Series 1, Box 2: Correspondence with individuals (D-H).

[s.l.]: [s.n.], [s.d.]

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Dear Donald Dawie:

What an original, interesting, and broad-gauged piece you did on me! I'm here to say that the observations were true and exact and that the general ideas to which you showed that they belong, enlarged one's understanding. What gave me the greatest satisfaction... how strong that was I didn't realize until you brought it out... was your opinion at the end that I belonged "not in the margin but near to the center of what should be seen internationally as distinctively American in twentieth century culture." I knew, of course, that I was in the general neighborhood but not how far in, nor how much of me lay there.

How different Zukofsky and I were in that regard! When he saw my first Americana poem, I remember he dismissed it as a mistake. "That isn't you," he wrote. Not surprising, perhaps, in someone who hardly ever in his whole life set foot outside New York City. There is no sense of an American place, therefore, in his work, or an American voice, the voice and character I grew up with in the Middle West. There are several American voices in New York City, of course.... Reznikoff evokes one of them in his street observations.... but LZ was not interested.

You may be right. Maybe I should have paid more attention to my versification. In any case, you'll see where my problem lies in the enclosed few observations I made last month for a symposium on new forms at St. Mark's Poetry Project in New York.

Again, a helluva review! I owe you one.
23 May 1984

Dear Larry:

I was cheered to see your name as editor on a recent promotional piece for Contemporary Literature. Let me first say something to you in that capacity. I understand from my current publisher, The National Poetry Foundation, that my new book, COLLECTED PROSE, has been sent to the magazine for review. If it is going to be assigned to someone, or has already been assigned, let me add this little book, SPIRITUS, I, published in England last year. It will give the reviewer more to work with. I have added one copy for you personally.

How basic and important your interviews with us in Madison have become. With each year more and more sacrosanct. I remember your saying when you finished mine, with a satisfied smile, that we had now concluded a historic event. I thought that was a nice compliment indeed but vastly overblown. I didn't feel "historic" at all. But you were right. You had seen the thing clearly, and you deserve the credit for being, if I'm not mistaken, the first academic to do so. I salute you.

All the best,

[Signature]
Dear Larry:

Re-reading in your letter, "a full-scale article on your work would be in order, if we could find a good person to do it," I can suggest two, Burton Hatlen and Andrew Crozier. Hatlen did something similar for my prose in his critical postscript at the end of my COLLECTED PROSE book, and Crozier wrote the piece on me for THE DICTIONARY OF CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY and has been a close student of my work since 1965. Hatlen, I notice, has an article on Zukofsky in Contemporary Literature, so you know his work. He can be reached at the University of Maine at Orono, 04467. Crozier teaches at the University of Sussex. His address is Bridges Farmhouse, Laughton, Lewes, East Sussex, England. They would write very different articles, yet both, in very different ways, on the mark. Let me know if you decide to ask either of them.

Michael Heller would be another possibility but he has a chapter on my work in his forthcoming book on the Objectivists and has probably written himself out on the subject, for the time being. There is also Martin J. Rosenblum, who did his doctoral dissertation on my Americana poems. He's at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and is working presently on a critical biography of me for The National Poetry Foundation. Whether any part of that would be suitable for an article I don't know, but I'd leave him for last.

Leah and I moved here six years ago, while we still had the energy and the will to make the change. Prior to that, we had been making winter-long pilgrimages to Oaxaca, Mexico, where the climate is divine. While the climate here is too sharp for that, it is, as everyone knows, even as far away as Jerusalem, where someone told me, one of the most interesting cities in the world. Even its ocean weather is interesting. Are you thinking of a warmer climate for yourself when you retire?

It would be nice to see you again. I'll be back in Minneapolis next May for a reading, along with readings in Chicago and Milwaukee, but Madison is still too far away for just dropping in. I'm sorry.

What with Parkinson's, I can't wish you "good" health, so let me say, "the best possible health."
23 Jan. 1986

Dear Larry:

I wonder if you'd mind doing something for me? Could you get in touch with whoever is curator of the rare books and manuscript section of the university library and find out if the Library would be interested in purchasing my archives? I would like to see them housed at...and in...Wisconsin, where so much of my life was spent. If the Library is interested and has the funds, I'll send them an inventory.

Did Burton Hatlen ever get around to writing the piece on me for CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE?

Affectionately,
Dear Larry:

Lawrence Fixel, the author of THE SCALE OF SILENCE and THE BOOK OF GLIMMERS, has been an interested and what I would call a philosophical reader of my work for a long time. When my COLLECTED POEMS came out recently, he immediately took off and responded with an essay that I find unusually illuminating, partly, I think, because he grappled with the subject head-on, without thinking in terms of categories and comparisons, the usual way; but mostly because he is a solid thinker. I find it so good, in fact, that I am passing it on to you myself for possible inclusion in Contemporary Literature. I'm sending it to your residence because I don't have the magazine's current address on the campus. Hope you don't mind.

1986 was a hard year for Leah and me. She found she had lymphoma in February. At first it looked as if she had only one malignant node, so she went through a long, wearing course of radiation therapy. At the end of this, however, the cancer showed up in other places, so now she's in the midst of chemotherapy, whose medications have to be as powerful as the malignancy in order to rebuff it. Hence its side effects on Leah have been drastic beyond description, as bad as the illness itself. All this has had us in its maw. To say more would only depress you. Maybe 1987 will be kinder. On that note all the best to the two of you in the new year.

P.S. Lawrence Fixel's address is 1496 Willard Street, San Francisco, CA. 94117

Carl Rakosi
Dear Victor di Suvero:

Enclosed is the bio, a photo, and a poem. But no poetic statement. Do I need to say why?

The preliminary program sounds fine. I wonder, however, about the omission of the language poets. Much as I dislike, detest in fact, a couple of them and their preposterous claims, the group as a whole has established itself as a historical movement and to leave them out is to raise questions about the NPA itself and why it's doing it when its theme is Many Voices=One Heart, problems you don't need.

Best,
Dear Ed:

I could use your help with something. The NEA is offering two senior fellowships for literature next year which are described in the Guidelines as being for "individuals who have made an extraordinary contribution to American literature over a lifetime of creative work" and "who have expanded the boundaries of our literary heritage in work that has taken place at the vital growing edge of literature. Their continued presence on the literary landscape is invaluable to younger writers." Commendable words, them, but the judges would have to be of equal calibre to recognize such a person when they saw him. In any case, the description sounds more than a bit like me, but how is a panel of conservative judges to know this? I'll be lucky if they've heard my name.

Anyhow, the fellowships are by nomination only and the deadline was March 1. I was nominated before the deadline but there will "senior" writers competing for these two fellowships who will be far better known to the panel of judges than I, people like Robert Penn Warren and Stanley Kunitz. I am sure, therefore, that I'll need additional supporting evidence and testimony from others in order to get anywhere with the judges.

The fellowship stipend, as you may know, is quite large and would make a sizable difference in our day to day budget. If it would not be an imposition, therefore, and you would be willing to write in support of my nomination, I'd be very grateful. The address is: Literature Program, National Endowment for the Arts, Nancy Hanks Center, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506.

When, oh when, are we going to see you again?

Affectionately,
Dear Ed:

Bless you for the letter to NEA. I am protected by the fact that by the time the winners are announced next spring, I will have forgotten that I was nominated, so I won't feel bad that somebody else got it.

I too have been and am going on the road: two days in Baton Rouge at LSU in February, where I had a chance to visit with Ed Sanders, Andre Codrescu, Rodger Kamenetz, and twodrinking buddies of Anselm Hollo from Baltimore, and in May will go to Chicago, Milwaukee, and New York, where I'll read from Poe at the Poe-Melville celebrations at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (never did this kind of thing before), talk about the Objectivists at NYU (never did that before either), and read at St. Mark's and the 63d St. YMCA. Leah will be with me in N.Y. for five days, then on to two weeks with my daughter, granddaughters, and old friends in Minneapolis. Should be fun.

Poor Robert Duncan has been very ill, very ill. It's sad to see. He's coming for brunch tomorrow and I'll know more. David Meltzer is also gravely ill, from a different cause. I was with him in Baton Rouge. He suffers in silence but his face shows it. Sad!

What do you hear from Jeremy Prynne? I hear occasionally from Andrew Crozier but never from Jeremy.

You've been getting big kicks I'm sure over Reagan's discomfiture in the last few days. Isn't it great? Somebody, they say Pat Buchanan, his speech writer, opened a man-hole and Reagan just dropped in but his not-quite-so-confident smile remains above surface and his words show that he still doesn't know what happened. It was a long time a-comin and it may not mean much but we may be lucky and it may.

All the best,
Dear Ed;

With your fine scalpel and discriminating pex understatement, you've written a very persuasive letter. The judges won't even know they've been insulted in the last paragraph, since it will not occur to them that they belong among those who lack the intelligence to recognize Rakosi's worth, and the message they will be getting is that if they vote for me, they will be demonstrating their superior intelligence, and if they don't, God help them! they will show that they are not one of the cognoscenté. Bravo! and thanks.

In his last letter before taking off on his safari, which will include, I imagine, a visit with Jeremy in Cambridge, Anselm wrote that he was joining you in the writing program in the fall. I envy you his company (and hope he'll be able to stay off the booze).

Affectionately,

P.S. I had no idea Olson even knew my work, let alone use it in the curriculum. What a pleasant surprise!
Dear Laurie:

This note of acknowledgment should have been sent a couple of weeks ago when August dropped off a copy of your forthcoming (I hope) SCRIPSI review of my COLLECTED POEMS. In general I'm touched no end by your "spiritual" identification with my work, so much so that at the end I thought to myself, "He's got it! By George, he's got it!" And I exulted when you were most perceptive, as in your treatment of my "I"...that was a knockout...., my creating forms as I go along, and the way you summarize it up at the end with a quotation from The China Policy. Lovely!

So, L'Chayim to you and Rosalind too (assuming that you meant to send me one in the title of your review) and hugs.

Carl Rakosi
Dear Robert:

A week or so ago I got a call from Grace Schulman at the Poetry Center of the YM-YWHA inviting me to give a reading in April. She didn't have enough money for transportation, so I suggested that she get in touch with Louis Simpson, in view of the interest he had expressed in San Francisco in having us return to Stony Brook for a joint program. Today I learned from her office that Simpson can muster only $200 for each of us but that Montclair State College in New Jersey does have money and she's going to see if they'd be interested in having us on some program that would pay for our transportation, lodgings and a fee (I insisted on all three). The YM-YWHA will be able to pay us each $200.

I'm excited at the thought of a public dialogue with you at various universities, which would open up some topics in which we are interested. If Montclair State College can come through with transportation & fees, we'd have the necessary financial base and could go ahead and try to pull other places into our itinerary, places where you are known and always welcome, and the few where I have a bit of a connection, such as the University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin (Madison and/or Milwaukee), the University of Colorado; even my poker buddies in the English Dept. at the University of Minnesota?

When I got through talking with Grace Schulman, irresistible subjects of all kinds immediately popped into my mind: 1. the metaphor; 2. the independence/personality/inscrutability, etc. of language; 3. the psychology of the poet (I have additional ideas on this), and what difference it makes. There were other ideas but they were knocked out of my head by the frustrating, depressing experience we've been having in trying to sell our house. Anyhow, I wanted to bring you up to date and at the same time find out how you felt about all this.

We miss you and Jess very much.

Affectionately,
29 May 82

Dear Carl--

I feel I have some things still to talk about, after our brief and
tantalizing meeting at George and Mary's. My stay was very busy,
as I'm sure yours was in NYC; I'd wanted to call just to see if we
could have lunch, but it never worked out. Maybe next time! But
I'd still like to say some things, if you will bear with me.

We never talked about your poetry--I wanted to. Your poem The City
startled me when I read it--tickled and impressed. I liked enormously
the sense of the city as a production: a production in many senses of the
word, including the vaudeville (sec. 3), and the connections of
commerce (the section with the little goat, #2, is wonderful), and the
laboratory/factory. I think the most astonishing lines for sheer
insouciance and brilliance are ones in section 5 which begin "I saw
the city/ changed" and end "a physics clear as alcohol,/ La Vita
Nuova, I hardly knew." And the list of all the makers/makirs/fakers/
fakirs at the end ... well, the directions and crossings through which things come (milk)
and are produced (chemicals). What is made. Who have made it. Including
and beautiful objects.

Some of the approaches to language intrigued me for the simple and
solipsistic reason that I've been doing similar things. Such as:
the Bird pirrika pirrika prrrk
ia ia

or
to their shh of vapors and their vowel ooo

Somehow making sounds, making not- sense sound: so crossing the
barrier between "language" and what we do not hear as our language
because it is "just" sound--all this has become important to me in
a way I could never have predicted. As an English teacher, very
sturdy and straight when it comes to grammar, I am even more amazed
that sometimes I will put bits of ungrammatical language in poems--
dialect forms, or invented forms. Little bits, not whole chunks, so
that the tension between the syntactic and the non-syntactic is retained
and causes ... something in the reader.

I've also wanted to say how much I am moved whenever I read your comment
on George, about knowing each other as if for a whole life from one
long brotherly connection, one night.

You know, probably, that I'm trying to collect correspondence by George,
for a possible book (selected letters, something of the sort). The last
I'd heard, your papers were at a bookshop, but now it appears that
you have them back. Do you suppose it would be possible for you to
provide xerox copies of the letters? dated? with annotations if they
are obscure? Although the project is just perking along now (I have
not gone into high gear with it), I am eager to encourage folks to
respond--do you think it's possible? I would be very eager to see
the letters, and all fair use will be made of them.

and best to Leah warmly,

[Signature]
Dear Rachel:

Just back from a long visit with my daughter and her family in Minneapolis.

About George's letters, I have had only five or six in all, all in recent years, each only a few sentences long, either praising particular poems of mine or acknowledging praise from me for poems of his. I enclose copies of two as examples. In the one addressed to Carl R, he is writing about my poem, LEAH, which he first saw in Sumac and which was later appeared in my book, ERE-VOICE. You'll see if you refer to the poem that he uses five direct quotations from it to make up his message; and in the last line, writing, "despite the owl and the lizard and meat," he is referring to specific poems in ERE-VOICE in which I have an owl, a lizard and beef. And when he says, "Interesting to think of this, these poems, as extensions of your remarks in Madison," he is referring to the now well-known interviews which Dembo had with Zukofsky, Reznikoff, George and me at different times at the University of Wisconsin in 1968 (Contemporary Literature, Spring 1969).

What I find interesting about this letter is that he composes it like a poem, starting with a few basic givens. The spacing itself suggests that. The same is true of the second letter, which was, I think, a response to the publication of ERE-VOICE in 1971. In the prose section of my book, EXCRANIUM, NIGHT, I reflect on this comment of his and what would have happened had I ended the poem where he thought I should have.

These letters were written, I believe, before we met. We met for the first time in the early 1970's when I gave a reading at San Francisco State and stayed at his house. That's why he says with amusement, "notice that J. Laughlin takes us as friends of 35 years." Afterwards, he and Mary used to phone me in Minneapolis when they felt excited about a new poem or book. The other few letters from George are in my archives at the Houghton Library at Harvard. They're too fragmentary, in my opinion, to be useful, but if you'd like to see for yourself, you're welcome to do it. The person to get in touch with at the Library is Rodney G. Dennis, Curator of Manuscripts (Cambridge zip: 02138).

How well I know what you mean in your comments about language. I always had a deep urge in that direction but the Depression and my professional
life as a social worker and psychotherapist plus my insatiable interest in human beings deflected me. I wish I had gone further. I knew what you were up to when I read your poem, SELVEDGE, in Montemora and another in Shearsman (?) and told George and Mary. They had not read them.

Your deep reading and absorption in The City was very gratifying. Thank you.

Keep in touch,
Dear Carl and Leah--

with the churlishness (or is it innocent busy-ness?) of the young, I don't know if I ever acknowledged your sending me 2 letters by George for the Selected Letters. Which I am now again actively working on, and which I hope to see thru, now, all the way thru to publication.

(As for "young" soon I shall have to stop talking like that, too)

A lot has been going on here. You may know, thru Mary, that we have a new (to-be-adopted) baby, Kore Simone. We got her at 3 days. She has been legally relinquished, now. And what a great baby! Also, a few months back of that, I finally completed the add-now-cut syndrome for Indiana U.P. which is doing a book of mine, and approved the copy-editing.

I appreciated your strong letter, and the intricate marginal notes which I could never have reconstructed--I mean, for circumstances I could not have reconstructed.

What I am finding in doing these letters is a few patterns: one is the letter/poem that you refer to. Gnomic gems spaced on page. And phrases that imply a whole context, a relationship (as you noted) so that they are allusive even within a life, to a recipient. Poems/letters which seem to use the space and distance filled with filiations as part of the medium in which the words enter.

Then there are adamently philosophic/argumentative letters, ones which define a position. Often these, too, begin in a relationship, in a discussion, and that discussion is continued by mail. George takes the opportunity to define his position on something by arguing, not nec. with the philosophers, but with the individuals in his life who hold a certain position.

There are also letters which seem to be written as extension of certain poems. Sometimes I get the sense that the letters come before, after and during the composition of the poems, and are quite tied to those poems. It is not clear to me (esp. because most of the correspondence is completely undated) whether a phrase from a poem appears first in a letter, and then is discovered there for the poem, or whether a phrase from a current poem enters a letter to be presented, or tested, there. But some strong bond between poems and letters is clear.

You may also be interested to know that GO made rough drafts of some of his letters. In the letter file which I saw last year in CA, there is one more letter, apparently to you, Carl. I had a poor Xerox, so then I transcribed it also. Do you remember whether it was sent (or I am enclosing a Xerox of the transcription)? Or what illumination you can give about the context?

You asked whether I have Ere-Voice or Ex Cranium, Nights. Neither, I am sorry to say.

Also, I will write to Rodney Dennis at Houghton, since I think it would be good to see the other materials.

Next letter will be sooner. As soon as a little chapbook called Gypsy/Moth is published, I will send you a copy.
Dear Rachel:

Yes, I had heard from Mary that you were going to adopt a baby and I marvelled at your spirit in having another go at it, with all your necessary absorption in writing and teaching, but it too, of course, is one of the great self-fulfillments and now that you have started, it will make a place for itself, willy nilly, in your life which is already full.

Is your Indiana U book the feminist one you’ve been working on?

About George’s letter: it sounds like something I might have received but I am not sure because I am so familiar with the way he thinks that reading it in your copy, it feels as if I might have received it. If I did, I must not have made a copy for myself. On the other hand the question mark under exotism indicates that he questioned what he was saying and that he might not, therefore, have sent this particular letter but a different one; or he might have simply called me long distance....he often did that when he wanted to tell me that a particular poem gave him particular pleasure. Other things suggest this too: 1. Fluteplayers from Finmarken (in AMULET) was his favorite poem. He would have thought twice, therefore, about sending me an opposing thought, that he preferred the commonplace. Fluteplayers may have been elegant, he often referred that way to my work, but exotic was going too far, and there was no point in making a dichotomy except to defend his preference for the commonplace and I don’t think he would have done that with me; 2. the letter is incomplete. George never ended a letter to me like that; and 3. it’s a little more critical than George felt it right to be with me.

The letter seems to be either a response to my book, EX CRANIUM, NIGHT, which came out in 1975, or to a group of poems from that book which appeared earlier in some magazine. That is certain because the line he quotes, “O eternal/ is its element” is from a poem on p.148 of the book.

His reference in paragraph 1 is to the University of Wisconsin interviews conducted by Dembo with Zukofsky, Reznikoff, Oppen and me. With regard to the contents of that paragraph, yes, I would have agreed that depth is the way a poem expresses its deepest meaning but I would not have leaped from that to “human.” When you use that word, you’re in a different order.

Keep in touch,
We look so cozy.

Leila and I are on the left. The photo was taken on the steps to Oppen's apartment on Polk St. in San Francisco circa 1977. Mary Oppen is on the right. CR
We look so cozy.

Love,

Mary
30 Dec 85

Dear Carl (E Leach) — just back from 4 months in the Netherlands ... found your card.

YES indeed, with many thanks.

I am still collecting and collecting and would like very much to see your 10 letters from George (we’re home now, so just send them on) with warm regards,

Beca

Printed in USA

Dr Carl Rotkosi
128 Irving St
San Francisco
CA 94122

Armorial Carpet, Spanish, c. 1425. Wool. Joseph Lees
Williams Memorial Collection
©1976 Philadelphia Museum of Art
Dear Rachel:

Problems, problems. When I wrote you about George's letters, I forgot that after his death, Mary and I had an angry falling-out over a piece I had written about George's last days during his illness. I'm pretty sure, under the circumstances, that she wouldn't want his letters to me included in your collection, and since she has rights over their use, we'd better not go ahead until you've checked it out with her.

Fondly,
19 June 86

Dear Carl--

Please forgive the outrageous delay in responding to your letter of 16 Jan. I take full responsibility for it. I got puzzled by your letter, and wanted to talk it over with Mary. (Also I had a rugged semester when coming back from Nijmegen, but that's somewhat beside the point.)

Basically, I didn't want to be involved in any falling-out that you and Mary had. It seemed unlikely that Mary would deny the use of all of your letters from George, and in fact, she wouldn't.

So you are free to send me the letters to which you alluded in November (when I was abroad, and without any of my GO file). It is entirely up to you what you would like to do. Of course any further letters would complete the record in positive ways.

I am now involved in cataloguing a large stack of Oppen letters--arranging by date as best I can. It's a pretty high stack--there were about 100 plus correspondents, and I had over 700 letters before I received June's--then I stopped counting. Each--almost each--letter is of high interest.

warmly,

[Signature]

All best to you
Dear Rachel:

I'm delighted to hear that you have well over 700 letters of George's. What a book that will make!

I could have sworn I had ten letters. It turns out I have only eight. Maybe two will show up later.

Best,

Carl
28 Jul 56
Dear Carl—Thanks.
In any number of ways, including the excellent notes. I’ve had a fine and scattered (!) summer, with some real ‘hits’ in the poetry, some deep delight in George. On the eve of our vacation cordially,

[Signature]

Carl Rotrosen
128 Irving St
San Francisco

CA 94122

Rachel Blau du Plessis

wv ref: to Leah
10 February 1987

Dear Carl,

I am preparing a brief biographical/bibliographical statement on you as part of the ongoing preparation of the edition of George Oppen's letters. To maximize the amount of information I have on which to build your biographical notes, my research assistant and I are kindly requesting that you send us your curriculum vitae or resumé, if available.

Could you please give some indication on your vita of where you were, especially your publications, when you first met and/or corresponded with George, or tell us in as much detail as possible about your publications and projects at the time the correspondence began? It would be nice to know why it began, under what circumstances and conditions, although sometimes that is stated in your letters or George's. We've appended a few questions for everyone to answer.

If there is something you would especially care to have included in the bio, please mention it. We will be happy to submit a copy of the note for your approval, but ask that you let us know if you want this option.

If there is an extant entry on you in a biographical/bibliographical reference text or encyclopedia that you like and would prefer us to consult either in addition to your vita, or as a substitution, please send a citation to help us find it, or a copy of the entry, if this is more convenient. As this portion of the project proceeds, we may need to contact you again. Enclosed is a prepared mailing label for your convenience in responding now.

We are happy to report that we are in the process of contract negotiation with a fine, but at this writing still prospective, publisher.

Thank you very much for your time and assistance, once again. With gratitude and hope that all is well with you,

Sincerely,

Rachel Blau DuPlessis
11 December 1987

Dear Carl—

a simple note, saying I like your work (have always!) and would like to consider some work for Sulfur.

I would love to see a sheaf of work from you, a bundle suitable for gleaning through and passing on to Clayton Eshleman, the editor.

The due date is early-mid January to get things to me.

I very much hope to see work from you.

warmly,

Rachel Blau DuPlessis
211 Rutgers Avenue
Swarthmore PA 19081
15 Dec. 1987

Dear Rachel:

Sorry, I have no new poetry to send SULFUR but I do have a part of an autobiography that it could use. Before I send it, however, wd. you mind checking with Clayton to make sure that he'd like something in this genre in the magazine. How's the new baby?

All the best,
as you see


C.C.

from Rachael Bland & Plessis
Dear Carl—

how interesting do
more just a little way!
I wrote to Clayton RE
autobiography & he will
tell me soon. Our
body will be 4 in
February & can draw
& write her name—
21 August 1988

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

In the course of preparing the Selected Letters of George Oppen, I have come to the moment to ask you to check your brief biographical note.

Although you had not indicated that you would like to see it, I would greatly appreciate your corrections and additions.

The format of the note is succinct for all contributors; birth date is given, along with profession (e.g. poet, professor); the name of your teaching institution (if relevant). Most important is a list of your books, along with their dates of publication.

If you would like other books emphasized, if the information I have can be updated with recent publications, if something is wrong or if, in your view, something should be added to more justly describe you in a public manner, please let me know as soon as you possibly can. I am enclosing an address label for your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Rachel Blau DuPlessis
Dear Marc:

Well, here it is, & bon voyage!

Since you won't be printing unpublished poems, please credit after each poem: from COLLECTED POEMS, The National Poetry Foundation.

Who is Yizhar Dagan? I found his poems, even in translation, quite lovely.

Best,
This correspondence from Clayton Eschelman is intensely revealing not only of Eschelman but of the hieratic, occultish hood around him. The blood pressure rose over a slighting reference I made to certain writers who were trying to cash in on the genius of Blake when they were only sick, sick, sick. In the interchange I thought I was disparaging Blake; in my reply I tried to show the difference between the visionary and the psychotic but it was evident he was reaching to a different time.

On the reverse side of the envelope, Eschelman in responding to some critical points I had made, which I no longer remember.

Carl Rakosi
This correspondence from [name redacted] is intensely revealing not only about the [name redacted] but about the [name redacted]. He confided in [name redacted], a not-faithful reader, to [name redacted] over a [name redacted] reference made about [name redacted], writers who were trying to cash in on the genius of [name redacted] but were only sick, sick, sick. On the interchange, it thought & was disparaging [name redacted], in my next letter to [name redacted] tried to show the difference between the visionary and the merely mentally ill.

Psychotic; from my professional practice, but it didn't talk.

On the reverse side of the envelope & is responding to some critical comment I had made, but I can't remember what it was.
Dear Clayton:

I want to keep the notes to PUNK ROCK....for the sake of accuracy. I notice in re-reading it that I have Polonious in the last stanza of the poem as well as in the notes. It should of course be Polonius. Thanks for catching it.

My remarks on Blake's voices and visions and on Squeaky/Antonin came, I'm afraid, from sheer exuberance of clinical speculation, nothing more. I found myself trying to defend guesses, which I never did as a therapist, and looking as if I judged literature by its mental aberrations, which I don't. Silly all around!

Looking forward to your ARTAUD and to future issues of Sulfur.
Dear George:

Here it is:

"Mr. Evans' poems, resembling him, have a hardy constitution. They have his eyes and ears and no one else's. They are written with care and waste no words. There are unexpected internal omissions in them and juxtapositions which get to the matter more quickly and increase tension. Their observations are fresh and would hold up equally in prose, a difficult test. The imagination at work is bold, without compromising reality. In short, they stand on a solid footing."

Affectionately, (not for the blurb)
8 Aug. 1984

Dear George:

Your review deserves a written reply. I expected you to write a good review but I was moved almost to tears by your loving understanding of my work, the depth both of your identification and your perception. In that respect it has it all over Michael Heller's essay, which has its own subtlety and perspicacity but remains somehow distant and only superficially committed. In addition, your review is interesting and very well organized.

I am thrice blessed: in the review, in the reviewer, and in the friend. Thanks, chum!
Dear George:

At last I can respond to your two new books. What a treat they are: vigorous and solid as always...interesting in both substance and language, and true to both...depressing how much poetry one has to go through before one finds these qualities now. In short, satisfying. Delighted you’re there.

Love,

P.S. The thing now is to have patience.
Dear Clive:

Yes, METAMORPHOSED did arrive. And a tough, scrappy little protagonist it is too, full of honest observation and grained with humor and character, conceivably difficult to live with, with its overlay of restiveness and annoyance above a deeper malaise, all interesting and earthy. A Faust bedevilled? An occasional preposition throws me but I don't know whether this due to Australian idiom with which I'm not familiar or to some intended meaning which escapes me, I see no evidence of the accidie you refer to (I had to look up that infernal word). Are you referring to habits of work? In any case, the language is bracing and I'm glad to have such a strong book on my shelf. Thanks.

Seeing the name, Kris Hemensley among your acknowledgments, reminds me that it was he took that photograph of my "ectoplasm" that you found in EX CRANIUM. I was reading (or answering a question?) before the Poetry Society of London and didn't know he was off at the side taking my picture. He attributed the ectopoetic effect to some fault in the negative. But I don't mind it much. In fact, I rather like how I look there. I must have been feeling good that day.

ORIGIN on a subscription basis and under new auspices, with Michael Heller added to the editorial box will either enlarge the audience or make the magazine go under. But it had to take this route. It was becoming too in-grown. Had become so, in fact, some time ago. And so I hope to have the pleasure of your company at least there if not in person.

Cordially,

Carl
dear Carl Rakosi...

a gent named Bob Ryley, Robert M. Ryley who is a fan of my dad's & teaches at a new york college turned me on to your address & xeroxed some pages of your book (look forward to reading it in it's entirety) that described the wisconsin lit gang...& then read about being bottle fed by a bourbon-head...

i was a great fan of my dad's & am...i also liked him a good deal as a human being...you could say i decided (when i was five...before i cld read or write) to be a "poet" (what's that?) simply to be, naturally, like my dad...anyway when i was 5 is when he read me 1 of his poems & it clicked... sounded just like him only More So, you could say....

so where does wne go from there?

i got busted up here in '81 for having been overheard saying i was jesus & now i'm Suing more or less against: psychiatric false arrest, while i sort of amble around saying it some More...also, just got a niteclerk job at this hotel...be the first steady i've had in a while...

enclosing then an Address book with a long poem in front of it...certain lines should seem to echo or something if i've done my stuff right...

Leon Serabian Herald was, indeed, a lovely man...maybe he wrote all he had to write & not more & if that were the case i can think of plenty of writers who should emulate the example, his son, Johnny was also a playmate of mine at a boarding school we both went to: manumit was it's name...

i've been in touch with Margery Latimer's daughter, Margot...i said to her: "look at that Margot: i mean if your mom & my dad Had decided to have kids Together neither you nor i would have been born, does that make us some new style brother & sister?" she said like hi brother....

no doubt in my head life is more interesting than fiction, usually that seems to mean in a bad way, but not inevitably always it'd appear...

have you seen Alice Neel's book & her portrait of Ken, painted she told me, the night i was being born? your passage on an incident weeks or months later sort100% with that portrait...ebery feeling adults busy working me into books & paintings before i was quite Aware they existed...i appear in one of Ken's books & maybe somehow in a poem & also 1 book of poems he dedicated to me...now i find myself scribbling about him from time to time...

bruce goose, son of mother goose is my main on-the-ground personna.

best & all

bruce

book is full of typos..."i mean"

job, you know...
Dear Bruce:

How strange it must have seemed to you to find yourself in a book as a baby and to read the excerpts about your dad. To Margot it was even stranger, and quite wonderful, because she didn't know until she was grown that she had a mother who was not the same as her step-mother. So for her it was a discovery of her past. I'm chagrined that I can't send you a copy of my book in which your dad appears but my publisher stopped answering my letters after the book was printed and I haven't been able to get any copies for friends. But perhaps the Seattle public library will order a copy for itself if you request it. The book, called COLLECTED PROSE, can of course be ordered from a book store or directly from the publisher, The National Poetry Foundation, 305 English-Math Bldg., The University of Maine, Orono, Maine 04469.

Parts of your book are touching, especially pages 27 and 24, but I'm unable to put it together.

If you feel like doing it, tell me about your life. I really know nothing about it and am interested. Also, what happened to Leon's son, Johnny. Are you in touch with him? Can he be reached? And your mother, Rachel. And how did you happen to wind up as a night clerk in a hotel in Seattle? There was a newspaper story in the San Francisco Chronicle a number of years ago about a Bruce Fearing, some kind of a clash with the police, the incident perhaps that you refer to in your book, but I wondered then whether it was Kenneth's son, Bruce. So it comes together now.

With best wishes,
Carl,

don't think you're the Only one... Alice Neel has a portrait of Ken; i'd heard about it & forgotten it till she turned up at his funeral "reception" (?) years back & asked if i wanted to see a photo... i liked it, went & saw the original & was really Moved, to say the least... then, when i noticed a tiny little baby in the portrait, next to the poet's left hand & about the size of his thumb i asked Alice about it & she replied; "o, that portrait was painted the night you were born."

in that space, as seen by me i'm born surrounded by a bunch of grownup artists, poets, etc all busy busy Exploiting my existence as "material" for their products... very strange space, space not available to previous generations where poets & artists normally died broke young & their kids weren't matters of much concern to any subsequent critic if, indeed they lived to have kids... how do i Adjust to the circumstance?

I Don't. i redefine it.

to Margot i laughed & said: "do you realize that if my dad & your mom Had decided to have children together neither of Us would have been born? does that make us some new style brother & sister?" she sounded like she was laughing & sent an affirmative answer... i'm glad if you're in touch with her i'm, at least temporarily, out.

end up as a niteclerk? i'm not at all sure i've ended up, just happens to be what i'm doing right now... also doing a few other things, recently gave a poetry reading at which i launched all my little poems into the audience in the shape of paper airplanes...

that book, address book i sent you, comes together between the top of page 38 in the line (first line ".....is all about itself" & page 7 which is white on black & describes a poem within-the-poem... but the pages you noticed 27 & 24 are, indeed, the Middle; as close to a heart as the poem has, it's Not a poem it's an address book & book of: Changes, changes changes changes, also it's not intended to be me writing but in my style which (my own style) i call free-rhyme... give you an example:

unseen help

the languages of earth
are broken discarded things
i don't bring into my
bedroom or study... muddy waters
is a clear bag when it
rains a lot upstream... 3 things
don't fly on a straight beam:
1 is a team of mismated oxen,
another's lox on a mint-scented bun
& the last i've forgot so
thanks for what?

bruce goose
son of mother goose
which is to say, with this bruce goose character i'm happy to be announcing poetry is to me: obsolete, just like poets announced for 300 or 400 years that the church was obsolete. & thereby created the de-facto church of secular culture complete with n.e.a. endowments & fullbright fellowships such as the one my stepdad, a printmaker once had.

Rachel Landon
Lawrence Hill Road
Weston, Vermont 05161

if you & she were friends i'm sure she'd be glad to hear from you & you can talk to her, tell her/ask her whatever you'd care to...

Johnny Herald you'd have to look up through a record label...i haven't been him for eighteen years & am not in touch with him though i Did like him back then & would be pleased if life put us back in touch...

i tried to look up your book it was out of the library i'll probably try again. Alice Neel had a book of paintings published in 1983...it's a real doozer...out of the 30's village crowd i'd say hands down she's gone furthest, what the hell, big famous artist with whom i've been in touch directly/indirectly, trying to point out to her well as absurd as it sounds if i was jesus she's a greater painter than michelangelo whereas she got to paint a real (weird) nativity. children of artists...i met Ring Lardner's kid, one of 'em...very conservative rather materialistic, i liked him but he's no where near as unique/original as his dad.

how original would i have to be to be Up to Ken? doubt i could be a poet at all; poet being a self-creating occupation of previous generations. Ken, of course, wrote about Alice in one of his novels...i'm glad you were so fond of Margery...Alice has Plenty folk to speak for her, including myself...Margery would be damn near lost without you to speak for her...

that was probably me you were reading about in the chronicle or might have been in 1971 newsweek mag & wall st. bundle carried stories about me but it hadn't to do with a police confrontation, rather a welfare fair hearing i got involved with with Ronnie Baby was gunner of Calloushermie & i was living in the back-woods of humboldt county (60 mi. south of eureka/arcata) building cabins, digging gardens & trying to raise my kids (who are now in portland).

you mention somewhere you have kids. what are they into? Alice has 1 chemist, 1 lawyer...something about starting by following in one's dads footsteps, right where his trail ends...heading...? anyway i really don't feel like i've "ended up" anywhere or anyway...what if some kind of bright new "scene" opens up around here in another year or so?...will it? might i be in the midst of it?...well, thanks for the reply...if anything else occurs to you be sure to be in touch, i'm really one Great little correspondent...

prayer

gruesome!
like watching a butterfly turn into a catterpillar
my last ex wife
god send me another life
in which we don't kill the things we love or worry about paying bills.

b.g. (usually i prefer Off-Rhyme with my Off-Rhythms)
Questions for Carl Rakosi

In "Scenes from My Life," you mention Margery Latimer's biographer. Could you provide his or her name and address?

Do you recall the title of the collection in which Latimer's story "Monday Morning" appears?

Much of Latimer's novel This Is My Body is a fictionalized account of her affair with Fearing. Have you read it recently enough to recall where truth ends and fiction begins? One of the characters is clearly Leon Serabian. Do you appear also? One scene seems to parallel your own experience as a guest in the Fearing house. The Latimer character screams at her father that the Fearing character is "part Jew. His mother is a Jew, Jew, Jew. Part Jew. . . ." Is it possible that you told Margery about the episode at the Fearings and that she adapted it to her own needs?

Fearing was forced to resign as an editor of the literary magazine at Wisconsin. Do you recall any of the details?

Do you recall roughly when Fearing's affair with Latimer began and when it ended? Do you recall any anecdotes about Fearing that you didn't use in "Scenes from My Life."

1923-1925

Have you saved any letters from Fearing?

I'm aware of Latimer's letters to Blanche Matthias at Wisconsin and have sent for a microfilm. Are there other Latimer letters that you know of?

Fearing is said to have been the model for the central character of Death of a Young Man, a novel by his Oak Park friend W. L. River. Did you know River? Have you read the book and, if so, do you recall what is supposed to be Fearingesque about the protagonist?

Do you recall any anecdotes about Fearing that you didn't use in "Scenes from My Life."

If it would be easier to answer these questions by phone than by letter, please don't hesitate to call me collect any Monday or Wednesday evening at (516) 757-1559.

Bruce's address
Rachel's
Dear Ed:

I would send you poetry if I could but I have no unpublished poetry to send, but how about a prose piece on George Oppen’s last days?

What a reckless romantic you are, starting another magazine at a time when it seems as if there’s a little magazine for every two poets in the country. You’re off to a good start with your announced contributors, no question about that, and I wish you the best, of course, but I hope you have a financial angel behind you and a business manager at your side, with know-how in distribution, to handle that side of the magazine.

Cordially,
18 Feb. 1988

Dear Mr. Franco:

No, I'm not going to be in Cambridge on March 6th for the memorial but I would very much like to have you read my piece, A Letter to Robert Duncan, which you'll find on pps.116-117 of my book, THE COLLECTED PROSE OF CARL RAKOSI. If you don't have the book, I've enclosed a copy of the piece, for your convenience.

There is an error on p.117, last paragraph: the word celebrity should be celebratory. Also, if you read the piece, please acknowledge its source.

With best wishes,
8 June 1985

Dear Joel Gersmann:

I was overjoyed to learn that you had done a play about Margery Latimer and Jean Toomer. Nothing could please me more. I write about her, you know, in my book, COLLECTED PROSE, which The National Poetry Foundation published last year.

It so happens I was close to Madison on May 11th: I was in Milwaukee that day, giving a reading, but I wouldn't have been able to take advantage of your invitation anyhow as I had a reading at the Chicago Art Institute the day before and a number of readings and a lecture in New York the day after. If it had not been for that, and if you had discovered me in time, I would have come down from Milwaukee for sure.

Now that I'm back home, I shan't be anywhere near Madison until next summer, when I'll be visiting my daughter and granddaughters in Minneapolis, but if you can get out here, I'll be glad to talk with you about Margery as long as you like. In the meantime, tell me how you got interested in her in the first place.

With best wishes,
27 Oct. 1987

Dear Lynn W. Gilliam:

In response to your letter of October 19th, I don't know which poems your editorial associate heard me read on National Public Radio but you might look through my COLLECTED POEMS, published recently by the National Poetry Foundation at the University of Maine, and see if there is anything there you'd like to re-print. If so, you're welcome to do it at your usual rate of re-imbursement.

With best wishes,
17 June 1988

Dear Harry Gilonis:

Sorry but I can't muster the interest for writing a piece on Zukofsky now. However, you don't need me fortunately. With the contributors you have lined up, you can't go wrong.

Best wishes,
This card is Allen Ginsberg’s reply to my asking whether I could use him as a reference for a Peggy twin.

He and Robert Bray had Saturday brunch at my home after a reading he gave there some time ago and we had a rip-roaring dialogue taped both by him (he took his own tape recorder with him everywhere) and by Harrison Keillor (now writing for The New Yorker) for a local radio station. Keillor’s tape, unfortunately, turned out to be defective.

At the end of his visit, Allen and I were such firm friends that at the door, he asked whether he could kiss me! That stopped me cold. I had never kissed a man before! But it went off all right. We embraced and bussed each other on the cheek, in the French manner.

Carl Rakosi
Dear Earl:

Your note reached me too late for me to delay reply. Yes certainly I will do all I can to help re: Suggenhein—I've written letters for various people over last few years with nil results but I'm sure they'd respect your standing and original genius and I will do my best to specify these awareness when I write—thank you for honoring me by the thought of my being helpful. I want to be—

Assuredly, love,
[Signature]

Aug 13, '97
Wald reach me here

Mr. Carl Rahoe
4451 Colfax Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minn. 55409
Air Mail
9 Jan. 1985

Dear Bill Morgan:

Thank you for inviting me to contribute to Allen Ginsberg's Festschrift but my relationship to Allen has been so marginal that I can't see what I would have to say that would be worth saying in the company of hundreds of others who do know him and his work well. Did you or Bob Rosenthal have something particular in mind? or did Allen ask you to ask me?

Sincerely,
8 March 1985

Dear Allen:

A great surprise and delight to get your Collected Poems, with the warm inscription. A delight because your work is so accessible and generous in detail. And what a difference it makes to have it all together in one large handsome book, with the approval of even Harper and Row. Meanings that were cramped and hurried over in the small City Lights editions (perhaps because one could always hear you read them from a stage) now command attention and somehow become much larger.

A happy event, therefore, and Leah and I wish you many more.

Affectionately,
Dear Allen:  

I could use your help with something. The NEA is offering two senior fellowships for literature next year which are described in the Guidelines as being for "individuals who have made an extraordinary contribution to American literature over a lifetime of creative work" and "who have expanded the boundaries of our literary heritage in work that has taken place at the vital growing edge of literature. Their continued presence on the literary landscape is invaluable to younger writers." Commendable words, and a big order, but the judges would have to be of equal calibre to recognize such a person when they saw him. In any case, to this survivor, the description sounds more than a bit like me, but how is a panel of conservative judges to know this? I'll be lucky if they've heard my name.

Anyhow, the fellowships are by nomination only and the deadline was March 1. I was nominated in time for the deadline but there will be "senior" writers competing for these two fellowships who will be far better known to the panel of judges than I, people like Robert Penn Warren and such. I am sure, therefore, that I'll need additional supporting evidence and testimony from others in order to get anywhere with the judges.

The fellowship stipend, as you may know, is quite large and would make a sizable difference in our day to day budget. If it would not be an imposition, therefore, and you would be willing to write in support of my nomination, I'd be very grateful. The address is: Literature Program, National Endowment for the Arts, Nancy Hanks Center, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506

I know that one of these days when I'm not expecting it, we'll run into each other again, so until then,
27 April 1985

Dear Allen:

Your letter to the NEA brought tears to my eyes. Really! What more can I say?

Love,

Sincerely
Dear Bill Morgan:

Here's something for the Festschrift, in the form of a letter, as follows:

"Dear Allen:

You might define a birthday as an event that's celebrated by others but not by the birthday child himself. He's there looking pleased and slightly dazed, but really off somewhere else, marvelling that an event which was forced on him and which he does not even remember, should occasion public notice and festivities. In your case, having reached the age of sixty, the festivities may suggest the end of something, and you are not, therefore, likely to feel festive at all, despite the affectionate hoopla. Quite the contrary. If that is the case, let me tell you that I am among the celebrants, and the reason why.

I celebrate your Blakean interest in the present. Your picking up Whitman's long American line and carrying it into today's world. Your tireless repertorial eye. Your great success with the media, which benefits all poets. Your honesty about yourself, as when you said, or are reported to have said, "Fame is not very interesting, but it does make it easier occasionally to get laid." And your personal generosity. If ever I needed help, you're the one person I know I could count on.

So happy birthday, Allen,

and love from Leah and me,

Carl Rakosi
THE HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

Brooklyn College of The City University of New York

in cooperation with the Department of English, The Master of Fine Arts Program in Creative Writing, and with the generous support of the MacArthur Foundation presents

LIVING POETRY

A Series of Spring 1988 Readings introduced by Allen Ginsberg

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Campus Road and East 27th Street, Brooklyn
All are welcome. Admission Free.
For Information: (718) 780-5847
LIVING POETRY
A Series of Spring 1988 Readings


February 22 JOHN WIENERS: “Am I a marked man, my life to be a lesson/or experience to those young who would trod/the same path, without God.” John Wieners’ self-poignant Hotel Wentley Poems (1958) brought forth a tragic sentence in American Literature unfelt since heroic Hart Crane. His emotive razor verse stropped the San Francisco Renaissance late fifties. Books include Behind the State Capitol and new Selected Poems 1958-1984.


March 7 AMIRI BARAKA: Baraka’s poems win world readership with lyric might and anger, his plays of ruthless insight have frightened Babylon for decades. His first poetry, Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note, was published in 1961, Selected Poems published in 1979. Currently Associate Professor at Stony Brook, Baraka founded the Black Arts Repertory Theatre in Harlem, the Spirit House in Newark and the Black Community Development and Defense Organization, a group committed to affirming black culture and gaining black political power. Brilliant adaptation of idiomatic black oratory to American verse, his major contribution to U.S. Poetics.

March 14 ALICE NOTLEY: Elegant and tough, stellar poet of the Lower East Side, Alice Notley taught generations of poets in workshops at St. Marks Poetry Project. Books include 165 Meeting House Lane, When I Was Alive, How Spring Comes, Margaret and Dusty, and forthcoming At Night The States. Philip Whalen said that Alice Notley’s the only poet writing now who has something to teach him.

March 21 BOB ROSENTHAL: Administrative coordinator for Committee for International Poetry, St. Marks Poetry Project board member, poet playwright long an important participant of NYC poetry world, a connection between generations. Poetry books include Lies About the Flesh, and Rude Awakenings. Among his many plays produced in NY, the notorious radioplay “The Whore of the Alpines” was aired on WBAI-FM. Cleaning up New York, a minor classic.

SIMON PETTET: Young English poet specialist in contemporary U.S. verse & Manhattanite, he’s the author of Lyrical Poetry and Conversations With Rudy Burckhardt. Administrative coordinator for Committee for International Poetry. James Schuyler calls Pettet “an original, and a welcome one”, his ear precise as his lyric intent. He’s currently writing a cultural history of Manhattan, New York Ghosts, and new poems, Eternity.

All readings from 12:15 to 2 p.m. MONDAYS
(except John Ashbery, WEDNESDAY, February 17)
Introduced by ALLEN GINSBERG

March 28 TULI KUPFERBERG: “Brooklyn College alumnus (BA, (cum laude)), singing cartoonist, original Fugger, all-round bohemian and luftmensch, renegade anarchist (is there another kind?), Writes poetry when there’s nothing better to do. Has written many books, titles and subjects of which he’s forgotten.” However they include 1001 Ways to Live Without Working; Kill for Peace (Yeah 10); 1001 Ways to Beat the Draft; 1001 Ways to Make Love, also Birth Magazine.

STEVEN TAYLOR: Lyric Poetics instructor at Naropa, this musician has collaborated in concerts and recordings with Allen Ginsberg on several continents for over a decade, composed operas and recorded with Kenward Elmslie (Palais Bimbo) and Ed Sanders (Star Peace). He’s the Fugs lead guitarist, and founding member of Tuli and the Fuxxons.

April 11 ANNE WALDMAN: With peerless Fast Speaking Woman, her Journals & Dreams, Shaman, and Makeup On Empty Space, & Skin, Meat Bones Anne Waldman’s oratorical power and musical sound have knocked out audiences on both coasts. Former director of St. Mark’s Church in the Bowery’s Poetry Project, also the cofounder of Boulder Colorado’s Naropa Institute poetics program, she’s performed in the Buddahfields of Europe and recorded “Uh Oh Plutonium!” and other poems on albums and music video.


ELIOT KATZ: Poet, printer, humorist, & political activist, his poems speak the colloquial heart of New Jersey. Haunts New Brunswick, cofounder of Longshot magazine, has recently completed his first poetry book, Thieves At Work.

April 25 JAMES RUGGIA: Diverse poet of tender complexities and driving compulsions, Ruggia’s taught poetry in New Jersey ghetto schools, lived in Turkey, and edited the St. Mark’s Poetry Project Newsletter.

EILEEN MYLES: Myles handles power with casual elegance, her poems and stories amuse, move and sucker punch, published in numerous magazines and anthologies, including the Paris Review, City Lights Anthology. Her books include, A Fresh Young Voice from the Plains, Sappho’s Boat, and recent, Bread and Water. Former director of the Poetry Project at St. Marks Church, she’s taught many workshops.

May 2 DIANE DI PRIMA: From 15 books of poetry and prose including Revolutionary Letter, Loba and Selected Poems 1956-1975, she’s been translated into 10 languages. An original female Beat bard of the 1950’s, her poems sway, shimmmy & growl but never grovel. Founded N.Y. Poets Theatre in 1961, edited Floating Bear and published Poets Press and Eidolon Editions, Ms. di Prima is nationally known for decades of poetry-reading tours, writing workshops for students all ages, co-director of New College Poetics School, S.F.

May 9 KENNETH KOCH: Professor of English literature at Columbia University. Witty, urbane, and rapacious, Koch’s sophisticated poetry challenges and pleases the wild-ear’d reader. His major handbooks for teaching poetry in the schools (Wishes Lies & Dreams, Rose Where Did You Get That Red?) are used internationally now. Books include poetry (The Art of Love, Thank You and Other Poems, On the Edge, Days and Nights, Selected Poems), his novels (The Duplications, The Red Robins), plus hundreds of plays.

BROOKLYN COLLEGE STUDENT CENTER
Campus Road and East 27th Street, Brooklyn
All are welcome. Admission Free.
For Information: (718) 780-5847
24 Oct. 1984

Dear David:

How nice to get your lyric. I do know about your new domestic life now and feel the essence of it in I11.

Leah sends her love. Come and see us when you're in town next.
31 July 1984

Dear Mary:

Yes, Mary has kept us informed about your endless physical trials, and we listened, appalled. That you can’t rid yourself of them is very hard for my mind to accept, but, still, until your new injury and virus, you functioned brilliantly for the Battered Women’s Shelter, so there’s hope.

And your writing may even benefit...In any case, writing again after four years gives you a new slate. The last things I saw in print were tight and clear and interesting. They were better.

When you are able to travel again, we would like to have you visit. As George would say, "Of course."

Affectionately,
Dear Peter:

Everything OK on the proofs except a question I have about where the title, AMERICAN X NYMPHS, will be. Surely not at the bottom of the page all by itself, as on the proof page! You wouldn't dismember a poem that way, would you? a poem that, in the words of the immortal Will, "never did you no harm" and drop its head in the basement.

You'll have your own things to say about me in the Notes on the Contributors but add that my COLLECTED PROSE came out last year from The National Poetry Foundation and that my COLLECTED POETRY, also from The National Poetry Foundation, will be coming out shortly.

I must say I was depressed by the appearance of the room in which we read; in addition, I couldn't get quite the right voice for that mike and kept flinching and feeling repelled by what was coming out of me. I suppose, however, that if we had had a larger audience, I would have done better.

Anyhow, next time I get to N.Y. I promise to drop in on you at N.D. and maybe have a go with you in Anglo-Saxon.

Cordially,
Dear Peter:

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Cordially,

Carl Rakosi
128 Irving Street
San Francisco, CA 94122

6/10/85

Dear Carl:

Just a quick note to set your mind at ease. The proofs you read were Xeroxed pages from uncorrected bound galleys, not real page proofs at all. The title will of course be at the top of a fresh page.

I agree with you about the atmosphere of the reading. Shinder's setup was no shindig. I was expecting better, myself.

All best,

Peter Glassgold
Dear Peter:

I had a stormy/sassxem phone conversation with Mary Oppen about the piece and agreed to withdraw it after concluding that it wasn't worth all that turmoil. I wrote J that same night. Unfortunately, I had a few weeks before already read proof on it for CONJUNCTIONS, so it's probably too late to do anything there.

Yes, I did see the printed announcement of the readings at the Y, with my name on the program with yours. Shinder had sent it to me before I had agreed to read.....in fact, at the same time as he invited me. As things stand now, I did agree to read for a fee (moderate) slightly higher than he had offered, but I haven't heard back from him, and a part of me doesn't expect to because the man doesn't answer letters, but if I do read, I'll be glad to join you for dinner before. In fact, I know just the place: Carnegie Delicatessen, where I'll have one of their super-soups. As for Shinder, if you can do something on the scene to bring it to a head so I know how to plan, I'd appreciate it.

For Notes on Contributors just say that my latest book is COLLECTED PROSE, published by The National Poetry Foundation, and that the Foundation is bringing out my COLLECTED POEMS some time this year.

I'm looking forward to seeing you again after all these years.
Dear Al:

I have just come around to reading and yet and want to say, you set yourself one helluva formidable task. One hesitates to attempt a form so full of possible false notes as the threnody, a form so familiar to the reader that he holds onto his disbelief (that something interesting is going to happen) much longer than normally. Anyhow, somewhere along the way I found my disbelief gone, and reflect on the little book with affection and thanks.

But why, oh why, the quote from Kunitz? "How shall the heart be reconciled to its losses," strikes me as literary rhetoric at its worst, a mess, exactly the sort of thing that makes one disbelieve in poetry.

Fondly,
Dear Jonathan Greene:

I'm afraid I may have misled you, but not intentionally. When I wrote to ask about the size of Gnomon editions and how long it takes from acceptance to publication, I thought you might be a publisher of very small editions, such as a hundred or two hundred, primarily for collectors, and did not inform you that The National Poetry Foundation at The University of Maine had agreed to bring out my COLLECTED POETRY sometime in the fall of 1985 because I thought that a tiny edition of AMERICANA, sufficiently prior to that, might not matter. An edition of 1500, however, would, and I doubt whether either you or the NPF would find the proximity acceptable. If I am mistaken in this, let me know. In the meantime, my apologies.

Shall I return the books?

Sincerely,
21 May 1984

Dear Jonathan Greene:

I'll be damned but right after I wrote you, I heard from The National Poetry Foundation that they would have no objection to Gnomon publishing my AMERICANA, so if you don't either, you've got yourself a deal. In that case, I'll send you an up-to-date, complete version.

I'm leaving on May 31 for a three week visit to Minneapolis. My address there will be c/o Barbara Rawley, 2007 Kenwood Parkway, Minneapolis, MN Minnesota, 55405, in case you want to reach me while I'm away from here.

Sincerely,

Carl Rakosi
26 May 1984

Dear Jonathan Greene:

My Foreword will follow.

Doubt however whether I'll be able to do it before I leave here on the 31st. or during my % visit to Minneapolis. In that case it'll be done after my return on June 19th.
23 June 1984

Dear Jonathan:

Sorry to hear about the death and illness in your family, very sorry.

About AMERICANA I see no point in publishing a part and not the whole of it, as parts are already in print in various books. What is needed is the whole (AMERICAN NYMPHS is not integral to it and would not need to be included) as a separate book where it can be read as a whole. I'll hold off writing the foreword until I know what's what. In the meantime, rest up in that hot Southwest sun.
Dear Jonathan:

Forgive me for being so slow to answer your letters but Leah has cancer and it has been very hard for me to do much more than tend to what has to be done as a result and struggle to overcome my depression and fears.

About your Collected, I'm delighted it's being done and am waiting eagerly to see what it will all look like and be. I've learned from dealing with Terrell that he means well but he has very limited funds and this will cause delays in how quickly the book will appear, but be patient; and he has very little know-how in merchandizing. But he has integrity and will turn out a clean, attractive book.

Love to you both,
Dear Jonathan:

First the good news: after a year of chemotherapy, the latest C-T Scan shows that Leah’s cancer is in remission. So for a time, there’ll be an end to her dreadful chemotherapy. You can imagine what a lift that has given us! Her energy has not returned, but that’s a small thing, considering.

Yes, the N.Y. Times review as splendid. A lot of people saw it. A month before that, there had been an equally strong review in the VILLAGE VOICE; and later one in Poetry Flash and in the San Francisco Chronicle. So what I was afraid would happen, and was in fact sure would happen, that my book would go totally unobserved, did not happen at all. On the contrary. That was exhilarating, of course; rejuvenating. But only for a few days. Then I went back to my customary state of doubt and vulnerability.

I know, of course, how deep your need was to have all your work brought together and published. How glad I was, therefore, to help you in a small way to do this. It’s given me pleasure. Now you must have patience, as I said before, until Terry gets enough money together from the sale of other books to be able to get yours to the printer.

Your experience in the hospital reminds me in one respect of one I had not so long ago. I went in with symptoms that looked like diverticulitis and the doctors looked concerned. They put me on intravenous feeding of glucose....I think that’s what it was....and I just lay in bed, waiting for the bad things to happen which they were expecting but which they didn’t describe to me, but it didn’t happen. On the contrary, the I-V feeding made me feel extraordinarily light and good...my head was clear, my body felt pure. I didn’t feel sick at all. So there I was with nothing to do but lie in bed and read and chat with friends who came to visit and make friends with the delightful young nurses who tended me. So my trip to the hospital, after the initial gallop of test-test-test, was more like a vacation.

Love to you both,
Dear Jonathan:

Welcome to the club of Elderly Amnesiacs. I'm a charter member. Fortunately I have Leah's memory to run to for help. I've been running to her for years, especially on names and dates. In fact, she says she has never worried that I'd leave her because she knows that I couldn't get along without her memory. Or her cooking. Anyhow, you can relax. You did respond to the news about her immediately. Your secret accountant must have written down so dimly that you couldn't be sure.

Leah is still in remission, thanks be. She exhausts easily, but except for this, and a sense of foreboding always at our backs, mine more than hers, life goes on as before, with the poet, however, more or less mute. Too busy scurrying around in his mind for a safety crew against calamity, which he knows lies ahead, and licking the same old wound over and over, the recent deaths from cancer of old, close friends, one after another after another. It's one that doesn't heal because there's nothing to fill their absence. Sounds gloomy but in fact we're coping and are usually in good spirits. And have never been so close and loving or enjoyed our children and granddaughters as much. So even here we manage to come up on the plus side.

The management at The National Poetry Foundation, as you may know, has changed. A new president, Burton Hatlen, a young professor and perceptive critic, and for the first time a board of directors to formulate policy. What I don't know is who is in charge of day to day operations. There seems to be no question that your Collected is going to be published, the question is when, in view of Terrell's slipping so far into the red. I'll try to keep track of what's happening.

If Leah is still in remission by next September, I may be in England then with her and with my daughter and son-in-law. Mostly for vacation (maybe a flat in London for a few weeks?) and to see old friends. Incidentally, you're vague about your own health. What is (has been) the trouble?

Affectionately,

Note change of address from 128 to 126 Irving Street.
Dear Jonathan:

Forgive me for not responding to your letters but for the last year I have been ground down by Leah’s cancer. The responsibilities of nursing and caring for her have shut out the literary world and even the possibility of correspondence. The end, after three years, came on January 21st. I don’t yet know what’s going to happen to me, living alone after 49 years of marriage to Leah but at least I’m able to write to you again and to tell you that I feel relieved and content that you finished vol.2. I don’t know any work which I’m looking forward to more and in which I have so much confidence.

Love to you and Kate,

Carl
12/26/85

Dear Jim:

I'm delighted to hear that you'll be in EXQUISITE CORPSE. It's a good place to be. Yes, I do subscribe to it, but thanks. And thanks for your Hanukah and New Year's greetings also.

All the best in the New Year,
12 June 1985

Dear Jimb,

Thank you for your new poems. They are of the same quality as those I say in INTREPID, which I liked.

Would you believe I once lived in Gary? When I was seven. I remember the steel mills, of course, but in addition a terrifying experience on the school playground one day: five huge, wild-eyed black boys, shrieking war cries and wielding clubs with nails, driving all the white kids off the premises. That was my first sight of blacks.

Another memory. It's a very hot night. We're all sitting outdoors on the street and a little black puppy comes running up, his tail wagging joyously. That was Teddy, and love at first sight, for him too. He stayed with us until we were grown. The city was still small and young then and my father could have made millions if he had bought property, which was going begging then. Think of that!

Sincerely,
12 July 1988

Dear Roger:

Well, here I was expecting to see you again, but it's not to be. Leah has cancer and can't make the trip and I don't want to go off on my own and leave her. I'm sorry, Roger. It would have been nice.

And thanks for your efforts. I did get an invitation from The Poetry Society and already had one from Dick Caddel at the University of Durham. Oh well, what can we do?

Affectionately,

[Signature]
To Daniel Haberman:

    How exciting and, yes, up-lifting
to hear a singing voice again! What Guy Davenport
wrote about THE FURTIVE WALL goes for me too.
    But why the etchings?
Is there a book of mine which
you don't have which you'd like?
    All the best to you, and if
you're ever in these parts, please look me up.

    Thanks,
Dear Daniel:

You came on me so unexpectedly in the cab with the muted reference to your chemotherapy that I was too stunned to respond, but the thought of what you must have gone through is very much with me, and in a small way I too feel stricken. Oh well, what can we do?

You certainly deserve that trip on a freighter to Valparaiso. I have a special interest in knowing how you find it because in the 1930s I worked as a mess boy on one going to Australia (and a meaner, more low-down, goddamned job I never had) and remember with what class the one passenger and the ship's officers were treated. I never did get to see the captain. He stayed in his cabin the whole time (as in a Conrad novel).

Bon voyage, my friend!
Dear Daniel:

You're right, the only way to hold out against a hospital and not accompany yourself become a dead, anonymous hallway there, an unoccupied hospital bed, an empty enamel bed pan, a side of meat turned this way and that for examination while all time is suspended and everything stops.....I can taste the metal....is to hold on to the idea of poetry. You're so right. No one can accompany a person down that long, melancholy hallway. This is one ordeal which simply can not be divided up and a portion given to someone else. Hence, in his sense, he is the only person there. That's being alone in a sense unknown to us in every-day life. But even worse is how the hospital inexorably steamrolls over the strongest will and makes one a non-person. One wonders whether this is what is really meant by fate, face to face, not at a rhetorical distance. Oh my! Do you have someone to talk to?

I suspect that the Committee turned you down for Bread Loaf, despite Nemerov's nomination, not for literary reasons but because you're not well-enough known yet to attract students.

I wrote Bob Holman at St. Mark's, by the way, urging him to invite you for a reading on the grounds that you were a lyric poet, an endangered species, and that people should have a chance to hear you before the species disappears. I also quoted from Guy Davenport and told him I concurred. I hope it'll do some good.

Interesting that your red-headed messboy quit. I quit too.

Best wishes,
Dear Daniel:

Lovely book, lovely work, your POEMS. The same light touch, the same grace and wit. Thanks. One poem in particular, Sonnet in the War Meter, I have to single out, distorting as it may be to do so, because it had a knock-out effect on me. Also, were not these poems written after THE FURTIVE WALL?

Well, anybody who has a crew as diverse as Dahlberg, Nemerov, Guy Davenport, Joel Oppenheimer, Helen Adam, Jonathan Williams and James Schuyler in his corner is a winner, I say.

How did your tests come out?

L'Shono Tova
Dear Daniel:

I'm glad you shared your good news with me. However, I don't agree with you. When it comes to cancer, 80% odds are not twice as good as 40%; they're ten times as good.

As you know, our immune-defense system is profoundly affected by will, not just will to overcome an illness but will to achieve a purpose in life, which includes your strong, perhaps indomitable, will to create poetry. So it seems to me you have something going for you which other patients don't have. In addition, perhaps the gods will be kind.

Thanks so much for the poem and your warm thoughts.
Dear Daniel:

Yes, truth "lurks in metaphor" because, although arithmetic is a product of the mind, psychology is not arithmetical, especially not where we can't observe what is going on, as in the mind-body relationship. There, because metaphor can be more holistic, it may do better.

No, I didn't write the Latin verse, "Guard your wives, you Roman townsmen, etc." Honestly. I'm the baldhead lecher himself.

I'll be with family too this Thanksgiving. My son, George, and his wife and two little girls are coming down from Chico, which is about 175 miles northeast of here. The rest of my family, my daughter, Barbara, and her two teen-age daughters, for whom we pine all year, live, alas, in Minneapolis.

So it goes,
Dear Dan:

Oh my, what a gift you have sent me in the TIMON! An oasis in bookmaking. May your tribe increase! And your health be kind to you.

Carl
Dear Daniel:

Hurray! The 11th of February is your day. And your Guggenheim reading makes it your year too. I'm glad.

Hugs for your poem, in which your will goes its own way despite the desperate situation.
17 Jan. 1984

Dear Daniel:

I bask unabashed in your charming booklet and was warmed by your affectionate New Year's thought of me. If I pursued that vein, I would find myself having A Chance Encounter With Robert Herrick, whom my old friend, Zukofsky, to my surprise, could not take very seriously.

Leah and I will be coming to New York in May, despite the fact that it was too late to get a reading through the Academy of American Poets. I'm giving a lecture on May 15th at NYU (The Poetics Institute) and a reading at St. Mark's on May 15th, and if they can raise the money, one on May 17th at the 63d St. Y. So perhaps we'll be able to spend a little time together again.

I won't say anything about your health because I expect it to be all right.

Affectionately,
Dear Dan:

Don't imagine for one moment that I'm not aware of the good things that have been happening to you this past year: Poet-in-Residence plus an Elector at The Poet's Corner, poems in The Southern Review, a reading at the Guggenheim, and perhaps other things unreported by my spies. Marvelous. Tell me that your health has kept up with this, and I'll know that all is well. Incidentally, I'm curious about your experience with the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine.

Although I'm not a New Yorker, I miss the City once in a while and so I'm trying to get back there next May for a visit. If I can get a few readings I can make it. I think I can count on St. Mark's again but I need more. What can you tell me about how to get one at Guggenheim?

All the best,

[Signature]
31 July 1984

Dear Daniel:

      Happy to hear the good news.

      I've got two fair prospects for a reading, St. Mark's and NYU where Michael Heller is trying to arrange a combination interview and reading. Since I don't know anyone at The Academy of American Poets to make a contact for me at the Guggenheim and can't make one for myself, as I don't know who's in charge of readings there, I guess I'll have to let that pass. But if I get those two readings, I'll let you know. For one thing, I've got to find out where "the best Hungarian food in the city" is. There used to be some good places up on 2nd Avenue in the 80's, I think, but they slipped into a low average, so I assume this is a new one.

            Stay well,
9 Aug. 1984

Dear Daniel:

I wrote to Mr. Henri Cole at the Academy, taking particular care to address him as Mr. and Henri, not Henry. Thanks. No need for anyone to do more. If I have to be recommended to him by somebody, it means they don't know who I am, and I can do without that.

No, The Green Tree doesn't ring a bell. So that would be a first time.

Look at George Eliot's language and themes, always heartfelt and passionate. That tells you why she's still relevant and readable. Meredith's language, on the other hand, is relentlessly Latinate, top-heavy, complex, wordy. Today it sounds almost antiquarian, cold. When I was young, Meredith and Hardy were considered to be on a par. Now look.

If you want the most readable, read Trollope.

Best,
9 Sept. 1984

Dear Daniel:

You have the benefit of recent reading. I haven't read George Eliot or Meredith since I was a senior in high school, so you're probably right. Now that you mention it, I do remember her heavy moralizing and explaining. At any rate you won't catch me reading either one of them now, Meredith because of his language. Trollope, on the other hand, I did read in recent years and found his prose as fresh and light as a brook. I can also recommend Italo Calvino's The Baron In The Trees, a surprise, yet as basic as Gulliver.

For Christ's sake, stay away from the obits. How many times do you want to die? They can't tell you nothing.

The Academy's schedule for the year was already full but I do have a reading, as I thought I would, at St. Mark's, and I may get a reading cum interview at NYU. I'll know in a few weeks.
Dear Daniel:

I see by yours of the 15th that you've finished the most onerous of your administrative chores and that you're dancing with relief.

That is an odd combination: Brodsky, Jacobsen, Kunitz and Rakosi. Must have been a committee selection. My friends will wonder, what's Rakosi doing in there? and my academic disregardsers and nay-sayers will wonder the same thing? what's Rakosi doing in there? In any case, you've elevated me into very respectable company, and I can do with some elevation. By the way, I don't know Jacobsen's work. Of what literary persuasion is she?

Has it struck you that three (possibly four) out of the four readers are Jews? Well, maybe three out of four is not so extraordinary in this sort of thing. But what if it's four out of four?

I think I get the picture now: first the vespers, then the unveiling of the memorial stones, then the four 5-minute readings, then a reception. Right?

After searching through Poe for a few poems that could be read to a contemporary audience without embarrassment, I can see why Jacobsen and Kunitz refused to tintinabulate with him in public. Cowards! Anyhow, the ones I will read (without embarrassment) are: SONNET TO SCIENCE, SILENCE, TO--("I heed not that my earthly lot...")*, TO HELEN, and the first two paragraphs of THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO. That should come to about five minutes, give or take a minute. If you can arrange to have me read last, it might be best. I'll be coming from out of town and I won't be in control of all the circumstances, although if I can manage an 8:30 am plane out of Milwaukee, there'll be no problem.

Nice of you to invite Leah's sister-in-law. I'll ask her and see if she wants to come. In the meantime, let me give you her name, etc.: Alma Jaffe, 137 Riverside Drive, 362-6946, that's where I'll be staying; and in your next letter, give me your phone number, just in case.
27 Dec. 1985

Dear Daniel:

What a lift I get from your graceful poems, and, as always, the elegant paper and distinctive type! Bless you and a good year. To Daniel and Barbara, so be it written and come to pass.

We saw the announcement of Barbara’s concert in Stockton and longed to go but I just couldn’t manage the driving. Maybe we’ll be lucky and she’ll play in San Francisco next time.

The language poets, whose most obnoxious member, Ron Silliman, lives in town, have been stirring up one hell of a controversy, as you may have heard, until I no longer know which end is up. Ugly goings on!

Love,
Dear Dan:

A Jew shouldn't be hearing bells at the news of a wedding but that's what I am hearing. Glad bells. Makes both Leah and me feel good. The right thing to do. When is it going to be?

About Leah, as I said, she's holding her own. Our relationship, however, has changed: we've become an impasto of one, an amalgam in which hardly a thought or feeling passes through my mind that does not in some way have to do with her.

My literary self is nowhere in sight.

Believe me it was encouraging to read that you had survived against such odds, but how did your reading up on the latest research help to bring this about?

Again I hear bells. All the best,
18 March 1988

Dear Dan:

Leah is back on chemotherapy and things have become wobbly and nightmarish again. I don't need to tell you more. You've been through all that. Anyhow, it's put me far behind in my correspondence.

Your new book has all the familiar virtues of the others, with this difference: some of the poems take more risks in form and subject matter, are bolder, than others, and that I fidd all to the good. And the translations are fun. Thanks, Dan, for this preview.

I'm going to be in N.Y. from April 8 to April 12 but the tasks I have at St. Mark's and in Brooklyn College all come during the day and I'll be tied up with the old friend I'm staying with, some of the time, so I may not be able to see you and Barbara. But I'll try. In any case, I'll phone.

Love,

Leah
1 Oct. 1984

Dear Leo Hamalian:

Bless you for remembering to send me the issue of ARARAT with the article about Leon Herald. It made my heart glad to see Leon honored.

And what a treat the Saroyan issue was! It brings Bill back to life exactly as I knew him, and more fully than I knew him. How can I thank you enough for that?

If you're in town again and feel like visiting, don't hesitate to call. It would be a pleasure.

Cordially,
30 Oct. 1984

Dear Leo:

It would be fun to write something for you on Leon and Bill but I don’t know whether I have anything worth saying. I’m working on something else right now and when I’m through, I’ll look to see.

I empathize all the way with your father, as you describe him. What would he have thought, I wonder, about our governor here? The Duke was a blockhead when he was Attorney-General and he hasn’t improved any in the Executive Mansion. Leon would have been disgusted and Bill even more.

Best,
Dear Leo:

The little anthology you sent me puts you in the class of boundless benefactors. Thank you!

I never saw Leon looking the way he does in the photograph, the mouth pulled together so tight, so severe, as if he had been constricted into a hard, dry cell of old age. Leon used to look ageless but never old. And Leon without a smile and a sparkle was not Leon.

Leah and I are going to be in New York the week of May 13th. Perhaps we could get together?

You have me incurably curious about the references to mg in the Rexroth-Zukofsky letters. Is there some way I could read what they are?
23 Feb. 1985

Dear Leo:

Dinner chez Hamalian is a great idea. It would have to be May 16th, however, as I'll be reading (I think) at the 63d St. Y on the 17th. If you'll give me your phone no. and address and how to get there by bus from Riverside Drive and 86th St., where Leah and I will be staying her sister-in-law (362-6946), we'll be all set.

I had seen an account somewhere, probably in The New York Review of Books in the endless series of articles and letters on the Hiss case, of that story about Sam Roth being able to clear Hiss but never being called. I knew Roth slightly. He was not a bad guy. A bit of a crook but he didn't deserve prison. I was in Two Worlds Quarterly too.

See you fairly soon.

Cordially,
5 March 1985

Dear Leo:

It will be fun celebrating Hampartzoom Ascension Day (you gotta be kidding!) chez Hamalian over an Armenian meal (that's not kidding). Onward to new experiences (for us). Just one proviso: I'm not supposed to have anything with seeds or nuts in it. I don't know whether that's conceivable in the Armenian cuisine.

Yes, I was in Two Worlds Quarterly, but for heaven's sake don't bother to look it up. It was very early work and worth disinterring.

Got your directions and if Hampartzoom is with us, Leah and I will give ourselves up to your doorman at 530 90th St. on May 16th at 7:30 pm and wait for the rest to happen.

Cordially,

[signature]
Dear Burt:

I’m afraid I’ll have to let your invitation pass. All I did, after all, was to read a couple of George’s poems and wish him a happy birthday. The one comment (or was it two?) which I made is not enough to be worth reproducing, and I have no urge to do more with it. As for a poem, I’ve already gone that route. Twice would be corny. But you and Hugh Kenner and Robt. Hass did have something to say and I hope they’ll come through with something.

Terry spoke well of your Afterword, and I can believe it.
9 Jan. 1984

Dear Burt:

I'm afraid I was not at my best in the interview (not your fault). I'm impatient, therefore, to see the typescript and improve it. In the meantime, I've found Martin Rosenblum's 1975 interview in Margins and one that appeared that same year in Preview, along with correspondence. Please return Margins after you've duplicated the interview, which, you will see, is full of words crossed out, words like Ugh and eh and all kinds of repetitious crud. The material in them rings true, as I re-read it, particularly Rosenblum's, so if I'm not mistaken, they'll be useful to you for your Contemporary Literature article and also perhaps in your own interview. If they prompt new questions in your mind, shoot them along and I'll take a crack at them. You might even want to reprint parts of the Rosenblum interview.

Next time I hope we'll be able to spend more unprogrammed time together. We didn't really get a chance to get to know each other and relax.

So au revoir,

p.s. Don't forget to return the copy of my letter to you along with MARGINS.
Dear Burt:

I want you to know that I'm enthusiastic about your post-duction. You've given the reader a handle to my work, which I see now needed doing. I'm particularly delighted at your elucidation of the aphorism as a literary form, for the one thing I dreaded was that my prose would be judged on other grounds. In all this, you are accurate and generous. True, your foray into the Objectivists' Jewishness, as you yourself suspected, is a bit wobbly, but noble (Reznikoff too was a secular Jew. His Jewishness came from an ongoing love-affair, from the early days of the Menorah Journal to his marriage with the impassioned Zionist, Marie Syrkin, with Jewish history and Old Testament quality and the necessity for Jewish survival). And there is one point on which you are mistaken. My poetics too, like Reznikoff's, were already developed a few years before 1930, when I first heard from Zukofsky. I got them from the same source he did, Pound's do's and don'ts on writing. So it's not poetic principles that I got from Louis but superlative editing (all of our correspondence at that time came from his editing of the Obj. issue of Poetry and of The Obj. Anthology).

As I take leave of your essay, I see that you write like a loving friend of my work, which quite dazzles me and fills my heart.

What more can I say?
16 Dec. 1984

Dear Burt:

You must not call me Mr. Rakosi. I flinch at the distance that puts between us.

An taped inter view with me would be fine. If it's all right with you, I'd like to do it in the morning, when my mind is freshest and clearest. I don't know where you'll be staying but you're welcome to stay here, if you'd like, the night before the interview. We can put you up. We have a spare bedroom and even an extra bathroom.

Need I say that I'm delighted that you'll do the piece for CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE?

Best,
Dear Burt:

Muchas gracias for cutting out the meanderings and making the whole thing flow better. As it stands, the interview certainly does have the feel of spoken discourse and has much more to say than I remembered having said; which is a very pleasant surprise. I've made some small changes, cutting out repetitions and words like "really", which I see I use in speech for all kinds of inflection, but which on the page are anti-productive, not accurate enough. And I've added a few sentences here and there to fill out a meaning. Otherwise, everything's in good shape, ready to go.

With some squeezing, perhaps I could make it to Orono. I have a reading scheduled in Buffalo for Tuesday, Sept. 30, and a reading & workshop in Rochester for Wednesday, Oct. 1 and perhaps the following morning; and one in N.Y. for Sunday, Oct. 5. That leaves Thursday evening, Oct. 2 and part of Friday, Oct. 3 as possibilities. How would that work out for you? Please let me know right away. I'd be coming from Rochester. What airline would I use and how much time should I give myself? While you're about it, could you get me a schedule? The honorarium & travel reimbursement are satisfactory.

Sorry to hear about your personal crises. Are they behind you now? Does your doing the interview mean that you'll be getting to the article that Dembo invited you to do for CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE? If so, I'm completing a brief autobiography for the Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series. You're welcome to see it if you think you might find it useful.

Best,
Dear Burt:

I'm unable to reach Sam Abrams in Rochester to firm up my date there because he's still out of the country and I can't reach him but I'm pretty sure I'll be able to get to Orono in time to do the reading there on Thursday evening, Oct. 2, and whatever the day after. So let's go for Option 1. If I have to change that, I'll let you know right away.

Your experience with the illness and death of your mother is somewhat like what I've been going through myself since March. In one week, my wife, Leah, and two of our close friends in San Francisco were found to have cancer. Leah is doing pretty well, for the time being, all things considered, but one of our friends has already died and the other has only weeks to live. So you and I have been in the same place.

Best,
18 Aug. 1986

Dear Burt:

Just heard from Sam Abrams in Greece that Wed., Oct. 1 is satisfactory for Rochester, so I'll be able to take that 10:20 a.m. U.S. Air plane out of there on Thu., Oct. 2 and arrive in Bangor circa 1:45 p.m. The reading will then be that evening, and whatever you and Terry cook up for me to do will be on Friday morning, Oct. 3. I'd like to leave for New York in the early (or if necessary, middle) afternoon.

You said you had already made a reservation for me for that 10:20 plane out of Rochester. If you could also make one for me from Bangor to N.Y. and send me the tickets, I think that would be most convenient for both of us. However, if you do that, please have them made out to Callman Rawley, my legal name. I'm going ahead now and buying the tickets for the rest of my itinerary. If you don't buy the tickets at your end, let me know right away so that I can do it here.

Best,
Dear Michael:

Well, you went and did it, what you've been threatening to do for a long time, a piece on me. If I were a rabbi (a Freudian slip, I first typed rabbit), I'd give you three blessings: one for accuracy, one for insight, and one for not, thank God, being turgid or mushy. It turns out to be a necessary complement to Martin Rosenblum's Ph.D. dissertation on my Americans poems.

If you're going to have reprints made of it, I'd like to pay my share for ten copies.

Thanks,
Dear Michael:

Seems to me your best bet for your book of essays would be a university press or the new North Point Press (Jack Shoemaker, as you probably know). I'd try the University of California Press first (2223 Fulton St., Berkeley, CA 94720; Marilyn Schwartz, editor) because they're now doing Brian Ahearn's study of A and would have done my COLLECTED POEMS too if my previous books had been out of print or hard to find. Next, I think I'd try Ohio University Press, and so on down the line. If you establish your credentials in a letter and tell them what the book is about and what need it fills, you'll find out quickly, without having to go to the trouble of shipping your mss out to fifty different places, which publisher is interested enough to give it serious consideration.

I haven't been to the Main Library yet to read your article in Ohio Review but will. In the meantime, refresh my memory, will you, about our brief exchange on guilt. I remember your asking the question and my thinking, "What a strange question to ask (i.e., in connection with poetry.....or with anything having to do with me). I remember saying "no" in a no uncertain tone and being puzzled as to what you had in mind which made you ask the question. What did you have in mind?

Am I going East? Yes, in the Spring if I can get a few readings around New York to supplement a reading at St. Mark's, where I have been led to understand that I have a standing invitation, and earn enough to cover my expenses and Leah's from San Francisco. I have no particular urge to give readings, so if it doesn't work out, I shan't be disappointed, though I must say that I do like to be in New York about once a year to lose myself in all that anonymous rushing and surging and come out at the other and with my personality more mine than ever. As for you, if you can make it to the West Coast, stay with us. We have room.

Your rabbi.

Carl
Dear Michael Boychik:

Your rebbe would like very much to help you get a reading in the Bay area but the people in charge are all goyim beyond his influence and all he can do is give you their names: Frances Mayes, director, The Poetry Center, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway, San Francisco, 94132; and Ron Loewinsohn or Josephine Miles at the University of California in Berkeley. The situation south of here is a little more promising: Michael Davidson at the University of California in San Diego, and Clayton Eshleman in Los Angeles. As I think I told you, Leah and I would like you to stay with us if you can make it. Lots of room.

Read your article (twice) in the Ohio Review and was gripped by it. Very good! However, I have trouble with the concept of guilt. There is such a thing, of course, as tangible guilt for specific acts, but what is the guilt that appears in poetry? Seems to me factitious, more like a device for forcing and enhancing subject matter and for "proving" the alleged scope of one's concerns and tragic world-feelings to the reader, a device that works only if one considers experience from a great metaphysical distance, as the Apostle Paul did when he conceived the notion of original sin. All sick, sick, sick, and phony.

Dreadful weather you're having out East now; even worse in Minneapolis where my poor daughter Barbara lives.

Keep in touch,

[Signature]

1/21/82
Dear Michael:

Enclosed is my A NOTE ON THE OBJECTIVISTS for your expanded piece on me. You might also find something you can use in the tape which Bob Holman made of my workshop at St. Mark's the other night. In addition, when you're here, you can look into my copy of Martin Rosenblum's dissertation on the AMERICANA, if you haven't already seen it. And of course we'll be able to talk. My phone is 566-3425.

See you soon,

p.s. Did I tell you that my archives are now in the Houghton Library at Harvard?
Dear Mike:

I had heard of your becoming an editor of ORIGIN and was happy for you. Do you & Cid get along all right? It has published good work but too often an extension of Cid. It can benefit from your presence.

A book of my collected prose is coming out for my birthday in November (Terrell of Paideuma is doing it), so I have no prose at the moment to send you.... nor poetry either (my last unpublished poems are coming out in Conjunctions)....but give me time, I'll have something.

I'm delighted that your book on the Objectivists is finished and off to a publisher. Keep me posted on its fortunes.

The photos remind me how much fun we had together. Much obliged. And stay with us again if you come this summer. We'll be gone from June 6 to June 20, but after that the coast is clear.

Love,
Dear Mike:

Hooray for Southern Illinois University Press! (isn't that Lincoln country?) And for you who persevered and did it!

You praise the Objectivists? What, do you defy Messrs. Marvin Bell & Richard Howard? and all that ilk, Ugh!

Poor George Oppen has deteriorated tragically since you saw him last. He can no longer write a letter or read or follow adult TV. He is even unsure at times as to where he is or whether he will be able to even sign his name. You can imagine what a terrible burden this has been for Mary, what a trauma. But she's "surviving"...with some professional help from a program for the spouses of stroke and Alzheimer patients. Strangely, though, George's social sense has remained intact, and when you're with him, his actual condition is concealed by his fragmentary reminiscences and you have the impression that he's still all right. Incidentally, you were quoted by Robert Haas at a splendid public testimonial to George on his 75th birthday. He agreed with your perception that George's syntax did for poetry something like what Cezanne had done for painting. I'll be interested to see how you develop this in your essay. When I asked Mary when the Alzheimer symptoms in George seemed to have begun, she hesitated for a moment and then said, with a grin, "At
"birth," meaning that to some extent he's always had some problem with orientation and coherence. This struggle to achieve coherence is revealed in his syntax but works out to his advantage. It leads him into interesting syntactical breaks. And the slight dis-orienting drift forced him to find the most sturdy possible base of orientation in his work. Lucky for poetry.

Do come.
19 May 1984

Dear Michael:

I don't remember now whether you teach at NYU but if you do, would you do me a favor? Would you find out for me whether there's any interest at your school in having me there for a reading, or whatever, next May? That's when I'm giving a reading at The Art Institute in Chicago and I'd like to combine it with a trip to New York if I could. I'm pretty sure St. Mark's will want me but I need more than one reading to afford it.

How's the work coming? Ah, the working world!

Fondly,

[Signature]
30 May 1984

Dear Michael:

Thanks for your help at NYU. I'll ask Bob Holman at St. Mark's to make the contact for me at Cooper Union, as I don't know the people there and don't even have their address.

With regard to Jim Hartz at San Francisco State, I never met the man and our paths don't cross but I'll be seeing Michael Palmer at a party on the 30th and I'll find out if he knows him and would be willing to make the contact.

CONVICTION'S NET OF BRANCHES, a very fitting name for us Obj.s. Can't wait to see it.

Your mentioning Parnassus makes me wonder whom they'll be assigning my COLLECTED PROSE to or whether they'll review it at all.

What's the big idea pulling such a fancy word, synergistic, on me? Is this what they teach you at collitch?

Have a good summer.

Love,
25 June 1984

Dear Mike:

I have two commitments in 1985 as of now, May 17th in Chicago and May 19th in Milwaukee, and may have readings in Minneapolis and Kansas City immediately before or after. My readings in New York should also therefore come immediately before or after my Midwest commitments.

Something could come of a chat with you as part of the program at NYU. I like the idea.

Love,
Dear Michael:

The Chicago Art Institute has switched my reading to a later date in May, so I need to know from you how late in May a possible reading or whatever (I am not nudging) at NYU would be feasible, i.e., would not interfere with preparations for exams.

Glorious weather here, which makes us all feel glorious too, and close with,

Love,

Carl
Dear Michael:

I could use your help with something. The NEA is offering two senior fellowships for literature next year which are described in the Guidelines as being for "individuals who have made an extraordinary contribution to American literature over a lifetime of creative work" and "who have expanded the boundaries of our literary heritage in work that has taken place at the vital growing edge of literature. Their continued presence on the literary landscape is invaluable to younger writers." That sounds rather like me, no?

Anyhow, the fellowships are by nomination only and the deadline was March 1. A couple of people did nominate me before the deadline but there will be "senior" writers competing for these two fellowships who will be far better known to the panel of judges than I, people like Robert Penn Warren and Stanley Kunitz. I am sure, therefore, that I'll need additional supporting evidence and testimony from others in order to get anywhere with the judges.

The fellowship stipend, as you may know, is quite large and would make a sizable difference in our day to day budget. If it would not be an imposition on you, therefore, and you would be willing to write on NYU stationery in support of my nomination, I'd be very grateful. The address is: Literature Program, National Endowment for the Arts, Nancy Hanks Center, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506.

Looking forward to seeing you in New York soon. Have you been asked to participate in the Objectivist discussion at my session?
Dear Mike:

It's not impossible, is it? that the great things you said about me in the letter to the NEA are true. Wouldn't it be wonderful if it were! In any case, how wonderful of you to be so glowing in your words. Hugs and more hugs for that!

So now we know, you and Rosenthal. Very good. It should be fun. In the meantime, can you imagine me on the same platform as Stanley Kunitz, Joseph Brodsky, who seems to have brought new life from his part of Europe to the rhymesters, and Josephine Jacobsen (who is she?) at the Melville-Poe Celebrations at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on May 12th? I can't.
Dear Mike:

Yes, I was unusually relaxed for my NYU talk. Maybe it was the good meal, the good drinks, the good company before; and the nice weather, plus the knowledge that I was in the midst of intelligent friends who would understand exactly what I was saying. The two questions from the floor, however, continue to trouble me. I wanted very much to respond to Armand’s question about memory but couldn’t. I know he had something solid in mind but I couldn’t figure it out. Could you? I was left feeling that I had failed him on an important question. Eliot’s “question” about the presence of myth in Obj. poetry, I felt to be mischievous and misinformed and I was annoyed. Did I show it?

I’ll be reading with you here on Nov. 14th. Would you like to stay with us?

Affectionately,

[Signature]
Dear Mike:

First, let me tell you where I'll be staying in N.Y. In all likelihood with my sister-in-law, Alma Jaffe, 137 Riverside Drive/phone: 362-6946. There's a small chance, however, that she may have her son from Hong Kong with her at the time, in which case I'll be staying with an old social work friend, Maurice Bernstein, 400 Central Park West, Apt. 18 R; phone 666-2285. So best call before you set out to pick me up.

I don't remember your saying when you'd be driving me out to East Hampton, whether Saturday pm or Sunday am. Which is it? and what time?

I hope you're keeping up the good work and continuing to shun the 3d and 4th cup of coffee. As you know, the 3d cup will make yr eyes pop, the fourth will eventually make yr head look like a billiard ball, and the fifth will positively discombobulate yr gonads.

from a true friend,

Cat
**At The Galleries**

Karen Wexler Richards C. Wexler of East Hampton has had two of his watercolors accepted into juried exhibits. “Then & Now” at the Parrish Art Museum in Water Mill, and “An Independent Study” at the Critical Mass Gallery in New York City. The exhibits will run through Nov. 11th.

**Sight Visitors** is the title of this Theodore Gavenchak work included in the new exhibit opening at the Vered Art Gallery in East Hampton Sunday.

**LONG ISLAND ARTS**

Bonnie Schur in Peggy Mich, the Gallery owner, and Kelly Rubel, both of Shelter Island, and Susan Silberman in her “Canyon Series,” whi

**ARTS & LETTERS**

**THE EAST HAMPTON STAR, EAST HAMPTON, N.Y., OCTOBER 9, 1986**

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The Benefits of Laughter

Beaums-ArBs Ball

ParoentS have been invited to en-

dulge their fantasies Saturday night at the annual PajA/Art Museum "Bear-Abs-Ball." Held at the

Museum, 183 Main St. in Southampton, it is honor of the artist's life, it has become a must for guests to

give as a work of art.

For the fourth year, this year a group of parents has designed and sold-off

silk masks at the Museum's gift shop. Tickets to the Ball will be issued only at the entrance at the door from 5 P.M. on Friday; Saturday;

from 7 to 11:30 P.M. There will be refreshments, entertainment, and the oppor


tunity to see all of the artwork.

The Merry Mockers, a Carribean

style band, will play in this jedy which will provide the music between the hands of the

Ballroom has become a "local

singing" and was last year quite
crowded with contained parry-

Sages. The challenge this year to "be your favorite work of art" has inspired music in imaginative

Messages have ranged from sim-

ple requests to elaborate answers.

Guests will enter the party through a silk-screened entrance, designed by

Richard Lebert and decorated by

Helen Anne Riley.

Mack Designers

Among those who have design-

ed masks for sale are Rachel Leon and

Steven Kerner of Springs. Neil Na-

dor of Amagansett, David Seine of

Sag Harbor, and Bette Midler. The

Museum is accepting register-

ations.

JOANNE FLURO

Joan FlUro is in the act of creating an ap-

preciable one. Ms. LaRoche said. The most popular jokes she does are

"Why? Because it is, she

said. Newcomers often joke, "in-

famous jokes" talking about failing

the SATs and other political

jokes about religion and "nack

job that is more often current con-

tent.

Kearns is proud of the success

in which we live, refining the "Year-by-Year" variety of the "Who, the

wheel" joke of the 1960s and the "Our Gang" style of the 1950s both con-

structed on easier targets, she

said. What makes jokes funny—or not so funny—depends on whether or not

the listener sees in the same way the punch lines.

Scientist Of Laughter

Those who study laughter, a sci-

entist called, "first thing that springs to the mind around now is the studies

"Mr. LaRoche said. She noted that

are more urgent than physical expres-

sions of happiness.

"Think of all the children who are

permanently offended," she said. La-

Roche is known as being

childish and in order to be an adult, or what she LaRoche technically call-

led "dork," one cannot be funny, she

said. Our workshops are con-

structed to reflect the "workshops

that are so sensory and fun, and then we have a 'fun' " by the mischievous bore of

the company.

Anatomy Of Laughter

Anatomically, Ms. LaRoche ex-

plained, laughter consists of

a group of muscles that control

the expression of laughter. The

motions of the muscles around

the mouth, the smile, are followed by a contraction of the muscles near the

eyes, and finally the forehead. She

told the group to laugh through

the emotions, which is Bowman with

inspiring society. "In a way,

Laughing also stimulates the endo-

crine system, creating the pruning

principle that is essential to human

survival. Dopamine and other hormones are released from these glands as a

result of laughing and are released from the brain glands that are responsible for alert-

ness, according to Ms. LaRoche, she

said. All those people who are un

able to laugh are said to be bitching together, getting up on laughter," she

said.

Ms. LaRoche became involved to the benefits of laughter at an early age. "I was six years of age when I learned to

laugh," she said. Like many, she

said, her favorite stories were

short stories. She then worked as a speech and of

troublesome children. "I think I want to laugh again," she said. That

readily

connected him to drug

users and non-professionals in a

range of settings. Ms. LaRoche

"Immortal Beloved," about the

composer, Beethoven, d "Immortal

Beloved," about the

composer, Beethoven, was

set in Germany in 1943, in an interview a few years ago,

said. Ms. LaRoche has performed

with soloists and orchestras, and taught

singers and pianists about the

effects of laughter.

Ms. LaRoche started to work with

students at the John Drew Theatre at Guild

Hall in East Hampton, where she

also acted as a speech and

emotional health counselor. "I

was taught to laugh together," she

said. "It is the way that I am

laughing now," she

said. Ms. LaRoche has authored

nine books and a collection of

original jokes for children to

enjoy. "I know your sense of humor. It is centrality or possessiveness or profundity," she

Laughter is thought of as being

childish and in order to be an adult, or what Ms. LaRoche technically called "dork," one cannot be funny, she

said. Our workshops are constructed to reflect the "workshops

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SUNDAY BRUNCH 12-3

OPEN FOR DINNER FRIDAY & SATURDAY

BUDDY BARNES AT THE GRAND PIANO

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13

in N.Y.C. — rave reviews.

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Dear Mike:

First, no lectern for me at Guild Hall; then no mike, which I was supposed to have (when I entered the hall, there were lots of people but no one seemed to be in charge and I assumed that if the new director had not even set up a lectern, she certainly wouldn't be able at the last minute to set up a mike); then no check. And as of now, still no check, the amount of which, to avoid further slip-up, should be $600. Can you help? I don't even know her name.

The more I think about the your idea for an Obj. anthology, the better I like it. It would enrich it, don't you think, if you included some of our prose?

We send our love,
25 Nov. 1986

Dear Mike:

The scuttlebut is that you're going to be editing a MAN AND POET book on me. I heard that from third parties and also in a passing reference to it on the phone from Terry that moved by me so fast, I couldn't be sure that I heard right. Is it true? If it is, there is available, in case I didn't send you a copy, a brief autobiography that I did for the Gale Research people, and a rather full interview that George Evans and August Kleinzahler did with me.

Have you gotten around to thinking whom you're going to invite to contribute? When you come to that, I have some names to suggest that might not occur to you, people who have shown a particular interest and rapport with my work, among them Eric Mottram (Kings College London, English Dept., Strand, London WC2R 2LS, London), a copy of whose response to Ex Cranium, Night I'm enclosing; and Larry Fixel, who's at work now on a response to my COLLECTED POEMS which, from what I heard of it over the phone, sounds very solid and, as is usual with him, altogether his own.

What's the latest about a review of the COLLECTED in the Times?

Love,
24 Jan. 1987

Dear Mike:

Nothing could be sweeter than the words from an editor: Go ahead, write your damned review for the Times (and get off my back). Of course, after your encounter with a state of the art frigate we expect some naval drift, but we'll have to make allowances for that. Anyhow, I'm delighted, delighted.

You may already know that the book has gotten off to a great start in The Village Voice, I'm enclosing O'Brien's review in case you missed it.

Love,
11 March 1987

Dear Michael:

    After reading your review, I can't
tell you how impressed I am by myself. You weren't
kidding, were you?

    You did a super-job on me, no kidding! I was
relieved that you dealt with the COLLECTED without
relating it to the other Objectivists, Hurray! Also
I was surprised and delighted that you tackled
my most difficult and complex poem, The Transmuta-
tion Into English, and made sense of it for the
reader. Thanks, friend!

P.S. Jack Marshall also wrote a Class 1 review
for Poetry Flash, Thought you might be interested.
23 March 1987

Dear Mike:

the 16th of May it is, we've noted it on the calendar, and I'll be ready for you with a cup of coffee in each hand, your ration for the day. As for your "sawing away at your poems," I don't like the sound of that somehow. How about just waiting for new poems and then in the dead of night when no one's around, just slipping into them and if they fit in the morning, claiming that you've made a great discovery?

Love,
Carl
25 May 1987

Dear Mikes,

Following is the happy band of illuminati, may their works prosper, who have somehow become hard-core, true-blue, top-of-the-line addicts; may their tribe increase, Oh Lord, and honor them in the Man and Poet book.

1. Michael Heller. Excellent. Blessed be his name!
2. Martin J. Rosenblum. Has already spent years on a critical biography of me. His PhD dissertation was my AMERICANA.
3. Andrew Crozier. His interest goes back twenty years when he was a graduate student under Olson at U of Buffalo. Wrote a very discerning piece on me for The Dictionary of Literary Biography; really interesting. Is doing another for the PEN magazine in London and maybe collecting others for this issue. His deepest interest has been in my early work. We suggest he be asked to do a memoir of my visits with him in Cambridge, etc., as well as something critical.
6. August Kleinzahler. He's already done a short piece on my Prose for Sulfur and is doing a personal memoir kind of thing for Exquisite Corpse 11. That's what he likes doing and does best.
7. George Evans. Reviewed my Prose for Twelvemonth Review. Good at criticism. He too would have something interesting to say in a personal memoir.
8. Larry Fixel. He may be interested in adding to the piece he sent you, bringing in other elements from my prose & poetry.
9. Eric Mottram. In a letter he sent me in response to the Collected Poems he wrote that he's always been interested in "the way you walk that edgy line between personal utterance and the statement which resists it." He's sharp.
10. Karl Young. As I told you, he wrote the clearest, most accurate short introduction to my work. Took me by surprise because I didn't know he even read me.

Others Less Addicted But Nonetheless Worthy.

11. Cid Corman
12. Tom Sharp. On the early work
13. Paul Auster. He'd be good on The Poet sequence (or anything else)
14. Burton Hatlen
16. Robert Creeley. He's an admirer. I think he'll want to do something.
17. Louis Simpson. He gave me a big play in his book, *An Introduction to Poetry*. He'd be most interested in my *AMERICANA*.

18. Jim Harrison. He wrote the review of *AMULET* for the *N.Y. Times* in which he said my short poems were stronger than Williams'.

19. James Laughlin. A memoir from him perhaps as the publisher of my first three books.

20. Anselm Hollo. We have great rapport. Perhaps something personal from him?

21. Robert Duncan. Ditto. He might be up to it. He should at least be asked.

22. Eliot Weinberger. You know him better than I.

23. Allen Ginsberg. Like Creeley, I think he'll want to say something. Next to Reznikoff I'm his favorite Obj. poet. Is giving a talk on me at Boulder next month.

24. Ed Dorn. It would be interesting to see what he'd have to say about the *AMERICANA*.


26. Jonathan Williams


28. Armand Schwerner

29. Michael Palmer

30. Michael Davidson. I don't sense a strong personal interest but he has a clear, objective eye.

31. Jeremy Prynne. As with Crozier, a personal memoir of my visits with him in Cambridge if he'd rather not do anything critical.

32. Roy Fisher

33. Anthony Rudolf

34. Gael Turnbull

35. Robert Vas Dias

36. Michael Edwards (University of Essex)

37. Tim Longville.

38. Kenneth Cox

39. Peter Craven or Michael Heyward in Australia (editors of *Scripsis* gave me a big play in the magazine; quite perceptive).

40. Hugh Kenner. It would be a coup if he would say something but I doubt if he has the interest, anymore than for Reznikoff.

41. Jim Powell. I'm enclosing copy of letter. He's a specialist on the lyric in Greek and Roman times.

42. Jed Rasula and/or Marjorie Perloff?

43. L.S. Dembo. Almost forgot about him. He deserves a place of honor. He was the first to introduce and promote the Objectivists in academis.

44. David Cope. I don't know how good he is as a critic but he's giving a lecture on me, along with Ginsberg, at Naropa.
45. Foucault. He knew my early work. It would be interesting to get his considered response to my COLLECTED.

46. Dr. Mihaly Szegedy-Masak (Magyar Tudomanyos Akademia, H-1118 Budapest, Manesi ut 11-13, Hungary). He's the one I told you about whom Prynne introduced to my early work, who was my host in Budapest. Very impressive critic in comparative literature. Doesn't have either of my COLLECTED's. He'd be a coup.

47. Otto Orban, Frankel Lee ut. 84, H-1023 Budapest, Hungary). A very gifted, sophisticated, witty young poet, who spent a year at the U of Iowa and could manage an article in English, I think. I have no idea whether he'd be interested but I'd like to hear what a European has to say about my work. I spent some time with him too in Budapest. He doesn't have any of my books.

Some addresses

Anthony Rudolf, 8 The Oaks, Woodside Avenue, London N12 8AR. Doesn't have my COLLECTED's.

Michael Edwards (U of Essex), 30 Alma St., Wivenhow, Essex CO7 9DL, England

Gael Turnbull, 25 Church Walk, Ulverston, Cumbria, England

Paul Auster's new address: 458 Third Street, 3R, Brooklyn

Tim Longville, Robertswood, Farley Hill, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3EL

Andrew Crozier, Bridges Farmhouse, Laughton, Lewes, East Sussex

Jeremy Prynne, Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge University

Anselm Hollo, 453 South 1300 East, Salt Lake City, Utah 84102

Rodger Kamenetz, Louisiana State University, Dept. English, Baton Rouge, La.

Eric Mottram, Kings College London, University of London, Strand, London WC2R 2LS London

James Laughlin, Norfolk, CT 06058
Dear Mike:

A correspondent writes me: "Somewhere recently I read a review in which Donald Davie took some critic to task for not sufficiently appreciating your work." So we'd better get him onto The Man and Poet book before he changes his mind. Ditto Ann Waldman, who introduced me in Boulder as a national treasure...but with her as with Ginsberg, not for her critical faculties but perhaps for some memories of me at Boulder and elsewhere.

A third suggestion: Jim Cohn, 90 Kenilworth Terrace, Rochester, N.Y. 14605, a perceptive, sensitive young fellow, still in his twenties if I'm not mistaken, who interviewed me in Rochester. I had a sense of a shy but extraordinary, probing mind.

We're both still out of trouble.

Love,
Carl
4 Nov. 1987

Dear Mike:

How does the change at the top in the NPF leave the C.R., Man and Poet project? Have you heard from Burt?

I've been invited by Allen to give a reading at Brooklyn College on May 9th. If we can agree on the terms and if Leah remains in remission, I'll see you then.

Love,

Michael Heller
Dear Mike:

Here we go again, another trip to N.Y., arrive Friday evening, April 8; leave Tuesday, April 12. My first assignment is in a panel discussion on Saturday afternoon at 3:30; then a reading on Sunday afternoon at 2 pm (both at St. Mark's); then a reading and class participation at Brooklyn College on Monday afternoon (Allen Ginsberg). I thought there would be time to see you when I made my travel arrangements but now I don't know because the events are all in the afternoon. I'll be staying, as before, with my friend, Maurice Bernstein, 400 Central Park West, Apt. 18 R, phone 666-2265. I have your phone number.

I've just learned that Donald Davie has written an enthusiastic review of my COLLECTED POEMS, I think for The Threepenny Review, so he certainly should be invited to contribute to The Man and Poet book. Also Charles Tomlinson, who wrote me warmly after receiving the COLLECTED POEMS (but not in the specific way Gael Turnbull did, so I had the impression he had not read this book, that he assumed he knew what was in it from previous books). Tomlinson's address is, believe it or not, Ozleworth Bottom, Wotton-under-Edge, England (it doesn't seem possible that a letter would reach such an address, does it?)! Also: Jonathan Griffin told his good friend, Anthony Rudolf, that he wants to be sure to write something for the book. His address is 7, Sharples Hall Street, Regent's Park Road, London, NW1. And two more: Robert Bly and Hayden Carruth. Bly once introduced me to a huge anti-war audience at the University of Minnesota...I think it was around 1968...by only seven words: "Carl Rakosi, one of the great Objectivists!" (couldn't beat that, could you?) to which there was thunderous applause. Since at that time I was not yet known to that audience, it must have meant that they were exultant that my generation had joined them. The other prospect, Carruth, I mention because he was an admirer of my early work. I don't have their present addresses nor do I have any way of knowing whether they have my two NPF books.

Gee, I hope we can squeeze in some time together.

Love,
Dear Mike:

Yet

I am in no condition to write adequately to people close to me, although I'm in better shape than I thought I'd be, due largely to the tight protection my son and daughter and granddaughters formed around me and the solidarity of our bond to each other. Of course the real test will come in a few days when my daughter Barbara leaves and for the first time in almost fifty years I'll be alone, night and day, forever, waiting for that second shoe to fall.

In the meantime, a quickie: in the latest issue of BIG SCREAM (which is neither big nor a scream) there's a short article by Joel Lewis to introduce his WPA poems, in the course of which he writes: "These works are in the tradition of two great poems of history: Charles Reznikoff's TESTIMONY and Carl Rakosi's AMERICANA, both of which are drawn from historical record. I share with these great poets the belief that the history of the common person is drowned out in the droning historical narrative of its "important" dates and "great" men, etc."

Did I suggest Joel Lewis as a possible contributor to the Man and Poet? I forget. Anyhow, I've seen some pretty decent critical work by him in the last year.

More, I hope, later,

Love,

Carl
Dear Anselm:

In love again, and so quickly? Mad, mad, but I'm cheering for you on the sidelines, you indomitable romantic. The psychotherapist in me wants to believe everything you say about Jane D....and I have no reason to doubt it....but it's a prudent observer, and your friend, and hopes you'll let her life style influence you, and not the other way around. I say that because I care and I have this persistent image of seeing you self-destruct in boiler-makers some day and me standing by, powerless to do anything, and it's very painful. Let her do it!

Of course you're lucky to be free of Jan. If she spent only a month in a psychiatric facility, it means that she's out on medication and that no real psychological treatment was attempted; take away the medication, and she'll slip back to where she was.

We had a big memorial celebration here too for Ted Berrigan. Bill Berkson arranged it at Intersection. I think something like 60 poets participated, no one to take more than five minutes. I adhered to that but I don't think anybody else did, and the thing went on long after I left. I didn't think I'd have anything to say, but I described my first encounter with Ted at the University of Essex years ago and his non-lecture on the New York poets, and read a couple of his short poems, all of which set up a pleasant rapport with the audience, which was in the mood for pleasant memories.

From a publication called City Arts I send you an amusing excerpt to remind you of the San Francisco scene.

And how have I been spending my time, you ask? Mostly writing letters to Cid Corman in Japan. He's doing an 800, I repeat 800, page exposition of A and asked me for some specific information about the young Zukofsky. But he has a hypothesis into which he is determined to fit the facts, so that I have to keep correcting him. Not easy. I wind up being corrected, incorrectly, by him. But I keep trying, knowing that I'm not going to have the last word. Add to which, he makes it a rule to answer every letter the same day!

My new book of prose from The National Poetry Foundation is scheduled to be out in about a month. I'll send you a copy, but is 203 E. Mt. Royal your permanent address?

Love from us both,
Cher Ami:

Your response to my books was heart-warming. Heart-warming! And when you added Jane's, that gave me particular pleasure, don't ask me why. I can't make up my mind, however, whether the 8X10 Club was a hard test or an easy one for my prose. Probably an easy one. It's the fucken academic types that give you the cold shoulder. Anyhow I can't imagine a better instrument for my prose to go out on than your rich resonant voice.

It's because I feel a deep cultural (European?) affinity between us that I asked Andre to sound you out about reviewing the Prose book but now that I've done it, a small voice reproaches me. I shouldn't have put you into a position where it would be awkward to say no. As a consequence I'll never know whether you would have wanted to do it on your own or whether it isn't a damned imposition and burden. That's what I get for being more aggressive than I would normally be in pursuit of something I would like.

"muddling along as usual," you say about your day to day life. How different that feels to you than anything I can imagine you as! It just doesn't go with your work or your speech.

Tell us more about Jane and you and Jane and what will happen if St. Mark's takes you (they're nuts if they don't)/

Have you read Susan Sontag's long essay, APPROACHING ARTAUD, in her recent collection, UNDER THE SIGN OF SATURN? It's Sontag at her most inspired. Also Irving Howe's autobiography, A MARGIN OF HOPE. If you want understand the radical social and political thinking in this country from the 1930's to the present, as it emanated from New York, experienced and deeply reflected on by an honest man, you must read it.

Leah and I continue to be well but our friends fall. George Oppen is in The Oakland Home for Jewish Parents (ironic that he should wind up there; he's never even been inside a synagogue) with Alzheimer's Disease and can no longer dress himself, his memory shot, not able to recognize anyone but Mary and his half-sister, although he puts up a good front, disoriented, and living in continual terror over his mental collapse. And Robert Duncan has been struck with kidney failure, in both organs, and has to live with dialysis three times a week and some modification of that later for the rest of his life. He sounds week on the phone but not badly depressed, so I could notice. But I see George and August fairly often and they give me alift. And so would you if you were here.

Love to you both.

[Signature]
Dear Anselm:

Glad, so glad to hear that you're "hanging in there....with glorious Jane!" Happy news! Ditto your upcoming inspection/engagement party in ol Mississippi (my, how you get around!) and your wedding in June, which Leah and I will celebrate with Champagne. If we had a picture of the two of you, we'd stand it up and try to imagine what you lovebirds will be doing in England and Finland, while this old lovebird becomes more and more irritable. Cummings said it: "Ain't love grand?"

I wish I could send you at least one poem in exchange for your two find poems, for which many thanks, but I've been struggling with prose (an example of which will be in the next CONJUNCTIONS) and unbelievable serendipity of nothings, and have no new poems, either for you or for the Baltimore Sun. Of course, if you don't mind reprinting, I'll pick out something and send it to you. Which reminds me: what happened with Andre in Baltimore? Was his job at LSU terminated? Being held for him until he returns from his stint at LSU? Are you filling in for him? etc.

I just heard that the Poetry Center at San Francisco State is looking for a new director. I don't know what it pays but they've added a class to teach so as to increase the salary. Applications have to be in by early January. Stan Ryczek, whom you may know, in the English Department is the one to write to. A lot of people here would like to have you back.

Also, you may know about an opening at LSU as Program Director for a new MFA curriculum which the University will be setting up next fall. Salary probably $55,000! The chairman of the selection committee approached me but this comes too late in my life and I recommended you instead. I hope something comes of it.

Our good friend George Evans has been making quite a stir recently, as you'll see from the enclosed feature story in the Chronicle. To top it all, he's earning a very good salary, is treated by the staff, who are mostly commercial artists and PR people, like a delicate child who needs protection from the temptations of business and money, and he's excited about what he's doing. Couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

The latest SAGETRIEB, which came this morning, has a review of the Toothpaste Press books by Gary Lenhart in which you and I are lauded to the empty-rean and also found to have certain similarities, which may not be to your liking. Thus, Herr Lenhart: "I find no poet so reminiscent of Rakosi as
A selm Hollo......Like Rakosi, Hollo is frank, amiable, raving, and astute." Nothing wrong with that, is there?

What a translation you made of Alexander Blok's THE TWELVE AND OTHER POEMS! I've just come across it for the first time. The original may be different but I don't see how it could be better.

The L-A-N-G-U-A-G-E poets are getting me down, down. Am I imagining this or are these bright boys making us look like old dodo's? Send answer immediately by Federal Express!

Hewing to the old straight and narrow in your personal life, are you?

Love from Leah & me,
Dear Anselm:

I thought originally of writing you about a reading in Baltimore but I remembered your deploring how little money you had at your disposal, so I thought there would be no point in asking. Also, starting with an invitation from Chicago, the others just snowballed and filled up a circuit. However, if your fiscal situation down there has changed, it might still be possible but difficult, as you'll see from my schedule:

May 10, Chicago Art Institute; May 11, Woodland Pattern Book Center, Milwaukee; May 12, New York University, lecture on the Objectivists; May 15, St. Mark's; May 17, 63d Street Y, New York; May 18, leave N.Y. for Minneapolis. Leah will join me in N.Y. on the 13th. For your use if you need it, I'll be staying with Leah's sister-in-law in N.Y.: Alma Jaffe, 137 Riverside Drive, phone, 212-362-6946. My phone here is 415-566-3425.

A surprise, meeting Tom Diventi and your other friend (I don't know which is which: one was tall and a painter and the other was short and dark and full of sparks). They were my most audibly enthusiastic audience and I think if they had been able, they would have given me the keys to the city of Baltimore. It was fun. They and Andre and Rodger all spoke very highly of Jane, so I felt good when you linked your name and destiny with hers in your letter.

About the Melville-Poe celebrations, what an odd assortment of people to be honoring them by short readings from their work: Kunitz from Yale, Joseph Brodsky, who has given new life to the rhymesters, Josephine Jacobsen, whom I've never heard of, and yours truly, from plain old America.

Well, I do hope we can all meet somehow.
5 June 1985

Dear Anselm, old friend:

Just got back and rushing this off before you leave for Helsinki.

How full your life has suddenly become, now that you have Jane. I'm with you on this, and can't wait to see you both. I'm delighted too that you've made a connection with Ed in Boulder, which is a pleasant enough place to live in...for a while. In other words, the future is upbeat, n'est-ce pas?

I was startled by the photograph of you. There was Shylock before me, pleading his cause, below what looked like some blessed damozel in wraps. Not what you intended, I'm sure, but the camera insists that reality is this way and not that way.

Are you familiar with the Singleton translation of Dante? It's out in paperback too. I'm told it's the most reliable, the most accurate, from every point of view. But I'll look into the Mandelstam too. Grenier's A DAY AT THE BEACH I'm not familiar with. Will look into that too. Do you recommend Arthur C. Clarke? Me, I recommend Calvino, at the moment.

Write, after things have slowed down. There are many things you and I have to say to each other. In the meantime,

Love and the best to you both,

Carré

P.S. I was the one who urged Andre to stay with LSU but move to New Orleans, WHERE I had worked during the Depression.
12 Aug. 1985

Dear Anselm:

I hear bells ringing and Mendelssohn himself playing the organ and family and friends thronged around you as you and Jane wed, and wish we were there, although we could not do more than wish you & Jane the best, the Best, THE BEST.

Love,

Carl & Ida
Dear Anselm:

19 Sept. 1985

Hells

A lovely, loving review. It hit home. Thank you, old friend.

Will we be seeing you and Jane on a visit in the foreseeable future?

Affectionately,

[Signature]

(in Exquisite Corpse)
21 Jan. 1986

Dear Anselm:

I can't wait to dig into the Lagerkrantz (that sounds too much like Liederkrantz, which I also like) Strindberg to learn more about the man who has always fascinated-repelled me, but I don't know whether I'll have the patience for it all. Thanks. I have learned something already from the book that didn't know, that Strindberg also wrote poetry. What's it like? I learned too that in 1884 Max Nordau, my grandfather's cousin, was "another of Strindberg's guiding lights."

How nice that you and Jane will be coming again in the Spring. This time would you like us to invite some friends in?

Love,
5 May 1986

Dear Anselm:

I'm not surprised that LSU had to back out: the drop in oil prices must have knocked the pins out from under the economy in Louisiana. But do you have to leave Boulder? Wish I could help.

About Madison you said: "What a numongous institution the U there is." Numongous? Who dat? Incidentally, my oldest granddaughter, Jennifer, the apple of our eye, is a junior there now.

Happy to hear about your new book. Which reminds me, George Evans got a tiny but handsome review of his English book, NIGHT VISION, in the Times Literary Supplement. Just what he needed, as he's been running into dead ends trying to find a publisher in this country.

About us the news had been bad: Leah developed cancer of the lymph glands and has just finished her radiation therapy. We're both just beginning to come out of it, for after our long years together, whatever happens to her, happens to me. Fortunately her spirits have been good.... better than mine, in fact....and perhaps we'll be lucky.

Hugs from us to youse, and I do mean Jane too.
8 June 1986

Dear Anselm:

Imagine my consternation when I received the enclosed from the U.S. Postal Service. What did they lose? Help!

Busy as all hell on a short autobiography for the Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series. Have until July 1. Don't see how I can make it.

Love,
Dear Anselm:

You know already that I'm an addict of yours so you won't be surprised to learn that I danced a jig when I was reading OUTLYING DISTRICTS. Addiction hopelessly confirmed!

There's no good news to report about Leah, so I'll say nothing except that in the two years during which she's been battling cancer, my life has undergone its second great change (the first was when I stopped writing for so long): I've become her existential clone.

What can we do, bucko?

Plenty hugs for you & Jane,

Carl
10 June 1985

Dear Paul:

Thanks for OINK 18. Quite źiewiży lively.
Would you like to use the long poem you heard me read,
THE OLD POET’S TALE (18 pages) for OINK 19.
Have the twins arrived yet?

Best to you and Maxine,
Dear Paul:

How nice to know that the twins have arrived, eyes focused and smiling, that all is well, that Maxine has regained her pre-twins, we hope alluring, physique, and even that you’ve been stubbing your toes, rushing madly down the hall in the middle of the night for the babies’ bottles.

Will you have time to see Leah and me when you’re here? There’s a chance we’ll be up in the wine country with friends for a couple of days during July but the rest of the month will be free.

I’m sorry but THE OLD POET’S TALE is the only unpublished or to-be published poem I have now. It’s true, I’ll be writing up the talk I gave at New York University on the Objectivists but that I must send to Contemporary Literature, which has asked Burton Hatlen, who did a perceptive critical postscript in my COLLECTED PROSE book, to write a critical overview of my work. But for the future, when is the cut-off date for mss in any particular year?

Best,
Dear Paul:

Not knowing your work, I didn’t know what to expect of SOMEBODY TALKS A LOT (who is that somebody in the title....not in the poem....by the way?). I was immediately disarmed by THIRTY-THREE. From then on, things moved fast and all around, and the voice was light and playful, as if it were only a chatter, but it was obviously more, and that concealment is part of the charm. It has also the naturalness of street talk and a fast, story quality, held in check by poetic distance. Not to mention gayety and moments of hilarity, and amused and, on the whole, kindly perceptions of what goes wrong, none more that in yourself (always pleasing to a reader). The way you put this reminds me of Ashberry but you reach a destination, which he does not choose to do...or is perhaps prevented from doing by his personality....and you have a distinctive voice, not a small achievement at your age. Need more?

In his last letter, Messerli told me he was putting an anthology together and that he was starting with the Objectivists. Maybe that’s what interested J and Glassgold. Otherwise it doesn’t make sense to me either.

Love to you and Maxine and the twins....a bit less demanding by now perhaps?
30 August 1985

Dear Paul:

There were indications in SOMEBODY as well as FRANKISH TALKS A LOT that you had serious designs on the reader. I was glad to hear, therefore, that these would be making their appearance in the new book with The Figures. All play and no nitty gritty, I don't need to tell you, in time becomes tiresome.

Now that you've taken Kleinzahler's work for Oink, I realize that I should have suggested that you ask George Evans for contributions too. His work is every bit as strong and interesting and talented. Perhaps there is still time. I saw him yesterday and suggested that he send you something right away.

Love to you and Maxine and the twins, who if you survive the first year, will make indomitable of you.
Dear Paul:

The high intellectual spirits and jinks, the wit, the brisk, mental work-outs, the surprises, of IDEA...it's quite a book. Exciting! Thanks so much for thinking of me. And hugs to you and Maxine and the family.

[Signature]

12 June 1987