing* was published by Paris Review Press in 1969 with a jacket by Alex Katz, and *Hymn to Life*, *The Crystal Lithium*, and *The Morning of the Poem* were all published by Random House with covers by Fairfield Porter.

All the major figures of the New York School were to find commercial publishers,

Left to right: Arthur Gold, Julia Gruen, Harold Clurman, Bobby Fisdale, John Ashbery, Jane Freilicher, Joe Hazan, and Jane Wilson, Water Mill, New York, 1962. Photograph by John Gruen.



but continued to provide work to the small presses and mimeograph magazines (Barbara Guest, for instance, appeared in several issues of "C" magazine, and Ashbery's *The New Spirit* was published by Larry Fagin's *Adventures in Poetry*). In 1970, *An Anthology of New York Poets*, edited by Ron Padgett and David Shapiro (with a cover by Joe Brainard), was published by Vintage. It featured work by Schuyler, Koch, Ashbery, and O'Hara scattered throughout the book, which also included Clark Coolidge, Kenward Elmslie, Ted Berrigan, Harry Matthews, Tony Towle, Tom Clark, Tom Veitch, Lewis MacAdams, Frank Lima, John Giorno, Joe Ceravolo, Jim Brodey, John Perrault, Bill Berkson, Michael Brownstein, Ed Sanders, Peter Schjeldahl, Aram Saroyan, Ron Padgett, Dick Gallup, Bernadette Mayer, Edwin Denby, and David Shapiro.



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### *The New York School: Second and Third Generations*

- 1959 *White Dove Review* published in Tulsa
- 1960 Ron Padgett arrives in New York
- 1960 Dick Gallup arrives in New York
- 1960 Joe Brainard arrives in New York
- 1960 Ted Berrigan arrives in New York in December (or possibly in January 1961)
- 1961 Bill Berkson's *Saturday Night Poems* published by Tibor de Nagy
- 1962 *Fuck You, a magazine of the arts*, edited by Ed Sanders
- 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference
- 1963 "C," a *Journal of Poetry*, edited by Ted Berrigan
- 1964 Ted Berrigan's *The Sonnets* published by "C" Press; it was reissued by Grove in 1967 and again by United Artists in 1982
- 1964 Carol Bergé's *The Vancouver Report* published by Fuck You
- 1964 *Joglers*, edited by Clark Coolidge and George [Michael] Palmer
- 1964 Ron Padgett's *In Advance of the Broken Arm* published by "C" Press
- 1964 Tom Clark becomes poetry editor of *The Paris Review*; his editorship continues through 1974
- 1964 *Mother*, edited by David Moberg, Jeff Giles, Peter Schjeldahl, Lewis MacAdams, and others

- 1965 Berkeley Poetry Conference
- 1965 Joe Ceravolo's *Fits of Dawn* published by "C" Press
- 1966 The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church begins
- 1966 *Angel Hair*, edited by Anne Waldman and Lewis Warsh
- 1966 *Lines*, edited by Aram Saroyan
- 1967 *The World*, edited by Joel Sloman, Anne Waldman, and others
- 1967 Tom Veitch's *Toad Poems* published in London by Tom Clark's Once Books



Lewis Warsh, *Dreaming as One: Poems* (New York: Corinth Books, 1971). Cover by Joe Brainard.



*Best and Company* picnic. Photograph by L. Fagin taken at the Staten Island Ballfield, Easter Sunday, 1968. *Back row, left to right:* Peter Schjeldahl (with hand on head), Jim Carroll, Linda Schjeldahl, George Kimball. *Next row, left to right:* Susan Kimball (with dark glasses), Lewis Warsh, Anne Waldman, Ted Berrigan, Bill Berkson, George Schneeman, Ron Padgett, Dick Gallup (with cigarette), Carol Gallup. *Next row, left to right:* Tessie Mitchell (holding Emma Rivers), Katie Schneeman (holding Gwen Rivers), Sandy Berrigan (with hat and polka dot dress), Emilio Schneeman (kneeling between two baseballs), David Berrigan (holding baseball bat), Pat Padgett (wearing sunglasses, holding Wayne Padgett), Joan Fagin (wearing wristwatch), Elio Schneeman (in striped shirt).

- 1967 Ted Berrigan and Ron Padgett's *Bean Spasms*, with drawings by Joe Brainard, published by Kulchur
- 1967 Ron Padgett's *Tone Arm* published by Once Press
- 1967 *o to 9*, edited by Bernadette Mayer and Vito Acconci
- 1968 Bernadette Mayer's *Story* published by o to 9
- 1968 *Adventures in Poetry*, edited by Larry Fagin
- 1968 Larry Fagin's *Parade of the Caterpillars* published by Angel Hair
- 1968 Clark Coolidge's *Ing*, with a cover by Philip Guston, published by Angel Hair
- 1969 *Telephone*, edited by Maureen Owen
- 1969 Tom Clark's *Stones* published by Harper & Row
- 1969 Ron Padgett's *Great Balls of Fire* published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston

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- 1970 Anne Waldman's *Giant Night* published by Corinth Books
- 1970 *An Anthology of New York Poets*, edited by Ron Padgett and David Shapiro, published by Vintage
- 1970 Clark Coolidge's *Space* published by Harper & Row
- 1971 Lewis Warsh's *Dreaming as One* published by Corinth Books
- 1972 *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, edited by Ron Padgett and others
- 1973 *Z*, edited by Kenward Elmslie
- 1975 Bernadette Mayer's *Studying Hunger* published by *Adventures in Poetry/Big Sky* and her *Memory* published by North Atlantic
- 1976 Alice Notley's *Alice Ordered Me to Be Made* published in Chicago by Yellow Press
- 1977 *United Artists*, edited by Lewis Warsh and Bernadette Mayer
- 1977 *Mag City*, edited by Greg Masters, Gary Lenhart, and Michael Scholnick
- 1977 *Un Poco Loco*, edited by Larry Fagin
- 1977 *Dodgems*, edited by Eileen Myles
- 1979 *Rocky Ledge*, edited by Anne Waldman and Reed Bye
- 1980 Ted Berrigan's *So Going Around Cities* published by Blue Wind

Some of the great New York-based magazines were "C", *Fuck You*, a magazine of the arts, *Mother*, *Angel Hair*, *The World, 0 to 9*, *Lines*, and *Adventures in Poetry*, all born in the turbulent literary and social atmosphere of the East Village in the 1960s.

Ed Sanders came from Kansas to study classics at NYU. Poet, editor, publisher, bookstore owner (Peace Eye), singer/songwriter (founding member of the Fugs), political activist, and relentless archivist, Sanders founded *Fuck You*, a magazine of the arts in 1962. Unabashed and unashamed on every front, *Fuck You* reveled in an attitude best described by William Blake 150 years before: "Energy is eternal delight."

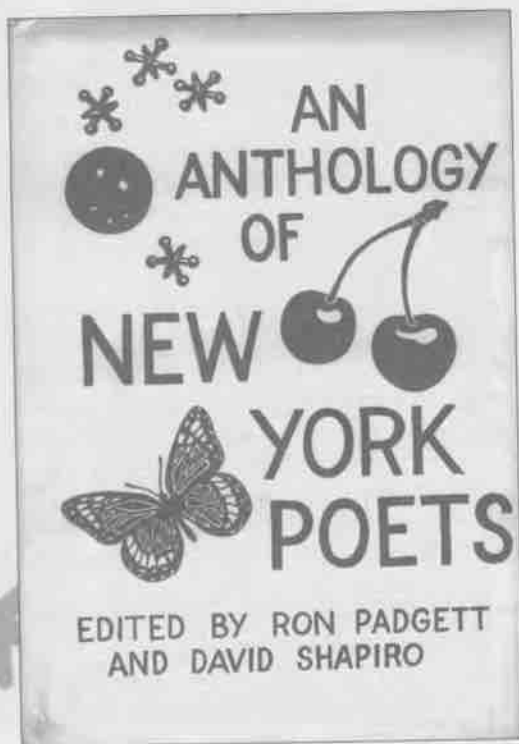
*Fuck You* published the likes of Charles Olson, Lenore Kandel, Carol Bergé, Ted Berrigan, Tuli Kupferberg, W. H. Auden, and Ezra Pound. The energy and ethos of the magazine is vividly expressed in the following statement: "Fuck You: A Magazine of the Arts is edited, published, zapped, designed, freaked, groped, stomped, & ejaculated by Ed Sanders at a secret location in the lower east side, New York City, U.S.A." Almost forty years later, it is still completely original and a total delight.

*Mother* was edited by several different poets including David Moberg, Jeff Giles, Peter Schjeldahl, Lewis MacAdams, and Duncan McNaughton from such diverse locations as Northfield, Minnesota; Galesburg, Illinois; New York City; and Buffalo, New York. Yet it was always associated with the New York School and published work by such poets as John Ashbery, Bernadette Mayer, Ed Sanders, John Wieners, Tony Towle, Kenneth Koch, and Joe Ceravolo, and artwork by many including Les



Left to right: Ken Irby, Robert Duncan, and Anne Waldman, Cambridge, Massachusetts, April 1972. Photograph by Elsa Dorfman. Photograph © 1998 by Elsa Dorfman. <http://elsa.photo.net>

*An Anthology of New York Poets*, edited by Ron Padgett and David Shapiro (New York: Vintage Books, 1970). Cover by Joe Brainard.



Levine, Andy Warhol, and Joe Brainard. Issue 7 included the infamous interview with John Cage conducted by Ted Berrigan. Actually, Berrigan was responsible for both questions and answers, most of which were appropriated from other sources, a circumstance that caused some embarrassment when the interview was honored with a cash award from *The National Literary Anthology*.

Ted Berrigan, in many ways the focal point of the East Village literary outburst, arrived in New York from Tulsa in late 1960 (or early 1961), having completed his Master's thesis on G. B. Shaw. While in the army, he had learned to operate the mimeograph machine, a skill that would serve him well. The first issue of "C" was published by Lorenz Gude in May 1963 – the contributors were editor Berrigan and his three best friends, all from Tulsa: Ron Padgett, Dick Gallup, and Joe Brainard. "C" was preceded

by the one and only issue of a mimeographed magazine entitled *The Censored Review*, which published poems by Berrigan ("I Was Born Standing Up"), Jonathan Cott, Dick Gallup ("Ember Grease"), Nancy Ward, and David Omer Bearden, and the very long and anonymous "Eli's Story" about a group of characters who were "All orbits in Brian Benedict's universe." In 1963, "C" published the Edwin Denby issue with its cover by Andy Warhol. Berrigan's breakthrough book, *The Sonnets*, was mimeographed and published by "C" Press in 1964. Ron Padgett edited the work and typed the stencils.

Among the other early mimeograph publications of the East Village were several collaborations: *Some Things* (a collaboration late in 1963 between Berrigan, Padgett, and Brainard) and *Seventeen* (plays by Ted Berrigan and Ron Padgett, and by the two in collaboration, 1964).

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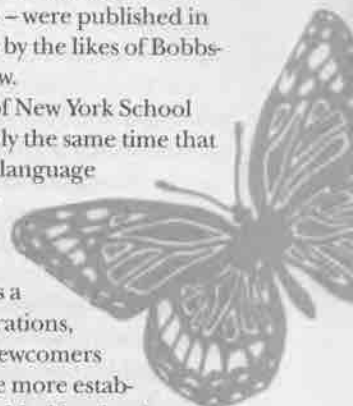
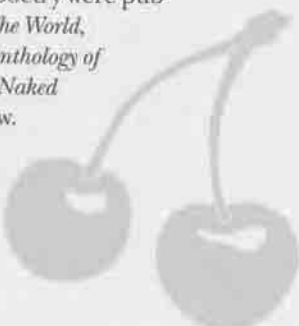
In the early years, Berrigan and Padgett were the best of friends, and their combined talents were crucial ingredients in the emerging scene. Padgett's high school experience in Tulsa editing the *White Dove Review* proved invaluable. His wisdom and learning mixed with Berrigan's enthusiasm and energy to provide an atmosphere of friendly competition and collaboration that inspired and encouraged other poets and writers throughout the 60s.

*Lines* was edited by Aram Saroyan and, like *o to 9* (edited by Bernadette Mayer and Vito Acconci), published works somewhat more visually and conceptually based than many of the other literary magazines of the period. *The World*, the magazine of The Poetry Project, was first published in 1967. Mimeographed at St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery, it has long been a cohesive, unifying element in the downtown New York literary scene and has always been identified with a broad range of new and interesting writing. Remarkably, *The World* is still publishing in 1998. Angel Hair was born at Robert Duncan's reading at the Berkeley Poetry Conference, where Anne Waldman and Lewis Warsh first met. They edited six issues of the magazine and a series of books. Larry Fagin moved to New York from San Francisco where he was associated with the Spicer circle. His eclectic *Adventures in Poetry* published both the magazine and a series of books.

It is interesting to note that, at least for a short while, trade publishers in New York and elsewhere did take considerable interest in the new writing. A great many anthologies of new and experimental poetry were published, including *The World*, *Another World*, *An Anthology of New York Poets*, and *Naked Poetry*, to name a few. Also, a significant number of books by individual writers –

including Anne Waldman, Tom Clark, Carol Bergé, Joel Oppenheimer, Clark Coolidge, Lewis MacAdams, Michael Brownstein, Ron Padgett, and Dick Gallup – were published in the late 60s and early 70s by the likes of Bobbs-Merrill and Harper & Row.

The third generation of New York School writers emerged at roughly the same time that the poets associated with language writing began to be identified as a group. The magazine *United Artists* served to a great extent as a bridge between the generations, publishing many of the newcomers to the scene alongside the more established members of the St. Mark's school. *United Artists* was also in many ways the apotheosis of the mimeograph magazine, spectacular in its simple design (the first twelve covers were simply tables of content) and adventurous in its combination of the personal and the experimental, pioneering in the publication of journal and diary entries. The third generation was largely based at The Poetry Project, and much influenced by teachers there such as Ted Berrigan, Alice Notley, Lewis Warsh, and Bernadette Mayer. In the mid- to late 70s and early 80s, East Village magazines and presses such as *Mag City*, *Frontward Books*, *4*, *3*, *2 Review*, *KOFF*, *Tangerine*, *Ghandhabba*, *Ladies Museum*, and *Dodgems* published writings by Greg Masters, Ed Friedman, Eileen Myles, Susie Timmons, Tom Weigel, Michael Scholnick, Maggie Dubris, Jeff Wright, Simon Schuchat, Elinor Nauen, and Gary Lenhart, among others who identified with and extended the heritage of the New York Schools. A similar scene developed in the Los Angeles area with the Beyond Baroque reading series in Venice, and many of its trends can be seen in the magazine *Little Caesar*, which further blurred the lines between literature, music, and the visual arts.



## Language Writing

- 1970 *Tittel's*, edited by Ron Silliman
- 1971 *This*, edited by Barrett Watten and Robert Grenier
- 1972 *Vort*, edited by Barry Alpert
- 1972 *L*, edited by Curtis Faville
- 1973 The "Wiater/Andrews issue" of *Toothpick, Lisbon & the Orcas Islands*
- 1973 *Hills*, edited by Bob Perelman
- 1973 *Poetics of the New American Poetry*, edited by Donald Allen and Warren Tallman, published by Grove Press
- 1973 *Shirt*, edited by Ray DiPalma
- 1974 Susan Howe's *Hinge Picture* published by Telephone Books
- 1975 David Melnick's *PCOET* published in part by *Tittel's* and also as a chapbook by G.A.W.K.
- 1975 "The Dwelling Place: 9 Poets," edited by Ron Silliman, published in *Alcheringa*
- 1975 Geoffrey Young and Laura Chester's *The Figures* begins
- 1976 Lyn Hejinian's *Tuumba* begins
- 1976 *A Hundred Posters*, edited by Alan Davies
- 1976 *Roof*, edited by James Sherry and Tom Savage
- 1977 "Politics of the Referent," edited by Steve McCaffery, a symposium in *Open Letter*
- 1977 Bob Perelman's Talk Series begins in San Francisco
- 1978 *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E*, edited by Charles Bernstein and Bruce Andrews
- 1978 Ear Inn Reading Series founded by Ted Greenwald and Charles Bernstein
- 1978 Hannah Weiner's *Clairvoyant Journal* published by Angel Hair
- 1978 "A Symposium on Clark Coolidge," edited by Ron Silliman; published as *Stations* 5
- 1978 Ron Silliman's *Ketjak* published by This Press
- 1978 Charles Bernstein's *Shade* is published, the first Sun & Moon Press book
- 1978 *E pod*, edited by Kirby Malone and Marshall Reese
- 1979 "Talks" issue (no. 6/7) of *Hills*, edited by Bob Perelman
- 1979 *QU*, edited by Carla Harryman
- 1980 Lyn Hejinian's *My Life* published by Burning Deck
- 1980 Charles Bernstein, Steve McCaffery, Bruce Andrews, and Ray DiPalma's *Legend* published by L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E/Segue
- 1980 *The Difficulties*, edited by Tom Beckett
- 1982 *Poetics Journal*, edited by Lyn Hejinian and Barrett Watten
- 1983 *HOW(ever)*, edited by Kathleen Fraser, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Frances Jaffer, and others

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Hannah Weiner,  
*Clairvoyant Journal* 1974  
 (New York: Angel Hair,  
 1978). Cover photo-  
 graph of the author by  
 Tom Ahern.

In 1982, two literary journals as disparate as *Ironwood* and *The Paris Review* both featured collections of language writing. Ron Silliman, in his introduction to the collection in *Ironwood*, traces a kind of "anti-history" back to the early 70s with the publication of two important journals, *Tattel's* and *This*. Silliman makes the important point that the phenomenon is based on a created audience and that language writing is most significantly identified as community based, with almost all its practitioners sharing "the responsibility of creating the institutions through which the work can be made public." He goes on to say that "the project of this writing is the discovery of a community."<sup>10</sup> In his introduction to the selection of language writing published in *The Paris Review*, Charles Bernstein offers the useful hint that this is a "writing that takes as its medium, or domain of intention, every articulable aspect of language."

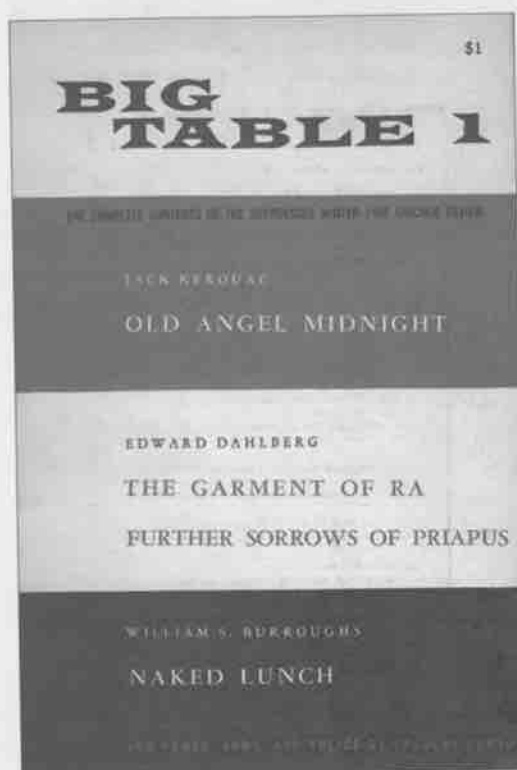
Although language writing surely flourished in the 1980s, a fact amply demonstrated by several anthologies (such as *In the American Tree: Language Realism Poetry*, edited by Ron Silliman, and "Language" *Poetries: An Anthology*, edited by Douglas Messerli) and critical works (*Code of Signals*, a special issue of *Io* edited by Michael Palmer; Barrett Watten's *Total Syntax*; Charles Bernstein's *Content's Dream*; Bernstein and Bruce Andrews's *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book*; and Ron Silliman's *The New Sentence*), it was, from its beginnings in the early 70s, an influential and always controversial presence in the poetry community at large. At first, the lines between the soon-to-be-identified language poets and various other vaguely defined schools or groups were not so clearly drawn.

10. Ron Silliman, ed., "Language Writing," *Ironwood* 20 [vol. 10, no. 2] (Fall 1982): 64.



For instance, Barrett Watten's first book, *Opera-Works*, was published by Bill Berkson's New York School-identified Big Sky, and *Roof* magazine, an important New York-based outlet for language writing, was born at Naropa Institute in 1976. Its early issues included both Beat and New York School poets. The second small anthology of language writing appeared in the ethnopoetics journal *Alcheringa* in 1975 – but by the end of the 70s, those associated with language writing had thoroughly established their presence and made visible their various unique and shared tendencies through an incredible network of magazines, presses, and reading and talk series located primarily in San Francisco and New York, with a smaller group active in Washington, D.C. Magazines and presses such as *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E*, *This, A Hundred Posters*, *E pod*, *Hills*, *Vanishing Cab*, *Miam*, *Roof*, *Sun & Moon*, *The Figures*, *Asylum's*, *Tuumba*, *The Difficulties*, *Poetics Journal*, and others served as venues for writing (poetry as well as critical prose) by Ron Silliman, Charles Bernstein, Lyn Hejinian, Bruce Andrews, Barrett Watten, Robert Grenier, Steve Benson, Rae Armantrout, Bob Perelman, Nick Piombino, Diane Ward, Carla Harryman, Alan Davies, and Johanna Drucker, among many others.

BELOW AND OPPOSITE:  
*Big Table 1* (Spring 1959),  
front and back covers.



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*Other Places (Chicago,  
Michigan, Ohio, Rhode Island,  
Iowa, and Beyond)*

Chicago



The literary climate in the Midwest began to heat up in 1958 when *The Chicago Review*, as its Spring number, presented an issue devoted to the San Francisco Renaissance. This included a chapter from the then-unpublished *Naked Lunch* by the notorious William S. Burroughs, as well as work by Duncan, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, McClure, and others. Editors Irving Rosenthal and Paul Carroll gathered and published more such "Beat" material in the Autumn 1958 issue. As they prepared the Winter issue, the *Chicago Daily News* published an article entitled "Filthy Writing on the Midway"; as a consequence, that issue was suppressed by a cowardly administration, galvanizing and energizing the literary underground.

Carroll and Rosenthal, along with a half dozen other editors, resigned from *The Chicago Review*. With the suppressed material they founded *Big Table* (so named by Jack Kerouac in a telegram: "CALL IT BIG TABLE"). The first issue, which featured Kerouac, Dahlberg, and Burroughs, was impounded by the U.S. Post Office. The ACLU challenged the Post Office in a hearing presided over by Judge Julius S. Hoffman, who later presided over the Chicago Seven conspiracy trial. Judge Hoffman followed Judge Woolsey's decision regarding Joyce's *Ulysses*, and *Big Table* continued publishing through five issues. The aura, even the glamour, of censorship helped to increase its distribution, and its audience consequently grew significantly. Like *Evergreen Review*, *Big Table* was crucial in bringing the underground to those of us waiting in the wings in small-town America.

(Three editors of the geographically distant *Northwest Review* at the University of Oregon, in Eugene, were to face this same issue later, when their publication was suspended by the university after the publication of eight poems by Philip Whalen and work by Antonin Artaud in its Fall 1963 issue. Also included were an

interview with Fidel Castro and a portfolio of photographs of contemporary Cuba. Like their fellows in Chicago, the group, led by editor Edward Van Aelstyn, started their own periodical, entitled *Coyote's Journal*, which in its first three issues used material gathered for the *Northwest Review*.) Other important

BELOW AND OPPOSITE:  
*Table 1* (Spring 1959),  
front and back covers.



Chicago periodicals and presses of the 1960s and 70s included Alice Notley's *Chicago*, Art Lange's *Brilliant Corners* (which, in addition to poetry, printed writings on improvisational jazz), the Surrealist/anarchist/leftist-oriented Black Swan (still in operation), Yellow Press, and *Milk Quarterly*, principally edited by Darlene Pearlstein with Bob Rosenthal, Peter Kostakis, and Richard Friedman. Interestingly, some of the poets in Chicago were taught how to use the mimeograph machine in the 1960s and 70s by Ted Berrigan on one of his visits to Chicago or during teaching stints at Northwestern.

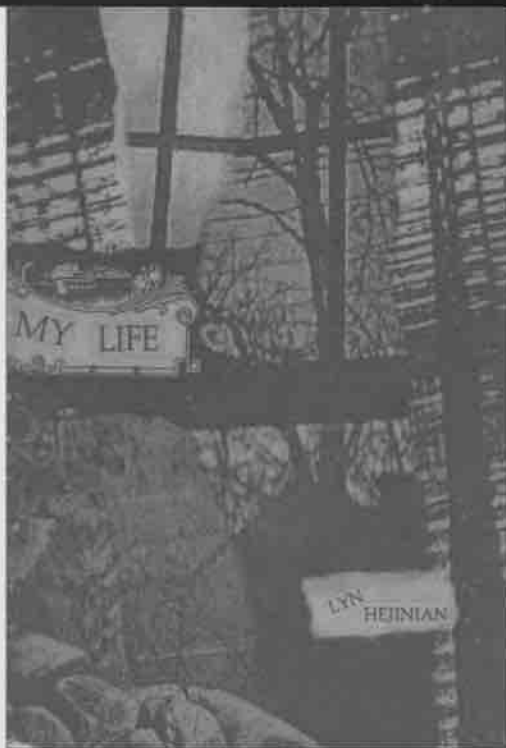
*Brilliant Corners* 4  
(Fall 1976). Cover photograph of Thelonious Monk by Jim Marshall.



#### Michigan, Ohio, and Rhode Island

Other activities in the Midwest included the Artists' Workshop Press in Detroit, which published (often in broadside format) work by such poets as George Tysh, John Sinclair, and John Wieners. The use of colored "construction" papers (of the sort favored by grade school teachers) was a particularly distinctive characteristic of this press, which also cultivated a sort of hard-core working-class aesthetic. Dudley Randall's Broadside Press of Detroit was very important for the Black Arts Movement during the late 60s and 70s and published a great many writers including Gwendolyn Brooks, Sonia Sanchez, and Sterling Brown. Ken and Anne Mikolowski's The Alternative Press, also of Michigan, has published an avalanche of interesting work over the past thirty years, most of which has taken the form of broadsides, postcards, bookmarks, bumper-stickers, and other ephemera. In 1971, they began to issue annual packets of printed matter by subscription, the announcement for which carried the slogan "Art Poetry Melodrama." Artists and writers published include Faye Kicknosway, John Sinclair, Ted Berrigan, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Creeley, Jerome Rothenberg, Lewis Warsh, Tom Clark, George Tysh, William Wantling, Joel Oppenheimer, Robert Bly, Philip Guston, and others. Burning Deck Press (as in "the boy stood on the") began as a literary magazine in Ann Arbor in 1961. Three issues were published in Michigan before editors Keith and Rosmarie Waldrop moved to Durham, Connecticut, where the fourth issue came out. Material for a fifth issue was gathered but never published. In 1968, the editors moved to Providence,

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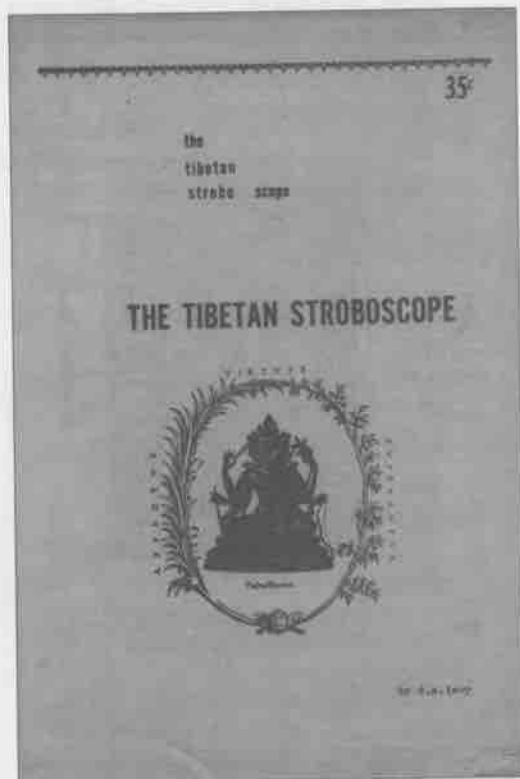
Lyn Hejinian, *My Life*  
 (Providence, R.I.:  
 Burning Deck, 1980).  
 Cover collage by Keith  
 Waldrop.

Rhode Island, the city where Clark Coolidge had earlier co-published his influential magazine *Joglars*. Burning Deck has published over 200 books and broadsides, primarily by younger writers, and is generally recognized as one of the most important and interesting literary presses publishing in English. Its books are often designed and printed by the editors by letterpress. It is interesting to note that letterpress, previously the mark of more upscale publishing with a distinctly mainstream flavor, was then in the process of undergoing its own revolution. As photo-offset became the standard in commercial printing, the letterpress machines became available for next to nothing. Poets like the Waldrops picked them up cheaply and produced works very much in the spirit of those working with mimeo, thus transforming letterpress aesthetics into the service of the revolution. The Waldrops are both accomplished writers and translators with wide-ranging

tastes. Over the years they have published works from John Heath-Stubbs, Bruce Andrews, X. J. Kennedy, Rochelle Owens, Mark Strand, Ron Silliman, Edwin Honig, Lisa Jarnot, Marcia Southwick, William Bronk, Lyn Hejinian, and Barbara Guest, among others.

*465: An Anthology of Cleveland Poetry* published the work of T. L. Kryss, Russell Atkins, Grace Butchert, d.a.levy, and others. d.a.levy was an important catalyst in Cleveland on several fronts. His aptly named Renegade Press (later 7 Flowers Press) produced some fifty volumes of levy's work, much of which takes the form of amazingly beautiful and prescient concrete poetry (see, for example, *Fortuitons Motherfucer*, *Zen Concrete*, and *The Tibetan Stroboscope*). levy also edited several anthologies, serials, and magazines including *The Buddhist 3rd Class Junkmail Oracle* and the *Marrahwannah Newsletter*. As Ed Sanders later said of Ted Berrigan and Paul Blackburn,

d.a.levy,  
*The Tibetan Stroboscope*  
(Cleveland: Ayizan  
Press, 1968).



levy "lived it 24 hours a day" and he paid a heavy price: levy was arrested and jailed along with Jim Lowell (proprietor of the great Asphodel Bookshop, a welcoming home for new poetry for over thirty years) on charges of distributing obscene material. One of the truly unique and authentic spirits of the mimeo revolution, levy became famous as the poetry world gathered in his support, but in 1968, at the age of twenty-six, he committed suicide.

Ray DiPalma began publishing, among others, writers associated with scenes in Iowa City and around The Poetry Project in New York in his magazine *Doones* in 1969 out of Bowling Green, Ohio. A considerable range of poets such as Ted Berrigan, Merrill Gilfillan, Ted Greenwald, Darrell Gray, Anselm Hollo, Robert Kelly, James Tate, Bill Knott, Ron Silliman, and Larry Fagin published in *Doones* as well as in DiPalma's series of booklets and one-shot "supplements" such as *Painted Horses* and *Shelter*. DiPalma moved to New York in the mid-70s. He has been associated with language writing since the beginning and has published many impressive volumes of his own work under such imprints as Sun & Moon, Segue, and Burning Deck.

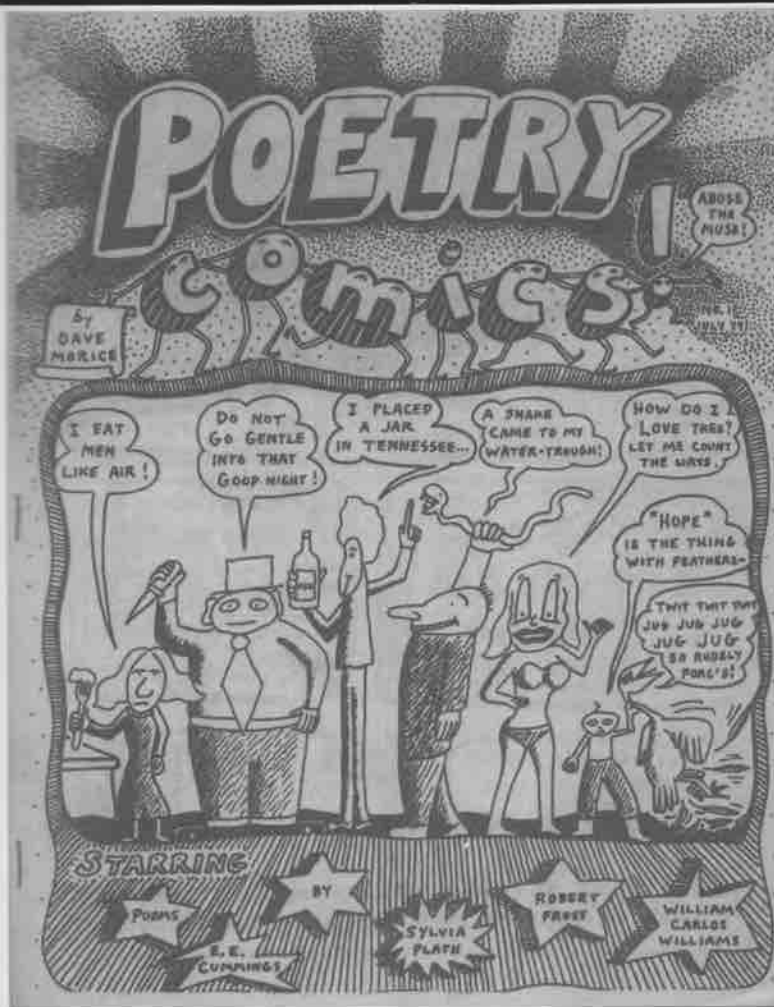
#### Iowa

Whether because or in spite of the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, a vibrant literary scene developed in Iowa City during the late 60s and early 70s. Ted Berrigan and Anselm Hollo were both in residence as teachers at the famous workshop for a spell, but probably wielded greater influence in the bars and cafes off campus. More than thirty small presses and magazines sprouted up during the period. Among the most interesting were

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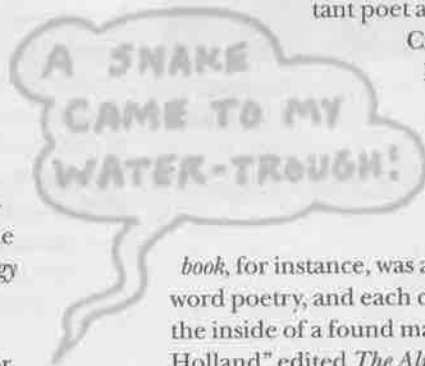
Poetry Comics 1  
 (1979), edited  
 and drawn by  
 Dave Morice.

*This, Toothpaste* (later *Dental Floss*), *Gum, Hills, Matchbook, Search for Tomorrow, Blue Wind, Poetry Comics*, and *The Spirit That Moves Us*. A genuine "movement" evolved, and Darrell Gray's articulate and rousing manifesto of "Actualism" appeared in *Gum* 9 (January 1973). It begins, "Actuality is never frustrated because it is complete." And ends, "Why belabor the impossible?" *The Actualist Anthology* appeared in 1977. *Toothpaste* was edited by poet and printer Allan Kornblum, who is now the director

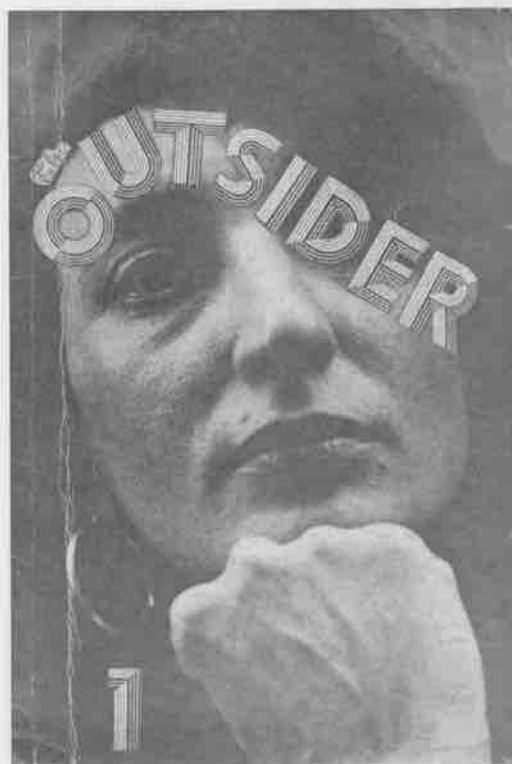
of its direct descendant, *The Coffee House Press*. Dave Morice (a.k.a. Dr. Alphabet, a.k.a. Joyce Holland) has been an important poet and teacher in Iowa

City since the mid-60s. His magazines and books continue to stretch the limits of language (and publishing) in subtle ways. *Match-*

*book*, for instance, was a magazine of one-word poetry, and each copy was stapled to the inside of a found matchbook. "Joyce Holland" edited *The Alphabet Anthology* in



1973. Contributors to this anthology of one-letter poetry include Bruce Andrews ("O"), Larry Eigner ("e"), and Bernadette Mayer ("n"). Dave Morice began publishing his *Poetry Comics* in 1979, and Simon & Schuster later published (and then remaindered) a collection of this excellent work.



*The Outsider 1*  
(1960).

#### Beyond

Interesting magazines and presses flourished throughout the country as a network of literary publications kept far-flung poets and writers in contact with one another. Fine work could be found in *Margins* (which published reviews and writings on poetics), *Grist* (established in Kansas in 1964 by John Fowler, *Grist* is now publishing online at <http://www.thing.net/~grist/>), *Quixote*, *The Wormwood Review*, *Io*, *Truck*, *Suck-Egg Mule*, *Duende*, *Wild Dog*, *The Fifties*, *The Sixties*, and *The Outsider*. *The Outsider* represents an extreme act of publishing and deserves special mention. Edited and published in New Orleans by Jon Edgar and Louise "Gypsy Lou" Webb, *The Outsider* was lavishly (one imagines even maniacally) produced by letterpress with a wide range of interesting and unusual materials. Yet in spite of its formal sophistication, it still manifests the indomitable spirit of the mimeo revolution by virtue of its devotion to such writers as Charles Bukowski and Kenneth Patchen, both of whom were recipients of the "Outsider of the Year" award. Other contributors to this "book periodical" were Robert Creeley, Douglas Woolf, Gary Snyder, Larry Eigner, William S. Burroughs, Michael McClure, and Barbara Moraff.

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### Canada, England, Scotland, Europe, and Australia

Of course, kindred acts of experimental writing and publishing were committed around the world. For a time, in the 60s and 70s, Toronto might well have boasted the largest number of avant-garde poets per capita of any city on the face of the earth. The great Coach House Press has been a vortex for innovative writing and publishing since its inception in 1966. Among the many Coach House titles are Michael Ondaatje's *The Dainty Monsters*, *Journeying and the Return* by bp Nichol, *Excellent Articles of Japan* by David Rosenberg, *The Great Canadian Sonnet* by David McFadden and Greg Curnoe, *Neil Young* by Tom Clark, *Ow's Waif* by Steve McCaffery, *Bill Jubobe* by Bob Cobbing, and Nicole Brossard's *A Book*, to mention only a few of the works published during its first decade. Throughout Canada, writers, editors, performers, publishers – instigators-at-large – worked through such presses and magazines as *Contact*, *blewointment*, Coach House Press, the *Ant's Forefoot*, *Tish*, Periwinkle Press, Intermedia, Talonbooks, Very Stone House, Ganglia Press, Oberon, *grOnk*, *Open Letter*, and *Weed*. A great deal of memorable work, particularly in the realms of concrete and sound poetry, emanated from Canada (especially Toronto and Vancouver) during the period. bp Nichol's



presence and example were an inspiration for many, and his untimely death in 1988 was a great tragedy.

A quick sketch of presses and magazines operating in other parts of the world would have to include, in England, *My Own Mag*, *Aloes*, *Stereo Headphones*, Fulcrum Press, Coracle Press, *Aggie Weston's*, Writers' Forum, Beau Geste Press, Gaberbocchus, and Cape Goliard/Grossman; in Scotland, *Poor*, *Old. Tired. Horse.* (and the work of its editor, Ian Hamilton Finlay, in general); in the Netherlands, *Kontexts*; in Germany, Edition Hansjörg Mayer; in France, *Merlin* and *OU*; and in Australia, *The Ear in a Wheatfield*.

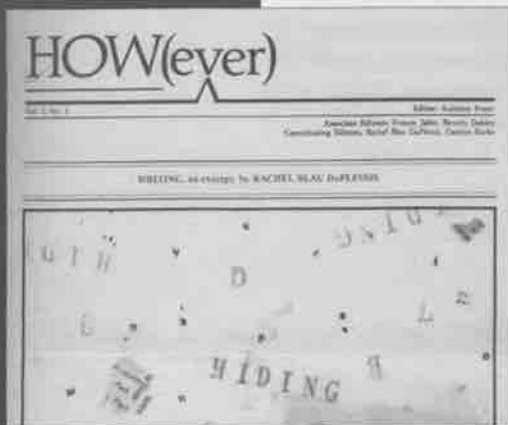


## Women's and Feminist Writing

Great strides were made in the development of women's and feminist writing during the late 60s and through the 70s. Ron Silliman observed in 1982 that "the single most significant change in American poetry over the past two decades is to be seen in the central role of writing within feminist culture, which in 1982 is (for good reason) the largest of all possible verse audiences."<sup>11</sup> Important developments among women and feminist poets run parallel to the New American Poetry but rarely intersect during the 1960–1980 period, except perhaps as they relate to the creation of independent poet-operated women's presses. The establishment, for example, of Judy Grahn's The Women's Press Collective in Oakland in 1969 and Alta's Shameless Hussy Press in Berkeley were crucial in providing a venue for women's literary voices to speak out. These writers (with significant exceptions) felt self-consciously apart from the more experimental side of poetry and determined that their concerns might perhaps be more directly served through populist modes of expression. The example of work by such writers as Adrienne Rich, Judy Grahn, Pat Parker, Ntozake

Shange, and Susan Griffin, among many others, was important in defining and foregrounding issues particular to women and feminists that would be further explored over the next two decades. It is no coincidence that the magazine *HOW(ever)*, edited by Kathleen Fraser and first published in May 1983, opens with the questioning "And what about the women who were writing experimentally? Oh, were there women poets writing experimentally? Yes there were, they were." Fraser, working with contributing editors Frances Jaffer, Beverly Dahlen, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, and Carolyn Burke (and later with Susan Gevirtz, Chris Tysh, Myung Mi Kim, Meredith Stricker, Diane Glancy, and Adalaide Morris), published sixteen issues (in six volumes) between 1983 and 1992. Unlike many other feminist magazines, *HOW(ever)* was framed in a literary context and traced its history to include Emily Dickinson, Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, and Dorothy Richardson. Thus, *HOW(ever)* set out to be, as Jaffer expressed it in the first issue, "A vehicle for experimentalist poetry—post-modern if you will, to be thought of seriously as an appropriate poetry for women and feminists." Contributors and topics include Norma Cole, Karen Riley, Kathy Acker on humility, Lyn Hejinian, Caroline Burke on Mina Loy, Johanna Drucker on canon formation, a group of writings on Barbara Guest, Laura Moriarty, Joan Retallack, Gail Scott, and the various editors, among many others.

11. Ron Silliman, ed., "Language Writing," *Ironwood* 20 [vol. 10, no. 2] (Fall 1982): 68.



*HOW(ever)*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1985).

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## African American Writing

African American literary magazines of the years 1960–1980 were rarely devoted exclusively to literary concerns – more often they presented a mix of cultural expression and political commentary in an ongoing effort to battle the racism, oppression, and violence that characterized the era. The history of the African American little magazine runs rich and deep, and a beginning look would include such publications as *Freelance*, *Confrontation*, *Callaloo*, *Soulbook*, *Umbra*, the *Journal of Black Poetry*, and *Hambone*, among many others. As with feminist writing, third-world writing, and writing by people of color in general, the trajectory of African American poetry charts a somewhat different course than that of the New American Poetry and nearly always speaks to its own audience of its own issues and on its own terms. One fascinating and eclectic example is *Yardbird Reader*. Edited by Ishmael Reed, Al Young, Shawn Wong, Frank Chin, and William Lawson, it ran for five volumes, from 1972 to 1976. A vast range of writing from many cultures was presented, including African Americans, Asian Americans, Colombians, Puerto Ricans, Filipino-Americans, Franco-Americans, Anglo-Americans, North Africans, Kenyans, and Caribbeans. *Y'Bird*, edited by Ishmael Reed, continued the work after the demise of *Yardbird Reader*. In 1978, Grove Press



*Yardbird Reader*, volume 1, edited by Al Young and Ishmael Reed (Berkeley: Yardbird Publishing, 1972).

published a collection of work from *Yardbird Reader* entitled *Yardbird Lives!* Dudley Randall's Broadside Press in Detroit was a prominent venue for the Black Arts Movement, and during the late 60s and throughout the 70s published such writers as June Jordan, Lucille Clifton, Raymond Patterson, Etheridge Knight, Audre Lorde, Dudley Randall, Alice Walker, and Sonia Sanchez, among many others. LeRoi Jones and Larry Neal edited the provocative *Black Fire: Anthology of Afro-American Writing*, published in 1968.

## Conclusion

In 1982, Grove Press published *The Postmoderns: The New American Poetry Revised*. Edited by Donald Allen and George Butterick, this anthology confirms the prophecy of its predecessor. In the opening sentence of its introduction, it boldly proclaims its intention "not to deal comprehensively with the full range of recent American poetry but with that poetry written in America since the Second World War which, by its vitality alone, became the dominant force in the American poetic tradition." It is this vitality which is the unifying element in all the various intertwined and tangled schools and movements described above. In the heyday of the mimeo revolution it was called "the indomitable spirit," and it is our hope that this collection will serve as a vivid reminder for those who were there, and as a source of inspiration for poets and publishers now and of the future. As William Carlos Williams reminds us,

It is difficult  
to get the news from poems  
yet men die miserably every day  
for lack  
of what is found there.

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