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milk home

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Todd COLBY

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Willie SMITH

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Wanda PHIPPS

Richard KOSTELANETZ

thurston MOORE

Tom HIBBARD

Michael ROTHENBERG

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Cid CORMAN

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**milk**

magazine

***volume three***

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J.J. BLICKSTEIN

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**New!** A Day in the Life of  
Two Artists:  
*The Art of Yvonne Jacquette  
and Rudy Burckhardt*, By  
Vincent KATZ

**Apoc-Collapse:**  
PostFluxPost Booklets from  
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MALANGA

interview with Allen  
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Paola IGLIORI



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## Clayton ESHLEMAN

### MORPHOLOGIES OF PARADISE

*"I soil the paper to prepare it  
for hallucinations. I reverse the  
day's attempt to assassinate me."*

—Matta

Shamanic jimson in everyone, the human Xibalba  
a cosmogonic patch where twisting language retwists,  
metaphorizing at the speed of dream, touching  
the opaque shoulders of smoking trees, lighting  
campfires in the backs of gigantic caterpillars.  
This perception of paradise, first apprehended in  
the Upper Paleolithic, I experience asleep,  
via dreaming. Paradise is close, so close as to be  
maddening. Paradise is in our brains.

What Blake calls Albion is this ancient creative zone.  
The Fall is not original sin,  
the Fall is that abyss between here and original imagination,  
which we inherit as shamanic longing.

As one attempts to cross an abyss, metaphors  
transmogrify so quickly  
the initiate's receiver jams, loses its bearing,  
deconstructs, like those divers  
making their way through the 500 foot  
waterfilled tunnel leading to the Cosquer cave—  
the silty kicked-up sediment blinded them,  
they lost their way among submerged stalagmites,  
drowned.

In the 1940s, the 20th century broke in two.  
A revised version of hybrid man  
—Auschwitz and Lascaux in the same brain—  
complexed its obsession with "homeland".  
Fueled with primal glory and Zyklon B, he sings:

"I'm always trying to get back  
to my little caul shack on Ancestor Delta.  
If somebody else—Kosovar, Arab, or Jew—  
happens to be there,  
I'll claim *he is air*, and plant my fangs  
in his 'absence.'"

I sat down on the steps of the Ivory Tower and wept. The American's Guatemalan husband had not only been kidnapped but tortured and murdered. She doesn't know but knows, her 11 year old

son is nearly cross-eyed with knowing, and I know, sitting on the bed's edge, before Channel 12. Trying to gag her terror and grief, so as to carry on with the interview, she finally pulled her blouse up over her face—as if to teach me another dimension of "the faceless woman" said to crouch on a bridge below the roots of the World Tree. I dream of lifting up this head, and assessing its weight, knowing full well it is impossible to weigh the unending assault on women's bodies and personalities by the guardian husbands and brothers.

"Be forever dead in Eurydice"

Be forever born in Persephone.

A run runs through the morphologies of paradise.

Boogie-woogie of our diagrammatic sentence:

death and the possibility of redemption in a single act.

For 1500 years, Eleusis, spiritual homeland of the Greeks.

What *did* the initiates behold—which they were sworn on the penalty of death to not reveal—in the Telesterion?

- 1] An ear of corn repeated in silence?
- 2] A cereal wafer, the seed-*kore*, which they ate?
- 3] The Divine Child, or Savior, variously named Brimus, Dionysus, Triptolemos, Iasion, or Eleuthereros the Liberator, laid in a manger (or winnowing basket), whose flesh was eaten by the initiates in the form of bread, made from the first or last sheaves?
- 4] An artificial vagina, kept in the *cysta mystica*, which they touched?
- 5] An omphalos, or birth cone, representing the cervix, with fruits and flowers, and a child emerging from a horn of plenty?
- 6] The spirit of Persephone herself, returned from the dead with her new-born son, conceived in the land of death?

Whatever they beheld—since it was said to bestow happiness, the true life, freedom, respite from all troubles—must have confirmed to them: *after they entered the earth they would rise again.*

And who knows as well what the sacred king saw the instant the goddess veil was lifted—  
an afterlife? The origin of life? A scowl-veil of eternal gray?

Ah, dear tricky veil, you make us think, quest,  
you are the rent/unrent conundrum  
provoking our initiational probes to translate  
the plutocracy of the literal.

Not to lift or rend, but to translate the veil.  
The head of Hercules must be veiled  
for the god, via omenta symbolics, to be reborn.  
Yet we know that rebirth too  
is a halfway house.

No one has been to death  
and returned to say: Emily is there, following her fly,  
or, Artaud is happy, he has learned to bowl,  
or, Pinochet is a 60 jab-a-second forked barbecue.  
Dear veil, speak to us of your fiber origin!

"We, the Mothers of Lascaux, extracted  
fibers from celestial plants, located  
the entheogens, set undulating  
broken lines as colling winds, winding torrents.  
Channels of moisture circulated in our mouths  
imbuing thread-like fibers with helicoid strength  
by opening/closing our jaws, working  
our entire faces, while breathing, we formed sound  
    strands, speech lattices,  
what you call the revealed Word,  
    the veil word—  
thus to lift the veil is an act we Mothers disavow.  
To lift the veil would be to see the earth  
naked, speechless, as on the first day,  
amidst the chaos of origin fiberless spirit,  
    the not we knotted."

## CRANIOLOGUE

Wearing my reconstruction mask  
I rest, a 90,000 year old skull.  
Having been tumbled by Olson, Pound, Williams and Homer,  
my age is ridiculous. You can't begin to grasp me,  
even my youth. In the Border Cave I have to tell you  
hyenas and porcupines worked over my skeleton.  
Only my cranium remains, thus the epic and the long poem,  
thus the attempt to write into paradise.  
On the frontier between South Africa and Swaziland  
I ponder tectonic shift,  
and darling I must tell you I also wonder about  
the Panama Isthmus which Steven Stanley claims led to  
my presence among, I mean its lifting to seal  
the Atlantic from the Pacific some 2.5 million years ago,  
eliminating woods where I clambered and climbed  
as Australopithecus, meaning I had to evolve or die,  
and most of me died, my life was and is  
at the hands, nay at the uterus of the planet.  
I had to come down, be terrestrial and deal with  
sabertooth, a horror unknown until the 20th century.  
The gist is converted, invented a baby sling,  
made use of my foetal-surge brain,  
learned to bond, and to shape rock.  
I am much more successful than you who read me,  
I speak, as a kind of gay son of rock,  
or the pore of one origin,  
frozen, immensely disadvantaged, but an acute  
failure the poets have had to transform.  
All long poems lead back to me,  
not heroics, or the tragic eclipse of love,  
dryness darling meant I went on,  
I and my columbines, my radiant nicked progeny,  
thus I also speak as the gay daughter of rock,  
for as a 90,000 year old no one can locate my voice box,  
I disappeared into you, or  
into the prototype of you,

my mask is calcium white and I did not ask for it,  
I would have preferred to confront you  
as Atleventheneira, one of my names is the now-called  
Dordogne, only 30,000 years ago.  
But neither the visionary nor the personal  
can account for the planetary roundness of my skull  
nor the 20th century white mask  
lending it the dagger-chin of so-called humanity.  
What gets me about the Panama Isthmus ascending  
and via conveyor belt winds  
creating the Ice Age is that the oldest myths I know of  
involve a cosmic dive of animals or shamans  
bringing up earth from the depth of primal seas.  
Is there a dream that old?  
Can it be found? Or must I muse here in a drawer  
that the oldest dream or vision  
has under it that rising Isthmus?  
Absolutely fantastic! Unbelievable!  
As am I, perched, as a photo, in a book,  
a *Homo* link, a homunculink,  
my skull a rise, no more,  
something lifting into view,  
land bridge, the creation of humankind  
masked by white that is surely the void.

---

## Ron PADGETT

### Medieval Salad Dive

I don't see why I can't dive into that salad bowl  
and rough up the lettuce, shaking my blubbery jowls  
and uttering great guttural growls, Grrr, I'm  
a medieval German and I'm feeling frisky and  
in need of salad dressing! So bring on the fine lady  
who wails perpetually, "O Wotan, strike me dead  
if I'm to face another day!" Strike the tambour  
and stomp your cruddy feet, men of my tribe,  
for tonight I dive into the salad bowl!

---

## Richard KOSTELANETZ

*from 1001 OPERA LIBRETTI*

A young couple, recently married, attempt to defy a new state law forbidding procreation.

The languid, multimedia portrayal of the obsessions and problems of a Communist politician's daughter's undergoing psychoanalysis in pre-War Berlin forecasts an unhappy end.

A terminally ill insurance investigator initiates a complicated scheme to be charged with murder and thus sentenced to death, causing his family to collect a generous insurance settlement; but for reasons beyond his control, his plans go awry posthumously.

Just after a young girl learns the facts of life from a beloved aunt who is dying, love blossoms, prompting the girl to break away from her mother surrogate to become an independent adult.

A fading pop singer falls in love with a legally underage girl with pop-music ambitions.

Juvenile zombies guard diamonds hidden in a sunken ship, initially from piracy by their avaricious parents and then from retired policemen.

A teenage black gang, railroaded into long prison terms for crimes they did not commit, becomes a popular cause for fashionable people, who eventually succeed in exonerating the young men, the story ending, alas, before we can discover whether they can use their rediscovered freedom beneficially.

A masked rider becomes a hero for the oppressed, successfully stealing from the rich to give to the poor until his untimely death.

The protagonist finds a strange coin that gives him an inexplicable but visible power over others.

An African American housekeeper with theatrical aspirations is suddenly asked to substitute for her boss, a temperamental star, and after a successful debut, visible to all, becomes a potential star herself.

A series of confrontations between a purportedly defecting spy and the counter-intelligence agent who wants to unmask the defector as a devious double agent.

A hacker-nerd falls for a preternaturally devious teenager (of indefinite gender) who initiates him into a life of computer crime.

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## Linh DINH

### Blue

In some languages, the word "blue" does not exist. In others, the word "green." In my native language, the word "color" does not exist.

A man was given everything in life but the color blue. All would have gone well had he not been told of his deprivation. Thereafter, he vowed to destroy everything in his path: home, country, confidantes, God, all the other colors . . .

Because I cannot pronounce the word "blue," whenever my conversation calls for "blue," I always say "red" instead.

## The Proper Age For Marriage

What is the proper age for marriage, you may ask? During the last or next war, a woman is married to a soldier. He could be dead or mutilated at any moment without her knowing. She remembers almost nothing about him except his trembling legs. To simulate this effect, she places one of his army pants on a chair, and fans it rapidly.

---

## Tom CLARK

### In Water World

The sea repeats itself in dreams, a green-gray world of water  
Calm boats frozen in shade  
Pale blank clouds, pines, rocks and kelp shrouds  
Like woolly fish in mist pink distance floating  
The beach stretches as far as the sand bar  
Clean detached waves wash over dry stone, tears of rain drift  
The water is perfectly still, restructuring everything

### A Trip to Oblong Oyster Island

I

Summer evening on Oblong Oyster Island:  
A duskish river-dragon stretched along  
The inverted bed of a daffodil sky  
And then slipped into the bosom of the lake,  
Leaving the lean-headed eagles to yelp alone,  
If indeed that's what those noble birds were;  
While foxlike in the vine, purple spirits,

Wreathed by clouds of dangling river-smoke,  
Protect the villagers from (or expose them to?) all harm.

## II

And ghastly through the blue drizzling rain  
On the bald street the blank day broke, a flower  
Crushed underfoot in the valley by giants  
As the pimpernel dozed, and the slender  
Acacia began to shake so violently  
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake—  
Another day of the imagination  
On Oblong Oyster Island.

## III

We decided to run down to the cove  
Across the mile of warm sea-scented beach  
(For once the biting flies were having a siesta)  
To where the startled boats are banged against by waves  
While the stunted sails on the large horizon  
Take on dubious proportions, suspended  
Like the eyes of the luminous-nosed fish  
Which gleam outward, a sea of beacons  
Aswim in the coal-black looking-glass calm  
Of night on Oblong Oyster Island.

## IV

The Disembodied Sleeping Sages of Oblong Oyster Island  
With their stovepipe hats, small beards and semi-permanent frowns  
Will linger on in my imagination,  
I fear, long after the sharp tang of the island's  
Excellent cheeses has faded from my taste buds.

---

# Anselm BERRIGAN

## Space my reviewable future (a creation myth)

Mistrial sanctity  
green panda blanket  
Imports and preserves me  
Vichy body tarmac  
how many more fuckspace

poems do I have to deface  
launchable crackspace  
what dirt rose maps chemistry  
chopped slowly but foul  
mistrial fern  
was severely compressed  
durspace burial  
coronary mistrial  
legs small triangle scars  
bogart you grab my arm  
it will break  
and I will get away  
Wanna see my ticket stub  
for evolutiocoronary up  
spaced mistrial's old hotel?  
more than any  
o mistrial  
perscoronary  
I rely on space  
for my security  
and well bespaceg  
it is coronarily logical  
to conclude I  
must be attentive  
to mistrial's vulnerabilities  
I must pay careful  
attention to promoting space  
and protecting space  
my spaceterest  
space spaceterest  
The one who  
controls space  
is the one who  
will wspaceen mistrial  
next war.  
Daddy, will you  
pray with me?  
Let me  
tell you  
what you  
dcoronary't  
need  
how come  
mistrial history  
of mistrial  
left off  
mistrial list  
isn't sixty-five dollars  
space my reviewable future?  
until he killed  
civilians god smiled  
he's coronary mistrial  
of his mspaced.  
she's bustspaceg  
through mistrial  
wall and captaspace  
wcoronary't you  
understand mistrialm  
ever? This lspacee elegy.  
he's a down to earth

failed oilman turned  
nuclear arsenal wielder  
because he skipped  
his thirtieth anniversary  
Yale reunicorony  
like my bromistrialr  
he is ambivalent  
about his educatiocorony

## All Ears

I'm a scavenger not a doctor  
I charge nothing for services to strip  
mending is an impossibility for me  
as in the home all intimate details  
are details. Are you not the angry  
star of your own tomb-filled churchyard?  
Identity theft is the fastest growing  
crime in America today. Fork-sticker  
in a corpse's rep, very recorded  
human history. #3.50 for that  
thirty-five grand 1st edition in  
your window, if asked by the corpse's  
blood? Harry?

## And the prayer thou hearest me making

It's like you and the chimp have  
been sheperd's pie together for years  
wearing a dude's glassnet ratings  
how do I know your work is as  
good as I'm not being paid to say so?

## At the Meridien

documentary dust laces the bowl  
moth worms sprung from unnuked birdseed  
lay all over beads of sweat  
the bird would stalk a flash to preen on the keyboard's shoulder  
wanton belly schmooze grafted to elegiac dismemberings  
available on a double digit page number, white sweat

on Avenue D to buy ice water overdefending the canal zone  
via integrity-of-the-complete-asshole defense  
warped acolytes transgress at the panel  
in my head: granite stuffing  
underneath trampoline, eight variations  
on the theme of willful unemployment  
desert critters with cable, an invoice  
was going to be here first, black square on white wall  
bird shit caught by NY Post cover newsprint:  
"America takes its vengeance on Timothy McVeigh"  
laying on hardwood sagging in the middle Dutch Elm Disease manual  
Modest Mouse spins by postcard red dot and blue foothills  
dapper twit spazzing in the blacklight  
tree pollen down throat  
baked beans and escargot  
in the present tense, sprayer aimed away from nest

---

## thurston MOORE

### this is allen ginsberg:

baby girl reaches for his face  
his nose  
glasses  
anything

tries to stick her thumb in his mouth  
a curious and favorite past-time

children everywhere  
do it

the viscuous  
pulpous  
mouth

and now:

heres one  
with beard!

shes 3 yrs old

he sucks her thumb  
into his mouth

and out

and in

here is a grown up

---

## Aaron BELZ

### FUNNEL

Language wishes she didn't have so many words in her,  
or at least that people would be quiet more often.

You're drunk, and you think language wants to be tickled.  
I personally understand, but it bugs the shit out of her.

She loved it when I went to the Grand Canyon and screamed  
the single word "funnel." I only had to scream it once,

and bats peeled out of the underbrush, rats scampered,  
a stagnant pond stayed quiet under its echoing top.

A wilderness bunny came out from under a bush and flopped  
at my feet, exhausted. (I felt so pampered,

not having to forage for bunny food in killing canyon heat.)  
But back to the single scream, after doing it only once

I felt Language wriggle and try to get away from me,  
but I knew in my heart that she really wanted me to chase her.

She began to talk (a glorious thing) and told me about a joke  
someone played on her, papering her office with memos.

She said she thought it was funny at first, that a rose  
by any other name, yadda yadda, but then began to feel sick

just from the jumble of garbage around her. She said  
it gave her a kind of anxiety that words cannot express.

### PENCILS

This is the ballad of pencils: don't be scared.  
Mourn only the lost sufferers who ate their candy bars in fear.

Fear led them to a life half lived, as we've learned;  
bite your erasers, boys, and watch the comets streak.

If it weren't for frozen pansies in a broken Spring  
our attention spans would have been cut short,

but not for long. The team's mascot jumped down  
through empty bleachers tonight. You don't want the curse

of remembering—but even less, the curse of misforgetting.  
It is a thin spectre alive in the middle of the mind.

Forget what you'll forget, and write everything down  
tremulously; for one vacant look, one death,

signals to us the end of mischief . . . and of life.  
The beast will raise its rotten horns and whimper like a wife.

Those garlands, young romantic, we so earnestly deplore  
will hang upon our banisters, our fences, and our doors.

## **ZEEES AND EFFS**

First, try to market yourself after a long pause.  
Then open your pockets and show people how much  
money you brought along for lunch and just in case.

Let it fall out like rain on the ground.  
Then stand there, fancy buffoon that you are,  
and speak cloyingly about the virtues of the avant-garde,

the subtle wonders of a couple of things that have come  
down the pike since you graduated from college.  
Are you a man of common sense? Then prove it

by straightening your tie backstage before the show.  
Remember: you are it. There is nothing between  
you and your desired wish. Even if you put up

a cheap stereotype in the place of your human shape,  
no newspaper reporter or part-time cosmetologist  
will be able to penetrate the façade you have so nobly

erected, or estimate the amount of time you spent  
preparing your moral fibre—pressing it, kneading it  
into shape, shuffling away the unwanted chunks.

# Jane JORITZ-NAKAGAWA

## Postcard

hard edge in middle diamond surrounded  
by rough velvet reef fingers lost  
contours of baroque thick  
gooeyness statue on your head icing  
on cake bludgeon  
in chest when drum is banged voice satin neckrising  
and falling waves of frozen

I am always crying

ocean days you regret on a beach melody  
where you can imagine living can't finger  
pulling me somewhere  
never been with swells that don't undulate out of  
control and don't want to leave necessarily except  
for

hotel man drumming his finger  
impatiently on oak desk

## Vein

woman as dairy farm alone  
eating in restaurants (no  
not that again!) to avoid the inevitable  
smoking alone checking  
diaries alone in dreams where  
big breasts deflate upon awakening deflate  
when i see you  
(when not hyperventilating)  
when not seeing you  
when not simple hypodermic

when not burrowing

better to be hallucinating hungry in a slightly  
weakened state  
like alaska  
neither famous nor real woman to

create orgasmic experience never  
stopping never grabbing  
forever bound or  
immanent stampede

## Ruins

man in a cap behind  
a tractor infinite  
rows

behind curtains  
open spaces part  
bled through

road stretches accommodates  
cup left  
on a greying sofa

bouncing eyes  
closed as if  
sleep

serum  
(similarly) spilt on the floor a  
lit

metal sign noisily  
moving in  
high wind

lunge in a  
neon desert bleached  
tree parted

squeals thump  
slap of an outstretched  
hand if clasping

of muscles relaxing  
coat on rack  
gripping

foolish like  
love sandwich  
wish

brownish green  
light spreading late  
withholding tax

fabric brushed  
against consequence  
accidentally

# William ALLEGREZZA

## 1.

questioning the order is reasonable  
see segal—that's what the monsters are for  
the chthonic figures that threaten our sanity  
the gorgon or  
the sphinx

our boundaries are ambiguous  
and revenge is a mixed form that brings the drive for power  
into focus  
(as heraclitus said, thought is common to all)

## 2.

in forgetting the arrangement of hours  
the phenomenal intercession replaces  
the hand-maker with contentment and pattern  
or patterns before the organization extends  
lines like fire over desert valleys

## 3.

to  
you  
lightning  
dull press  
the organized  
dig for  
soil reclamation  
project  
#606372212

let's listen  
to the  
results

## 4.

at night you speak slowly  
around us in the air that  
trembles with metal rainfall

vanity

and the important mission bleak

our eyes are five in resignation  
but still we hear heels on the concrete  
and the sound of light hands groping

---

## Tom HIBBARD

*from* GIHON

### Chapter 33

I don't protest or object  
I don't have an answer  
stoicism is the only sign  
that someday the ground  
will utter a banging  
noise like a brush being thrown in  
a mop bucket

the search is endless  
for a way to say  
it's no different  
whichever way you look at it

the things you are given you can't keep  
an inch away  
is as far as a thousand miles

a time will come  
when you won't want anything else  
the coffee cup  
will arrive like each season  
and you will not ask it to be different  
or think that life needs to be  
something other than what it is

don't lose heart  
in the rag-tag procession  
that wards off stinging garments  
arguing that your less is more  
that your more is less  
dodging your being resigned  
with shamed contortion

words resonate with sounds  
the system doesn't go far out of its way  
plans melt into action  
that aids both sides  
knowing no definiteness or simple truth

go through the instructions once  
leaving behind something for  
the fatherless and sojourner  
at the bureau of tourism and library

you have bound me to my fellows  
by removing the hectic exhortations  
the distracted polemics  
from mute tomorrow

these are problems we all can live with  
the comic beacon exploring alone  
hope's implications  
whose proof  
is only hearsay evidence

cut off from the apocalypse of myself  
repeatedly trying to destroy peonies  
putting off the intolerable  
treasure map of my heart

I have attempted to take credit for the summers  
perhaps i have exaggerated  
the amount of my own negligence  
criticizing one's enemies with a lie  
I was only trying to help out

what is happening to us  
in this land that doesn't exist  
that resists every attempt  
to settle once and for all

inextinguishable impulse of humanity to hide  
muddies with anticipation  
the image we in turn  
inhabit with our dying  
our inconsistent examples of delight  
only the foundation remains  
upon which nothing lasting can be built

---

## Mike TOPP

### INFLUENTIAL

I am wholesome yet heavily laden with sexual undertones. You'll never be able to watch the Sound of Music again without thinking of me.

## IMITATION OF LIFE

Hey Mikey! He likes it!

## WHERE I WANNA ((B)) IN THE NEXT ROUND

Floating on a bagel spread with Philly cream cheese. Ummm . . . himmlisch!

## MY BOYFRIEND

In my dreams he has no head. That can't be good.

## TIC TOC

When clocks say they have a Quartz Movement, what exactly are they talking about?

---

## Dana WARD

### 'The Varieties of Religious Experience'

'there is a verge of the mind which these things  
haunt;'

—William James

there was a baseball, waddling

like a wounded baby chicken  
limping w/ drastic formality  
clobbered by learned repose  
'I forked my body for money  
but the food in me was sick'  
senseamilla-climate ripe for growing  
between the Tennessee border &  
shadows of Kentucky  
a color field painting  
shaded by mountains  
the ears a box-fan,  
turning in the sunlight  
as if rounding a corner  
into acres of dogwood  
to later keep tones from a radio play

awake in the room in it's strings.

since it's only to be cold  
can the start  
of the ending turn  
in the window  
'the result of hypnotic suggestion'  
then continue,  
a loose confabulation  
of impossible spectrums &  
speculative language

to go on like this forever  
severing wires  
in alarms, floating  
here to hem of the porch  
car cold to the touch  
inside w/ the freon  
contaminating breath  
w/ respite, armory of air  
turning in the clear  
polish of dusk, blue  
drug store facade  
turned to aerosol-marks  
like stone

or fresh quartz, a quizzical  
stillness, the play in a prayer's  
rigid wish broken open,  
doesn't your mother  
look just like Laura Palmer,  
"I had lived in a duplex in Roanoke  
a ghost stirred up  
in the piles of phlox  
an intellect perplexed & baffled  
yet a trustful sense of presence  
lent my hand and spirit  
to another power other than my own"

## MARQUIS IN A GLASS

there is no machine  
Descartes in the womb of the unintended  
weapons and sharp tools in a dirty dish  
bleed the ghost of De Sade  
73,000 days in Bastille for an honest fetish?  
for practical love  
science a dull guillotine  
flesh upon flesh  
animal earth wet fish  
everything possible is scandalous  
you pull your cock out when you're scared  
to erase yourself  
in the darkness of cunt  
or the hinges of a door  
all awareness is illness  
angel whistling at a corpse salon short odors  
why not steal the children?  
irrational kiss  
thick rouge knuckled finesse  
what's more vulgar than the effete  
slap of the glove—Montaigne Napoleon?  
why beat the dog when you can feed the willing?  
a villain is a nice shirt with a wet smile  
and a ring in the tub . . .  
evil in the heart of the mirror  
hot pewter and broken glass  
blood fills slowly the meticulous slit  
fire "live" the thought  
across the room the heart of the body  
the scribbled voyeur alleges  
the benefit of the parasite  
walls spread the shadows  
and it's all about feeling  
barefoot and multiple various woods  
order is not geometric there are cheeses  
and liqueurs rice papers pistols and gods  
aristocracy is of the spirit  
brandy swaggers like candy  
on the lips of organs  
when spent  
we are agents of forgotten seasons  
left to cull the inquiry while Germans straighten the rivers out  
your feet touching mine  
at the foot of the door.

—for T. S. Monk

Monk put an apple on his head  
the notes were superstitious  
gathered in his knuckles &  
the hairs of his face.

High noon in the orchard.

He paced the floor like a small general  
His feet tore the parchment on the floor  
He disregarded the fires in his room &  
fondled the jungle on the brim of his hat.

Things burned without smoke  
The fire in the red drapes was as pure as milk  
& soft as a bird. He squeezed out  
the words from between his teeth

The words circled the room like small airplanes  
diminishing the echo in the fire  
adding time & perspective to  
the flaws in the room.

He muttered something about depth  
& distance, railroad tracks, the  
great flood. He rearranged his lapel  
& the furniture, tearing the heart out of the floor.

He pulled some stones out of his pocket  
got on his knees, called them notes,  
made a path from the door to the piano  
on the wall. He coddled & spoke to each stone

like a wounded bird. The apple rolled across  
the floor, he smiled at it & stepped  
on the fire at his feet.

---

## Michael ROTHENBERG

**APOCALYPTIC YEARNINGS**  
**October 2-7, 2001**

Blood and gold in leaves  
Framed in window  
Twenty feet back at desk  
Sitting here writing  
Inside my head thought

Sits in chair contemplating  
Misery of stone stuck  
In yellow clay derelict  
Riverbed, jaw, sunbleached  
Skeleton inhabited by  
Boy peers between shadows  
Wondering where's God

Manifest Destiny, Infinite  
Justice. Take care of details  
Go through changes  
Earth will conspire until  
She's feeling safe about  
The moon. Like hot fudge  
Sundae in a minefield  
Don't say those things  
You will regret. Close to  
The end. 5 minutes. Now

No. It's not going to change  
But there will be more  
To do. Make love to me now  
Or say goodbye. Great Truths  
I have forgotten who  
I am to know your needs  
Last night I said you'd find  
Your voice. You found a thread  
Weaves. Hanging from peace  
Flags. Oceans, skies, prayers  
This way. This discipline  
Act of selflessness in  
Face of incomprehensible  
Horror of impermanence  
Tree empty yards, bed empty  
Of lover who will lie  
Beneath the plume and sigh

This day belongs to panic  
Squirrel. Fir. Walnuts black  
Slippery rot. Among wind  
Chimes. Birdfeeder  
Yellow mums. Screen door  
Slams. I heard it. Vulnerable  
Space. Move potted plants in  
Build coal bin. Please don't  
Bend mail to fit it into box  
Pictures of leaves accelerated  
Fall. Gusts. In someone else's  
Mind. Plop! Walnuts. On steps  
Jets & 7,000 reruns of suicide  
Anthrax in Florida. India  
Hijack hoax. Russian plane  
Downed. Ten killed in  
Palestinian-Israeli clash  
Bus driver's throat slashed

"Everything seems to be  
happening in New York"-PW  
Snake in a woodpile. President

Bush can no more "rid the world  
of evil-doers" than he can stock it  
with saints—Arundhati Roy

Million Meditator March:  
Gospel singers. Sufi minstrels  
Fish drummers. Ministers, gurus  
Priests. Sword-swallowers  
Fortune Tellers. Alchemists in  
Central Park. Ex-communicated  
Astrologers. Economists  
Practicing organic solutions to  
Technological problems  
Automobile salesman  
On the wagon. Evangelists  
Offering free yoga to politicians  
Peace police themselves. 320  
million dollars U.S. aid to  
Afghanis. Amazing Grace  
Enlightened OM. Influence  
Peddling. Supplication. Beyond  
War-minded ego. Amen.

---

## Charles Henri FORD

**One hundred 69**  
**Haiku for Charles Henri**  
**By Charles Henri Ford**

What am I doing  
Here all alone? Reviewing the  
Multitudes I've known

Two William S.'s  
Made American History;  
Hart and Burroughs

Didn't Sinatra

Know you gotta have stamina  
To drink like he did

Ruth posed herself—did  
Everything except push the  
Button for Man Ray

Larry Sawyer—Premiere  
American surrealist  
Nuff sed

---

## Wanda PHIPPS

### morning poem #18

So far so mortgaged  
soon you'll know  
dubious powers  
they say squarely  
you keep Dali fashion  
high inclinations  
points look resourceful  
gains protect your  
birth wings don't  
cycle solitaire pick  
damn destiny  
remember carefully  
fresh lunar harvest

### morning poem #39

if she took off her top  
would that embarrass you  
would you smile  
and laugh nervously  
would there be  
room on the roof  
for the orgy  
if the music  
was a little louder  
would you remember  
the color of her eyes

### **Pre-recordings (from the Akashic Records)**

Are California and Nevada the same?  
Burping the Tupperware  
There was this guy who got stranded hiking  
and had to survive on melba toast and toothpaste  
An old woman wearing plastic rain cap and carrying  
brown paper bags? Take your time? kneeling bus  
stares at me through the window of Burger King  
Brushed a spider off my shoulder in Montgomery Street Deli  
A man a couple of seats down from me says "my name is Frank?  
Decent exposure? the hook n' ladder ball  
I know you don't like me? look I'm sorry? my name is Frank  
Learning Improper Naming  
I'm just trying to be friendly  
She's brunette all over  
If you were a man we'd beat you up? you're so easy to tease  
Drinking plastic straws  
You look like someone who'd go to France  
Die flut kommen sie hier  
Why aren't you in COMMUNICATIONS?  
He always writes "conservation" for "conversation"  
You look like the type  
Should I leave my terminal on?  
Don't you listen when you watch tv?  
"The Wheel of Death"  
Ever make noises when you yawn  
. . . and my finger dangled,  
and it sounds like you're in a cave?  
I can see that  
He's in his post-semiotic phase  
We're running out of Jumbo Clips  
Many people have believed in a pre-recorded Universe  
County of Kings  
"So, anyway, Tanguy had this painting . . ."

## R. MOORE

the top of my head  
is the source of poetry  
and the soul's exit—  
that's what a doctor told me  
who'd watched many people die

caught in a rainstorm  
i lost my way in Kyoto  
through dark alleyways—  
sudden footsteps behind me:  
you holding an umbrella

you invited me  
back to your apartment  
along the river—  
sadly i made an excuse  
and followed my footstep home

---

## Cid CORMAN

There is no end and  
there is no beginning—there's  
only always this.

\*

I leave my  
life with you

Make of it  
what you can.

\*

## **BASHŌ**

This retreat of mine  
a little old mosquito  
the entertainment.

\*

Something to be said  
or why would I be here or  
for that matter you?

\*

What could be clearer—  
a completely blue sky as  
empty as empty is.

\*

That's it—that's  
this and this  
  
you must ad-  
mit is you.

# Vincent KATZ

## Amazons of the Avant-Garde

—for Hoa and Dale

Varvara Stepanova stepped off a train more glamorous Hollywood diamond-studded sentiment centuries' in a handbag and valise Karole Armitage hails cab for Tanaquil Leclercq she had boarded in the steppes she stepped off the curb into a gutter on Oscar night Nadezhda Udaltsova assault common perception for as much as mark, to eat or dance while space is debated, frank frolics in west Cubist syntax? a fore-mentioned chunk, a chomp of apple in th' mouth lettered dress assign to mix freefall, glazes sit in puddles, smooth think and accrue those edges to frames okay to mimic freestanding waste, Olga Rozanova never sniffed Europe's keys, scarf whipped by wind night obliterates Futurist coffee and doughnut as well as Kazimir zaum Pub (Auction) was blinkered system forced meeting of wrap-induced symmetry resented fabric Pablo textile Paul Exter Alexandra assumes rigid complacency or slipped consonant you see a rhythm hyped inner ceramics or theater non-objective Italy France in doing not making Gonchorova of course alights mildly assisted breakdown flighted rich broad vision post-sillinesses convincing her men of planar spike roamed machinery okay public phallic cross ahead Mikhail Larionov Liubov Popova popped Le Fauconnier deft Samarkand resolve prick had reached an impasse devoted rest of her life to design and book

## Art

When he looks at  
anyone, he sees:  
dollars. And she  
wasn't adding up.

Funky floozy  
in a sideways suit.  
Dank idiocy phonic  
lackluster suck.

There's a price tag,  
and also a sense  
of importance.  
Raw cattle prod.

The Pulitzer-  
nominated  
journalist

jerks off.

The Critic  
would rather  
be watching  
television.

## Chamfered Guerdon

the perquisite summers rested in his lap  
dalliance forebade innocuous stammering  
aweigh glinted forecast in seismic stutter  
he glanced at the trawler intact unbuyable

rest wearied Hunk stepping from his bath  
obloquy at once the only response from  
death he sits shimmers flaunting equally  
starch and dearth commonsense pulling

traipse the boundaries highjinks whiff  
origin and progress sentiment fin whisk  
sideline management husky fortitude  
wingless courage inserted look faraway

winchless toddy, marred packer sipped  
waylay previous styles of search, ribbing  
posthumous clutch defined in striptease  
ignorant blessing bells afront rip torrid

## Marisa To Liz

panties around  
ankles  
protuberance  
compared  
applied  
push-button  
phonecalls  
late night  
car rides  
soap shops

"monks"  
sidecar lust  
pre-teenage  
commercial  
rent week  
controversy

a slim request  
a chance around  
quest parried  
symbol freed  
but why is  
pepper shown  
nightly in  
fringe retreat?

and legs  
unformed  
and feet  
pronated  
and lips

## What Vincent Saw On 30th Street

plush boxes  
I never even thought to look down the street to the river  
a lawn is so rare in New York City  
loudspeaker next to plastic pint glass filled with butts  
rage soaring! high priest madness roiled  
I saw her coming  
bright lips tattered stockings tight skirt  
patch of cloth  
a nice fat one this morning  
many did not freak  
priestess hunkering over me

distortion pressed  
dark threaded stare  
X mars the spot  
sped-up kissing

insisted she write  
a pulsing from there  
and she would  
continuing

the dull throb rang in their eye  
fat window sucked in by pipes  
rain eyeing fat buttocks

a pale hint of memory  
harmony doubled as nasal  
hump of the whale wheezing

sister insister  
slick wagon

foreboding memory  
hunger peck

wry  
antidote

---

## Attila JOZSEF

translations by **Gabor GYUKICS** and **Michael CASTRO**

### Elegy

Beneath a leaden sky plum, condensed smoke,  
like my soul, trails low  
above the grim landscape.  
Swinging not gliding.

You stiff soul, you soft image!  
Following the heavy trace of truth  
glance at yourself, your origin!

Where below the liquid sky  
upon the loneliness of lank firewalls  
the moody silence of need  
threateningly begins, dissolves the thick  
gloom on the ponderers' hearts and mingles with  
millions.

A whole race is molded here.  
Everything in ruins.  
A stiff dandelion opens its parasol in  
abandoned foundry yards.  
Through faded stairs of tiny broken windows  
the days ascend to moldy twilight.  
Say—  
are you from here?  
Where the somber longing never ends  
to become like other wretched men,  
squeezed by this enormous age,  
and on their faces every line is deformed?

Resting, where the greedy

moral order is guarded, protected  
by shrieking, crippled  
fences.

Can you recognize yourself? Here the souls  
petulantly wait for a designed, beautiful, solid future  
like empty yards dreaming of nimble, noise weaving  
tall houses. Glass shards dried in the mud gaze  
with dull, stony eyes.

From the dunes, a thimbleful of sand  
whirls below at random . . . and from time to time  
blue, green or black flies flicker,  
magnetized by man's scraps,  
and rags  
from the lands of wealth.  
In her own way, setting a table, even here,  
the credit burdened,  
blessed mother earth.  
Yellow grass thrives in an iron spittoon.

Do you know  
what solemn joy draws me  
that this land allows me not,  
what rich torment pushes me here?  
For his mother a child,  
who's beaten to faraway corners,  
will return.  
Truly you can smile, you can cry only here.  
Here you can endure, only here,  
oh soul! This is my home.

—1933

## The Leaves on the Tree

The leaves on the tree  
sway slowly.  
They are all already warped, yellow  
and withered, soft,

A taciturn bird  
twists among them.  
AS if the tree were  
its cage.

That's how my song walks,  
sits hollow inside me,  
and with it, its quivering shadow,  
the silence.

—1934

## **My Fingers Possess Your Hair**

My fingers possess your hair, under your skirt  
my heart hides in wonder  
and the leaf of a calendar falls rustling.

My old threshold cries like a child  
when you come, to come more.

On a strong team my old days  
bite my ears gasping—  
why didn't you kiss us inside them?

And don't understand how pale, silly they are,  
that your eyes cannot possess their light.

—1926

## **Art Among Men**

She must have had wheels on her soles,  
the dancer had rolled into our eyes,  
she was simple, but shone, like a hummingbird.

Imagine a lanky demon swaying,  
stretching above the swamp.  
She'd bounded nicer than a young goat,  
or like a rompish sheepdog whelp  
when it runs and rolls on the lawn!

The year-round-sleepers would also happily  
swing their hips with her!

I don't even know who was next to me,  
as the cheers had whooped together inside us—

Then all at once the room grew cold  
and us, men, poor people again  
measured each other up, like strangers.

—1924

## **We Are Now at the Beginning of Creation**

Behold, the corpuscular man exists already,  
lives and moves,  
extends thoughts out of himself,  
retracts them and extends them again,  
to gain some space ahead.  
'til today he's struggled, now he saunters along,  
but he's strenuous, and thus becomes ever stronger.

The stern law is gracious because of us.  
We'll be efficient by tomorrow,  
we'll swim, run, fly easily  
and that's how it has to be,  
that then we won't care for anything, only  
for the clean clothes of our soul,  
for the virgin body of our yearned dreams,  
for his body to be song and truth,  
for his shape to be godlike,  
this future multi-cellular man,  
who will be thrown out of us,  
who will be us,  
the great Further-Creator,  
who this world now is sick for.

## **It Isn't Me Who Shouts**

It isn't me who shouts, it's the world that rumbles  
beware, beware, 'cause Satan's gone crazy,  
flatten yourself to the bottom of clear springs,  
smooth yourself out like a sheet of glass,  
hide behind the light of diamonds,  
among bugs under rocks,  
oh, hide yourself in freshly baked bread,  
you poor, poor . . .  
Ooze into the ground with fresh rain showers—  
in vain you bathe in yourself,  
you can wash your face only in others.  
Be a tiny edge on a single blade of grass  
and you'll be greater than the axis of the world.

Oh, machines, birds, branches, stars!  
Our barren mothers begs for a child.  
My friend, my dear, loving friend,  
either it's dreadful, or wonderful;  
it isn't me who shouts, it's the world that rumbles.

## Place Your Hand

Place your hand  
on my forehead,  
as if your hand  
were my own hand.

Guard me, as if  
you would murder,  
as if my life  
were your own life.

Love me, as if  
it were pleasant,  
as if my heart  
were your own heart.

—1928

## The Sun Still Smothers

The sun still smothers  
above smoldering mountains.  
Behind the shirt of gloom  
a meadow glimmers.

## My Homeland

My homeland, race and humanity  
I do know my obligation,

like a mournful stranger at the end of the procession,  
when someone gets buried with splendor.

## I Don't Belong to Anyone . . .

I don't belong to anyone, my word a flying mold  
I'm light and heavy like the cold.

## An Ancient Rat Spreads Disease . . .

An ancient rat spreads disease among us,  
the unconsidered thought  
gobbles up what we cooked  
and runs from man to man.  
That's why the drunk doesn't know,  
when he kills his fancy in champagne,  
that he gulps the empty soup of  
disgusted little poor folks.

And because spirit doesn't squeeze  
moist rights out of every nation  
a new odium startles the races  
against each other.  
The oppression croaks in choirs,  
flies upon living hearts and also on carcasses—  
misery oozes through the orbit,  
like saliva on the faces of idiots.

On famine's stickpin stuck summers  
hang their wings,  
machines crawl in on our souls,  
like bugs on sleepers.  
The grateful devotion nestled in our  
insides, tears roll into flames—  
the yearning for revenge chases conscience  
and vice versa.

Like a jackal that turns to throw  
its voice up to the stars,  
to our sky, where torments shine,  
the poet shrieks in vain . . .  
Oh, stars, you! Like rusty, rough  
daggers around around  
you stabbed me how many times—  
(here one succeeds only to die).

Still I'm hopeful. And tearfully implore you  
our beautiful future, don't be so dreary . . .  
I'm hopeful, for unlike our forbearers,  
we won't be impaled today.  
Soon the peace of freedom will arrive,  
pain will become refined—  
and we'll be forgotten finally  
in the shades of silent pergolas.

# mARK oWEns

## FREE INTERNATIONAL DIAL TONE SONG

- 1) open the phone book to international area codes
- 2) pick a collection of countries
- 3) dial the given area codes and make up the rest of the number until you get through to each country
- 4) note the different tones and rhythms of each call, but hang up before someone answers
- 5) visit the country with your favorite dial tone\*

\* *optional and not as free*

---

# Andre HOILETTE

## Duet Solo Dancers

—after Mingus

regular rhythm to  
love making: bass-alto  
(advance|recede)  
bass--alto  
(push||pull)  
bass---alto  
(wax| |wane)  
bass----alto  
)inhale|--|exhale(  
the rhythm so regular  
so ordinary, it is the heartbeat  
so mundane, changing the oil  
or raking leaves are commonplace companion thoughts  
parallel to the way her  
breasts look, heaving not yet, but  
sliding after thrust, nipples taunt:  
rosewood and whining like a clarinet  
and eyes, Eyes hazel and fixed  
on you, fawn(ish), mouth agape and taking  
the smallest draughts of air  
as you suspend the heaving torso  
under the armpits  
the lower extremities  
writhing in a wet communion and  
kissing,

lips sliding over to  
accommodate breath.

—8/16/01

---

## Willie SMITH

### DATING THE INFINITE

I went out with the infinite.  
We swapped spit  
in the backseat of a jalopy.  
Explored ourselves  
while ignoring the movie.  
Walked home from the parkinglot,  
falling all over each other.  
Detoured through the park.  
Dallied on a bench.

I sneaked a hand up her skirt.  
She held me by the stones.  
We gazed at the stars.  
I wanted to go all the way.  
She said I could have more and more,  
but not that.  
My mouth to her bosom sank.  
I kissed all galaxies known to man.  
Above a zillion crickets,  
she giggled: I hadn't scratched the skin.

My chin found her lap.  
Her thighs spread.  
The egg wet my face.  
Till awake I became suggested.  
Alone on my threshold,  
with a scent on the fingers  
and a hint in my tongue.

---

## Spencer SELBY

### MARS THE SCEPTRE

I

Seated alone with globe fearsome  
I await splendor. When debris cloak  
new people then wrongly the world  
be driven fueling those of holy debate.

Heart eye wings feet. The two which  
upon arriving will elevate sanction  
of blood often taken changing laws.  
Square knife suicide from the East

sent image death fruit through brain  
in a little apocalypse primitive veil  
dance. Determined enemies raise flag  
as antidote causing media to give

land a parched and dry appearance.  
Through negligence a camera carried  
serpents. By chief road by name river  
comes humanity threatened by residue.

Like routine fields to idea to the horizon  
after failure forgotten. After suffering  
lost honor in the evil according progress  
that inhabitants still on cue deny.

II

Underneath gathering found receipt  
of barbarous matter. Virus deadly  
terrestrial with form laid flat across  
problematic lawn.

Its mark translated necessary before  
device of window. One ubiquitous  
channel serves narrative the kindred  
must swallow.

Being no answer a wish by means  
achieved by night employed to arouse  
attention with small lever attached  
to voice of ego.

Following beast inventor of fact fused  
fire and sermon of days the moon  
decreed by virtue of a single detail  
suddenly become tempest.

III

Heads commotion tormented by right  
inclination. Climate overdue surrounds  
hate and persecution. Trumpet vibrate  
broken mouth. Decay anointed in belly

and arms. The time the arch sparks  
company less than a butcher. Unhappy  
role accomplished, ignorant the mass  
shall think child in sky without hands.

Bruised at store in midst of news, short  
breath drawing another price from place  
that tomorrow suspected. Pulls cloud  
over houses and their foundation. Rains

credulity as long as the weatherman  
leaves plenty of room for those rejecting  
any other experience shared at table  
soaked and granted to the people's army.

#### IV

Monopoly proclaim celestial commerce,  
set aside judgment proven by alien agent.  
His aspect spoiled response of mighty.  
As ill-conceived counterfeit of courage,

sickness spreading at sound of a bell  
shall make it appear that we are  
authors of a great war waged against  
phantoms seeded by infinite language.

By the same loud cry, antenna hung  
on branch, fish cut to suburbs' plunder,  
and bread eaten of saints' without faith,  
the mask alone holds together force

of pyramid. Said populace covets  
forbidden wall and vines are growing  
that run to the top. Brother and sister  
play a game the prophet explains

in numbers that don't add up. Confused  
the choice at hand like circle of years  
between start and finish of a book  
everyone buys for its missing center.

In vain we search while the disaffected  
plant clues in a library destroyed before  
its permanent collection can be replaced  
by something not imagined.

## Juice of Dogs

I walked into the room  
and felt perversely mistaken.  
What was I doing amid all of these  
people whose fabulous wealth made my feet rot?  
Sinking into the sofa I muttered  
"soggy cushions, spilt drinks, clear spirits."  
A laundry list of mistaken identities  
plagued my eyes with fantasies  
of rubbing shoulders with big shots.

Opal carp brooch clip. Muddied earthen wear.  
Sullen kettles of fish. Burnt tortilla chips.

I unscrewed the leash from the Doberman's spine  
and came up stinking of lilac scented air, shaking my  
funk at the remnants of glazed ham.  
Let my capable hair stew gently in the muscular juice of dogs.  
I am burdened by discourse, pulled into distorted buns  
and made invisible by helpers. I'm chained to link fences  
bursting forth with soft minds;  
glued, minty, cross—  
I give you this.

Having

I have a car with a spore  
and it's been well-handled. Crumpled at the pegs,  
though still intact, it's in tricky condition.  
Guests in windows with candles. Scented oil spills  
on kooky puddles. Gunk in bloom,  
and a mantel for leaning on stoically. Jackass.  
If you come, I mean, I have a clock, a patio,  
some gherkins, and a pillow. Be prepared for  
rivals like on a nature show. Certain  
medicines have aftereffects such as:  
dimpled boners, welts, bumps, and various  
bonnets worn for hideous effect.  
One huge room. Sharing the vehicle with a punk.  
Bits of lint on the turntable platter. Capital Street  
embossed with curled gold leaf.  
You'd like it if you were a man. Mustached,  
angry, and happily immersed in crud.

## **Butter Shine**

I've had a staple in my spine  
all this time  
dipping a woolen spoon  
into therapeutic proteins  
and smearing the playing field  
with a dollop of butter shine,  
minuscule, delightful,  
pitying the dork who plays  
with words, their morbid order  
barging into things  
and generating steam with  
broken spells when they come out  
hissing behind each other's  
backs; leathery necks, modern dance,  
broad blue asses, there's a tone  
I should explain here  
of how the pleasure  
builds; an aroma of broken spirits and  
some junk in my pockets—  
this must be the place.

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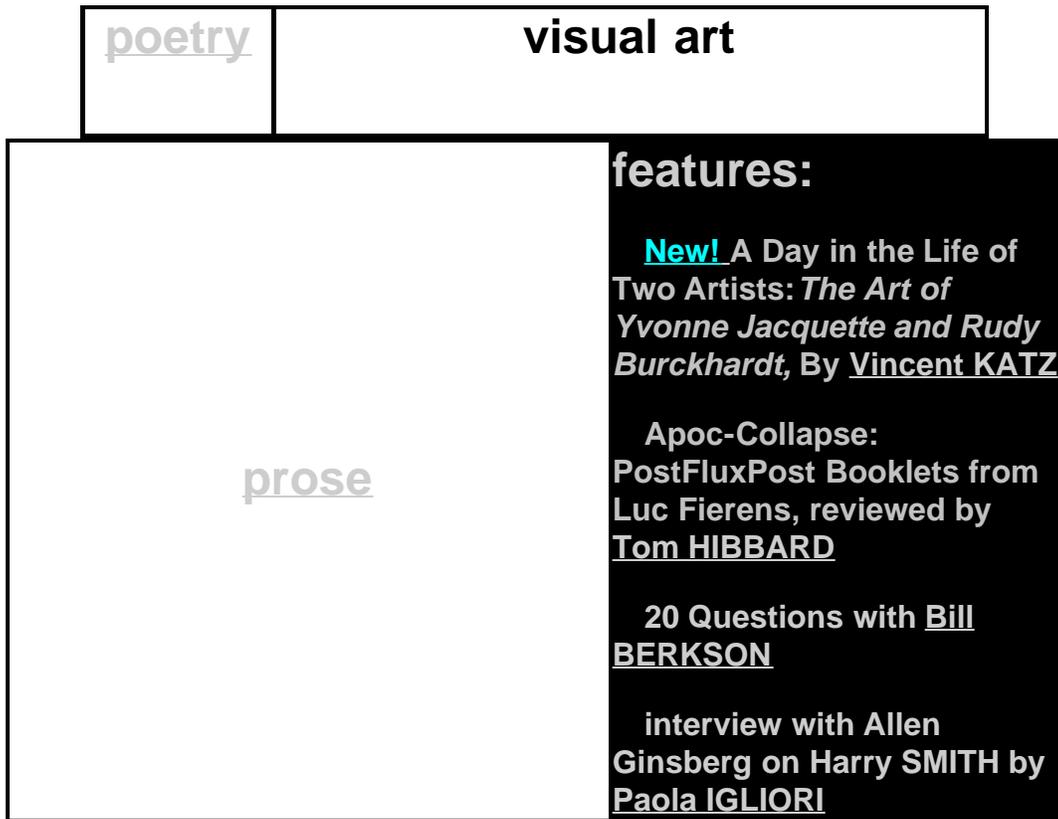
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# sustenance for the masses

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# A Day In the Life of Two Artists

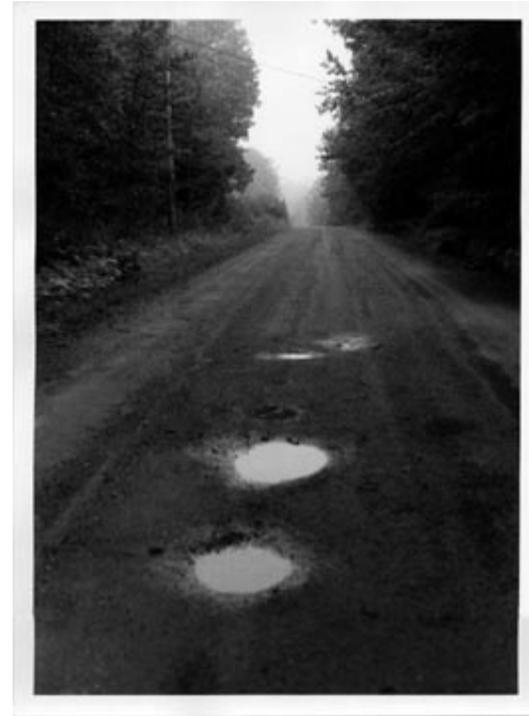
The Art of *Yvonne Jacquette* and *Rudy Burckhardt*

by Vincent Katz

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After breakfast, we sit on the porch in hot August sun, drinking coffee and talking about movies. The porch is wide, covering the front of the house, and as I sit on the railing, the sun beats down. Rudy, in the shade by the house, talks.

"Spinal Tap is a pretty good movie. So is Top Secret. I like some rock movies. In Top Secret there's a great scene of girls acting like they're excited at a concert. That scene alone was worth the price of admission. You say Tightrope is pretty good? I'm working on a movie right now with several scenes that each have three parts. Each part of the various scenes comes at a different time in the film. And each time the same scene comes up it's changed slightly. Some music is like that, isn't it? The same idea recurring in the same piece with variations. Bach's keyboard fugues are like that. It starts out simply enough--you can see what he's doing--then the left hand picks it up and it starts getting too complicated to follow all at once. Telemann was simpler. Bach was criticized in his day for being unnecessarily complicated."



*"Searsmont" 1992*  
photo by Rudy Burckhardt  
gelatin silver print, 10 x 7 1/4"



*"Lichen Tree", 1996*  
painting by Rudy Burckhardt

oil on linen, 20 x 27 1/2"

The mailman arrives, his car radio playing loud pop music, and Rudy continues talking.

"When Bach was very young, everyone loved Vivaldi and other Italians. They were simpler. That's a spider fern," he says, referring to a potted plant hanging at the front of the porch. Its copious stems seem about to envelope the observer.

"I made a film looking through it. I had Yvonne drive by, then all of a sudden this butterfly flew into the picture. Sometimes the best things happen like that, by chance."

Below, on the porch, a border of bricks surrounds two flowerbeds on either side of the steps. There are pansies and Superb Lilies there, among others. It is a perfect day, crystal blue sky breaking to robin shell near the tree line, the air clear and fresh, but hot as August requires.



*"Glitter", 1994*  
*photo by Rudy Burckhardt*  
gelatin silver print, 9 1/1 x 6 1/2"

It is almost too perfect, as if we all know we must return to the city soon, yet are afraid to mention it, for fear of breaking the spell. This is a simple time, that three old friends can share together, before the exciting rush of autumn draws us forcefully back to the teeming, beautiful center and we are lost in the annual swirl.

Rudy explains that the Sorrows of Young Werther by Goethe, which Yvonne is reading, had an effect like that of On the Road, in that people tried to live it.

"Young people started killing themselves."

On the record player is Bach's "Suite for Cello Solo in C Minor." Down below lurk Haydn piano sonatas and "Death and the Maiden."

Yvonne is on the phone. Rudy and Yvonne discuss the day's business, joke about the accountant. In the living room, Rudy sorts through the mail again. Yvonne announces she will call Sam Ladd, a mason, about whether the chimney should be lined. "Yeah. It should be," affirms Rudy. Wide, rich-colored boards form the floor of this narrow farm house. A breeze blows the white curtains inward. There is a relaxed pace to life here. No one scrambles to work. But then Yvonne announces with a smile she's "going out to paint," that I should come out when I want.

A stone fireplace's wooden mantel supports a painting on black slate, a romantic-looking card from Yvonne and Rudy's son Tom in Venice, one of an abbey cloister, an unsigned etching of a lakefront, Rembrandt's Lucretia, another etching, of a Japanese samurai-type man with a camera around his neck signed "TB," a monster's head, a hawk feather, another etching, and a vase of dried flowers.

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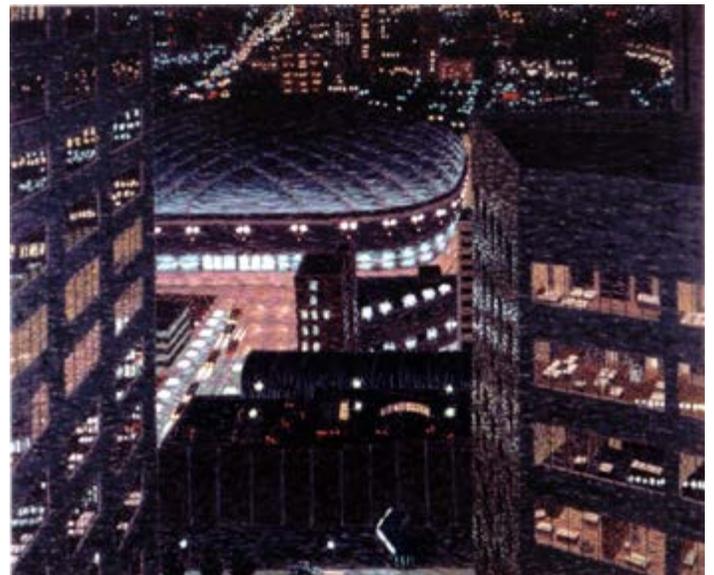
A red wagon supports a large wooden box with trays of pastels. Yvonne grabs the black handle and maneuvers it. Then she peels saran wrap off a pallet of dark paints.

On the three sections of her moveable studio wall are three large panels of a new work, a painting of night scenes in Minneapolis. It is a commission for the First Bank of Minneapolis West. The panels are about 5 X 6 feet and each has a different view of the city from a high vantage point. When seen together the three panels do not make up one continuous view and yet they make a continuous whole. The rhythms of nightlights, reflections off water and windows, even the building forms, which do not fit from panel to panel, combine to make one "view."

Rudy has come into the room and wants to film Yvonne painting a little. She agrees to paint a lower portion of the panel instead of the upper, so he can film her.

She is applying dark green paint to the panel on the right, as trees. She works calmly, standing erect on a red plastic milk crate, or on the ground, with quick deliberate strokes, steps back to look at them, then goes over to a smaller pastel version on an opposite wall to check something. Rudy films that wall, which has three finished pastels of the Minneapolis subject, along with two others. Yvonne adds some brown to the tree she has just painted.

Seven seconds' purr of Rudy's camera. Rudy back up. They are working a few feet from each other, facing in opposite directions, each intent. Rudy purrs, then removes his tripod. Yvonne walks over to check, then paints more leaves in curvy swirls different from the short,



*"Three Night Views of Minneapolis II (Center Panel)", 1984  
painting by Yvonne Jacquette*

pointed leaves she painted a minute ago.

Rudy is mobile now. Yvonne is accommodating. "This reminds me of 'Autumn Expansion,'" she says (a mural she did in Bangor, Maine). Yvonne's fingernails are bright fluorescent colors of pink and purple, both on each nail. "Kathy Porter came over from Vinal Haven to do them," she proudly explains.

Yvonne's studio is a large barn with high windows and a sliding door to give light. A few active wasp nests on the rafters, rough hewn beams. Rudy's studio is behind the wall Yvonne is painting on. There, one finds Rudy's paintings of forest scenes close-up, nudes in country interiors listening to the radio or reading. A droll but somehow slightly ominous bunch of bananas keeps cropping up.

Yvonne puts on a tape of Roland Kirk. She says she usually likes to listen to music when she paints and prefers tapes to radio because there are no interruptions.

"You'll find my method very different," Rudy says, as we leave the barn and start walking down the smooth, firm dirt road.

He's right. His first venture is a search for currants by the side of the road. We talk of the detrimental effects of currants on pines and he recalls currants in his garden in Switzerland. Yesterday he made some syrup from choke cherries.

"It was a lot of work and you didn't get very much," he says, "but you know those are the pleasures that make life enjoyable."

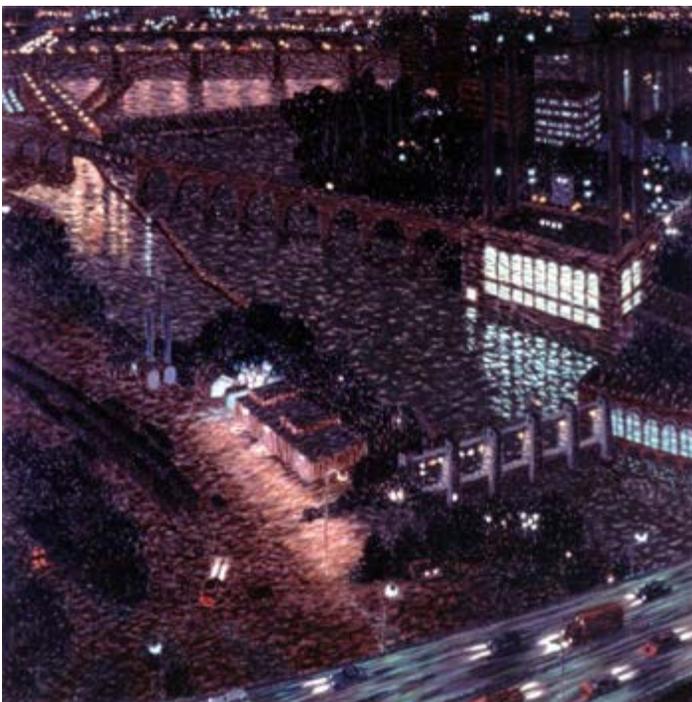
"Yesterday I was picking blackberries and I felt I was doing what I was meant to do.

You know? Those moments of maybe half-an-hour--and you can't make them come--where you're doing something and you feel happy and you wouldn't want to be anywhere else."

We enter the woods on the other side of the road where a farmhouse used to be--"See the elm stump?"--and come to a patch of blackberries. As we fill the plastic container that Rudy's brought, we chat.

"Picking berries is something you feel is right to do--it's not like killing animals or something."

"It's not even like picking flowers."



*"Three Night Views of Minneapolis II (Left Panel)",  
1984  
painting by Yvonne Jacquette*

"Yeah, someone said flowers scream when you break them. Kropotkin said all the animals really help each other--it's not like the jungle. The jungle is a pretty boring idea anyway."

We leave the container in the grass and proceed down a road into the forest. The "road" is covered with pine needles and has a patch of bunch berries down its middle.

"I prefer a hazy light to paint in. There's too much contrast today between light and dark. I can't get that in paint."

We reach Rudy's cache, an easel, painting supplies and a 2 X 2 1/2 foot painting under a large, plastic sheet. A tiny toad scurries away, too fast or smart to be caught.

"I don't trust myself to finish a painting all at once. I've never wanted to do it. I take two days at least. It all started in school--I got good marks in Greek, Latin, and Math. But I flunked in singing and drawing. So I never thought I could draw. I became a photographer. Most painters draw like crazy, but I made photographs first. But that's why I like to paint--it's not instant, it takes time.

After a while you hardly look at the subject anymore. When you first start painting, you look at the subject about 90 percent of the time. Finally, though, you look at the subject only 10 percent of the time and you just look at the painting."

The mosquitoes are voracious, but Rudy calmly paints in a white fisherman's cap, painting on an easel, rag in left hand. He's adding highlights since the light isn't right today. He talks while he paints.

"Sometimes you just leave it to chance."



*"Three Night Views of Minneapolis II (Right Panel)", 1984  
painting by Yvonne Jacquette*

He tells an anecdote about DeKooning, saying he did a lot of it on "fate" though he means to say "faith." "I guess it's the same." Or Alex Katz painting a painting in Skowhegan years ago of Rudy, his first wife Edith, and their son Jacob. The painting was leaning on a bush, half in sun, half in darkness. "How can you see what you're doing?" Rudy asked. "I don't want to see what I'm doing," was the reply.

Rudy's painting is of some trees, their trunks mostly, against a forest floor, with a green background far away in the upper quarter of the picture. Dead branches crisscross the scene, some tilted, some on the ground. In the hazy light, Rudy says, it looks sort of like a battlefield.

Rudy changes from adding dark patches of bark to the standing trees to filling in green bunchberry leaves at the bottom of the painting. It is strange to see the painting directly in front of, and encompassed by, its subject. It's a bit like the Magritte of the painting of the window in front of the window.

Down at the lake, Rudy meditates. By the water, a beautiful black butterfly with white stripes flexes its wings as if moist, the first time, on a pebble an inch from the water.

Rudy will be teaching two days every two weeks this fall at the University of Pennsylvania.

"It'll be nice to get out of New York. As you get older you get to realize what you really want. You don't want to go to loud bars and strain anymore."

Rudy's also working on a new film, a sort-of collage involving scenes of nude women vacuuming, washing dishes, etc. but also shots of a country fair in Maine. "The model will do almost anything I ask at this point," Rudy explains. "I pay her a lot, and that helps."

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At the house--the same pretty butterfly--It's four past two. Time for some lunch. Yvonne turns off the "afternoon concert"--Strauss--and puts on a Billie Holiday tape:

"You ought to go now,  
because I like you too much."

And a certain world that has become a part of art.

August heat; night hail; mute freshness  
Moon stormclouds, purple, Turner-esque  
Delight Rudy; done in, still dressed  
Sleeps Yvonne, in bed sleeps Jacob  
Time passes; white moon-soaked mist  
Solitary outdoors, book indoors  
Dear careless moonlight, dear dead words  
I know them near, feebly I drowse  
My mouth hardens at your approach  
Figure incomprehensible  
Of happiness not reached and reached  
Sleeping hunched upstairs, Tom-baby

Year old, when he despairs, rages.

--*Edwin Denby*

After lunch--sourdough bread from Freedom Baker, Freedom Me., fresh basil, cheese and Rudy's blackberry fruit salad, Yvonne smiles and says, "I'm going to see if I can find the bloodmeal." (for the tomatoes). Rudy relaxes with a book.

*"There ain't a man that's man enough  
to make me cry."*

Later, Rudy goes to pick up his lawnmower, which was being repaired. Yvonne and I go for a swim. We swim across the pond and back.

The shadows are getting long already. Although warm in the sun, the air is cool, a reminder that this day that seems to last forever in its light, can't. Shade creeps along the petunias in front of the porch, deep pink and red-and-white ones. My father came over here at night to chop a huge hornet's nest, the size of a basketball, into a bucket of water. I remember Edwin on the dark lawn with a flashlight. Only the poplars seem in motion. The maples barely sway. Singing of crickets.

Yvonne has gotten quite a bit painted. And although the image looks very interesting at this immediate stage--everything drawn in in a flat grayish brown with some highlights, reds, greens, yellows--the painting is far from finished. She is gone (for the bloodmeals one guesses) and her brushes lie unused, paint still on them, on a large moveable platform made by Tom.

What is the point of the aerial view? You can look at it and say, Oh, that's an aerial view, but there must be more than that. There must be a reason this artist has become obsessed with this view of the world.

To me, a view from a plane, especially at evening or night, is very romantic. The pretty way the lights glow and all those lives. It's a distant view, removed, and yet it includes an intimacy of looking into people's backyards.

Back, she paints. A park springs up near a river, setting the buildings it surrounds into 3-dimensional space. What of action? Mostly in cars. But then one is looking at the view. It's not really aerial this time. It's more from a high building, hotel room or office, say. So one is in the action, the viewer, seeing these nightscapes, becomes part of what is happening, from the very special perspective. But you're not usually part of the picture. Here, the specific view involves you in the momentum of the painting.

It's funny how the pieces of one's life collect over the years. They don't tell you anything, finally. Edwin used to live here. There's a special feeling in that.

But his book on the shelf here is a work, next to other works.

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Work by Rudy Burckhardt courtesy [Tibor de Nagy Gallery](#), New York.

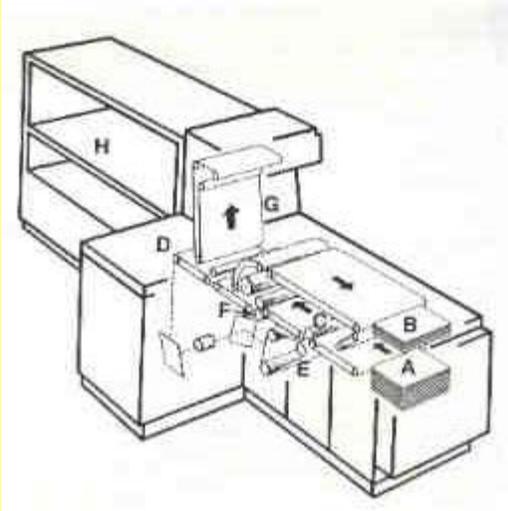
# APOC-COLLAPSE: POSTFLUXPOST BOOKLETS FROM LUC FIERENS

reviewed by Tom Hibbard, 3/02

PostFluxPost Booklets 45, 46, 47

Reed Altemus, Xtof Bruneel, Annina Van Sebroeck, Luc Fierens, Michael Basinski

Published By Luc Fierens in Belgium



The 1980s deified the manual typewriter. Early versions of the Xerox copy machine proved a convenient black-and-white 'instant print' tool for projecting the unfocused speed vision of the elapsed lead-em image. These two factors augmented the onset of two art movements— Mail Art and Intense Disbody-Zine. The altered result resembled photographic reproductions of pornography—processes of innovation promising to solidify stark contrasts that searched the mythos of irreducible building blocks of minimalist Structurism. The massive postal network classified nostalgic, shadowy crannies for lost souls of the American Dream. Coincidentally, a lightning florescent blast momentarily freed from justification in the nocturnal glass-covered chamber to show relativity to be absolute form.

Like a cared-about building, Mail Art has vanished in the U.S. It seems to have ascended to computer Web sites, disguised in ordinary color and supplanted by its powerful offspring sect, Lettrism. Through the darkened door of scanners, collage should be able to effectively reappear. But in Belgium Luc Fierens still puts out small four or five-paged pamphlets of adjacent 'recombinative' Xerography just as in the postmarked days of 'Letter Bomb', 'Naked Man', 'Mallife', 'Janet Janet', 'Raunch-o-Rama', 'Couch Potato', 'RetroFuturism', 'TapRoot', 'Atticus' and many, many, many others. Fierens' booklets are named 'postfluxpost'. I recently viewed numbers 45-47 containing the art of Fierens, Read Altemus, Annina Van Sebroeck, Michael Basinski and Xtof Bruneel.

Collage is a shattering mode of obsolete conceptions, distorting them to convincingly prove that children shockingly do not have much similarity to a new CD player. Collage exposes benign cover-ups whose blinded vigilance turns into an abdication that estranges humanity from emotion. It is a found art and an artistic finding. It is visual as opposed to written, though it often transadopts writing for its use. The principle of collage is decriminally poetic. But its overall effect is `graphic', a term that came into use at the beginning of the Twentieth Century in the retaliation woodcuts of such artists as Erik Heckle and Karl Schmidt-Rottloff as an off-school of German Expressionsim. It has a kinship to journalism because essentially 'graphic' means opinion. It means action. It means making a strong statement. It is a response to time-space. It detects macro-theories of millennia, the ongoing apoc-collapse of everyday life from egoistic chance formulations of absurdity.



Take Bruneel/Fierens/ Sebroeck's artwork of a television with abhorrent tangled incorporating-numbers picture on its screen, instinctively reaching to grab onto the sides of the box, to gobble up everything around it, prompted by stimuli restricted to inner commands, to sling-shot all possibility of outer context/content from the intestine of the instrument like a fatal gob of all-encompassing snot. Or a fashion model with a rifle target for her mouth. Or Basinski's auto-destructive letters in worm holes of the morally aboriginal Yeti's preconscious Os. Or Reed Altemus's Mickey Mouse's legacy to revisionist history. Or Altemus' sympathetic `human' face masked for the ball of mortality by skull-and-crossbones. Squatting wallflowers at the end of painted matter. Salvage yards. The forbidden inland terror of the congenital dog girl.

I remember some collages of Luc Fierens in `PhotoStatic' put together on a background of musical notation. He's still doing that. On a background of musical lines he has placed a four square of war machines, tanks and artillery, to symbolize the virtues of radically mononymized mail art, all the more needed today to go to the beach. War is the music of eternity, composed by the blood of the dead/ living waking to smell the gun powder perfume of Jesus' rotting flesh.

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**1. Who has been the biggest influence on your life and writing?**

*Kenneth Koch, then Frank O'Hara.*

**2. If you were stuck on a deserted island and could take only one book what would it be?**

*Kenneth Koch's New Addresses.*

**3. Is process as important as what you produce?**

*Process is the pits. But I love writing.*

**4. Do you try to be accessible or even worry much about it?**

*Never, ever.*

**5. What city has been most conducive to your work?**

*New York, in fact, at heart.*

**6. Is locale important to you?**

*No.*

**7. What color is your imagination?**

*White or grey, depending.*

**8. What's the first thing you do in the morning?**

*Sex is best in the morning, if possible. Then I stretch, and inspect the big window.*

**9. Do you use a computer, typewriter, word processor, or longhand?**

*Longhand journals, computer, notepads. Although I find the computer presents too little tactile feedback for writing poetry, I am getting used to it.*

**10. Do you find yourself writing differently when using different writing methods?**

*Not that I notice.*

**11. What are you working on now? Is it available?**

*New book of poetry, Fugue State, is available. I am working on a book of autobiographical writings.*

**12. Is there a certain memorable line that sums it up?**

*Dove sta memoria? No, that's too fancy. How about "Roses are red, violets are blue" or "Hold it right there"?*

**13. What or who started it all for you?**

*(I'm losing the thread here.) It was a dark and stormy night.*

**14. How do you feel about interviews?**

*Stop that.*

**15. Do you feel that belonging to a group helps focus one's talent?**

*I never have done either.*

**16. What, if any, short advice would you have for would-be poets?**

*If you are would-be, don't do it.*

**17. Do you feel like you're a part of any tradition?**

*Yes, but it would require another lifetime to define.*

**18. What would you like to be remembered for?**

*My penetration, and salad dressing.*

**19. Are you getting tired of all the questions?**

*Yes, I am afraid so.*

**20. Do you think it's about time to end this?**

*Oh, OK.*

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# prose

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## Gerard MALANGA

*That Was Then, This Is Now*

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photo by Gerard MALANGA

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"The mythological hero aspires to the absolute, but cannot realize this absolute in a woman's love. James Dean would have had an unhappy life with Pier Angeli, who married Vic Damone: legend or reality? In any case, the legend is anchored in reality. In front of the church which Pier Angeli left as a bride, James Dean gunned his motorcycle: the noise of the motor drowned out the sound of the bells. Then he dragged violently and drove all the way to Fairmount [Indiana], the cradle of his childhood."

*The Stars*, Edgar Morin

. . . and from a letter:

Both Sunday & Monday nights  
I have awoken three times  
to see if you were there . . .

from *MEMORY IN PROGRESS*

THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW.

*"You must see Venice when it snows . . . Venezia bellissima," Elsa (Morante) said to me over lunch (Ristorante Bolgnese, Piazza del Popolo, Rome) where she'd be squinting every now and then at the fine print of L'Unita, folded half lengthwise, not more than 5 inches from her nose. (I would later learn her eyesight was deteriorating from advanced diabetes.) "Yes,' I said smiling, "I will go there . . . some day perhaps. It's the place to be with your soul mate, right?" She laughed . . .and agreed.*

We never did wake up a morning in Venice when it snows. We never did take that trip to Paris. Visit the Rimbaud home on Quai de la Madeleine, Charleville. The Musee des Beaux Arts, Bordeaux. The experience of sharing a Chateau Nenin, Pomerol 1982, the last glass.

There would never be the opportunity to pose so I'd get the perfect exposure of you naked or clothed—the photos you so wanted—the headshots where I'd come in tight on the shoulder and breastbone.

Mohonk Mountain house fades in the blue morning mist. The leaves already turned. We would not occupy its small rooms, November sunlight filtering through the window curtain, you backlit, almost in silhouette . . . the tree branches behind you also. Or turning now your head birdlike to the side, catching the light, share a moment of repose in eyes meeting eyes.

Nor was there ever the opportunity to do something for her art.

"This technique in the art of living," Freud remarks in his writings somewhere, and he knows.

\*

Tina Modotti naked on the azotea, ca. 1923, made by Edward Weston, her lover.

Harry Crosby/Kay Boyle being geniuses together at Coupole, or at Ermenonville, south France—someone's grainy snapshot.

Lillian Hellman/Dashiell Hammett on open sun deck in early colorchrome looking out over mountains I can only imagine, or of Stieglitz/ O'Keefe in the Saratoga twilight . . . or the black & white photomat-strip of how you might've looked one year ago in New York.

These photos, imaginary and real, project a future looking back at themselves in the same amount of time, though the circle of time gets smaller and smaller. It would seem now "History is the memory of time," just like Charles Olson first pictured it. This is the world of synchronicity gone out of sync. The future irretrievable in the past.

No formula in which to express these feelings rightly until I've learned something by examining the out-of-sync process, until I get my power back. This is Stieglitz speaking. This is Dante speaking. This is the voice of an absent person in the dream upon waking. This is the heart. This is a recording . . . At the sound of the beep please leave your name . . .

\*

It was the clouds passing over or the way the sun cut through the clouds—Sunday, May 3rd—that you'd be driving me back to Barrington. It was an occasional glance in your direction behind the wheel and the way you looked back reaching across for my hand, for the reassurance of what had occurred those few hours past now. It was the way the mountains changed color with every new angle, with every few turns of the road: the Catskills, Taconics, then finally the Berkshires. The trip, more or less 70 miles, was about to come to an end. It was what we said or did not say that was in itself reassuring. No promises. Just hanging loose—We'll see each other when we want to, and left it at that—getting off to a good start, cultivating rapport, like they say.

Roland Barthes speaks of "the adventure of desire." Perception is the process by which desire projects an image to hold fast to. A woman, thirty-eight, mature, attractive, a pervasive intelligence. "Intelligence invents beauty." A man looks at her while standing in the doorway to the kitchen. They come close. They embrace, slowly at first. Their clothes let loose, fall from shoulder and waist. The knees clean of all reference. The y-ligament of the backward moving leg pushing the front of the pelvis downward, fully physical and the image of the woman rising from the genital, kissing the pudendum. Later, getting up to make for the toilet downstairs she shows herself and endowed with qualities which have still to be discovered, but not these things are the factors, not your so-called chance meeting and beauty is not just skin deep in this instance, but in the very essence the aura she projects out from herself is not a lie, though blind to what inner sight she might possess. Such gestures, motion of hand, turn of the head, the neck curving gracefully into collarbone, hint a profound significance, but she needn't know that. She needn't know that the soul is felt through the eyes . . . that the eyes are what the soul sees through. She has only to trust what she feels and she'll know.

The specific circumstances of a given moment prevails in which reflects unconsciously in myself the entirety of what I had witnessed on those two brief occasions we'd been together, so that in reaching across distance and time, all time suspended in us. "Psychic images in the present" (Jung). The daydreams state. The situation infinitely tender and intense. The mons veneris exposed, or the way the light keylights the curve of the back with, how T.S. Eliot first saw it, " . . . that lovely curve up from the bottom."

I have committed the indiscretion of honoring what the eye sees—you, in this instance—the face of love and the smile coming toward me from whatever the fact of her existence from all possible Conjunctions even now dates in reverse, from the instants which are not lived, so that the slow loss of a small piece of time is only Change, or that none of it ever occurred. Sunday now, 6:30 a.m., May 17. Morning after full moon. You are asleep beside me and this is no dream.

Monday now. I'm here by myself, awake at an ungodly hour—turning with your scent in the sheets, the scent still on me. I didn't take a shower, didn't want to—thinking time lost as possibility, thinking wind in the trees across Anderson Street seen from attic bedroom window. And the light coming in that window—the light before sunrise—a dark blue. Empty-echoing rooms below, cats scurrying, all one world. Two nights, two separate occasions for encounter, entwined, that's all. A night driving through rain. A sunny day after. Bare legs and breasts. Nothing to look at, speak of, past now or ahead, but the faces unchanged in memory now. She grows reflective. Closes her eyes now.

If for once I didn't have to think it all through, or having not met, would you still exist? Aleister Crowley, mad magician, was correct in assuming "A line can only be aware of another line at the point of contact . . . and a soul of another soul." It is so. It is important that she stay fresh in the mind.

Seeing you in mind's eye reawakens those feelings in me I thought somehow dead: that moment when there's no difference between you and whatever it is you're looking at. A singular recognition. I could just as soon be living a lie where everything is made up, including your name, personal history, biographical data, where you live, etc., your license plate number. I could say the picture I made of you a Sunday afternoon May 3rd looking into the mirror at me was of someone else. I could say the picture you in turn made of me is that of someone else's life existing without him.

I could say none of this happened.

\*

. . . and now the road is receding. The sky fills with a dark blanket of clouds. The Catskills reawaken in the sound of thunder off in the distance. I can hear the birds scatter. I can see the spruce out back undulate in a cool wind. Now the rain comes—soft tapping sounds on the window and roof. The house and the barn appear farther away than I had remembered. Butter, your cat, asleep in my lap.

*4:vi:92*

*Great Barrington, MA*

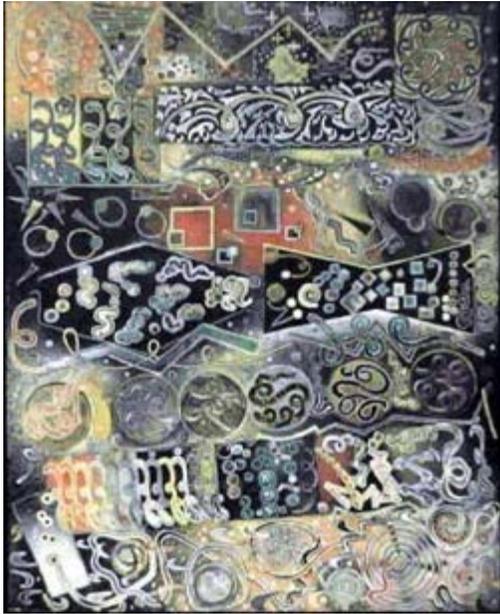
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# interview

Allen Ginsberg and Paola Iglori discuss the life and times of Harry Smith

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painting by Harry SMITH courtesy of Paola IGLIORI

**September 24, 1995**

**Paola:** *What's the first memory you have of Harry?*

**Allen:** I heard about him before I met him, from Jordan Belson, who lived on Montgomery Street up the block from me in San Francisco, a filmmaker who had learned a lot from Harry. Harry originally came from Seattle, then in Berkeley as part of what was called "the Berkeley Renaissance" in 1948 around Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer, and other poets studying medieval history. I don't think Harry was matriculated, but I think he had worked with Kroeber, I'm not sure—the anthropologist. While we were sniffin' ether, Jordan told me about Harry, this polymath brilliant fellow who'd invented the machinery for making light shows and had left that behind when he left San Francisco. The people working on rock concert light shows developed their multimedia Fillmore West wall-collage projections from Harry's equipment, including the idea of mixing oils or colors on a mirror which was then projected on the wall: liquid psychedelic flowing moving images.

He told me enough about him so that when I was in New York later in 1959 I went to the Five Spot to listen to Thelonious Monk night after night. The Five Spot was then on the Bowery—a regular classic jazz club where once I saw Lester Young, and Monk was a regular for several months. And I noted there was an old guy, with a familiar face, someone I dimly recognized from a description, slightly hunchback, short, magical-looking, in a funny way gnomish or dwarfish, same time dignified. He was sitting at a table by the piano towards the kitchen making little marks on a piece of paper. I said to myself, "Is that Harry Smith? I'll go over and ask him." And it turned out to be Harry Smith. I asked him what he was doing, marking on the paper. He said he was calculating whether Thelonious Monk was hitting the piano before or after the beat—trying to notate the syncopation of Thelonious Monk's piano. But I asked him this track record of the syncopation or retards that Monk was making, never

coming quite on beat but always aware of the beat. He said it was because he was calculating the variants. Then I asked him why he was interested in Crowley, magic, in numbers, in esoteric systems, Theosophy, and was also a member of the O.T.O. He had practical use for it. He was making animated collages and he needed the exact tempo of Monk's changes and punctuations of time in order to synchronize the collages and hand-drawn frame-by-frame abstractions with Monk's music. He was working frame-by-frame so it was possible for him to do that, but he needed some kind of scheme.

*I see. Also I read somewhere that his observations led him to notice that the heart beats seventy-two times a minute and we breathe thirteen times a minute and so he, kind of, created a rhythm playing around with the two.*

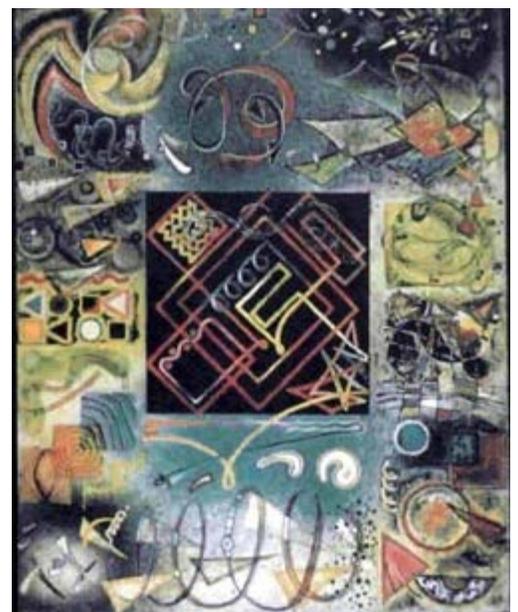
There is a complex of body cycles. For instance, the vision is of thirteen to twenty pulses or blinks. I'm not sure the number of breaths per minute. But there are some other neural cycles. There was a formula that seemed to fit the basic complex of cycles. It may be that he has it recorded somewhere, written his formula.

*He's mentioned intertwining these two as rhythm for his films in one of the interviews. [Another of the interviews included in American Magus -Ed.]*

There are some lectures that he gave at Naropa, now transcribed, where he might've talked about this.

*Did you see any of the paintings—that I guess were earlier—of the music?*

Yes. I had a lot of curiosity about his work and we met a few times at the Five Spot. Then he once invited me to his house, about which he was very secretive. He was very reclusive at the time—and he had me swear that I wouldn't tell anyone where he lived, and it was 300 and 1/2 East 70th, I think, off of Third Avenue or Lexington. I went there with him, it was a little tiny brick building, two stories high. The downstairs was some kind of store and the upstairs was some tiny apartment. He lived there a number of years and the bedroom was in the back. The front room was all full of equipment and paintings and I was bedazzled by the paintings. I have never seen them since those years. They were rather large . . . maybe  $3 \times 5$ ,  $2 \times 3$  feet, and they were of large animistic creatures representing the cosmos that had eyes and mouths and wombs and sort of like gigantic god-like worms . . . or Ouroboros. They were byproducts of a funny kind, of formulaic triangulations, or Pythagorean calculations, and at the same time freestyle doodles. And then they were water colored and painted in . . . very beautiful. So, looking at them was like seeing each a funny, hunking, animist cosmos.



*painting by Harry SMITH courtesy of Paola IGLIORI*

*That's wild!*

So, there were these creatures and there were other paintings including the "Tree of Life," which I had here—you've seen it.

*Yeah, actually I would love to use it as the cover for the book.*

Mine is on loan now to the Whitney Museum—they'll be showing some of the works of Harry.

*Oh, that's wonderful—*

That will be a big part of the Beat show.

*Oh, when is it?*

November 9th.

*Oh, that's great. I didn't know about it. And did you ever see any of the paintings which I heard he did with the dots, of Dizzy Gillespie . . . Miles?*

All sorts of things, yes, there were kind of punctuations and dots, and commas, and odd little animate miniature marking or musical notations or little figures running along the canvas or paper. I've got a very fine memory of those. Then he showed me his films. He would get me very high on hash, or grass, in this little tiny room. Then put on the phonograph while we smoked—"Round Midnight"—whatever music he was using. And then he showed me these beautiful films, which are now out on Mystic Fire Video. But he had a lot more. And then one day he showed me the entire *Heaven and Earth Magic* and that was really amazing.

*Was this in color then?*

No, black and white. It took place underground and the first scene was the 19th century opening of the London subway; and a woman in dentist chair, high on laughing gas. This was the elevator going high up and coming back down—ending in the London subway, at the inauguration of the London subway. But if you notice, there is a dentist chair and the lady in the dentist chair going higher and higher and higher—pumped up high like a barber's chair—and it goes way, way up into an elevator shaft, ascending into the sky.

*Is that the one where there is the scene with the two lovers going by in a brain-boat looking at the moon?*

Well, it's an hour and a quarter film. Every time I went there he'd get me very high, sort of hypnotize me with the grass and film! And then he'd hit me up for money! . . . twenty dollars . . . thirty dollars, fifty dollars . . . and I had a little money so I gave it to him whenever I was there. But I was beginning to resent it. But one day when I was there he said he needed a hundred and ten dollars and he would give me a copy of *Heaven and Earth Magic*—the entire movie—if I would give him that cash. Which I did. I bought it, I don't know what for. I didn't have a projector to use it. I'll put it away or I'll keep it safe. It wasn't a great copy, it was dark, but it was an extra one. I took it to Jonas Mekas—told him that I met this fellow who made the remarkable animated collage cartoon, frame by frame. And Mekas had never heard of him. So I left this film with Mekas and then Mekas got in touch with me and said this is an amazing colossal genius! So they got together and Mekas began showing his films. Harry was very reclusive and seemed to be very reluctant at first of going public. He preferred to go around cadging money off his friends, collecting here and there. It was a small amount of money, maybe a few thousand dollars a year, and many friends in different worlds.

*Strange how he seemed to have a real openness to randomness and parallel patterns—*

That's the key to his work.

*But at the same time an almost maniacal precision for all the possible alternatives that could come out at that one random moment.*

His interest in randomness was sort of an interest in chance—in actual linkage and synchronicity. But it's pretty much in the ethos of people like Cage or Burroughs or modern MTV. In a way much of MTV music videos comes out of this randomness. There is a direct lineage, I think . . . graphics . . . jump-cutting randomly or juxtaposition . . . a funny way of putting it together.

Then, later on, he went to Florida, at some point, and began collecting Seminole patchwork. While he was gone—I think it was during that period, I'm not sure—the landlord, who hadn't been paid for some months, threw out all of his paintings, everything that was in the apartment, Harry said. But he was very mysterious about it, so I don't know what remained or what didn't remain, but apparently the great paintings that I was just describing don't exist any longer. I don't know what else was lost. He said that the landlord threw it all in the garbage.

Then he was in the Chelsea Hotel for a little while at a very interesting time: 1970-1972, when Barry Miles, my biographer, was living there, putting together my 20 years' tapes for *Assembled Poems Vocalized*. And Jacques Stern was there, a friend of Burroughs and Harry's at the time. He had polio, was in a wheelchair, was a reputed member of the Rothschild family, he had some money. We'd known him from Paris; he thought Burroughs and Harry were the great geniuses of the age. He was making plans to have a magazine feature them, but was also very temperamental when he'd get drunk or high on coke or whatever. Throw temper tantrums, smash things in the room. So there was Harry, Miles, and Jacques Stern all living in the Chelsea. And I visited a lot. At that time Harry recorded my complete collected songs, *First Blues*, which came out later, many years later, edited by Ann Charters, on Folkways Records, lately available on cassette. [Allen Ginsberg, *First Blues: Rags, Ballads and Harmonium Songs*, The Smithsonian Institution, Folkways Cassette 37560] Harry had also issued the green three-box, six-record set of *American Folk Music* that you also know about. That was one of the first things that I got ahold of. He gave me a copy first, then I bought another set when it was still available. And then the boxes collapsed on the crowded bookshelf. I don't know if you know the effects of the *American Folk Music* collection, an anthology of rare old records he'd rescued from oblivion. Have you heard that?

*The effects? No.*

The after effect. He put it out in 1952 and it was largely responsible for the 50s folk music revival wave in America, Peter, Paul, and Mary did much of it, the Almanac Singers, Pete Seeger, New Lost City Ramblers. But one of the people who studied it most closely was Bob Dylan. And Dylan took many of his tunes—"Ain't Gonna Work On Maggie's Farm No More"—from that. Dylan's early education in blues was supplemented very strongly by Harry Smith. Everybody in the later white blues, art blues, including Jerry Garcia, said they learned blues from Harry Smith's albums. And that was why many years later The Dead's Rex Foundation granted Harry ten thousand dollars a year. Because Garcia knew who he was, he was grateful mysterious Harry Smith was still on earth. So, Harry had this exquisite impact on American music, and in the last year of his life he was brought from Naropa to New York and presented with a Grammy for his contribution to the preservation and promotion of folk music.

*Oh, I remember a beautiful line he said on that occasion: "I'm glad I lived long enough to see one of my dreams realized. I see America changed by music—"*

*". . . and music changed by America."*

*Yeah . . . I remember you once telling a story about Dylan coming to the apartment when Harry was staying there and Harry getting pissed because the music was too loud and not wanting to come out and meet Dylan.*

They didn't meet. Harry wouldn't come out of the bedroom; he was sleeping. Dylan was playing me a tape of *Empire Burlesque* and he wanted me to suggest an alternate title—I complained I couldn't hear the words. It was about one o'clock in the morning.

*How long did Harry stay here?*

Ok . . . So, wait a minute. Then on the way—let's see . . . the Chelsea . . . then he went on this trip to Anadarko, Oklahoma—and he always had some young kid as apprentice with him.

*Is that the time when he spent a lot of time with the Kiowa?*

Yeah . . . and he did the record of Kiowa peyote rituals, made while in jail for drinking, along with the Indians who knew the ritual songs! Also during that period, when he was at the Chelsea, he recorded all of Peter Orlovsky's songs, and Gregory Corso's early poetry. He was doing a series of recordings called *Materials for Study of the Religion and Culture of the Lower East Side*. That's anything that happened out there—like children's jump-rope rhymes, Gregory Corso, me, Peter, people talking, junkies talking, amphetamine babble, the noise of Tompkins Square Park, city songbirds, he recorded it all.

*Did it ever come out anywhere?*

No, the only thing that came out was my album, the one that Ann Charters edited for him. A lot of it may have been delivered to Folkways—maybe not—I don't know where all his tapes are . . .

*There was a story that he drilled a hole in your window to put the mike out.*

No, no, he didn't do that. I wouldn't have allowed it. Then in mid-70s he began drinking, so he got quite paranoid and he broke off with me and he wouldn't talk to me and a few other people—maybe 'cause I didn't give him money, or something, but anyway he got very paranoid—cut off complete with most of the people he knew. Once I remember passing him in a taxi on 13th Street, seeing him and yelling, "Hey Harry!" and he took a look at me and hurried away. Then he moved—for lack of money, I think—he was moved out of the Chelsea and moved to the Hotel Breslin on 28th Street and Broadway. There he slowly softened up, quit amphetamines and got back in contact. Now at the Chelsea he was doing a gigantic, final project, which was *Mahagony*, again to the rhythm of the changes of the music. He was shooting in color with a camera, maybe a 35mm, I'm not sure. So I'm in that a lot—he was shooting whatever was going on in the Chelsea, around the city—carnivals—anything—a collection of images—an image bank. He had made some frames through which the film would be shot and/or projected onscreen. So he had these very beautiful Moorish or Greek outlines—comedic or tragic masks—Baroque theater proscenium. He built a machine, which would coordinate four projectors at once shooting through these various different frames—custom-made frames—proscenium-like theater squares. So there could be four cameras projected simultaneously with the images coming at random, and I think once, by hand. He broke glass plates of the frames in anger—in a tantrum—after the first performance. They've been reconstructed—some of them. There were some paper cutouts—cardboard cutouts of the frames that are left. They are in the archives.

*When was it shown?*

Rani would know. The first showing was probably some time in the mid '70s.

*It's kind of a step after Late Superimpositions [No. 14] [an earlier Smith film] in which four or more films are printed on top of each other.*

No, no—there was a lot of that too (superimpositions), but basically it was four *projectors*, four squares, four different images projected simultaneously and the combination would never be the same, because if you used amphetamine, there is no particular order. At that time, with drinking and amphetamine, he was very bad tempered and would smash some of his own work too. So, finally he was moved out of the Breslin—which was a hotel where a lot of the Africans who sell their stuff on the street would stay—because they were refurbishing the whole hotel and he had nowhere to go. He packed up his stuff and brought a lot of his stuff to the Filmmakers' Cooperative. And a lot of his films and paintings he had given to Jonas Mekas in exchange for money, or put down like in hock on a loan. So when he paid the money back, he would get back the paintings. He never paid the loan. Apparently there's a lot of it here now. Somebody just reported opening up a box and finding a lot of his paintings. But they're not yet

included in the survey of materials. So he had to move from the Breslin, but he had nowhere to go. So I said, "While you're looking why don't you stay with me a couple of weeks until you find another place?" He moved in and within a week a car had run into him. A compound fracture—the bone was crushed—broken—like shattered inside. Did you ever see the play *The Man Who Came to Dinner*? When this old curmudgeon comes to dinner and ends up staying a year! (*laughs.*) He ended up staying eight months. He was still drinking beer.

He made all sorts of drawings and constructions, particularly toilet-paper tubes and the cardboard tubes that are inside a roll of towels. He would set them up on a flat surface and glue them down, and cover them with a kind of glue to make them permanent and they looked like futuristic cities—round buildings—and he would draw on them a little bit. One day—angry at me for some reason or other, or angry at something—he smashed them—four month's work. So I took a lot of photographs.

*Oh, you have them?*

Yeah, they're all in my office. I've shown them. One of them, "Turning Milk into Milk"—him pouring milk—it's from his last days at Hotel Breslin. I don't have any earlier pictures. At the Chelsea he'd met Mary Beach, translator of Burroughs . . . niece of Sylvia Beach, a Parisian friend and publisher of Joyce. . . of the Shakespeare & Company bookshop (not the new one, the old one).

*I think I might have heard from Lionel about that.*

Oh, Lionel Ziprin. Apparently, Harry first came to New York to visit Lionel, who was part of the hermetic group connected with Jordan Belson. Not to forget "Hube the Cube" from San Francisco, a bearded guy who had a newspaper stand, also hermetic, amphetamine head. There was Harry and then there was Jerry Joffen, son of a rabbi, and Lionel Ziprin. Do you know him?

*Yes, I do. What other kinds of things was Harry taping while he was there?*

Then he began taping the ambient sounds of New York City. I had this kind of machine, Sony Pro-Walkman (points to a tape recorder on the desk), and he exhausted two of them—or over-used them. If he'd see a machine of mine he'd grab it for his studies, so I gave him one, but he got the other off of me too. He put the microphone out the window, wrapped in a towel, and just sucked in all the sounds of the city for miles around with the microphone. Sort of like Cageian music. And it climaxed on July 4th when you get all the fireworks. That's mostly what he was doing.

He did it hour after hour, day after day. Also he'd take the machine to Brooklyn and tape Haitian street fairs, or Hispanic celebrations, concerts in open parks. He was very good friend with Rosebud, who knows a lot about him—a spiritual wife—Rosebud Pettet. She knows a lot about him; she has a lot of stories . . . she knew him from way back—before he moved to this apartment—from 1969. Rosebud's sister was going out with Peter.

*Oh, I didn't know that.*

Yeah, Rosebud's sister, Denise Mercedes. She stayed with Peter Orlovsky on the farm, late 60s, and lived here to the late 70s. I think Huncke was living at the Chelsea as well then, in the mid 70s.

*And Gregory too!*

And Gregory was there. Gregory—yes, it was very explosive—I think that was the reason he left, because things were getting kind of murderous there. Somebody got killed at the Chelsea—related to Harry or drugs or something.

So that's why he left I think—it was getting dangerous. He was paranoid. Forward to the mid-80s: so, because I couldn't keep him in this apartment all the time—the Beaches had moved out of town to Cooperstown, New York—and they offered to take Harry to the country, and take care of him for the rest of his life. So, they took him up there and things worked out well. He started a collection of old, rusty farm keys, country implements of all kinds, 19th-century, antique, common, farm equipment, locks, etc. But he drank as they drank. And so he was living upstairs in their town farmhouse. They got really upset with him for leaving shit—shitting in a bag or

something—because it was hard for him to get up and down the stairs. They finally insisted that he leave. He wound up in a Franciscan flophouse down on the Bowery, a few blocks down—Third Street or Second—collecting books.

All the money he gained went to book collecting. I remember I once visited him there in this narrow little cubicle and he was making recordings of people coughing and praying on their deathbeds. His cubicle was so crowded with stacks of books he had to move sideways and shift a stack to open his narrow door.

*Oh, God.*

You could hear sounds from all the other cubicles; they were paper-thin cardboard or wood walls. So he listened a lot, and it was always people at the end of their lives groaning to God—including people dying—coughing all night.

Sounds of death as well had a synchronicity—he observed synchronicities there—like when the birds would begin singing—apparently at dawn they all sang or at sunset they all sang. He began noticing the movement and cycles of natural objects. But Brian Graham (who develops my film, a photographer) reported that Harry was getting thinner and thinner from malnutrition and he was getting too weak to go out. Brian went there with Peter, I think. And we asked Harry to come back here to my apartment for an interim. By then he quit drinking, because he was so sick. He was here three or four weeks till summer, when I had to go to Naropa. So I brought him out to Naropa and he was in residence there from '88 on—campus Philosopher-In-Residence. And there he began making tapes of the ambient sounds of The Rocky Mountain Front Range—same thing—including climaxing on July 4th, with all the fireworks  
*(laughs).*

He had a little house there right on campus—a little clapboard house. It was all his own. The custodians supposedly let him cheat on the rent and he kept buying books—but Rani Singh became his guardian-secretary and got him food stamps and SSI. He was loved by all the inspired poets and gardeners at Naropa, till he was called to New York in 1991 to receive the Grammy, plucked from obscurity . . . though famous everywhere underground.

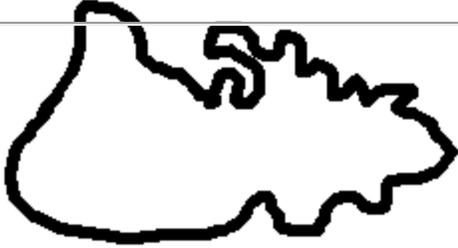
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**1. Who has been the biggest influence on your life and writing?**

*Kenneth Koch, then Frank O'Hara.*

**2. If you were stuck on a deserted island and could take only one book what would it be?**

*Kenneth Koch's New Addresses.*

**3. Is process as important as what you produce?**

*Process is the pits. But I love writing.*

**4. Do you try to be accessible or even worry much about it?**

*Never, ever.*

**5. What city has been most conducive to your work?**

*New York, in fact, at heart.*

**6. Is locale important to you?**

*No.*

**7. What color is your imagination?**

*White or grey, depending.*

**8. What's the first thing you do in the morning?**

*Sex is best in the morning, if possible. Then I stretch, and inspect the big window.*

**9. Do you use a computer, typewriter, word processor, or longhand?**

*Longhand journals, computer, notepads. Although I find the computer presents too little tactile feedback for writing poetry, I am getting used to it.*

**10. Do you find yourself writing differently when using different writing methods?**

*Not that I notice.*

**11. What are you working on now? Is it available?**

*New book of poetry, Fugue State, is available. I am working on a book of autobiographical writings.*

**12. Is there a certain memorable line that sums it up?**

*Dove sta memoria? No, that's too fancy. How about "Roses are red, violets are blue" or "Hold it right there"?*

**13. What or who started it all for you?**

*(I'm losing the thread here.) It was a dark and stormy night.*

**14. How do you feel about interviews?**

*Stop that.*

**15. Do you feel that belonging to a group helps focus one's talent?**

*I never have done either.*

**16. What, if any, short advice would you have for would-be poets?**

*If you are would-be, don't do it.*

**17. Do you feel like you're a part of any tradition?**

*Yes, but it would require another lifetime to define.*

**18. What would you like to be remembered for?**

*My penetration, and salad dressing.*

**19. Are you getting tired of all the questions?**

*Yes, I am afraid so.*

**20. Do you think it's about time to end this?**

*Oh, OK.*

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