Series 1, Box 5: Miscellaneous publisher and personal correspondence.

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

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March 10, 1983

Dear Eric Gould:

I appreciate your invitation to have my work appear in DENVER QUARTERLY. At the moment the only unpublished poem I have is the one I'm enclosing. You're welcome to that.

With best wishes on your editorship,
Dear Eric Gould:

I have made a slight change in I WAS LISTENING TO JEAN REDPATH and am enclosing the revised version. Also another poem.

Do you have an issue of the Denver Quarterly coming out before the November all-poetry issue in which you'd like to have a bit of prose from me? It would be part of my COLLECTED PROSE (aphoristic) which is being published by the University of Maine/ National Poetry Foundation and is scheduled to be out this November for my birthday.

Cordially,

[Signature]
Dear Eric Gould:

Would you mind letting me know right away if you'd like to use the enclosed two poems along with the two you have? These are poems which CONJUNCTIONS was holding for publication and will use if you do not.

Best,

He was Making an Apocalypse
I was Listening to a Redpath Head
Rilroy Was Here
Dear Eric:

Before I send you the prose, I want to make sure you understand that by the first issue in 1984 it will already be in my COLLECTED PROSE, which is supposed to be out by November 6th. You'd be reprinting it, therefore, and would have to give credit to the publisher.

Best,

9 Feb. 1986

Dear Liza Bernstein:

I'm sorry I have no new work to send you, and I am so behind on chores and unfinished projects that I can't even answer your questionnaire. (Incidentally, you will not get an honest answer to question 5). If I ever get out of this backlog, I'll keep RINGER FIVE FINGERS POETRY in mind.

Best wishes,
9 Oct. 1985

Dear Mr. Tejada:

The enclosed is the only poem I have now that has not been published in this country.

With best wishes on your issue,
7 March 1984

Dear Peter Craven and Michael Heyward:

Thank you for your joint invitation and the enclosures. It's heart-warming to see the excellence in SCRIPSI. Unfortunately, I don't have any unpublished work at the moment. However, if you wouldn't mind using poems that have appeared in magazines but not books, I could send you a group. Or better yet, if you wouldn't mind using things from books, I could make up a probably more interesting group. Whichever.

From reading SCRIPSI, I get the notion that you might also be interested in an essay on my work, and/or an interview. On the first, there are two possibilities: one is to use an essay by Michael Heller which will be one of a part of his forthcoming book, CONVOLUTION'S NET OF BRANCHES: Essays on the Objectivist Poets and their Poetry (Southern Illinois University Press, Jan. 1985), and the other is to use the Postscript, a 19-page essay which Burton Hatlen, the editor of SAGETRIEB, wrote for my COLLECTED PROSE, which has just been issued by The National Poetry Foundation at the University of Maine. Both are first-class. If you want to pursue this, you can reach Michael Heller at P.O. Box 981, Stuyvesant Station, New York, N.Y. 10009 and Burton Hatlen at SAGETRIEB, The National Poetry Foundation, 305 English-Math Bldg., University of Maine, Orono, Maine 04469.

As for an interview, it might be fun to have /ask George Evans and/or August Klienzahler to conduct one with me. See if they can stump me.

With best wishes,

Carl Rakosi

128 Irving St.
San Francisco, CA 94122
Dear Michael and Peter:

(hope you don't mind the familiarity. Just too awkward to use all those names in a salutation).

SCripsi 4/2 is full of interesting things. It's a pleasure to see how much you are able to do.

George Evans has just written a solid and very perceptive review of my COLLECTED PROSE, which I imagine he'll be sending along for SCripsi. This, together with the twelve Meditations, which I am enclosing, will be a better introduction to my work to those in Australia who don't know it than a group of new, unpublished poems would be.

The interview is coming along.

Cordially,
Dear Michael and Peter:

Here's to the next SCRIPSI then!

You're undoubtedly right in wanting an introduction of some kind to XR& Oppen to go along with my piece, and I have just the right one for you, I think. It was written by Jack Marshall shortly after Oppen's death for Poetry Flash, a local calendar of poetry events in the Bay Area. It's an astute, carefully thought-out analysis, the best thing on Oppen, in fact, that I've seen. Why don't you ask to see it for SCRIPSI? Tell him I suggested it. His address is 1056 Treat Avenue, San Francisco, CA.

Very best,
Dear Michael and Peter:

Michael's essay on Oppen is quite adequate as an introduction. It is both true and fair. I doubt whether you'll need Jack Marshall's article too.

One small correction: Zukofsky was, as you say, "a guiding light" to Oppen, who was five years younger and just beginning to write when he met LZ, but he was not that to Reznikoff and me. We were already established and were not influenced by him. His relationship to us was that of discriminating critic and appreciative reader.

All the best,

28 Nov. 1984
Dear Peter and Michael:

Bad News. I did not anticipate that Mary Oppen and George's sister, June, would feel deeply pained and agitated by my piece on Oppen, but they do. We must not publish it, therefore.

You might still want photographs to go with your piece on Oppen, however. In that case, write to her. Her address is: 968 Tulare Street, # Albany, California 94716.

Sorry about this last-minute foul up.
Dear Peter and Michael:

How very understanding your letter was! But the situation is quite otherwise. Far from blaming myself, I feel outraged. Mary Oppen's furious objections were due not to grief... not at all... but to fear that my piece would tarnish George's image, and she scolded me in a rage like a self-righteous school teacher for being insensitive, et al. So you see the ladies don't need comforting, any more than Margaret Thatcher does, and I have no stomach for doing another piece on George. The best thing I can do is forget the whole thing. But I'm not going to forget your very understanding letter.

Carl
3 August 1984

Dear Ms Cornwell-Robinson:

You are welcome to reprint my poem, The Experiment with a Rat. That comes from my book ERE-VOICE, published by New Directions. They are not my publisher any longer, however, so you need not get reprint permission from them.

I am enclosing two other poems about animals which may be equally suitable, perhaps more so, for your anthology of contemporary poems about animals. To a Collie Pup comes from AMULET, also published by New Directions; and Ginger comes from SPIRITUS, I, published last year in England.

When you have found a publisher, I assume you will let me know what the financial arrangements will be.

With best wishes,
Carl Rakosi
128 Irving Street, San Francisco, California 94122
22 June 1984

Dear Ms Rose:

You have my permission to reprint my poem, The Experiment with a Rat, in the revised book, ENGLISH, WRITING AND SKILLS. I would appreciate knowing what the payment will be.

Sincerely,

Carl Rakosi

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Note: The handwritten note on the right side of the page reads:

for "The Experiment with a Rat"
80% of
Phone call
4/9/85 3:20pm
Write confirmation letter
22 June 1984

Dear Kathryn Anderson:

I am writing you at the suggestion of David Wilk to ask whether W.W. Norton might be interested in publishing my COLLECTED POEMS, a compilation from previous volumes: AMULET (New Directions, 1967); ERE-VOICE (New Directions, 1971); EX CRANIUM, NIGHT (Black Sparrow, 1975); DROLES DE JOURNAL (Toothpaste Press, 1981); HISTORY (Oasis press, 1981, London); and SPIRITUS, I (Pig Press, 1983, Durham, England). The manuscript of the book comes to some 400 pages.

The National Poetry Foundation at the University of Maine is interested in doing it (they have just published my COLLECTED PROSE) but they are inexperienced in distribution and access to reviews, and if Norton were interested, I would prefer to have them do it.

Sincerely,

Carl Rakosi
Dear Mr. Simmons:

Thank you for sending me a copy of Michael Heller's book on the Objectivists. You can quote me on it as follows: "Accurate, illuminating, scale and proportions just right. You can take my word for it as an Objectivist."

Sincerely,

Carl Rakosi
Dear Mr. Green:

It occurs to me that I neglected to respond to one point in your last letter, that I might be interested in having someone write about me. Yes, I would. I have in mind two possibilities in England: Andrew Crozier at the University of Sussex, who is at the moment writing a piece on me for the DICTIONARY OF LITERARY BIOGRAPHY, and Eric Mottram at the University of London; and three possibilities in the U.S., all people who have already written about my work: Martin J. Rosenblum at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, Michael Heller at New York University, and Paul Auster.

How long an essay-pamphlet do you have in mind?

With regard to an original contribution by me, perhaps we should wait until you know how much of a grant you'll be getting this year and how much you'll be able to publish for sure. I wouldn't want my manuscript tied up for any length of time on an uncertainty.

With best wishes,

Carl Rakosi
Dear Jim Green:

I suggest a five year lease for the British and Commonwealth markets and to leave the other open for the time being. The Collected Prose is not quite collected, as I'm still working on one section, but I'll send it to you as soon as a part of the new section is finished.

I've forgotten which poem I sent you for the poem-card. If it's the one beginning, "One time in Boot Hollow" please substitute the following version:

**AMERICANA**

One time in Boot Hollow
Little Ab Yancey
challenged Foggy Dell
and his companions
Homer Bullteeter
and Slappy Henstep.
Crowing like cocks
they accepted the challenge
and flapped their wings.

Then up rose Ab
and neighed like a horse,
crying, "I'm the yellow
flower of the forest,
all brimstone
but the head
and that's aquafortis"
and rode them
down like lightning
through a crab-apple orchard

and rose to
Chairman of the Board.
Oct. 8, 1982

Dear James Green:

Herewith is the COLLECTED PROSE, not quite complete, as I'm still working on a few other sections in Scenes from My Life, but it will do for the time being. If I counted right, it comes to 94 pages.

Please acknowledge receipt, so I don't have to worry about it.

Cordially,
Dear Mr. Green:

I've written a foreword and some additional pieces for my COLLECTED PROSE. The short pieces go into the section, EX CRANIUM, THE POET, and An Incident in the Life of Louis Zukofsky follows DAY BOOK. These pieces incorporate parts of A NOTE ON THE OBJECTIVISTS and make the rest of that piece unnecessary, so will you please delete A NOTE ON THE OBJECTIVISTS and destroy it?

Incidentally, the book will have an American publisher, so if you're interested in taking on European rights and joining in the print-run, write Carroll F. Terrell, PAIDEUMA, University of Maine at Orono, Orono, Maine, 04469. I don't know, of course, what Mr. Terrell will think of this.

Season's greetings,
Dear Mr. McClung:

I know that the University of California Press publishes very few books of poetry, but its recent publication of Zukofsky's A prompts me to inquire whether it might be interested in bringing out my COLLECTED POEMS as a companion piece, in view of our close association as fellow Objectivists.

This association began in the February, 1931 issue of Poetry, which he edited, where my poems led off this Objectivist number, and continued in THE OBJECTIVISTS ANTHOLOGY, where he referred to me as "the aristocrat of this section devoted to what I prefer to go by the tag of the epic." We also corresponded at some length and during the five years I worked in New York were in constant contact with each other. In a letter dated 2/13/42 he wrote, "Rakosi's book is out at last and he's one of the few poets alive I give a damn about."

For your information, here's a quick run-down of my publications. My poems first appeared in Ezra Pound's THE EXILE, and in THE LITTLE REVIEW, where Joyce's ULYSSES and the early work of Pound, Eliot, Hemingway and Wyndham Lewis was first published. Then came my first book, TWO POEMS (The Modern Editions Press), and subsequently, SELECTED POEMS (New Directions, 1941), AMULET, (New Directions, 1967), ERE-VOICE (New Directions, 1971), EX CRANIUM, NIGHT (Black Sparrow Press, 1975), and MY EXPERIENCES IN PARNASSUS, Black Sparrow Press, 1977). A new collection of poems is ready for publication. In addition, a critical study of my work by Dr. Martin Rosenblum is soon to appear in the Twayne series on American writers. Of some relevance also, perhaps, is the fact that I have received three National Endowment for the Arts Awards, have lectured and given readings at over twenty universities here and abroad, including Cambridge University, University of Antwerp, University of London, and at the Library of Congress, the 92nd St. YM-YWHA in New York, and before the members of the PEN club in Budapest; and that my work has been translated into French, German and Dutch.

If my books are not readily available to you and you'd like to peruse them to see if they would be suitable for the University of California Press, please let me know and I'll send them to you.

Sincerely,
May 7, 1981

Dear Ms Schwartz:

First, the addresses you asked for. The last address I had for Frederick Thomas Sharp is 911 Arnold Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025 (phone 415-329-0988), but he moves around a bit and you may have to reach him at Stanford University, Department of English. The title of his dissertation there is "OBJECTIVISTS" OF THE EARLY THIRTIES: A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE WORK AND ASSOCIATION OF LOUIS ZUKOFSKY, WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS, CHARLES REZNICKOFF, CARL RAKOSI, EZRA POUND AND GEORGE OPPEN. Martin J. Rosenblum's address is 2521 East Stratford Court, Shorewood, Wisconsin 53211.

I was mistaken about Rosenblum's dissertation. It has lots of bibliographical references but no complete bibliography. I have, therefore, brought the one I have up to date for you. Hence the delay. Could you have it copied at the office there and return it quickly. The dissertation you are welcome to read at your leisure.

Cordially,
Dear Mr. Stuart:

I have over the years had letters (no diaries or journals) but these now are in libraries or about to be there and I no longer have access to them to send you for consideration. There have, however, been a number of interviews, and I am in the process of writing my autobiography. Perhaps something could come of that?

Cordially,
Dear Chris Bristow:

Thank you for your invitation to read at Chico State. At the moment, May 15th is open for me and I would be glad to do it at that time.

I must tell you, however, that my fee for an out-of-town reading in the last few years has varied from $200 to $500. Would it be possible for the University to come up with the minimum in this range?

With best wishes,
17 Jan. 1986

Dear Chris Bristow:

OK, I'll be there, May 15th.

Exactly where and at what time of the day will the reading be? I assume there'll be a reading stand and a good mike available.

My social security number is 477-34-1002A.

Glad you could come up with the extra amount.

Cordially,
9 April 1986

Dear Chris Bristow:

Thanks for sending me the time and place of my May reading. In case you have some last minute message on May 14th or on the day of the reading, you'll be able to reach me at the home of Dr. George Rawley in Chico, 343-9547.

Although the room and the audience will be small, I still would like a mike, not so much in order to be heard but to give my voice enough backing to reassure me that it's not going to thin out.

With best wishes,
Dear Ms Bourdette:

You have my permission to reprint my poem, THE EXPERIMENT WITH A RAT in your revised ENGLISH: WRITING AND SKILLS-FOURTH COURSE, including transcription into braille and large type. The fee as before will be $100.

Sincerely,

Carl Rakosi
Long lines of poetry tend to give a flowing, melodic effect. The following section of a poem by Diane Wakoski uses long lines to create the effect of someone so enthusiastic about the subject that she goes on and on, flooding the reader with images.

[from] Ode to a Lebanese Crock of Olives

for Walter's Aunt Libby's diligence
in making olives

As some women love jewels
and drape themselves with ropes of pearls, stud their ears
with diamonds, band themselves with heavy gold,
have emeralds on their fingers or
opals on white bosoms,
I live with the still life
of grapes whose skins frost over with the sugar forming inside,
hard apples, and delicate pears;
cheeses,
from the sharp fontina, to icy bleu,
the aromatic chevres, boursault, boursin, a litany of
thick bread, dark wines,
pasta with garlic,
soups full of potato and onion;
and butter and cream,
like the skins of beautiful women, are on my sideboard.

—Diane Wakoski

The preceding poem uses long lines to convey an overflow of praise for its subject. What other subjects would fit into long lines of poetry?

The following poem by Carl Rékosi uses a different effect. Instead of varying the length of the lines, the poet separates some words from the others. As you read this poem aloud, pause before you read the words that have been set off.

[from] The Experiment with a Rat

Every time I nudge that spring
a bell rings
and a man walks out of a cage
assiduous and sharp like one of us
and brings me cheese.

How did he fall
into my power?

—Carl Rékosi
Dear Ian Hamilton:

On the chance that you know my work, I am writing to inquire whether you think The London Review might be interested in reviewing my two recent books, COLLECTED POEMS and COLLECTED PROSE, published by The National Poetry Foundation at The University of Maine.

As you may know, I'm the last of the Objectivists. Now that my work has been collected, it occurs to me that it might be a good time for someone to analyze it for British readers and relate it to the work of the other Objectivists, Zukofsky, Oppen, Reznikoff and Niedecker, in some kind of a historical, critical overview.

If you think there would be any point in sending you the books for such a perusal, or any other, please let me know to whom review copies should be sent.

Sincerely,
Carl Rakosi was one of the "Objectivist" poets of the 1930s who stopped writing for two decades to become a psychiatric social worker. Since resuming writing in the mid-1960s, he has completed three books and will soon embark on a lecture tour. The program will begin at 8 P.M. in Humanities Room 203. Admission is free and the public is invited.
MINNESOTA WRITERS' FESTIVAL

featuring

Robert Bly  Meridel LeSueur  Thomas McGrath

Frederick Manfred  Carl Rakosi

Kate Basham
Carol Bly
Michael Dennis Browne
Emilio DeGrazia
William Elliot
John Engman
Kate Green
Keith Gunderson
Pat Hampl
Phebe Hanson
Margaret Hasse
Susan Hauser
Bill Holm
Lou Jenkins
Mary Karr
Michael Kincaid
Wendy Knox
Sr Galen Martini
John Minceksi
Jim Moore
Joe Paddock
Nancy Paddock
John Rezmerski
Barton Sutter
Cary Waterman
Charles Waterman
plus many others

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE WRITE

Philip Dacey
Literature, Language & Philosophy Dept
Southwest State University
Marshall, Minnesota 56258

April 24-28

Southwest State University
12 April 1986

Dear Mr. Perkins:

If you have to pay for it out of your own pocket, forget it. No fee.

Best wishes,
Dear Mr. Brawner:

I do control the rights to my poems, *Extracts From A Private Life* and *The Old Man's Hornpipe* and am willing to have Professor Perkins quote them in his *A History Of Modern Poetry*, including future editions, translations, and non-profit special editions for the visually impaired. He may also have non-exclusive world rights.

As I'm unfamiliar with Professor Perkins' name, would you kindly tell me where he teaches? Also, what Harvard University Press will be paying the authors of quotations.

Sincerely,
Dear Sam:

Thank you for your PATHWAYS TO THE HUMANITIES. Its cogency, logic, rich references, and good writing are very impressive. I'm delighted. I get the impression that others have included the humanities in their professional view but that you are more or less alone in giving it such a large place in the curriculum.

Thanks too for the Commentary article on Ginsberg. When we see you next, I'll tell you what I think about it.

All the best to you and Evelyn for the next year and all the years to come.

Love,
The Living Writers Series Presents

-Major American Poet-

CARL RAKOSI

Reading from his own work
& the work of other Objectivist Poets

7:00 p.m. Friday, May 8
The Back Door
(Aztec Center, San Diego State University)

Free Admission All Welcome
For more information call 265-5443

Poetry

Its nature is to look both absolute and mortal,
as if a boy had passed through
or the imprint of his foot had been preserved
unchanged under the ash of Herculaneum.

- Carl Rakosi
SIMPPLICITY

O rare circle,
you are not in favor now.
Not much is written about you.
Perhaps not much is known about you.
But when I hear this,
"I am just a widow woman."
What do I know?"

and when I see the father of many children
hurrying to the polls in Saigon
to pick the candidate whose symbol is the plow
and when I hear an eighteen year old tell the judge
"So here is Tom Rodd.
I wanted to go to Selma
and Montgomery but I didn't.
I wanted to go to Washington and confront the President
but I didn't.
But this war is too much for me to say I didn't.
So I'm prepared to go to jail.
I have no beef against this court.
I drink beer and I play the banjo."

O rare simplicity,
when I hear this,
I know I am in your honest presence.

—Carl Rakosi

CARL RAKOSI, the major Objectivist poet, will read from his work &
the work of the other Objectivists (Louis Zukofsky, George Oppen,
Charles Reznikoff & others) this coming Friday evening at 7 pm at
Aztec Center's The Back Door. One of America's significant poets,
Rakosi is a splendid model of an anti-formalist whose work is at
once complex & accessible—a poetry full of humour, high spirits,
intelligence & social consciousness. For anyone interested in the
development of contemporary American poetry & the work of its current
masters, this reading should prove an exciting event. It will be,
as well, the final event of the Spring '87 Living Writers Series.

Please urge your students & friends to attend this event.

CARL RAKOSI AT THE BACK DOOR... FRIDAY, MAY 8, 7PM
free & open to the public......information 265-5443

THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
The Poetry Center
at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Columbus Drive and Jackson Boulevard

11th Season
1984-85

Friday, October 12, 8:00pm
Gerald Stern
A celebrant of Jewish mysticism and nature, Gerald Stern is a Lamont Poetry Selection winner and author of several volumes including Lucky Life, The Red Coal, and Paradise Poems.

Friday, November 30, 8:00pm
Paul Carroll/Alice Notley
Chicago poet and former editor of Big Table, Paul Carroll is the author of Odes, The Luke Poems, and New and Selected Poems. Alice Notley, author of How Spring Comes and Phoebe Light, among others, was a 1983 winner of the prestigious G.E. Award for Younger Writers.

Tuesday, December 4, 8:00pm
Elizabeth Hardwick
Distinguished critic, novelist, and lecturer, Elizabeth Hardwick is a founder and advisory editor of The New York Review of Books. Her most recent book is Bartleby in Manhattan and Other Essays.

Friday, February 8, 8:00pm
Ted Kooser/A.K. Ramanujan
Ted Kooser's Sure Signs: New and Selected Poems was praised by Karl Shapiro as "a lasting work, comparable to Frost in his richest vein." A MacArthur Prize Fellowship recipient in 1983, A.K. Ramanujan is author of four books of poems in English, and several volumes in translation from two Indian languages.

Friday, March 15, 8:00pm
Joe Brainard/Paul Violi
Joe Brainard, the noted artist, will read from his poetry and prose, including the legendary I Remember. Paul Violi, a 1980 NEA Fellow, is author of the well-received book of poems, Splurge, as well as Harmatan and Baltic Circles.

Wednesday, April 17, 8:00pm
Annual Benefit for the Poetry Center
James Merrill
Winner of the National Book Award, Pulitzer Prize and the Bollingen Prize, James Merrill is author of many books of poetry, two novels and several plays. His most recent book, The Changing Light at Sandover, was published in 1982.

Friday, May 10, 8:00 pm
Carl Rakosi
First published in the 1920's by Ezra Pound in The Exile, Rakosi's poetry also appears in the famous 1931 "Objectivist" issue of Poetry magazine. He reads from his many books in this rare Chicago appearance.

The above events are supported in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.
Dear Jack:

Now that you’ve published Niedecker’s selected poems, I wonder if you’d be interested in doing mine. The situation is this. All of my books—AMULET, ERE-VOICE, ANB EX CRANIUM, NIGHT—have gone out of print. The one exception is the little Toothpaste chapbook, DROLES DE JOURNAL, which should also be running out soon. Last year the National Poetry Foundation published my COLLECTED PROSE and this fall they’re bringing out my COLLECTED POEMS, some 430 pages in length.

Because of its size and cost, and also, I’m afraid, because Terrell at the National Poetry Foundation simply doesn’t have the set-up or the connections or the know-how (or is it interest?) to market the NPF books in bookstores, I am certain that my COLLECTED POEMS will wind up nowhere but in university libraries and that so far as individual buyers of poetry are concerned, it will be, in effect, as if my poetry had disappeared.

There is, therefore, it seems to me, both a market and a literary need for some of my poetry to be available in bookstores. What I had in mind was a book of about 150 pages. If you’re interested, call me (566-3425) and we’ll go on from there.

Best,
Walker Art Center and
St. Paul Council of Arts and Sciences
Poetry in the Schools Project present

POETRY READING

Alvin Greenberg
Carl Rakosi

Sunday, 26 March  4 pm

Walker Art Center Lecture/Information Room

Tickets: $1.50, students $1. at the door
Dear Dave Woods:

Following Barbara Bawley’s phone contact with you, I’ve written my publisher, The National Poetry Foundation, to send you a review copy of my COLLECTED POEMS. However, since the NPF is connected with the University of Maine, the personnel at the NPF office might be away on vacation, so if you don’t get a review copy of the book in the next few weeks, please let me know and I’ll send you an extra copy that I have at home.

I’m enclosing a few reviews that have already appeared. Although I’ve been living in San Francisco in recent years, I’m essentially a Minnesotan...lived there from 1945 to 1978 (and would still be living there if it were not for the winters) and my daughter and her family and many old friends still live there; I’ve given readings at Walker and the U and at colleges throughout Minnesota, and after John Berryman’s suicide, I took over for a time his seminar on the American character...et al. Because of this connection, perhaps a review might have special interest for readers.

With best wishes,

Carl Rakosi
Dear Jesse Glass:

Your warm, enthusiastic letter made my day. Yes! Thank you.

As a rule, I'm reluctant to read the work of someone unknown to me because it entails having to respond with an opinion that may have to be unfavorable and then I'll be stuck with how to respond without hurting the person's feelings. It was no different when your batch of poems dropped out of your packet and I was trying to figure out what to do. Then I began to read IN WINTER. The second stanza began to be interesting and by the third stanza I was caught by the strength of your imaginative build-up in "as Mercator....." and I continued to be held to the end. Then in quick glances at the other poems I saw both a careful craftsman and a solid intellect at work. Welcome aboard!

[Signature]

Carl Rakosi
March 21, 1983

Dear Margot:

I wanted to call you on Sunday but found there was no phone listed under Margot Latimer. Apparently it's under your married name, which I don't have. I just wanted to know how things were going with you. Did you know Blanche Matthias passed away? In view of your tight finances, I do hope she left you something.

My piece on Margery is now tick with my publisher and will be a part of my COLLECTED PROSE, due some time in November (for my birthday). It's about the same length as what I sent you but with some deletions and additions and some tightening up, necessary because the original piece was intended only to give you and Nancy Loughridge information, not for publication.

I'm going to be visiting my daughter in Minneapolis between June 5th and June 19th. Any chance of you being there at the same time to visit your cousin?

It's obvious we're not going to have a correspondence but if you'd like me to call you from time to time, send me your phone number.

All the best,

P.S. Did you get AMULET?
Dear Margot:

Although your mother was heart and soul into writing, she would have attached equal value to the work you're doing. I know that from her big-eyed wonder and excitement when she heard about my first job at Family Service Society in Cleveland. So it would not be stretching things to imagine her looking down benignly, like a guardian angel, with her great smile. There is another thing that I know she would be beaming at, that we have found each other!

Lovely to have Michelle's and Philip's pictures. I can suspect why Michelle, as you say, "loathes" hers: it's quite studied. But there's a mystery in that pose that captures my interest, and for a moment her mouth and wide-open eyes remind me slightly of Margery.

I'm enclosing AMULET, the book that's closest chronologically to Margery. It's that phase of my work that she would have known, and known me by. When you've had a chance to spend some time with it and would like another, let me know and I'll send you the next later book. And so on.

My reason for needing to read THIS IS MY BODY quickly is curious and unexpected. My book of collected prose is being published next year in both this country and England. A section of it is called Scenes from My Life, and for that I need to know again how Margery perceived me, and that's in her novel. So if you could do something to get it back from your friend right away, I would appreciate it. I have a deadline. My memoir of Margery will be a part of that book.

Which reminds me. Nancy writes despairingly that you won't reply to her letters and has, therefore, asked me to ask you to write the Feminist Press, if you have not already done so, to request them to use my memoir. If she makes the request, she thinks it will put her into too weak a position. She's probably right. Will you do it? I wouldn't want anything to stand in the way of their publishing Margery's stories. Don't worry about Nancy's psychological misinterpretations. I can correct them.

One other thing. I've been reading Margery's letters to Blanche. They're high quality....maybe the best things she's ever done. But there are not enough of them for a book. I need more, especially her letters to Meridel. Are they in your father's ms. collection of her letters?

Affectionately,
Dear Margot Latimer:

I have no doubt that you've been waiting eagerly for my written recollections of your mother. I'm sorry, therefore, that it's taken so long, but there were long breaks when I couldn't work on it. Needless to say, when I was writing it, I had you in mind, even more than Nancy Loughridge....you, Margery's mystery child, whom I never saw, whom I wondered about, time after time: what were you like? where were you? Did you need anyone's help? Was there some way I and Margery's other friends could help you? Not knowing your father, however, or where he was, there was nowhere I could take my concerns. Now that I've found you, I hope you will satisfy my great interest in you by telling me about your life, particularly your adult life. I'm interested in everything that's happened to you, big and small.

Any chance of your coming to San Francisco some time to visit us?

All the best to you,
Dear Margot:

I was delighted to get your season's greetings. I hope 1986 brings all the best to you and the children.

Yes, of course I have seen the new Guardian Angel. I sent for it as soon as I learned that it was out, and was delighted at its physical appearance (more attractive than anything Margery was able to have during her lifetime). And the Feminist imprimatur will bring her readers which she wouldn't have otherwise. Although Margery was too absorbed with other things to have thought in feminist terms, she was always searching her own nature, which was intensely feminine, and in that sense could be regarded as an early feminist, worth looking into by the present generation. The three pieces at the end of the book did my heart good. What remains now is for Nancy Loughridge to complete her biography. I hope you will cooperate and that she hasn't lost interest in doing it.

Again all the best,
Dear Margot:  

When I wrote you my reaction to GUARDIAN ANGEL, I had not yet read the three Afterwords. Having read them now, I must say that I find the pieces by Meridel LeSueur and Louis Kampf quite distorting. Of course anything that brings Margery's work to public attention and respect is to the good, and it is understandable that Meridel would think it necessary to locate Margery in the feminist mould in order to persuade the Feminist Press to print her, but she goes much too far. She is of course warm and affectionate in her warm recollection of Margery, but there too she gets lost in a mushy mystique. Pretty soupy stuff. The point is that Margery was a pure individualist first, last and always, and was against all moulds, even the feminine. That was one of her unmistakable traits and one which set her apart from others.

On the other hand, Louis Kampf, a well-known Marxist in the Modern Language Association, puts Margery into his camp. According to him what Margery was doing, by means of her sharp observation and artistry, was to reveal the desperate nature and unhappiness of people in small towns, which is to be expected under Capitalism. Another mould, not to be believed of the real Margery. The fact is that her work was nearly always autobiographical, and the unhappiness and boredom of her characters are not social observation for the purpose of revealing the consequences of Capitalist society but projections of her own unhappiness and desperation and boredom in Portage. Of course readers are free to project any interpretation they need to make on a piece of writing, but this one is simply out of character for Margery.

That leaves Nancy's biographical note. I found it to the point and believable.

Anyhow, you asked. Now let me know what you think.

Best,
Dear Nancy Loughridge:

I was overjoyed to learn that you intended to do a piece on Margery Latimer. Nothing could be more overdue. I'd better write out my recollections of her, and that will take a bit of time, but in the meantime I can dispose of a few other things. Leon Herald, whom I'll bring into my recollections, passed away a few years ago. So did Horace Gregory, who was on campus at the University of Wisconsin at the same time as Margery; but his widow, Marya Zaturenska, who was also there, may still be around. Her last address was Palisades, Rockland County, New York 10964.

Alas, I don't remember what poem I promised to send Margery on the birth of the new baby nor what became of it. Nor do I know the whereabouts of Lula Vollmer, whom Margery mentioned from time to time but whom I did not know, nor Harold Hartley and Perry Goldman, whose names do not strike a bell with me.

I should add that some of Margery's letters to me are, if I'm not mistaken, in the University of Texas library in Austin, along with correspondence from Fearing and Louis Zukofsky to me. I don't know how they'd be catalogued there, possibly under my name or Zukofsky's or all four. Which leads me to ask whether there is a group of my letters to Margery at Fisk, since you speak of "a lost letter" from me, and whether there is any way to read these other than at Fisk itself. I didn't realize that Margery had kept my letters and that they might still be around.

I'll send Margot a copy of my recollections when they're done (your typescript doesn't make clear whether she's now 40 or 49; which is it?), but in the meantime, would you mind sending me the addresses of Blanche Mathias and Meridel Le Sueur, and telling me something about yourself and how you happened to get on the trail of Margery?

With best wishes,
Dear Nancy:

No, I didn't know that the Feminist Press was considering reprinting Margery's stories. Did Meridel have something to do with that? The reason I ask is because she's become a great mother-figure for young feminists (no one deserves it more) and told me a few years ago with great assurance, which I longed to share but could not, that someday Margery's work would be reprinted and appreciated. The day that happens, I'm going to celebrate.

I'm a little bewildered and touched by your offer to substitute my piece for yours. Of course my heart tells me that it belongs with Margery's work but would the Press go for that? Furthermore, perhaps it should be an introduction, not a postscript, and you should write a postscript of a different sort, based on research, analysis, etc., and on what other friends and relatives have told you which are not in my account or differ from it. In any case, I wouldn't want the Press to brush you aside, no, no.

I welcome questions. It might help me to fill out the memoir. Incidentally, your "take" on Margery as having a Blakean innocence answers a question I had about her work, of which I now have only a wisp of a memory, and that is, how expressive of her was it? Apparently that side of her came through.

Margot called me last Sunday and we had a great talk. She had a had a dream the night before she received the memoir in which, amidst much sturm und drang, a voice, or whatever, let her know that I had decided for some reason or other not to do it. The next morning, after breakfast, her son (?) brought in the mail, and there it was. She burst out crying.

Would you believe that Margery's niece lives only seven blocks from where we used to live in Minneapolis? What a shame that we didn't know!

Cordially,
Dear Nancy:

The mystery deepens, not surprisingly. I am afraid that your interpretation of Margery's mother goes \textit{much too far} beyond the evidence. Why do we have to pretend we know when we don't? We can't even make an educated guess, there's so little to go on. I assume you have evidence for saying that she viewed her husband with contempt and treated her daughter Rachel abominably. I don't know about that, but those are strong words that would need to be supported by an unbiased source. In any event, if the evidence is Margery's letters to her mother and what I know about Margery and Zukofsky's one-time observation of the mother, then all we can say is that the mother was a dominating, unyielding force derogating, undercutting and probably subtly sabotaging Margery, from which I conclude (as a clinician) that Margery may have been an unwanted child and that the mother protected herself against feelings of guilt over this by evading the whole issue of mother love and putting the relationship on the basis of mother-approval and disapproval, convincing herself that this was what a mother was supposed to do. This gave her tremendous power over Margery without needing to be confronted by her own basic deficiency. On this basis her disapprovals were much more frequent and felt much more deeply by Margery than her approvals because they were triggered and motivated by the mother's affectional rejection, the tone and coloration of which would permeate the disapprovals.

If we follow this scenario, which unfortunately is all too familiar in the human family and accounts for a large proportion of the neurosis in the population, much of Margery's behavior falls into place and becomes understandable. It would go like this. Margery realizes at an early age that she can't get true mother-love and full acceptance from her mother and that the acceptance is going to be partial and impermanent, depending on her mother's approval and cut off without notice if her mother is not in the mood for it. This substitution of approval for love is a very bitter pill but swallow it she must. After that it's a matter of trying to live unscathed in a relationship in which all power is invested in the mother to dispense or withhold the necessary approval.

The matter is even worse. The dispensing and withholding of approval is a powerful instrument for making a child comply and be what pleases the
Dear Nancy:

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The matter is even worse. The dispensing and withholding of approval is a powerful instrument for making a child comply and be what pleases the
mother, and this mother, who is nothing if not strong-minded, uses it in a strong-minded way. Under such circumstances, a child would have to be a "model" child, compliant and submissive in all things, in order to hope to be able to get the mother's approval. And then the chances are that this mother, feeling the way she does about a child, would disapprove because the child was compliant and submissive, for this kind of mother has to disapprove no matter what, because approval and love go together: no love, no approval. So it's a no-win situation for poor Margery, but she couldn't have known that, she had to try. But even if she had known it, she couldn't have lived with it, it was too painful to bear.

But you and I know, of course, that Margery was never compliant and submissive, and nothing on this earth could make her be anything out of character. So the mother is up against someone as strong-minded and unyielding as she. You say you think she was manipulative. She probably was, but no more than most parents. She didn't have to be; she had the power. Margot remembered her as jolly, loving and happy. I assure you she could have been all those things...to a granddaughter. After all, she (Laurie) was not the one who was insecure, she was in control. She could afford to be jolly with a granddaughter. And she could be loving too...sure, with a granddaughter. Why not? Rejecting mothers are often loving grandmothers. And "happy" too. By that time in life she could have been, if not exactly happy, as she seemed to the child Margot, at least viewing life with a certain amount of equanimity and good nature, which might have been true even during Margery's childhood. There is nothing incompatible between that and her deficiencies as a mother.

Going back to Margery, the most galling thing about her relationship to her mother must have been that she couldn't fight the thing out openly or confront her with it. A child can't do that without risking all, all approval and acceptance. She has to go at it in a disguised way. And Margery did that. Her letters to her mother are made up of endless complaints: she's bored, she doesn't feel well, she's lonely, she doesn't have enough money, etc. Always the message is, "I'm miserable, I'm unhappy. You're the mother. I need your help. Do something. Help me." The complaints are desperate calls for affection, in disguised form, since Margery knew perfectly well that her mother couldn't do anything about her loneliness or her boredom or her physical ailments. And of course the mother doesn't do anything, except the one thing she can do, send her a little money occasionally. It's not in her to give the primal affection Margery is really seeking.
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I suspect that the effect of these letters on her mother was simply to confirm what she had come to expect of Margery, endless complaining, and that her response was pretty much the same as when Margery complained, during the Zukofsky visit, "Mother, this coffee looks like mud," and the mother answered, "Well, stir the mud and drink it." In other words, shut up and get on with it, and don't be such a baby....a response which, of course, was no response to Margery's calls for help and forced her into repetitive ritual complaining, to which the mother did not have to pay serious attention because the complaints were so disguised.

One more thing about this scenario. On closer examination it leads, for Margery, to a sick, subterranean agony, the agony of not being able to suppress her need for her mother's love.....no one can do that....and of feeling, on the contrary, metasthetize and its claims become more desperate and insistent, and eventually unreasonable. You said in your letter that you felt that Margery "never managed to separate herself from her mother, never cut the cord." That wasn't quite it. What she couldn't separate from was her need for her mother's love, and since that need went with the mother, she did hold on to the mother, but not because she was not grown-up and couldn't take responsibility for herself and do things on her own and be her own judge, etc., which is what we ordinarily mean by "separating."

Growing up in this mother-child gestalt in which she was disapproved, poor Margery deeply believed there was something wrong with her as a woman, that she was unattractive, dressing accordingly, that her voice was wrong, that her body was a strange, distant thing. Not so in writing, however. In her powers as a writer and observer, in her prescient intuition, she had limitless confidence. She knew she could create confidence for herself there.

The parts of this scenario hang together very well and are convincing, but that is only because they replicate the elements of a conventional diagnosis. If you use it in your book, you would have to add a disclaimer to the effect that we have no direct evidence about the mother and that basing a portrait of her entirely on Margery's behavior is very risky. In any case, whatever she did to Margery that caused anguish and difficulty was not done out of malevolence but out of her own situation and needs at the time. In other words, we are not dealing with a monster.

Going back for a moment to Margery's exacerbated affectional needs and expectations in a relationship to a man, I was very much aware of this, as was everyone else, and remember thinking what a great relationship it would be if a man were up to it, if he could just forget everything else and give himself to it, all of himself, unplumbed depths that he was even not aware of.
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But it would mean that he'd have to be willing to let himself be enveloped by it/her, which was the last thing Kenneth was willing to do. To break out of such a relationship in which she talked about marriage and children, which she longed for, Kenneth used strong words. They can be found in a story, MONDAY MORNING, which she wrote in the summer of 1929. The story is dedicated to Blanche, in whose files I saw it. When I read those words, I instantly recognized them as Kenneth's and remembered Margery's coming to me after the event, looking downcast and confused and a bit dazed and mangled and repeating Kenneth's words, as if to ask me, her friend, what did I make of such strange behavior? I was a man, I would understand. I did understand alright but what could I say? That this ending was inevitable, this was the way Kenneth was? I could not tell her I was not up to such an intense, full-throttled relationship either. I said something, I think, about the harshness of the words but was at a loss how else to relieve her knot of injury.

In the story Margery corrects the injury. In it she fantasies that she has a loving husband and is carrying his child, doing all the necessary domestic tasks while the husband goes off to work. She is utterly content. Into this Eden, however, come flashbacks of what is recognized as Kenneth's last words to her, although the speaker of the words is never named.

"I won't let you lock me up. I won't. No. You can't. Cry then. Cry all you please. No, I'm Not a monster."

"Today I don't want a million babies, Margot (mine: isn't interesting that Margot is the name she gave herself in the story and also to her real child?) I'd kill them all. You bore me. I want to go a million miles away from you, my angel. I'd soon choke you and the kid as well. I'd murder you after six months. I'd be in the penitentiary and you'd be bringing me cigarettes and stale cookies. Don't talk. Every word you say you've said one million times. You bore me. Keep away. I haven't anything at all for you ever. No, you've got me crazy. I swear any woman in the streets has more than you. They have bodies. They have senses. They don't hang on a guy for love all the time. Oh, shut up for a change."

The words are Kenneth's but the way she put them together is not the way he sounded. Somehow she has them sounding mushier, less incisive, less idiomatic. This is partly because she has them coming through an emotional haze, but also because, at this time, she had not quite got the hang of man talk. You might say she was feminizing it. Thus when the voice in the story says, "I want to go a million miles away from you, angel," in the mouth of Kenneth there would be deadly sarcasm and a drop of vitriol at the end of that word, angel.
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Dear Nancy:

It's convenient for me that Florence Howe is away from her office, as I have had my re-union with Blanche Matthias and another meeting with her in which we checked out each other's memory of Margery, and I know from this that a few things in my memoir will have to be corrected, and a few things added. In addition, what I wrote was intended for your use, not as an introduction to a book. If it's going to be used that way, some changes, of course, will have to be made. I'll hold off doing anything, however, until I get the go-ahead sign from you.

Is Margery's correspondence with Zona Gale in the Fisk library? These should be enlightening. From some letters I saw at Blanche's, Blanche may have been Margery's closest writing confidante. A whole archive of Margery's letters to Blanche are in the University Library in Madison. They would be a counterpoint to her letters to Zona. Have you seen them?

Blanche too asked whether I heard a resemblance in Margot's voice to Margery's. I heard some, I guess, in the up-beat liveliness of Margot's voice and the suggestion of a slight laugh in it, but not more than that.
6 May 1984

Dear Nancy:

How are you coming along on the biography? I notice that the Feminist Press has come out with Margery’s GUARDIAN ANGEL. Did you have a hand in that? I hope so. I hope too that you’ve been able to restore a working relationship to Margot. That’s a bummer.

My COLLECTED PROSE is out but I’m embarrassed that I can’t send you a copy because the publisher hasn’t sent me any, despite repeated requests, for distribution to friends. It’s annoying. If it’s important for you to have the book, with the piece on Margery and the others in its final form, it can be obtained from The National Poetry Foundation, The University of Maine, 305 English-Math Bldg., Orono, Maine 04469; or on order from a bookstore. If you’ll be writing the Feminist Press regarding your book, you might let them know that the piece is there. Otherwise I’ll do it.

If there’s anything I can do to help you with your book, please let me know. I mean that.
Dear Nancy:

You must not give up on Margery's biography because Margot hated the essay. That wouldn't make sense. You're not writing it to please Margot, after all, however much we may all want her to be pleased. All you can do as a writer is to be careful, thorough, conscientious, and as perceptive as you can. That's quite enough. Relatives often hate biographies, for obvious reasons. Do you know what Margot takes such strong exception to? I can tell you what she told me over the phone: she felt you were hostile in the essay, which surprised me because in everything you wrote me you were so warmly and enthusiastically identified with Margery, and that your psychological speculations about the family seemed to her far-fetched and ill-grounded. In my overdue response to your long letter I'll have some things to say about these speculations but in the meantime, you must not lose heart. I, for one, am depending on you to do the biography, and I'm sure Blanche and Meridel are too. I have a horrible feeling that if you don't do it, it will never get done.

Would you like to send me the essay to get my reaction?

Best,
Dear Nancy:

Yes, Margot is very slow to write. I had almost given up hope myself that she would respond to my second letter, but she did, so you may still hear from her. I wrote her yesterday to ask, as you requested, that she approach the Feminist Press about the introduction but I don’t know whether she’ll think it’s her place to do it.

I’m very uncomfortable about your saying, “My pride wants to salvage something from the last four years.” “I don’t understand what has been lost by you and what pride has to do with it. I happen to have known Margery, you didn’t, so how could you have made her come alive as I did? That couldn’t have come from books or letters, and to downgrade yourself for not having done it is unrealistic. Whatever you did in research and thought is still intact, not affected by what I did. Isn’t it all going into your biography of Margery? Furthermore, my memoir, probably somewhat abbreviated, is going to appear next year in a volume of my collected prose, so there is no necessity for it to appear also in a volume of Margery’s short stories, although I agree that would be a good place for it. You could still use your introduction if you felt the loss was there. I really wouldn’t mind, as it’s going to be published anyhow, although not for the same audience. Anyhow, do we know that the Feminist Press is even going to use Margery’s stories?

Got held up in my reply to your last letter but it’ll be coming.

Best,

[Signature]
Dear Nancy:

I have read your piece on Margery twice and it much better than you led me to believe it was. In fact, it is more appropriate as an introduction to her book than mine, and I would be opposed to substituting mine for yours. I say yours is more appropriate because it covers Margery's whole life whereas mine deals with only a small part, and because I have things in mine that are only tangentially relevant to Margery.

You say you find your piece flat. I know what you mean, but that tone is not uninteresting. It's the tone of restraint and a measured pace. It's a perfectly appropriate tone. If, however, you think it needs more fleshing out (I don't, since the stories will speak for themselves) and you think you could flesh it out by adding from her writing, I wouldn't hesitate to do it. It won't overlap what Louis Kamp does. He has quite a different purpose and that will make his piece altogether different.

Is this the writing that Margot hated? I don't understand.

A few small points. (1) How do you happen to know such specific details as you have in paragraphs 2 and 3 on page 1? I'm not saying it wasn't that way, but how could you know that it was? Perhaps your sources should be given. (2) Gurdjieff is supposed to have been Bulgarian. Did Toomer or Orage say he was Russian? (3) Kenneth was not Semitic-looking, unless you think Walter Matthau, the actor, looks Semitic (their faces look a little alike; identical noses). Kenneth's hair was black but it was fine and his complexion was not dark, so that he really didn't look dark. People didn't really see him physically as Jewish. (4) You write, "Kenneth's gods were Karl Marx, Edwin Arlington Robinson and H.L. Mencken." It's true he was quite taken by Robinson, and influenced by him, and he did admire Mencken's spunk and lingo, but Marx was quite outside his orbit. Kenneth had a few radical friends in the Village but he himself was totally a-political. These friendships and the profound pessimism in his poems, the devastated city scenes, made the Communists think he was one of them, but they were mistaken.

My reading of your introduction convinces me that you must not let yourself be deterred from writing the full biography.

With best wishes,
There's only one possession that's worth having and that is the capacity to feel that life is a privilege and that each person in it is unique and will never appear again.

Margery Latimer to Zona Gale, 1928
Margery Bodine Latimer was born on February 6, 1899 in Portage, Wisconsin, the second child and daughter of Clark Watt and Laura Augusta Bodine Latimer. Her parents had met and married in Mansfield, Ohio in 1890 and her father, a traveling salesman, had chosen to settle in Portage because of its good rail connections to his Upper Mississippi territory. The town of Portage in 1899 had not yet been put on the literary map by Zona Gale's phenomenally popular Friendship Village stories.

Laurie Latimer was a beautiful, gentle woman, low-key in manner, who loved books, music and comfortable surroundings. Clark Latimer, a large, handsome, noisy man whose impeccable dress verged on dandyism, held conventional views and his tastes were uncultivated. He adored Laurie all his life and worked extraordinarily hard to provide his family with the finer things, but it seemed, when he returned from his long road trips, that he was almost baffled by the three females living under his roof.

From the moment of Margery's arrival, she became the center of her mother's emotional life; the six-year-old Rachel, a robust and gregarious girl, fell into alliance with her father. Laurie Latimer sensed immediately that there was a special, other-worldly quality in her youngest child; Margery seemed to possess a sixth sense which enabled her, even when an infant, to "know" things inaccessible to others. She seems never to have grown a protective social crust; wise and vulnerable at once, Margery would face life with the directness and intensity of a Blake vision.
Margery's early resolve to be a writer was strengthened by the example of Portage-neighbor Zona Gale, though the two did not become acquainted until 1917. One of Margery's short stories, printed in the local newspaper, caught Zona's attention and she immediately summoned the young author to tea at her elegant columned home overlooking the river. At 42, Zona Gale had already achieved financial independence and fame through her writing and had returned to Portage several years earlier to live with her parents. Her finest work (and the Pulitzer Prize) was still ahead of her at the time of her meeting with Margery.

Zona was enchanted. "There is a wonderful child here," she wrote to a friend. "She is one of the most exquisite centres of intuitive experience imaginable." 2

For her part, Margery was cast under a spell which would not be broken for 14 years.

Margery entered Wooster College in Ohio in the fall of 1918 but seems to have been terribly unhappy there from the start (homesickness, mainly) and she withdrew at the end of the first semester. The following autumn she entered the University of Wisconsin, only 40 miles from Portage, but was not much happier. The impersonality of the huge campus, the emphasis on football and the rah-rah spirit, the brassy social life revolving around fraternities and sororities -- all repelled her. A fellow occupant of Barnard Hall recalls Margery at that time:

My first impression of Margery was that on the whole she seemed somewhat remote, intentionally. It might have been a mask for shyness. But when one got a little closer one found she set a lot of store by being not different, exactly, but distinctive. 3

Everyone agrees that Margery was a strikingly attractive girl; the word most often used to describe her was "radiant." Above average in
height (about 5'8") and large-boned, she had a mass of golden hair,
variously described as honey blonde or strawberry blonde, large,
piercingly blue eyes and perfect skin. The poet, Carl Rakosi, recalls
Margery vividly:

She wore no make-up, no lipstick, no high heels,
no frills of any kind and only the most plain
dresses. Her walk was unselfconscious, very
straight and direct, without being masculine.
What struck one immediately was her radiant
presence. Blake would have described her as
a cloud of gold. ... In a long life, I have
not seen her like.

Academically, Margery performed adequately but she could not learn
by rote; the canned lectures seemed only to skim over the surface and
left her bored and restless to find deeper connections.

In May of 1921, while Margery was preparing to leave Madison "for
good," Zona was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in drama for Miss Lulu Bett,
the first woman so honored. The play had opened in December and was
still attracting standing-room-only audiences; Zona was earning enormous
sums of money and was the most sought-after figure in New York.

Margery arrived in the city in June and signed up for a summer play-
writing course at Columbia. The class was a disappointment but Margery
found a friend there who more than made up for it. Blanche (Mrs. Russell)
Matthias, an extraordinarily lovely, wealthy, sophisticated woman in
her early thirties, was intrigued by the "glorious looking young woman"
who was indolent and impertinent in the classroom and so wonderfully
alive outside it. Blanche soon became Margery's closest friend, con-
fidante, and supporter.

One of Zona's many letters of introduction finally paid off for
Margery in October when she got a job in the fashion department of the
Womans Home Companion. She promptly moved into a charming studio on West 23rd Street, bought a typewriter on the installment plan, and began her first novel. Zona wrote her from Portage that Mrs. Latimer marveled at the courage her youngest daughter was showing but Margery's brave new world didn't last long. She was fired from her job in the spring and, chastened, returned home to Portage. She wrote to Blanche: "If it weren't for Zona, I would feel like Nothing." 5

Margery re-enrolled at Wisconsin in the fall but this time as a special student, taking only those courses which appealed to her. Money, as always, was a problem. Clark Latimer's earnings in the first nine months of 1922 amounted to only a little over a thousand dollars. Zona responded by initiating the Zona Gale Scholarship Fund which would grant to the winners the incredibly generous sum of $70 a month. The scholarship terms were hand-crafted for Margery's benefit and Zona made certain that she was the first recipient.

Margery's third year at the university was a complete turn-about from the first two; she blossomed. She made friends with Kenneth Fearing, Carl Rakosi, Horace Gregory, Marya Zaturenska, and others in the literary group and her contributions (essays and reviews, mainly) began to appear in the Literary Magazine. And there was the excitement of Zona's visits to campus, which were frequent. Margery's feelings for Zona were intense, almost overwhelming. She wrote to Zona about this time:

A new sense came to me as Miss Conklin sat there talking of you. I was filled with you ... I thought I would like to serve you, serve you, belong to you. I feel as though now for the first time I am bound to beauty. 6

At the same time, Margery's friendship with Kenneth Fearing had gradually deepened into a romance, to the astonished delight of their friends. Two more opposite people could hardly be imagined. Kenneth's
looks were dark, frail, Semitic, unprepossessing; he was appallingly
grubby in his personal habits. Kenneth's Gods were Karl Marx, Edwin
Arlington Robinson and H.L. Mencken; he deplored the romanticism of
Margery's novel-in-progress which he blamed on Zona's influence. His
upbringing had been very unstable (his mother was about to marry for the
fourth time and would have seven husbands in all) and perhaps because of
it, he played the role of enfant terrible to the hilt. His brilliance
and talent were unquestioned, however, and though only 20 years old, his
poems were already attracting notice in New York literary circles. The
Latimers were vehemently opposed to Fearing as a suitor; Zona was not
charmed by him either but had the good sense to base her objection to the
match on the discrepancy in their ages.

Margery decided, in the summer of 1925, not to return to college but
to live at home and concentrate on her writing. Her novel was now finished
and Joseph Hergesheimer, at the height of his fame and influence at this
time, had appointed himself Margery's unofficial agent and was trying to
find a publisher for it. She and Kenneth visited back and forth between
Portage and Madison but a shift of power in the relationship had occurred
and Margery now found herself the pursuer, not the pursued.

Partly as a way of getting Margery's mind off Kenneth, the Latimers
agreed to underwrite a combination holiday/writing trip for her the follow-
ing summer. Zona recommended an artists colony in upstate New York, near
Rochester, where she had once stayed and where good friends of hers would
be spending part of the summer. Margery boarded the train in July, expect-
ing to be away only a month or two, but it would be almost a year before
she returned home. She worked hard on revising her novel (the Knopfs,
after showing strong interest, had finally turned it down) and exultantly
wrote her mother in September that it was finished and that Blanche, who was
visiting her, was lending her the money to go to New York to make the rounds
of publishers.
The next ten months were among the happiest and most exciting of Margery's life. She and Mavis McIntosh, a friend from Madison, shared a room at the Old Chelsea on West 16th St. and the "Wisconsin Gang" made it their home away from home. (Horace Gregory would celebrate these days in his first book of poems, Chelsea Rooming House, published in 1930.) She was dating the painter Walt Kuhn, among others, and there were dinner and party invitations from Anita Loos, the Carl Van Vechtens, the Hergesheimers, and Carl and Irita Van Doren. Georgia O'Keeffe (who was from the Portage area and who was, in addition, a good friend of Blanche's) was coming into prominence through Stieglitz's group shows at the Anderson Galleries.

Piqued, perhaps, by Margery's happy letters, Kenneth arrived in New York in December, eager to resume their relationship. They went to the movies (still silent), to the Provincetown Playhouse and to concerts, when they could afford it, and simply walked the streets of New York when they couldn't.

No matter how hectic her schedule, Margery, at Zona's urging, tried not to miss A. R. Orage's Monday night lectures on the Gurdjieff philosophy. Like many other Americans in the post-war years, Zona Gale had become deeply interested in Eastern mysticism and this interest had intensified after the death of her mother the year before. Gurdjieff's movement had become famous (or infamous) in 1923 when writer Katherine Mansfield, a recent convert, had died at his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in Fontainebleau. Zona's credo was that "life is something more than that which we believe it to be" and she sensed that the mysterious Russian, Georgei Gurdjieff, had a clue as to what the "something more" might be. Margery herself found Gurdjieff's teachings impenetrable but she was drawn to the charismatic Orage who soon became her friend and literary mentor.
Margery needed all of Orage's support and encouragement (he predicted that she would one day surpass Katherine Mansfield) as the new version of her novel had met with a cold reception. Originally entitled Lilac Castle, it had then made the rounds as Pink Flamingoes; Margery concluded that it wasn't publishable in any color and scrapped it. At the same time, she followed Kenneth's advice – or perhaps a nudge from Orage – and abandoned her highly romantic, almost inflated, style (although it would peep through later in This Is My Body) and employed a sharp, minimal, effective prose for the short stories she was now writing.

Kenneth soon began pressing her to live with him and in the spring, restless to get out of the city, Margery agreed to share an apartment with him at Fort Place in St. George, Staten Island. They were, on the whole, happy together but neither was getting much work done and they agreed that they should part for the summer to concentrate on writing.

Margery arrived in Portage in June of 1925, intent on writing a novel with Zona as the protagonist. A month later she wrote to Blanche that she had finished 70 pages and "Zona ... thinks it very good. There are parts that I shudder to read to her and when I have finished I feel that I can't go on but she sits there beyond emotion, poised, remote." Margery was quite right to fear Zona's reaction. The central figure of Hester Linden in We Are Incredible comes off as a cold, sexless, domineering creature who ruins the lives of all those closest to her. Later, Margery would insist that she had not meant the book to be an indictment of Zona; rather, it had been a call for help. If so, Zona didn't answer it.

The novel was finished in December but before returning to New York, Margery accompanied her mother on a long visit to California. Kenneth complained, justifiably perhaps, that the Latimers were trying to keep them apart. However, when Margery rejoined him, it was Kenneth's idea that they
share their apartment at 62 Barrow St. with a friend of his, Leslie Rivers, whom Margery disliked. It was not a happy ménage. Kenneth was notorious among their friends, for his sloppiness and he was now drinking more heavily; the added burden of cooking and cleaning up after Leslie was the proverbial straw, as far as Margery was concerned. She felt that her own writing was being sacrificed in order to advance Kenneth's career, which was now in high gear. Even though, in 1926, two of her stories were sold and the following year Van Wyck Brooks chose two other stories for later publication in his prestigious American Caravan anthologies, Margery felt that her writing career was becalmed.

She had a sense of urgency also about getting on with her personal life; she wanted very much to get married and have children but Kenneth, after almost two years of living together, was still adamantly opposed to both. Looking back on this time, Margery would write to Blanche: "I tried to discover what he needed and I did but I can't live that way any more. I had to give everything - my peace of mind, my whole self, every kind of attention, and expect nothing." In the spring of 1928, she made the final break with Kenneth and returned to Portage and to Zona.

Margery was unaware that Zona's life had taken an entirely new direction. She had, six months before, quietly assumed the guardianship of a homeless two-year-old girl, Leslyn, whom she hoped to adopt legally. The second turning point in Zona's life was a chance encounter in California with an old Portage acquaintance, William L. Breese. Breese was a wealthy manufacturer and banker, Portage's civic leader, and a widower just a few years older than Zona. The friendship deepened after each had returned home and Breese began a discreet but persistent courtship. It seemed, on the surface, an ideal match but there were deep differences between them. Zona was a feminist,
a pacifist, a prominent supporter of La Follette's Progressive Party, and she had given up, long ago, on conventional Christianity. Breese was a conservative Republican and a Presbyterian elder, entirely traditional in his thinking. Will Breese was in love; Zona's reasons for accepting his proposal of marriage are not so clear. They were married in a quiet ceremony on June 12, 1928.

Neither Zona nor anyone else had the courage to break the news to Margery; she learned about the wedding only the night before it took place, reading the announcement in the newspaper. Convinced that it was a mistake or a joke, Margery ran in a frenzy to Edgewater Place to demand an explanation. Zona kept her waiting for over an hour and then coolly told her that what she had read in the paper was true.

Margery saw Zona's marriage not only as a personal betrayal but also as a refutation of Zona's lifelong beliefs. In particular, her "failure" with Kenneth had finally convinced Margery that Zona had been right all along — that a woman must choose between the life of a creative artist and that of an ordinary married woman. One couldn't have both, Zona had always said. There was also the uncomfortable realization that if Zona was not uncommon, not a unique superior being, then what was Margery?

Her breakdown was so disabling that the Latimers considered hospitalizing her; even the publication of We Are Incredible, and the excellent notices that followed, did not lift Margery's depression. Surprisingly, Margery was writing her most accomplished stories during this tormented time and these, along with earlier stories, would be published in 1929 as Nellie Bloom and other stories. The volume was reviewed widely and the chorus of praise was overwhelming. Most critics commented that the promise of her first book had been more than fulfilled.

Returning again to the story of her own life, Margery worked through-
out 1929 on a novel, *This Is My Body*. She intended the book to be both catharsis and communion; a way of reclaiming the girl that she had been and a plea, mainly directed toward her family, for understanding. In a state of exultation while writing it, Margery came back to earth with a thump when it was finished. "I have read half of the galleys and I am shocked and horrified. It isn't good the way I thought it was." 9 When the book appeared in 1930, the reviewers agreed with her and though she had anticipated their reaction, Margery interpreted the reviews as a cutting personal rejection.

Still, in her words, "on the rack" about Zona two years after her marriage, Margery tried once more to exorcise Zona's ghost through her writing. The result was a long short story, "Guardian Angel," whose central character, Fleta Bain, is an even more damning portrayal of Zona than was Hester Linden. Friends begged her not to publish it but when *Scribner's* chose the story as a finalist in a $5000 Short Story Contest, there was no question of holding it back. By the time the story appeared in the magazine's June issue, however, Margery had already found her release.

The appearance in 1923 of *Cane*, a hauntingly beautiful prose-poem about Southern Negro life, had established Jean Toomer's reputation overnight. *Cane* would be cited later as the harbinger and the highest achievement of the Harlem Renaissance but by that time, Toomer was no longer identifying himself as Negro, which was only a small fraction of his ancestry. In the 1920's, he had become an enthusiastic follower of the Gurdjieff movement, traveling several times to Fontainebleau to study under the master, and in 1931, at the age of 36, Toomer had succeeded A. R. Orage as the senior Gurdjieff teacher in America.
He had assembled a loyal group of about forty pupils in Chicago and it was at one of their meetings that he and Margery met.

If there is such a thing as love at first sight, Margery experienced it.

After dinner Lane played the piano and Toomer sat down beside me. Everyone seemed to "observe" us, for some reason. He said, "Now, I'm going to hold Margery's hand if I may, Mr. Lane." I couldn't stand it for more than a second. His hand seemed moving inside and mine got perfectly static. I had to take it away and he said, "You're protecting yourself. You've heard things about me." Of course I hadn't at all, except from Georgia O'Keeffe, who thinks he is simply great, much finer than Waldo Frank. But as I sat there not saying anything something quiet seemed to rush from my hand downward and I felt more quiet than before. I seemed to lose all memory, everything was washed away. I left early and suddenly as I said goodbye to those three - Lane, his wife, Toomer, I couldn't bear to go... The next morning when I woke up I thought, "I was washed clean. Now I can choose." What Margery might have heard about Jean Toomer was that he had a formidable reputation with women; they adored him and continued to do so long after he had lost interest in them. He was tall, very handsome, charming, self-possessed, a superb athlete and dancer, a gifted musician, and had a "hypnotically beautiful" voice. Toomer had never married and he had openly cautioned the many women with whom he had been involved that he intended to remain single.

It had been Toomer's dream for years to establish a permanent community for his students, modeled after Gurdjieff's Institute, where they could live, learn, and work together. Margery immediately thought of Bonnie Oaks, a summer compound about ten miles from Portage owned by her friends Harrison and Mildred Green. The Greens sometimes rented the hired man's cottage to vacationers and though it wasn't suitable as a permanent base for the Institute, Margery thought it could be a starting point. The "Portage Experiment," as it came to be known, was wildly misconstrued at the time (outsiders thought it a haven for Communism, free love, and nudism) and Toomer's ex-
planations of his aims often were so layered in Gurdjieffian jargon that they only added to the mystery. Put in contemporary terms, the basic idea was to live simply and naturally, to get in touch with one's feelings, and to begin the long process of integrating one's personality.

Margery loathed many things about the Experiment — communal living, manual labor, compulsory games — but the worst part, perhaps, was not having Jean to herself. One evening, as the group sat around the campfire, Margery lost her temper over a seemingly trivial incident and the next morning she was gone. Jean dashed into Portage to persuade her to come back (she did) and it was probably during this interview that Jean declared his love.

She, usually so adept with words, could find only one phrase to describe her feelings. Over and over she wrote to her friends, "I am miraculously happy." 

The wedding on October 30, 1931 in the Episcopal Church was a large and lavish affair by Portage standards and the reception which followed was almost a community festival. The Toomers honeymooned in Chicago and lingered there for a month before taking the train to New Mexico, still searching for a permanent home for Jean's Institute. His Gurdjieff lectures had been well received in Santa Fe five years before and Mabel Dodge Luhan had, in fact, offered her ranch in Taos as the site for a Gurdjieff community. Mabel was now bombarding the Toomers with telegrams, inviting them to stay with her. They arrived in Santa Fe in late November and rented a charming old adobe house in the foothills overlooking the town. New Mexico was colder (and more expensive) than they had anticipated but the month that they had together there would be the happiest of Margery's life.

Jean was working on a nonfiction account of the summer experiment (entitled Portage Potential, it remains unpublished) while Margery began
a novel based on the same events. For some reason, the planned visit to Mabel Dodge Luhan's ranch did not take place, to Margery's great disappointment; she didn't mind missing the formidable Mabel but had looked forward to meeting Frieda Lawrence and Dorothy Brett because of their connection to Katherine Mansfield. Nor did Jean succeed in reviving an interest in Gurdjieff among his former students.

Zona had arranged for her daughter Leslyn and the child's governess, Evelyn Hood, to spend the winter in California while she and Will traveled. Evelyn now entreated the Toomers to join her in San Diego where they could live rent-free in the large house that Zona had leased. They were pondering the pros and cons of Evelyn's offer when Margery learned, to her great joy, that she was pregnant. Jean was ecstatic.

Jean and Margery arrived in San Diego just before Christmas and during the six weeks that they stayed there, Jean completed his Portage book and Margery made good progress on her novel, now called The Ship. The people of San Diego appeared oblivious of the Gurdjieff movement, however, and in February they accepted an invitation from Margery's aunt and uncle in Pasadena to stay with them. There were many Gurdjieff adherents in the Los Angeles area, especially in Hollywood, but none were able or willing, amidst a deepening economic depression, to pay for Jean's instruction. They were, however, buoyed by the news that Smith & Haas had accepted Guardian Angel and other stories for publication.

Jean was beginning to realize that the Chicago group, still loyally sending contributions every few weeks, was his best hope for the founding of an Institute. Both he and Margery wanted to visit San Francisco before heading back, however, and a Miss Bulkeley in Carmel (who had been valiantly holding together a group started there by Orage in 1928) promised them a warm welcome.
They thought they had fallen into paradise. Miss Bulkeley had found them a magnificent redwood contemporary overlooking the ocean; it had four bedrooms, two baths, and a view from every window. Also through Miss Bulkeley, the Toomers became acquainted with the Lincoln Steffens, the Robinson Jeffers, photographer Edward Weston, poet Orrick Johns, and others in the Carmel art colony.

To stir local interest in his lectures, Jean granted an interview to a reporter from the weekly Carmel Pine Cone. The risk of rekindling the scandal which had raged the year before seemed remote. (Two of the Portage Experiment participants, married but separated from their spouses, had fallen in love and run away together; the tumultuous publicity which followed had cited Jean and his "free love cult" as the instigator.) Jean opened up to the sympathetic reporter and talked idealistically (and naively) of the day when there would be no racial, class, or economic distinctions in this country — there would simply be Americans. A Hearst reporter in San Francisco spotted the interview, pieced it together with the scandal of a year before and added some lurid details of his own to produce an outrageously malevolent story which made headlines from coast to coast. The Portage Experiment was portrayed as the first step, with Margery as the first recruit, of a sinister conspiracy to "mongrelize" the white race. Time magazine professed to be shocked that the Toomer's marriage was actually legal. Reporters and photographers besieged their house, cars filled with gawking sightseers caused a traffic jam on Ocean Drive, and the Toomer's mailbox was flooded with hate mail and threats. Portage was in an uproar and Margery's parents fled to Rachel's home in Montana.

Holding their heads high, Jean and Margery waited in Carmel for the storm to slacken before beginning the long drive back to Portage in June.
It had been a shattering experience but Margery was more concerned about her family than she was about herself and the baby she was carrying.

"I have brought suffering to you all - the one thing I have most feared."

Jean rented a large airy apartment on Division Street in Chicago; there were separate bedrooms for the nurse-midwife and for Laurie Latimer, who would be with them for the baby's birth. Margery had, from time to time, expressed great fear about childbirth but as the date approached, she wrote to Zona:

"We expect the baby about August 12th and I look forward now, to the event, with such excitement and such eagerness that all thought of my inadequacy in pain and in life has entirely left me. It seems like my one supreme date with reality."

Exactly what went wrong will never certainly be known. Margery probably contracted an infection for which, of course, there was no antibiotic. She remained conscious long enough to know that she had delivered a perfect baby girl. She died the night of August 16, 1932.

The day before Margery's funeral, Zona wrote to a friend that she had had an intense mystical experience sitting in her garden that afternoon.

It was not until some time had passed that the meaning came to me suddenly (as in spring one will become abruptly aware that he has been hearing a grosbeak). It was Margery with whom I have been sitting - Margery, among her new flowers. Margery lies over at her house, by the fireplace, in a world of flowers - so beautiful, so incredibly adult. It is as if she had lived a life time in one year - so beautifully, so surely entering, even here, upon her more.
1. WHS
5. [August, 1922] UW
6. n.d. P
7. July 4, 1925 UW
8. [1928] UW
9. Letter to Blanche Matthias [Christmas, 1929] UW
10. Letter to Blanche Matthias [May, 1931] UW
12. Letter to her mother [April, 1932] Fisk
13. [July, 1932] WHS
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**Grand Total**: 2442 (p.)

**Total**: 543 (d.)

**Grand Total**: 2985
Domestic

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773
205
25
37
68
2417
2272
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2249

107 - Returned = 38

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1369
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60
205

1137
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Sold, domestic and foreign: 74 copies

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**Domestic Total**: 1706

**Foreign Total**: 230

**Grand Total**: 1436
Dear Eileen:

There is no question that I'll read at St. Mark's in May but I can't tell you yet just when during the month because, as I think I wrote you, Michael Heller is trying to arrange a reading plus dialogue with me at NYU and if he gets dept. approval, it would have to be shortly before May 11th, when classes end and exams begin. He'll let me know as soon as he knows, but in the meantime you might want to call him yourself to find out. In fact that might be good to do. The last note I had from him was dated Oct. 5. Of course if he can't get dept. approval, a later date will be all right.

It will be fine to have Steve Levine read with me. I've had to turn him down a couple of times recently here in San Francisco and it may have seemed to him that I was disinclined, but it had to do only with my not wanting to read just then.

With best wishes,
Dear Ms. Ward:

I appreciate the invitation from The Poetics Institute to give a lecture on Objectivist poetry and will be glad to do so. The date, Monday, May 13th is fine and the honorarium of $300 is acceptable.

I would much prefer to have a dialogue with a couple of discussants than questions from the floor, although we could perhaps have a little of the latter too, as my lecture will not be long.

I'm sure you'll want to include Michael Heller in the dialogue because his new book on the Objectivists, as you know if you've read it, is both illuminating and accurate. Another good person in the N.Y. area would be Paul Auster (the last phone I have for him is 212-858-1143). Also Donald Davie, who I understand is on your faculty now. And if somehow you could get Burton Hatlen from the University of Maine to participate, we'd have quite a show. Hatlen did a very sharp critical postcript on me in my COLLECTED

With best wishes,

PROSE book and am working on a piece on my whole

poetry for contemporary literature.
5 May 1984

Dear Art:

The third Friday in May would be perfect. Let's set it for that date. I'm relieved.

Incidentally, can you use some recent brief eulogies of my work in publicity for the reading?

Also, would you do me a favor and let me know if you don't get a copy of my COLLECTED PROSE in a week or two? I asked Terrell, my publisher, to send you a copy and also the other people on your list (for which many thanks) but I can't be sure that he will follow through. He's dreadfully remiss in his correspondence.

Fondly,

[Signature]

C
12 April 1984

Dear Art:

Of course I remember you. How could I forget the loving way in which you and your friends treated me, the high excitement and enthusiasm of the audience....you had told me you had great audiences at The Body Politic but I put that down to local pride and didn't take it seriously.....and that lovely young woman with dark hair.....who was she? I was crazy about her....who after the reading came up to me, her face beaming (I think she may have been the wife of one of the poets, herself not a writer?) and full of emotion, and hugged and kissed me, at the same time pressing the evening's receipts into my hands, greenbacks all over, bulging out. You bet, I remember everything.

I'll be delighted to read at The Poetry Center, Art. The best time for me would be as late in May 1985 as possible. If this is too late for student attendance, or too late for other reasons, I would accept a late April reading. The Center's terms of $400 plus transportation to and from California plus one night's lodging are fine.

Now, may I ask a favor of you? My COLLECTED PROSE has just been issued by The National Poetry Foundation at the University of Mayne. The Foundation is non-commercial of course and does little more than publish books and bring them to the attention of the academic community, primarily the readers of Paideuma, the magazine devoted to Ezra Pound scholarship. Anything beyond that, I'm going to have to do myself. Hence my question: do you have any ideas as to how best to get the book reviewed in the Chicago papers?

Santé,

[Signature]
Dear Art:

The problem with April 19th is that I won't be able to combine it with a visit to Minneapolis to see my granddaughters; they'll be away at college then. I'd have to make a separate trip from San Francisco to see them. I have to ask, therefore, whether a reading in May on a different date than for Merrill would be possible. Or June. Or at any rate, April 26th rather than the 19th.

Thank you for your offer to review my COLLECTED PROSE, Art. I'll have The National Poetry Foundation send you a copy (and also the others at the Tribune and the Sun-Times). I assume that Terkel talks about books occasionally on his program? Sure, if he'd like to interview me, that would be fine. Live could be done the morning after the reading, or just taped, whichever.

Fondly,
16 Feb. 1985

Dear Karl Gartung:

After Speaking to you last, I received an invitation which I could not turn down, of being one of the readers at the 1985 Poet's Corner Ceremonies for Poe and Melville at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in N.Y. on Sunday, May 12th. This will not affect my reading at Woodland Pattern but it means that I'll have to fly out of Milwaukee the next morning. Under the circumstances, I'd better domicile with Martin Rosenblum, otherwise I won't have a chance to discuss his book on me with him. I don't know when on Saturday I'll be arriving...it depends on whether Studs Terkel will be interviewing me....but I'll do everything I can to see that you and I have some time together too.

Cordially,
4 Oct. 1984

Dear Mr. Shinder:

On August 13th Eileen Myles at The Poetry Project at St. Mark's, where I shall be giving a reading next May, wrote that she had talked to you on the phone and that you were "very enthusiastic" about my doing something at the 63d St. Y too. I wrote you a letter of inquiry after that, but I can't find my duplicate of that letter, so perhaps you never received it. In any case, this is simply to let you know that I would be available and would appreciate your letting me know if you would be interested in working something out.

Sincerely,

Carl Rakosi
Dear Art:

I can't tell yet whether the 4th Friday in May is going to be all right because NYU and Louisiana State University may also want me for a reading and interview and if they do, a date to go with May 24th would be too late in the school year, I think. Perhaps the thing to do is to keep both the 4th Friday and the 2nd Friday in May open until I know. If some day other than Friday is possible, perhaps a different day than that could be scheduled that third week.

I understand about the review, Art.

Best,
26 June 1984

Dear Mr. Gartung:

Thank you for inviting me to read at Woodland Pattern. The terms, $300 plus rooms and meals, are satisfactory. I can't tell yet whether the evening of May 18th or the afternoon of May 19th would be best because I don't know yet the dates of my readings in Minneapolis and, I think, Kansas City, nor whether Studs Terkel plans to interview me on radio on the 19th; so I'd appreciate it if you'd keep both dates open for the time being.

With best wishes,
7 March 1985

Dear Karl Gartung:

Picking me up in Chicago and driving me to Milwaukee is far beyond anything I expected of you but if you're really willing to do it, I would appreciate it very much, as I'll be carrying bags for a four week trip away from home. So as soon as I know where I'll be staying in Chicago and when I'll be free to leave, I'll let you know.

I understand there's been a change of plan now and that I'll be your guest for the night of the reading after all. That's fine with me and, I hope, with you too.

"They are remarkable in their steadfast attention and courage," you wrote. Truer words were never spoken about Michael and Mary Cuddihy.

Best,
Dear Karl Gartung:

I've enclosed two poems, one for the broadside and one for the announcement. Eager to see what the broadside will look like.

As for tapes of my readings, there are three that should be accessible (there are others but I haven't kept a record of where they were made): 1. the most recent is a commercially available cassette, obtainable from Rebekah Presson, New Letters on the Air, University of Missouri at Kansas City, 5346 Charlotte, Kansas City, Missouri 64110; 2. another is obtainable from The Poetry Center at San Francisco State University; and a third from Keith Anderson/ Cape Island Video/ Box 383/ Cape May Court House, New Jersey 08210. (Master tape 477). This is the famous 1973 National Poetry Festival in Michigan devoted particularly to the Objectivists. Zukofsky did not come but Reznikoff, Oppen and I were there, holding forth, along with Duncan, Rexroth, Dorn and Ginsberg. I forget now what you said you were going to use the tapes for.

Keep me informed about the poems.

Cordially,
Dear Jason Shinder:

As I mentioned over the phone, staying in New York beyond May 15th presents some problems for me, but I am willing to consider it if in addition to the $200 fee, I would be reimbursed for the additional expenses I would be incurring for the two days. I figure this to be at least $100. I hope you can manage this. In any case, please let me know quickly.

No, I have no objection to reading with John Allman and Peter Glassgold (I didn't know Peter wrote poetry).

The season's best wishes,
Sure, $300 for round-trip fare will be fair enough. Just give me a check for that amount, along with the fee, at the time of the reading. Because of the time difference between here and Chicago, I may want to fly in on May 9th, the night before the reading, so that I have a little time to relax between my arrival at the hotel and the reading. Since I'll be leaving the next day, I'll need two nights' lodging in Chicago, therefore. Will you be able to provide that?

Incidentally, will you tell me where I'll be staying? The owner of Woodland Pattern in Milwaukee is going to pick me up on the 11th and drive me back to Milwaukee, and I have to tell him where I'll be.

See you shortly,
7 June 1985

Dear Josephine (may I?):

I thought we were being recorded, but apparently not, because when I saw Haberman a few days later, he said someone... and now I know it was you... had suggested that my reading should be taped, but now that the event was whose chores had exhausted him, was over, I saw he was not up to doing anything more; nor did I think he had the equipment for it. But I feel the same way you do, a bit shocked that no audio record exists of our readings. Especially since the event was historical in nature.

Any chance of your getting up to these parts any time in the future? If you do, look us up, will you? I mean it.

Cordially,
Dear Rodger:

Another time, yes. I'm sure you'll come again. In the meantime, these observations on the runabout your book (which is hiding from me in my library just now, so I can't refer to it by name, but it's your Jewish mishpah book): "no striving for effect! what a relief!; a book of a natural man, i.e., observation, memory, humor, wit, compassion, thought in natural proportions; people brought to life in few words/ remarkable; so unpretentious, you've got to believe it, hence disarming and winning; simple as a good fable; glows with gentle sentiment but no trace of sentimentality, almost inevitable in this genre but in this book because the experience passed through the mind of a natural man and came out with all the ambivalence, shrewdness and humor that goes with actual experience."

Feel free to use the above.

Fondly,

carl
Dear Eileen Ward:

Heller and Rosenthal for the dialogue will be just what the doctor ordered, I think (yes, I did mix up the two Denis'es).

There are a number of people in the New York area whom it would be good to invite to the lecture. All but one are friends but not close friends, so please don't feel that you need to invite them to the party at your apartment afterwards. Do it only if you want to. I'll be there, of course, and also at the Grand Ticino, unless something happens in the meantime to prevent it. If I can't make it to the Ticino for some reason, I'll let you know. If you don't hear from me, I'll be there. Otherwise the arrangements you've made sound just fine; sound, in fact, like an Event, and stir up quite a bit of excitement in me.

Back to the people to invite: David Ignatow, P.O.Box 1458, East Hampton, N.Y. 11937; Armand Schwerner, 30 Catlin Ave., Staten Island, Y.Y. 10304; Louis Simpson, P.O.Box 91, Port Jefferson, N.Y. 11777; Allen Ginsberg, P.O. Box 582, Stuyvesant Station, N.Y. 10009; Eliot Weinberger, 234 West 10th Street, James Laughlin, Norfolk, Connecticut 06058; Harvey Shapero, 175 Clinton St. Geoffrey O'Brien, 200 East 15th St., Apt. 7-0, N.Y.C. 10003; George Quasha, Station Hill Press, Station Hill Road, Barrytown, N.Y. 12507; Bradford Morrow, ed. CONJUNCTIONS, 33 West 9th St., N.Y.C. 10011; R.B. Weber, English Dept., Southampton College, Long Island University; David Wilk, Box 261, East Haven, Connecticut 06512; Leo Hamalian, English Dept., City College of the City University of New York, N.Y. 10031; Rachel Blau DuPlessis, 211 Rutgers Ave., Swarthmore, PA 19081.

So all I have to do now is write the lecture or see if it would be better not to write it but to wing it.

Cordially,

P.S. I don't need to ask but just to make sure: you will have a good mike at my disposal?

My social security no., 482-56-3425.
Dear Dave:

So nice to get your warm, thoughtful response to my brief presence. A part of me is still in Baton Rouge, I'd have you know, and it too is warm and thoughtful.

I couldn't agree with you more when you say, "The poem is an object (I would have put the italic under object) and its performance is incidental to that." Absolutely. It's not like music, which is mute until it's performed, but more like art, which need only be seen. In other words, when a painting is finished, the painter is finished and leaves. There is no further need for him....or anyone else. Whatever magic or power there is in the painting is now there to be seen by anyone with eyes who has the sensibility, and the action is strictly between the looker and the painting, not between him and the painter. But in perf-po the action is almost not at all between the listener and the poem but between him and the poet-performer. This exposes the performer to all the temptations in a performer-audience relationship, the temptation to inflate the poem and to shade and accent it in such a way as to impress the audience, and to entertain, excite, shock, titilate, etc. and make himself admired and loved in order to satisfy his all-too-human ego and self-esteem.

I try to protect myself as much as I can against this sort of thing by never looking at the audience when I'm reading. There's quite enough theater going on between me and the poem on the page from which I'm reading. At the same time, it is also true that poetry which does not depend on depth or meditation or the magic of word associations....narrative poetry, satire, dramatic dialogue......actually seems to become more animated when it is performed. So, as you say, the subject is slippery, and it is quite possible to feel elated at Ed's folk-lorish wit and satire and at Shange's good ear for black speech and black experience (wasn't that prose that she was reading?).

My first reaction to your offer "to create a groundswell of support" at the University for my nomination for a senior NEA fellowship was that several people had already nominated me, that the March 1 deadline was past, and nothing more could be done. But on second thought, I might actually need others to support the nomination because 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. My one chance of
persuading the judges lies in the way the two senior fellowships in literature are described in the Guidelines: "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 (italics mine). Their continued presence on the literary landscape is invaluable to younger writers." If you and Andre and others in the English Department, either as individuals or as a group, could testify from your own experience that my work satisfies those criteria, it would do my nomination, I am sure, a lot of good. The address is Literature Program, National Endowment for the Arts, Nancy Hanks Center, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506. Thanks for getting such a thing started, David, and I'll see you in S.F. maybe this summer. If you don't have a place to stay in town, we could put you up.

Best,
Dear Aileen:

The Grand Ticino in your company and the gathering in your apartment stay in my mind in a pleasant glow. Something like the memory of a reading I gave in Monterrey years ago at which a well-dressed, middle-aged woman sitting quietly in the front row, her eyes lowered to her knitting, yet obviously listening hard to me, broke the silence after I had concluded, by simply saying, loud enough for everyone to hear, "Don't stop, don't stop. Go on!" To everyone's surprise and to my eternal astonishment.

That's what I'd like us to do too but I don't expect that to happen unless you come to San Francisco and visit Leah and me. Any chance of that happening?

[Signature]
Dear Roger Kamenetz:

I take it from your letter that there is a direct flight from San Francisco to Baton Rouge and that you'll be sending me the tickets shortly. Thursday About the Rizzuto reading, if there are two of us, I assume you'll want about thirty minutes from each?
23 April 1985

Dear Doug:

Before it slips my mind, I'd like to tell you that Richard Caddel, a fine young British poet, whose work Creeley admires, will be visiting S.F. early in November and that it would be an asset to the New College program if he could read there. His work is original, nimble, compact, quite interesting, and altogether unpredictable. If you think you'd like to have him, let me know and I'll have him send you his book, CICELY. Or you could write him directly: Pig Press, 7, Cross View Terrace, Neville's Cross, Durham, DH1 4JY, U.K.

Best,
Dear Greg Masters:

Sorry but I don't at the moment have an unpublished poem to send you for the Newsletter. However, I can give you the names of five books read this past year with enthusiasm: Milan Kundera's The Book of Laughter and Forgetting; Selected Letters of James Thurber; The Diary of Virginia Woolf, vols. 2 & 3; Katherine Anne Porter's Collected Essays; and Christopher Smart's Jubilate Agno, ed. by W.H. Bond.

Congratulations on cleaning up the appearance of the Newsletter.
Dear Bob:

You're a man of your word. The cassettes came, as you said they would. Much obliged. I haven't heard them yet but Duncan has a cassette deck and I'll listen to them there.

I assume that you're back from Paris full of Gallic wit and refinement (but no Gallic airs, please). How did it go?

By the way, do you know Daniel Haberman's poetry? I came across it only recently myself and was caught by his fine lyric ear. Guy Davenport, who, as you know, is a meticulous critic and not given to throwing praises around, wrote of his poetry: "Phrases shaped with classical exactitude, the unexpected but perfect adjective, the image in motion.....quintessential poetry.....his lyrics sing, his epigrams bite." I agree, and I think you should invite him to read at St. Mark's. The lyric poet is an endangered species these days.....not many around.....and people should have a chance to hear him before the breed disappears. I've never heard him read, so I don't know whether his voice can measure up to his music, but it would certainly be worth trying. The book of his I read was THE FURTIVE WALL. He came to my reading and gave me his address: 433 East 51st Street, N.Y.C. 10022.

Cheers,

[Signature]

[Note: The handwritten words "Holmen - Poetry Project St. Mark's" are visible on the page.]
Dear Susan Broadhead:

Yes, I'd like to be a Mentor in next year's series.

The program sounds good.

That rascal, Andre, never did show me his translations. I knew he had done a group for some avant garde Dutch magazine, and they did come out, so far as I know, but he never sent me a copy of the magazine. Then he said he was translating a group of my poems into German for a German publication, but that's as far as I heard. Years before, a young German who was finishing up his doctorate in Chinese literature at the University of Berlin had translated all of AMULET into German and, on the recommendation of Eva Hesse, Pound's official translator into German, who had read the translation, had found a good publisher for it. I thought I was all set, but at the last minute the publisher was bought out and all the editors sacked. So I haven't had good luck with German.

Would it be of any use to the committee on the selection of mentors to have the up-to-date bibliography of my books? I'll give it anyhow.

Two Poems, The Modern Editions Press, 1933
Selected Poems, New Directions, 1941
Amulet, New Directions, 1967
Ere-Voice, New Directions, 1971
Ex Cranium, Night, Black Sparrow Press, 1975
My Experiences in Parnassus, Black Sparrow Press, 1977
Collected Prose, National Poetry Foundation, 1983

With best wishes,
Dear Rebekah Presson:

I am returning the release, signed, plus some biographical information, which should perhaps be sent to Minneapolis and San Diego, and if they have public radio, Orono, Maine, Chico, CA and Santa Barbara, CA. As for music, I do have some ideas: for lead-in, Eric Satie, or Ernest Bloch's Proclamation for Trumpet and Orchestra or Aaron Copland’s Fanfare for the Common Man; for closing, Satie or a quartet by Dvorak or Copland's Quiet City or a nocturne by Chopin or Faure.

You'll be making a new tape, I imagine, with the accompanying music. If you do, will you please send me two copies? And you will send back my tape when you're through with it, won't you?

Cordially,
Dear Mrs. Rakone,

Mr. Rakone has just closed the door of his studio and is ready to meet you on the first day. But I'm afraid the Japanese playpaper is too small.

First, about St. He will be 74 in Nov. Let's you know it. They have moved out of N.Y. into a modest house in Kindale Park, X.J., in town. A half low block from N.Y. Pat is putting in a Japanese garden with swimming pool in the back, which is guaranteed to keep Patti occupied just
enough to present her with a getting Ph.D. They were glad to see me, but Pat had reached the stage of standing up to Sol and not yielding an inch and Sol was feeling perfected as usual when this sort of thing happens, and I was not enjoying the spectacle. How come you & I never fight?

Anyhow, Sol & I had the 7 am flight to N.Y.on Monday, since it's impossible for me to negotiate 3 loads by myself on a hectic break like that one. And the two of us can just make it. On the Port Authority Bus, where people pour out and in in every direction, it's even worse. Finally, I just settled on my train to Saratoga and made the fatal mistake of smiling kindly at a very old lady who looked haggard. From that moment on, it's all gray until I think of the old Ira Koori dodge of pretending to be asleep. It worked so well that I fell asleep and had forgotten how lovely the Adirondack are there this part of N.Y. Saratoga, as you know, is sublime.
middle of N.Y. vacationers. But the moment the cab turned in at the Yaddo gate, we were in another world. It was a forest with narrow, curving roads, with three lakes, and the trees so tall and close that the sun hardly peeped through. In a small clearing stands my cabin. I shall at least know what it's like to be alone in a forest at night. But first I have to pick up a flashlight. This was not my bed, however. That's in the first mansion, next to me is Raja Rao, a famous Indian philosopher and fiction writer.

But I've come to the end of the paper, must stop. The next night all will be done no later than five weeks.
Dear Mr. Rakocz,

My cabin is about 15' by 35' with a good working table but the rest straight out of the Salvation Army. Last night I tried to work in it. But it has possibilities but the dingy furniture depresses me. So I thought I'd work in my room, which has a lovely view as on English park but Raja Rao of Tropico was right when he said it is not long after that, worry the furniture here, because a post reminded me that the Raja worked in it.

Tuesday (I believe) Aug. 6, 1968
to work in mine. Just knowing that there's somebody breathing & moving around next door is to be avoided.

I sleep in MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

I sleep in West House, which must have been one of the servant's quarters. The estate is about three miles around, with three lakes, a tennis court & swimming pool. This sounds lush but the Trask family lost its fortune and the interior is sadly neglected. There is not money enough even for paint & screens on all the windows. The Mansion, where we eat, is English baronial, with the kind of pictures one finds in a seedy Italian museum, but, again, some of the furniture is absolute junk.

Last night we ate in state, with Polly & me as the guest of honor because I was the newest arrival. We walked in stately, were served stately, and spoke stately. Except when the young man who had come to sit next to me and who reminded me of Andrew Crozier

.....a bit more cheerful, but otherwise very much alike, even in physical appearance.....leaned over to whisper, "I want you to know I had heard you were coming and I was looking forward to it. I know your work and like it."
very much.” It was William Baskin. When I complained
that the haiku had been ignored
by all the literary journals I thought reviews will still appear.
But it doesn’t matter,” he said,
“all the young poets have your
book and like it.”
Raja Rao’s typewriter is
silent now, but I know he’s
in there, breathing, and his
very bright and very clever
typing eyes which instantly put
me at a disadvantage. I am
beginning to get on my nerves.
I must escape to my cabin
and figure out my specifications
for not having been productive.
There must be some .

Love,
Car


Wednesday Aug. 7, 1968

Dear (what was that name?)

I’m just a bit drunk as I write this.

When I came in from my cabin for lunch, I found a note from Bill Bristow, with whom I am forming a deepening friendship, inviting me to his room at 5:39 for drinks to meet Philip Getchell, the painter, and his wife Musa, a poet. After that, we went to sit together at dinner in the “rear left alcove table.” And we did. Bill had invited a few painters, among them a tall, young fellow with a narrow chin, beard called Palomas. We had great fun talking together.
This is a scanned image of a handwritten page. The content appears to be a personal letter or journal entry, discussing various topics such as a meeting with a person named Brown, who is a negro painter, and the writer's impressions of his appearance and character. The writer also mentions knowing another person named Hay and speaks about a reading event with a person named Bill who is writing a novel. The letter also touches on reading habits and the writer's plans to read a book before leaving in 10 days. The writer expresses a desire to read at the end of their stay and mentions working on a book project. The entry concludes with a mention of feeling busy with various tasks.
Unacceptable start. Another day to complete the organization to think it through and then let myself go on it intuitively. If I can finish that is the first word I'll feel reasonably good.

I can't tell you how much I've come to love my cabin in the pine forest. Nothing seems too much to tackle thank. I'm there by 9 and work straight through to 5 with only a few minutes for lunch. No human voice or sound of any kind during that whole time. Not a single moment of lying up of any kind for me yet. And the pine forest with its cascades of logs and pine needles are beyond description.

Love

By the way, no sign of the condor priest between 12 and 2. The way it comes on me at 8 or 9.
Dear Boopsie,

What no letter from you yet? What gives?

I left this way yesterday going past the letter table. I think finding anything from you yet. So what do you know?

Last night I dreamed we were driving in a strange city.

We stopped & I got out to let the wheel down out. You were supposed to pick me up but drove off. I waited & then had to find my way back. Not knowing directions, or subway trains or anything. Nobody told me. It was frustrating and angry.

And finally realized you didn’t.

Friday
Aug. 9, 1968
really care and that I don't love to divorce
you. I woke with a very hard feeling of
distress.

I suddenly realize I don't know
what day this is. I misa a calendar.
Anyway, the day before yesterday was
a poor day for me; I got caught up
in the chaos of reviewing and organizing
my extensive material on Vietnam. It fell
dead. Yesterday, however, I was in
my cabin by 8:30, however, and
was at it hard until 5:45. A good
day. The next poem will be called
The Enemy. The shape of it is beginning
to emerge, and it has possibilities. I've
never worked so much by plan before.
But maybe after I have it all down,
I'll take it apart and start all
over again with the pieces altered.
I'm determined to stick with it.

The other night Rosa
dian Kuzov,
a good representational painter, said Yadda
was like The Magic Mountain, and
she beginning to sit up. Although nobody
talks during the day, the talk
at night is so intensive with people
whom you select to talk to that it
has this unnatural over-life of Magic Mountain.
For example, I had great talk with Haffernay on art last night & with Berkson on poetry. After that there was a big party at another studio & I missed. In fact, there's no small party every evening, it seems, at a different person's studio between 5 and 6. My time is coming soon & I see, you do me! The idea of buying all that liquor at once, getting the ice & mixers, sending out the invitations, etc., appalls me. Maybe that's what the dream was all about: you weren't here. Of all those here, & like Ulysses Kay, the negro composer, best.

Love, Carl
buss from me for it.

Tonight I have to wash my socks, etc. Wednesday from 5 to 6:20 I entertain Alyssee Kay and Barbara Kay, William Haza, the novelist (he writes also for The New York Review, A real genius, witty), Bill Berkson, and Nancy Sullivan, also a poet, in my chambers with three bottles of Scottie, Bourbon and Vodka, which I had to drag here from Saratoga.

I learned today about a colony in Taos, New Mexico where artists can rent a house for $20 a month and stay as long as they like, supported by the Taos Art Foundation. How about it for this coming January or February?

By the way, Alyssee Kay's uncle was King Oliver, Satie's teacher and the father of jazz.

Keep writing.

Love,

[Signature]
Dear Boopzie,

What a great day! I knew it was going to be great when I got up. My head was clear, it was thoroughly short cut, and although I had my hang-over over the more details of the Van poem, which henceforth will be referred to as The Enemy (subtitle), something in the middle section finally clicked and I kept making it better and better until it looked & sounded right. Then I took a three mile hike (one doesn't really like here. It's too beautiful to walk by foot) around the lake, & then back to my cabin & worked at middle section some.
I dozed off, and suddenly had the
ending run my head in the form of
just two or three words, more or less
true to what they developed quickly,
section on peace, which I then
special inner music which took
just seven lines but worth the whole
stay in Yaddo!

The great thing about Yaddo, it
occurs to me, is that you know if you
don't make it one day, the next day
will be yours to work on it, and the
day after that, nothing outside of you
will halt you or divert you or take
up your time with petty business
that is really new for me! That's a
new dimension in time; hence (I hope)
inself, although so far I have
any greater depth here than it seems
in fact, I suspect it might do better
initially at home. But this is great
for completing work. It suggests, in
any case, what I have to look forward
to after December, for it! (With your
tender, dear.) I wrote at the thought.

I would like you to know that
my dear Mrs. Rakosi that my party
for my dear Kay and his wife, Bill Bertha,
Nancy Sullivan, the brilliant Mr. Bose
and Raja Rao was a great success. We
are friends forever.

It's strange. We all like each other so much here. Everyone has such an exquisite regard for the other person's time and Semma so glad if when you've had a good day! It would have expected the opposite. It does not seem possible that I've been here only ten days!

Love

Carl
Dear Boogie,

This is the life! I put in a card today on the enemy; it's moving; it's moving. About two thirds through now. I read three sections of it to Bill Benson this afternoon. I could tell from his face, etc., that he was deeply impressed. Then from about George, which I needed a reaction for, I was flustered because I felt too close to it. I was very excited about it. And two other little poems too. After dinner and good talk. We played croquet and had a good game with my friend, Paul Teichinkel, an artist, as light-hearted as a butterfly. Delightful fellow.
Tomorrow, alas, Ulysses & Barbara 
Kay leave. It'll be absolute without 
them. I feel the way I felt when 
Dinah last left, only less so, since 
we've been together much longer. 

Today, a new artist arrived, Abbie Doll (?), 
a effortless but earth-looking blonde, just 
painted from Spain. Also, a very good young 
poet, Stephen Sandy, back from a 
Fulbright in Japan. Sandy comes 
originally from Minneapolis. His parents 
still live on Kenwood Parkway. He 
was brought up as a boy on 41st 
and Colfax!

Bill Harris is the author of *Heart of the Heart of the Country*, which got super-
reviews. He's the hottest thing in fiction 
right now. I don't know whether he's 
more intelligent than I am, but he's far 
more learned and has a beautifully 
disciplined mind from his study of 
philosophy (he teaches Plato and Aristotle 
pulling you can imagine what a time 
we have together at dinner.

Two days ago Berkson started to 
have a mad explosion of writing: 10 poems 
(what?) in 1 day! Five today! He's 
read them to me. They're difficult because 
like Zuloaghi, he leaves out connecting 
words that would guide the reader. But he's talented and very bright.
We've become very good friends. This evening he offers a little looking for me and shipped me an envelope. It contained a poem dedicated to me! Nice?

Love

Cash

P.S. Am I glad I brought work with me! It would be hard to initiate anything here. Fassard and I have come to the conclusion that a month is about all one can take. One is too removed from things (experiences) that are meaningful.
Dear Boojum,

I am inexplicably sleepy, but I must dash this off. Today I started another short poem, and worked at another sketch for The Enemy. The short pieces came very fast, like the other short pieces I have done here. They are more or less by-products of The Enemy. I had intended to have them in the long poem, but realized they had an independent life of their own. Once I decided this, they became quite different and separate from the context of the poem.
five poems completed. The Enemy
two-thirds done, and another poem
half-done, all in 15 days. As soon
as the Enemy is finished, I'm going to
give a reading. The way it's done free:
you simply post a notice, serve drinks
and they come. No one is under the
slightest pressure of expectation but
I want to do it. That will tell you
something about how I feel about them.

Last night Bill Bercson gave a
reading. He was dressed in an elegant,
long, Italian corduroy jacket and
dressed the way a young poet should.
The party afterwards was a hoot.
Everybody but everybody who
anybody in the arts has seen there
some time or other. Even Mr. Calvo-Vella
was there, in Nancy Sullivan's room
in West House, where I am.

There are two men here whose
family backgrounds are similar to
mine, but they are not Jews. Paul
Tschinkel, the 
& Lewenthal, comes
from Yugoslavia, but with some
combination of a Slovenian mother and
father who was one of some 50,000
Slovene living in an Italian enclave
in Yugoslavia. During World War 2, the
fascists drove all the Slovenes out of
Yugoslavia, his father included. Thus, they
we were in various countries until he came here at the age of 14. Not too dissimilar is Michel
Roussakis, a composer. His father was killed when he was 4, and an Estonian
mother of German extraction, also apparently expelled because she was Jewish, this time from
the USSR. He too came here at about the same age. His
studio is a magnificent tower on one of the Kallithea, reserved
always for a composer because it is almost a mile from
where the rest of us are.

So it goes.

Love

Carl
Dear Ashlie:

Late last night I finished The Enemy. I had to. I had become bored with it. I had knocked two sessions when I realized suddenly that they would reduce the impact and that like two earlier ones, they had a life of their own and should be separated. They are somewhat in the style of my American poems and I call them Americanas. I put them on 6 (I think there are 5 in Amulet). That leaves The Enemy, 7 pages long— still a long poem. Except for the last page, which is lyrical, & don't like it much. Apparently only the lyrical really pleases me at all. But I'm not close to it to know right now. I may get some push on it when I read it here later on. This Sunday, Nancy Sullivan, the poet and poet, will read. I'll take the week after, I think.
Another very successful novelist is here, Paula Marzelli, a West Indian reggae, young & very attractive — a self-taught writer. She finished a novel here, her fourth, I think.

Today I worked with a big headache and later on had the run. So I decided not to work! I had earned a rest.

After all, I wasn’t doing a job. It was summer, the sun was out. So I lay by the swimming pool in my swimming suit for a couple of hours, chatting with a few others who were strafing time out. I walked around the lake, which is so much richer in trees and bushes and so much more virgin and interesting looking than Lake Harriet that I just can’t speak of it in the same breath.

And so, love Carl.

I’ve run out of stationary.
Dear Brodie:

Bill Hass' latest book, really a novella which appeared first in Northwestern University's new literary journal, has just been banned at least of its illustrations. So he instantly became a cause celebre and raced off to New York to see his publisher, etc. (will be interviewed about it in the New Times, I think). While there he tried to pick up a copy of Amulet for himself on the strength of Richard Werge's recommendation and one for Dick. After reading the book, Dick said it made him feel like starting all over again, and instantly he insisted how he searched the pages for lines he could crib. What a tribute, etc. He is going to micrograph two of the American poetry and incorporate use them in a course on American sociology studies). Anyhow, Hass wants to give bookstores without being able to get a copy in New York! Isn't that terrible? What nonsense on Toulouse-Lautrec's part. I rushed off a letter to him right away asking him to send out four plots copies one for Nancy Sullivan who wanted one too (she teaches at Rhode Island University) and a book of poetry put out by University of Missouri Press and one for the Yaddo Library, which will be the only one I pay for myself.

Today I started work on two new poems. That came to me. Some of my best. Thing to do is not to rush it.
At night, it gets rather sad & lonesome here. For some reason I have no interest in going to town with the others for the concerts, theater, races & shows. That's when I miss you. Nobody works here at night. Nor do New York writers. Romulus Linney has been here before, More slick and wasteful in a WASP manner than the others. Has two novels and a Broadway play under his belt. Young Smooth.

Best of all I liked the Ragtime next, Paul behind the Slovenian; then Buck Weber, who under a slow uncertain manner in a very gentle soul and as homespun as a country over. Bill Mckinley perked in as a son-like figure to whom I have an attachment in a different way. (Christ, he's clever. It'll ruin him.)

Sometime before I leave, I'm going to mail a copy of my next poema to myself in N.Y.S. just for cackle. Please don't open the envelope. Wait until they're typed, revised, etc. It'll be an treat seeing you again!

Carl
Dear Bosque:

It is understandable that you would be beginning to feel a little uneasy. But it won't be long now. You've done very well. It's true. One feels a whole lot calmer to realize what real productivity is. Today, for example, I finished the joint I mentioned in my last letter — 2 1/2 pages! Romulus Linney mentioned at dinner last night that the last time he was here, he finished a whole novel in two months! And so on. Everyone here turns out stuff like mad. They don't waste a minute, although they are quite relaxed and good-natured. Their work is vital to them, and I can't afford to let mine be less.

What seems to do the trick here is (1) being in a community in which everyone is working creatively,
(2) the rule of absolute silence
(3) not seeing anyone until late afternoon when one's work is done
(4) the working schedule which the community had set up. I can't, of course, reproduce (1) at home nor (4) except a self-imposed schedule, which is a very different thing from a community's schedule. Although it was a great help to me with (1) if you were to work at your site (2) and (3), however, can be imposed at home, but you must cooperate and in fact, the their custodian, the young Polly Hansen in the office there, protects each person's privacy. If you don't, you will feel things won't work. I don't expect to do much after I get home until Dec. I really have nothing. But what an experience this has been! It's hard to say what's in me! I don't think it can really be quite the same again.
Not quite three months at the office should put us both in a

Sunday my dear friend Tschui

is leaving. I can't stand it.

Also Paul Friedman, a fiction

writer who's going on to the

University of Alberta, from where

I've already invited him. He

may visit us. As the group

gets getting smaller, it's like a

family shrinking. Very painful.

Sighted & learned Biff Osaka

is leaving Wednesday. It's going
to be terrible. I'll have to find

my reading Tuesday night.

Our physical separation is very

much with me. Suddenly it bothers

me.

Love

Carl

P.S. Ann's son-in-law won't be studying

under Dember if he's in contemporary

literature.

Remember: I leave for N.Y. on the Adirondack

bus line (not Greyhound) at 12:30 clock on

Saturday, 9/7 from here and should arrive about
three hours later. Be sure to meet me because it's impossible to maneuver my three bags by myself in the Port Authority Building. There are two Adirondack lines, one going out West and the other to upstate New York. Another name for the line is Trailways.
Dear Boojie:

I must report all this before it slips my mind so that you can share it. I had "tipped up" ten completed poems on Sunday. What a drag that was! It took me all day. Nancy Sullivan had asked to see them before the mailing, as she said she couldn't get really get a feel except visually. So I made her copies as part payment for borrowing her typewriter. Next day I expected her to say something at the dinner table but she avoided all mention of it. I was getting more and more nervous, as these poems represented a new direction for me and I wasn't sure of their soundness.

I seemed to have lost my critical self-judgment. I was so busy putting them out. Finally I couldn't stand it any longer and blurted out, "How were they?"

"Oh, she said, "Great! I told you had me scared." I said, "When you didn't say anything." I left a note with them, she said, "and left the poems outside your door." The "note" enclosed. Nancy herself is no slouch as a poet. Her work appears in the same magazines mine. Quarterly Review of Literature, Massachusetts Review, etc.

Don't throw their "note" away (not my letter). Wait, there's more. Raja Pfo who had been listening to the previous poetry readings with more and more impatience and disinterest asked to see Amulet before my reading. Raja, I had since learned from them, and
his first book published by New Directions and subsequent ones by Macmillan. He lives part of the year in Southern France but mostly in India. He is an old friend of Henry Miller, Lawrence Durrell, and St. John Perse, the great French poet. The poet he loves are Yates, Rilke, and Valéry— all, as you know, pure aesthetic poets. Rilke's last infatuation with the readings. Well, I found him in the kitchen the morning after I gave him Amulet, seeing his eyes sparkling and ready to dance with excitement. "Look," he said, "I'm only half through, but every poem is different, a new experience. That's extraordinary. Poets repeat themselves so much. You have a marvelous sensibility for words. I haven't been so excited by poetry in many years. "Look," and he quoted a phrase from an early poem. "What's wonderful! I like you, Peter. I translated one into French, and it sounds beautiful." And he showed me the penciled translation. It did sound as if it could have been written in French. He wanted me to send a copy of Amulet to Yves Bonnefoy, a French poet who has just been translated into English by Richard Howard (the poet who said he tried to Aschme far more). He had just one criticism of my work. It had the same kind of mystery of poetic language that Rilke and Valéry have but it did not have their philosophical depth— it just came out. Beautiful, but I would have liked more philosophical. This was a marvelous criticism. I said, and said that I had just never had time to expand into the philosophical. Will that explain their beauty? he said. If you do expand, you will be something wonderful, unusual!
Wait, there's more! The evening of the reading approached and I was getting more and more apprehensive. Despite these misgivings, I tried to fortify myself by vodka, but nothing happened! I drank another slug, but still nothing. Finally the moment arrived. I started with my long poem, The Enemy (about Vietnam). There was to be an interval after that. When I finished, there was a great burst of applause. Bill Gross rushed forward to shake my hand and tell me how much he was. The second half of the program were typical pieces. They were songs and exclamations after the more personal ones. And when I finished on a farm bath, there was a thunderclap of applause. It went on and on. And when I finished the whole series, they all stood up and applauded and applauded. I had really thrilled their hearts. Bob Baxin said the artist just grabbed my hand and looked into my face. For a long time without saying anything. Again Bill Gross rushed forward, embraced me, kissed me on the hand and exclaimed, "I want to touch you!" He was almost crying.

I usually at a reading there is desultory chat and drinking. That time they were quiet and the talk was about maturity, the great value of it, etc. The essence of it all seemed to be that what I had done was to combine intelligence and emotion and humanity, and this to them was maturity, that rare thing. Well, can more be said? Could anyone ask for more? Incidentally, you know I'm writing the editor of The New York Review of Books? I suggest he ask me to submit The Enemy to them.
This noon I'm having lunch with Granville Hicks who's coming as a guest of Richard Velas. Remember Hicks, the great liberal of the Depression? He still runs a column in the Saturday Review.

Raja, by the way, is studying my next poem. Although he is too wise not to see them, he felt that I may have sacrificed some of my former verbal felicity for subject matter, and he confessed to see that, although he acknowledged this bias for pure literature which does not deal with social problems (he is a Bolshevik, with some disdain for the masses) but he said he couldn't be sure until he had studied them. Undoubtedly I have sacrificed some of the verbal in order to express the human. I think George might like this letter. Why don't you let him read it? Love Carl
Dear Boopie,

Ever since that planned reading, I haven't been able to get going on anything else. The adulation just as stop to everything. And now, that I know I have only a few more days here, it's another obstacle! Shall I?! (Polish for Blood of a pig!)

You'll be in N.Y., of course, when this reaches you, and lapping it up while I stew here at my table, immobilized. Get that anti-stomachy of your welling, honey. Incidentally, this seems to be a common experience there, so writers usually put of readings & showings until the very end.

Thursday night a friend of Bob's, a flamenco & concert guitarist, played for us here in the music room, which is clearly panelled both on ceiling and walls. The sound came out with a really mellow note I have never heard. Ravishing!

I was puzzled by y'r letter from the office, I thought you were taking that week off. My telephone at Next House is Area Code 518 - 584-0526, if you want to call me. I'm usually in my room after 7 p.m. Remember to pick me up at the Port Authority Bus Depot.

See you soon.

Love,

(Handwritten signature)
Dear Sergeant:

I'm just reporting in. It turned out the runway in Saratoga was too short for John's jet, so we had to land in Albany and from there a cab to Yaddo. Can you imagine what devil-may-care it took for me to shell out $15 for a cab? My god, what have I done? I went out of the way to be pleasant & the family of John's customers were delighted. Also, the drinks & the service were right. So it was a lovely, nice date.

P.S. Don't invite Yaddo to tomorrow, so still start the day clean and hungry.
Dear Bojoie:

June 12, 1969

I had every intention of writing to you last night but I got waylaid by Wong Maly (not, it’s not a mistake. That’s her name) who wanted my opinion of her new work. Her book happens to be one that Sorsense had sent me for review, so I had some acquaintance with her work. A very shy, fearful young woman, born in China, educated at the University of Singapore, where she learned English, and at the University of London. Wrote also in Chinese, which comes so easily to her that she doesn’t think it’s fair mother to is apparently a well-known Chinese writer! Wong perhaps because she feels so insecure, is so heavily made up around the eyes and so heavily
Perfumed that she doesn’t seem quite real.

These great pine forests again! The bird woke me at
of this morning, but I didn’t mind. I felt slept
out. My new working cabin
is smaller than last year’s. Actually more suitable for
one person. The cabin is so
enveloped by these giant trees
that the sun doesn’t have no
chance to overheat it. This
morning, in fact, I had to
light a log in my small
wood stove to drive out the
chill.

I’ve never have taken
that cab from Albany. That
opened the sluices that day
after, and splurged $14 on Coop
and $5 on bottle of a tape-
writer! Wow! It’s got me!
More later.
The first day was productive.

J.C.

P.S. Let me have John's Watt's number. He told me Ed. use it to let you know when I want to get pickled up in N.Y. While I'm doing this, there's nothing to prevent us having a cozy time! A tate, is there? And if I change my mind, I will have to call you more than once, wouldn't I? How about I? (Yes, I'm drunk—unfortunately on my own boozes.) Woof!
June 13, 1969

Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

(written during a sluggish interlude caused by constipation)

Dear Boojie:

I talked too quickly about the cool of the forest and all that Romantic Smell. Well, yesterday summer came and took it all! I sat there in my cabin in nothing but a jock strap. Strange, flying ants (or at least some I thought were) couldn't see where they were coming from, but for every jack-ass that I kick, I stifle it with my place. You should have some yesterday, leaping from screen to screen and dealing out instant death with my fly swatter. The floor was a beetle-field strewn with corpses. In the midst of all this, I saw one carrying his companion (perhaps out fumed)
off the battlefield. For a moment I was touched and wondered, 'What have I done?'

You remember last year the person I liked best there was a composer, Wyness Kay? Well, this year it's a composer again, Karl Korte. Lovely person. Two other composers here this time, Paul Rappoletti, who's like a hardass homo, and Richard Wilson who has a striking resemblance to the way Louis Buloffsky used to look, and pretty the way he did too. He has the room next to mine and since he practices on the piano there, I have no choice but to use my cabin. Would you believe that he has right prescription drugs in the medicine cabinet and that he is terrified of mosquitoes and wasps? Not bothered by them, terrified.

As for the Painters, there's not a single abstractionist here.
this time. I don’t know whether this indicates a trend or merely the selection of the Admissions Committee. All the group as a whole is much older, most in their 40s and 50s and a few in their sixties. Imagine that!
Poor Elizabeth Amzak seems badly deteriorated since last year, and poor me, I’m usually not stuck with ties at dinner (damn my sympathetic face).
Of the poets there are five. As I don’t know their work and I don’t know (except for Hong May) whether they know mine (and I can’t ask), we sat together like dummies.
Finally I feel like seeing a man about a horse but as there’s a thunderstorm outside my cabin, I can’t get to a toilet. What happens when you don’t go? Love, Carl
Yaddo
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.
June 15, 1969

Dear Boopie:

Gradually getting to know the people a little better. Not much to say. Lonely, especially now, Sunday night. It's been raining for two days, turned cold today. The food, however, has been very good — not too bad, to my surprise. The last three evenings have been filled with poker, but I'm going to have to stop. I don't sleep well after a game and I must realize I am not going to waste my days here in a groggy state. So this evening I told the boys we're getting together, and we did and played the old way. Not easy for me to do.

My world has been going so-so, not good but not bad either.

Love,

[Signature]
Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, Friday (date, ?)  
June 21, 1969

Dear Brodie,

It bothers me that you're all alone in the house now. But George's trip to Europe came after my dates for Yaddo were confirmed & I could no longer change them. Nevertheless I'm sorry. It's hard, I know. However the disturbing your day trip will be, at least it will break up the loneliness.

After loneliness it's impossible how lonely it gets after the dinner hour. Sometimes Richard Wilson plays Schubert on the piano but that's only until 8 right, and by that time everybody's scooted off to some appointment and again I'm alone. I don't
think these appointments mean anything. I suspect they're just excuses from the landlord. But for some reason that I haven't yet figured out, I'm not just lost it. Biggest wallflower you ever saw. That's me tonight, however, I interrupted. Joel Coatsworth, a hell of a nice guy from the University of Pennsylvania, was thinking about going to a W.C. Fields movie after dinner. He was offering to take Janet Traverse, the fiction writer from New Zealand (a plump British physical type with a griddle face) out for dinner and never thought to ask me. So I just invited myself in. But why didn't he ask me? It must be my fault because he likes me.

Creative people are really very sweet and affectionate. I like this. In the poker game, the other people — a small baldish painter in the late fifties from...
New York was sitting on a very strong hand against Joe, who had almost as good a hand, but I didn’t raise. Why didn’t you raise? I was left then. Oh! he said, with the sweetest smile, I had the better hand. I wouldn’t do that. Amazing little man with a thick, gray mustache who trudges down the road & his cabin ink pants too big for him in the seat, looking as if he might have a load in them.

Whoever I’ve become attached to her yet, like Bill Blackson and Virginia Kay last year. Pretty good day today.

Love, Cash
Dear Boopie:

Called you tonight.

No answer. Will try again tomorrow.

Please ask John whether he can arrange to have the limousine pick me up at 5 p.m. on Friday, July 15th. If it can be that late, I can run out to Princeton early in the morning to see Lowensohn and be back in time to be picked up. Let me know. I should know the how to get in touch with the pilots in N.Y. just in case I have to be late. So you know, I'll be at 147 East 50th, Plaza 5-5883.

A bit here, a bit there. I'm astonished to find I've written 9 poems in 2 weeks, at least
three months' work at home. So it's worth while. But God, how lonely it gets here at night! And I'm beginning to get tired.

Karl Korte, whom I like so much, is apparently an important composer. A record of his, which he played for us on tape, is coming out on the CRI label. Very exciting. Has some of the rhythmic vitality of Stravinsky. Used to be a jazzy trumpeter. Says that's where we got it.

Also, Richard Wilson has been playing beautiful music for one of the concerts after dinner. We've come to like him too. Very sensitive, creative young man. People are leaving one after the other now. Sad.

Like losing someone in your family. Besides, it's been cold and rainy all but two days, except for that everything
Dear Boojie:

Don't send me any more letters after you receive this, as mail gets to me very slowly here and, please, I'll be gone by the time it arrived.

At last count, I had either 14 or 15 poems finished and a big one (in subject & substance) almost done. So this stay will have been as productive as last summer when I also turned out one big one and an assortment of small & medium sized ones.

I see now that it's the big ones I can't do at home. I'm too fractured and interrupted. I've been at this big one for five days now without interruption (7 breaking words).
This weekend we were down to only six people, the familiar faces were all leaving. Whole new crowd is pouring in today and tomorrow. There'll be 25 of us. One who left was Israel Polley, a fiction writer and a big shot in the peace movement. Very down-to-earth, noble-like woman. Reminded me of Mother Blount, Teacher at Sarah Lawrence. Enthusiastic about two of her students: Carol Schuetting (Sid's daughter) and the daughter of Prof. Beck from the Education Dept. at the U. Remember we saw her the one time we were at their house. Bruce thinks the Beck girl is simply prodigious; Carol talented (in aspiring) also but not so prodigious.

Poor Bill Beckson lost his apartment all at once sudden. Evacu.
made it commercial & Bill said to find a place within a day or two. So down in the Village now.

I'll have an easier schedule in N.Y. than I thought. Won't be able to see Shorefield after all. The time & dead free, he's working.

Keep All for word.

Love,
Carl.
Yaddo  
[Saratoga Springs, N.Y.] 12/8/69  
Wednesday, 12/7/69

Dear Bootje,

You're undoubtedly wondering what Dumbo's call was about. It was to sound me out on my interest in being post-in-residence for the coming semester at the University of Wisconsin. It would involve helping some thirty students with their own poetry, four hours a week, $800. The next day the head of the department called to make the invitation official. But I had to reside in Madison, I couldn't commute. I didn't see how I could do that, but I wanted to show him I was giving the matter a decent consideration and so I told him I would discuss it with you and let him know right afterwards.
So get ready to discuss. It's a plum for a poet who
still has to make a living. What I wouldn't have
given for such a break years
ago.

Would you believe I've
done 17 poems in exactly
21 days? (My big one & book
into two; more solid this way.
8 may have another book
now, so I'll have something
practical to talk about
when I see you again.

& So, see you soon.

Love
Booze, the Male
Dear Boopsie:

The last night here and it’s very sad. I’ve formed warm friendships. I’m very sad to leave. Last night I read the poems I had written here, to all the guests, some 26 now. They were deeply moved. Today they’re all trying to talk about it at breakfast. Tonight, to my great embarrassment, they’re throwing a big farewell party for me—really a gesture of affection. My reading seemed to draw them very close to me. I’ll get very little sleep tonight.

I’ll be mailing this from N.Y. as soon as I know what plane. I’ll be taking back See you soon.

Love

P.S. - My plane is coming in Friday morning at 7:15, flight number 2256. I’ll look for you outside the entrance, as usual.
Dear Boojie:

Please deposit $200 in the checking account right away so that I'll have money to cover a check in case I have to pay a month's rent in advance somewhere else. I'll explain Saturday.

Carl
Sunday

Dear Boojie,

I am now in the Claridge. First home is a palace of the Doges by company. Just a reconstructed old building, grotto-like. Salvation Army No danger I become contaminated by luxury here! Then I arrived after coffee put my jaw back into place. Found an invitation from the chairman of the Dept. told I’d party on Nov. 9th after 8 p.m. So I suppose I’ll have to stay here until Saturday. Do you believe I can no phone in my room? Photo booth in the hall. Captivate! Love

Carl
Dear Boz. —

Yaddo. Saratoga Springs.

The tax you put on me followed me all the way there. In Buffalo it was raining, snails and little witches. The plane to Albany was so small I could feel the thrum of the motor all the way up my spine. And the forecast a storm waiting for Saratoga. So cut it out already I haven’t met anyone yet I am on my way to dinner.

Love, Carl

Monday, 7/20/70
Dear Boopie,

It seems I came with the wrong clothes. It's chilly here, has been all summer, according to Polk. Very little sun. She attributes this to a change in the climate resulting from pollution of the whole world going to pot. I don't believe it. Last night and this morning I began my friendship with a few of the juniors. I met a writer from the University of Louisville with whom I exchanged names of the University of Texas, where he had gotten his doctorate. A tall, gentle, and outwardly self-effacing man in his fifties, with a beard, tending his students, he says, insists he keep. He took it off once if his students missed him. I don't know whether he's to do creative or scholarly work. Will find out (and let you know immediately!) Then there's Munna Citation, a very well-known painter in her 70s. Seems to me I've seen reproductions of her work. Can you place her?

Also Michel Fuentes, a French novelist, at present teaching at Carnegie Tech. Very lively and sympathetic. And Octavia Locke, a novelist, published by Doubleday. Where's Dora, the negro composer whom I liked so? Public from last summer is also here — without any hope this time. Then a writer, whose name I don't know yet who is actually as big around as a fat but whose face is also fresh and bright as a seventeen year old girl's: very bright.

Tuesday, 7/21/70
(No stationary yet)
Before I sign off, I must also report that last night we had fresh raspberries and blueberries from the ‘addo gardens (along with hamburgers!),’ that my room is where I thought they were, and that on making my rounds around the lake on the estate, I ran into two boys catching rock bass ecstatically despite a huge sign, ‘Note: No Fishing Beyond This Date. But what do little boys care about signs?”

Love,
Carl
Dear Boycie:

July 26, 1976

There shall I start in this work which is paramount to me — here, has just but bridged yet, but today I felt the wings of something.

So maybe I drop my own down fault too & throw myself into being with the others until all hours of the night — or rather I was too weak to react — their company is awful to be alone — they all night. We've had great talks. Really great. And I've seen the New York City Ballet in two encyclopedic performances one on all-stardom ballet and the other a not yet finished choreography by Jerome Robbins on Bach's Goldberg Variations.

Tickets are expensive but we bought $2 in general admission tickets which entitle one to sit on the lawn and innocently drift one by one into the $7.50 seats. I followed 4 sold out but the seats would have remained empty.
Violetta, one of the chief Ballerina has been taking lessons with me a couple of times a week. She's a friend of Polly's, for whom I'm typing,stop. She told me that ballet is too serious. I don't care much for ballet, but it isn't true. I guess it's the classical ballet that bore me.

The week-end is approaching and everybody is beginning to scatter. We'll be all alone again. My quarters are enormous. I want my own bathroom. My bedroom has two four-poster beds, a settee, a desk, a chest of drawers, and lamps and small tables, all of which are barely noticeable as the room is so big. My studio is the next room, which is smaller, but it also has a couch. So the trustees of Yaddo have seen to it that there is a place for me.
There are two sculptors here. One is a young Englishman from Lancaster, extremely secretive and pensive. He started out as a disciple of Henry Moore, worked in marble for many years, then gave it up entirely for huge steel and plaster figures. I haven't seen his work yet, but I bet it's very great.

Add this: Two of the people here are daughters of psychiatrists. One is the wife of a psychiatrist, and one is the daughter of a famous surgeon in Cleveland. Dr. Crane, who founded the Cleveland Clinic, where I used to take patients and where I might very well have dealt with him. She, by the way, is a former student of Pat Adams. And the woman I saw was built like a tent and so diaphanous, turns out to be a singer from the Metropolitan Opera, or well to a poetess. A psychologist could have a hey-day here with these.
I've written to George Jeffrey but not to George & this little girl yet. Will do. Will do. Don't need one.

Hope you are better up. And I keep those letters counting. I haven't had one from you yet.

Incidentally I learned from a Californian there that Fox is about 8,000 feet up and that the terrain is quite unlike the Colorado Rockies so I guess that is put for the mountain.

Love

Carl
July 27, 1970

Dear Boppare,

No letter from you yet! That's not nice. I called you Sunday night but there was no answer. I'll try again after I finish this letter.

I've finally started to move. The last two days have been good; but hard work. I'm relieved when 4:30 comes and it's time to relax. you have to watch yourself though. Too many opportunities to stay away from your work (by telling stories reading, etc.) But then I don't see anyone until 6:30. At night I don't do anything but hang around like a zombie. The really bright one in the bunch you call Peter Raddick, an English sculptor left for a week so your talk is duller.

Remind me slightly of Andrew Crozier. I've gotten into the
demorest situation. When anyone with a problem talks to me, slip into a helping role without realizing it and before I know it, the evening is shot. I just don't seem to be able to relate in any other way when a person states a problem around my nose.

Look as if I'll be able to get a reading at the University of Tennessee and at Somerset College in Long Island. I don't feel there (who is here) thinks he can arrange it at the former, and Dick Dreber, my old friend from last summer, who stopped by a for a few minutes to visit me, said he can arrange it at Somerset. He is going to be in Philadelphia in October, so there won't be much transportation cost. What do you think of that? Shows you got to get around.

Love,
Carl
July 28, 1970

Dear Boopsie:

I wish now you had written thru that I was out of town and could reply after my return. The letter threat me with the miss of Rifle and all I could do was play dream about it all day. It had yads buzzing too. Everybody marvelled at the beak. I way & look at it, it'll be good. either way: it'll be interesting if we get and if we don't. We'll be spared the pain of a six months separation from the girls. Right?

Based on Rio etc. I know I'll be going into other South American and may even have a chance to see Borges again in Buenos Ayres. Wow!

I wrote Nais next p. way to accept (on the basis of your response) that wrote also to say that we can't stay more than six months and that I didn't speak Yiddish. That might...
kill it, but I can't help that.

I liked Ismael's letter very much. I liked her calling you "mom" (and was amazed at it),

I liked the way she gets right in and makes her friends her own. In fact, I liked everything about it. I wish only that she had said more about George. Yes, I think she will be good for him.

I know so much about the artists and writers here. You wouldn't believe how much they tell me. Some of it I would rather not know. A very congenial, kindly group this time.

love,

Dom
Dear Poople:

Would you believe I finished a 102 line poem yesterday and the two lines! That's like writing the book for me. This morning while Katy offered a toast to put in orange juice of course I didn't initiate the poem and came with notes on notes and these scraps of paper that seem to have no print which latter my desk at home. There is also another poem I wrote when I first came. If I had the theme and the atmosphere of Yaddo it seems to me that the notes I have now could be turned into ten books! Well, you see I'm in an expensive mood, which will dissipate him the every-day life soon, but just think, I'm only in the middle of my stay. I've been liberated from the prison and can now begin to look for another prison interesting tid-bits.
Michel Foucault turns out to be Jewish (D AGRE and Paris). Original family name is Cieznat. So Lancaster probably American Jews then.

Of course, there was a brief Read part of the novel translated to exist in West House—Library. It turned out good. The predecessor afterward was briefly but a bit too pretentious. I thought. Brattle but neglect. It turned out that I suffer about the only cool room in jail.

Octavia Lockie, Australian, buried to a grave as psychotherapist, Paul woman—just like, a her older brother in Rome, to whom she had a similar relationship to what you have to George. On the same day that she got news of her brother's death, she learned from her sister that her nephew, a student at Johns Hopkins, had been stabbed and was dying. An incident with an unknown teen—gets in which they attacked him for no reason, that beat him and then stabbed him as he was managed to pull himself...
up and staggered away. Octavia is a lovely kind woman in her 40s. Started out as a painter; then realized she didn't have what it takes. Has the kind of fresh face (but not the heavy beauty) of the woman who brought us our breakfast in Rome. Juxtaposing all four of her sisters married Jews, and her grand mother is buried in the Jewish ghetto in Rome; so they all think she may have been Jewish. Come to think of it, the brother who died was married to a Jewish woman, and complications ensued because the latter had stipulated in her will that she want a face buried with her husband, and he was pronounced The novel was written on loose leaf with her marriages (her first husband was Jewish too!) What do you know? I'm always a bit shocked to see how much the young novellas draw on their personal lives. Not the mark of a good artist.

And so it goes.

Irwin Driskell (W. Louisville) tells Local Dope that he likes the Down Review in an exciting new magazine.
Aug. 1, 1970

Dear Boojie,

What a nice letter from Jim Laughead, not just the acceptance but the tone. It was quite a lift, and since we’re all like one family here, I showed it to some of the others and they too got a lift. However, figured out I’d get about $1.89 in royalties. The work goes, goes, goes — it sounds easy but the hardest thing is keeping up with my ideas, they come so fast & slip away before I have a chance to jot them down. Of course, once they’re down, making a poem out of them is bloody work & slow work. The strangest thing is I never write about what I think I’m going to. Some stray fancy wanders in and I’m off to a different horse race. This is the place to become a drunk. I’ve been drinking a little from time to time in the afternoon, & I can’t tell whether to bolster me or to calm me. Then when time comes to get ready for dinner, I take a
good shot so as to be able to enter the dining room gayly, and keep up a scintillating conversation, after dinner, in a dragging of time, and feel loggy and with a fifth barrel. So far to me I could think of nothing of interest to tell you but they'd gone with that dragging feeling.

Michel Hougres and Octavia Locke left today. Hard to see them go. What a glorious face Octavia put up to the last. There was no sign of her tragedy although I know she feels deeply. Pat Adams came yesterday. Listen to this: she told me the Times review of her show brought in people and she sold about $500 worth of pictures, but the dealer got $1500 and the cost of canvases, paint, equipment, etc. cost her about $3500 so she wound up with almost nothing. Don't that sound wild? On Monday a Dorothy Phillips, writer, from California arrives. The delay in the mail is so fantastic that it's conceivable this will be the last letter you.
will get from me before I arrive, although I will write again in that case. Remember I'm arriving Tuesday, Aug. 11th, on Midwest flight 183 at 8:19 p.m., and expect to see your pretty face waiting for me when I get there so that we can rush right home and I can again be your DOM.
Aug. 3, 1970

Dear Bootpole:

It's obvious that will have to be my last letter, as anything I write you after this would never reach you before I get back. In fact, the mail being as it is, this may not make it.

The last letter I got from you was postmarked July 31, so I've been getting theirs, but very slowly. Apparently it's the same at your end.

Funn is hardly the way to describe my evening here, as you suggest. It's a desperate effort to keep from feeling chocolate. If I don't join what's going on, I feel too depressed going to my room alone in a big, empty house — whatever you may be feeling. No use both of us suffering. Yes, yadda yadda coming after middy mix was much, but at the time I arranged it, the plan was for you to go to
California or New York. Remember
Anything I'll be gone soon. I'm sorry you miss me, staying only one
day? I'm eager to hear you report
on your experience.

Working now on a poem about one of the latest at Yaddo. Will they
be pleased! Like my other poems, it starts off with one thing and then
works into something different and more complex. After that, they'll
be pleased, and I was pleased to be able to pay off a debt.

I'm talking as if it's already
finished, which really put the
keen on it. I had a bright idea the
other day: to make up a book
of selections from Pound's "Canto 7."
It would be a contribution to
potential Pound readers, but I
don't know whether Langdon will
see it for it. He's Pound's publisher too.

It's been hot and humid here too, but at night it's cool
enough in my room to sleep. The
daytime heat, however, has discouraged me from walking
around the lake. Incidentally,
the Cutter's "Insect Repellent works!"
except against deer flies, and
one turned a way the mosquitoes
were so voracious it didn't deter
them.

Awfully discouraging to hear about
the incident in St. Louis.
Looks as if it's going to be a
bad year for poor George.
Send you soon, dear.

[Signature]

[Handwritten text continues on the page.]
Aug. 5, 1979

Dear Boopse,

I'll take a chance on this reaching you before I do.

The yields from now has fifty lines. About another ten to go. Reckon I have to finish it tomorrow. Too many other things I'm eager to get to. If I know what the editors will be so but not how started out simple, naturalistic, but became extraordinarily complex. Everything one starts with more than an instant becomes so damned complex and subtle!

Two new people here: Mr. Dorothy Phillips, a middle-aged factor from California who never killed any insects or bugs in her house, and Maud Morgan, a painter, in her 70's who sounds interesting. The other night four of us had a shooting argument over the new left: Ted Anderson, a very blunt and likeable black composer, and Dennis Kowal, a young Czech of Polish ancestry, on the side of every kind
of lunatic melancholy or brain-centers.

She had Adam and I talking to
the lunatic aspects. He was very
short of and gesticulating. But it
ended perfectly friendly. Repulsive
I think to be otherwise-life.

Hot and cold. Now it's cold
again. My room was freezing.
I should have brought some
long-sleeved shirts and under-shirts
and things like pleasant under Greenbill
He had: we did, but to wear
coats to dinner. I went by the
way. He has the manner of an old
New England gentleman, but very sweet.
We came to dinner and with the look of a
man passing very happy and
trying not to show it. Under
the influence, I'm afraid! His
wife does they in delightful company.
They went up in their fifties because
they have a grandson in college.
They will be succeeded there
in the winter by Curt Harnack
and his wife, Noltenioe Calkins
the short story writer. Harnack will
be the executive. They were two one night
but they were at a different table and I didn’t meet them.

How nice, that Lehua referred to me as Dad.

I haven’t been thinking about what I would be doing in South America. I don’t know enough about their present operations to be able to guess. If they use my administrative experience, it would be one thing; if they use my casework experience, it would be quite different. I might wind up dealing with government officials on behalf of refugees, of course.

This ends little letter from Yaddo. And in the interval, I’ll have to decide with my own mind.

Yours,

Carl
Dear Boogie:

Monday
Oct 10, 1972

just a note to let you know I’ve arrived, and have settled in to both my bedroom studios have been taken on to get power and boose in the padlo. I am waiting now for 6:30 to come so I can get in and dinner. I’ve done a little work already, but haven’t met the guests yet. One I know, though Malcolm Cowley. He’s slept for three weeks. Hope I can talk loud enough for him to hear me.

Polly was delighted as always to see me and lost no time to let me know that she had been pleased to hear that I had talked over in the spring for the Berry man, but that I was a much better poet than he. Much better. The breakfast was pleasant except for one thing. the bus took too long to leave he shouldn’t only have approached it three or Albany where there’s a fifteen minute stop, the driver ruled relieved
him, took the other half of my round-trip ticket. I had to show it to the guard to get back on the train and left my only with a stub. That didn't seem right, and the most I thought about it, the less right it seemed. So I screwed up courage and talked to the driver. At first I thought he was trying to sell something over for him. Then the problem was to locate the first agent to get my ticket back. The ticket I had disappeared. Eventually found it as you can imagine, confessed his error and got back the ticket that should not have been taken from me, but without apology! But I was applauded by the passengers in front who had learned the atrocity.

The big shock in the weather here. It's like the middle of winter here. I'm shivering in my top coat that's how cold it is. Tonight it's expected to go down to the 20s. Shadrach's lodger! I had to reck into the winter like this? But, Polly says we'll still have Indian summer. Only two days ago it was warm here.
but the rain storm yesterday changed all that. Big winds now very strong. Little me going have to snuggle up in keekee tonight, and draw on my body with that paint good, something. Do you know that, not much to draw on. Been if you were here.

My room as small but adequate. My studies, in another building, is about the same size, but very pretty. I know already that I shall soon have affectionate attachment to it. So, how much more do you want? X just got here.

The Yaddo office phone (before 4) is 518-584-0746, if you have to reach me for an emergency. For our love letters, however, use the West House number 518-584-9509. Call directly any evening between 7 pm and 9 pm (your time), but let me know exactly what time you intend to call and on what day so that I can arrange to be in my room and wait for your call. Otherwise I might be chatting or playing scrabble.
in the library above the garage where we eat, or playing pool in the ball room, which I just dealt with the other men: Dave, a British composer and biographer of Ezra, Bill, a painter of the cotton Cowley (a crack shot at pool). The others are all women writers, 3 of them called Polly. So there are eight at the table. The conversation was a good - I held forth on the American character and talked a lot. Then I mentioned some very funny stories that just finished a book on the literary figures of World War I, which I do not intend to develop as a funny story. Food is pretty good to get back to London. I spend a lot of time and play that is convenient for you and that will be our accusation for billing and cooking. 

The truth is that the ride up here, despite the brilliant foliage along the last hundred miles, was quite drearily the bleakness of the wind and cold and the hardness of being proved further and further from you, were very uneventfully. Have to rush now to feed the

Love,

[Signature]
Dear Prosper,

The sport, as of today, is two poems of medium length and about half a page of a letter of prose apologia. Everything is coming hard, very hard, especially the prose, but I am determined this time to make some kind of a breakthrough in the prose. Next time I've always given up when things got tough, which means at the point of letting it slip on the standards to the distinguished. That now makes it more of a task to do it.

But even in poetry, it's hard this time. I was working all last night, for instance, with a problem in one of the poems. I finally worked it out but received a call from a friend in the evening. My regimen is: breakfast at 8, work in my studio from 9 to 1, lunch, a short walk, a short nap, then work until 5:30, then cleaning up and a little short drink, dinner, after-dinner chat, then a little reading and letter (sometimes) to read. And that's the day.

Sheopoly gave me good news of two of my fellow-friends: Ulysses Kaye. The Negro poet's poems have always had a hard time getting bought, finally got a windfall— a position as distinguished professor of literature at a salary of $30,000 a year; and Raja Rao had had something similar happen to him—a sinecure at the Smithsonian Institute where the man of his wishes give a lecture or two a year; otherwise, all the time to do is go on with two writing Poll reports he's been quite productive, but he also suffers from arthritis. He's been good, and he speaks about me. By the way, I started reading "The Spy, the Pope, and the Rope" which Polls recommended. The novel moves along the text as a breeze and is quite poetic. E. H. Forster called it the best novel in English to come out of India.

V. S. Naipaul declared, I made a point of getting next to me at dinner tonight. We talked easily. He's been ill, I think. Last year she herself may have felt for the first time. His eye remains unchanged but I don't pay much attention to it. The weather has been lousy. And, as Jennifer would say, this is the end... love, Carl
To [Ms. Susie]:

Tuesday and Wednesday were golden days for me; golden. I shall not see their like again.

Tuesday morning I wrote the lowest poem I have ever written. I started only 15 lines, but it casts a spell on me. I want to read it over and over. In the afternoon I started another poem and got well into it. Wednesday I finished it. It's 95 lines long. Mind you, it is in the same place as the first. I could pick it up right now and leave it and it'd be worthwhile. I couldn't have written either poem at home, especially the long one. That required a whole week of other writing before I could develop the sustained concentration for it. Also, wouldn't you believe I finally finished my prose piece on Borge? I'm not a good enough judge of prose to be sure of it, but I think it may be good. In any case, that's a much time as Billy spent on it. To more rewriting it, I have also completed some two pages of aphorisms and three or four other poems. All in all nine working days! I don't see how I can keep up this pace, but maybe I'll be lucky. Keep your fingers crossed.

It filled me with joy to hear in your letter that Barbara and George have begun to look and talk to each other for real. It is very important to me. There's something awfully bleak about a brother and sister not feeling at home.

That was a warm letter from Eugene. I'll drop him a note from here to acknowledge it. Evenings we plait here after dinner. Ray and sometimes I've begun to read a long novel by Rafa Rao, actually his autobiography. I can print here again talking in the main character. He leaves us not forget, doing my laundry.

Will, that's it, honey. Love.
Dear Bob:  

Tuesday, Oct. 24th. That was a day!

Put that down on your calendar. I started to my studies reluctantly. A little after 9, I was through brushing my teeth and was at my desk and I looked over some notes for a poem and started to work on them. Then I finished the poem and looked at my watch: 10:30. Well, I couldn't stop and called it a day. So I started on something else, worked, worked, waffled and finished another poem! I looked at my watch: it was 12:30. I couldn't believe it! Two poems in a morning! But I didn't quit yet. I was only 12:30. & thought I'd just sit around. I was sure I couldn't do anymore, so I just sat and looked over some other notes, then started to work and worked, worked, worked, and wrote a third poem! & was hilarious by that time. Three poems in one day! Unheard of! The time was then 3:00. The crazy idea flashed through my mind: maybe I could write a fourth poem before dinner? I had never heard of this happening, but maybe it could be done. Maybe. So I started with no confidence on something else and finished a fourth poem by 5:00 clock. So help me! But it didn't take anyone else either. We're all having problems with that work. I kept hate me & felt very good, dear, that you were not being forgotten by Barbara and George and our friends and that this absence of June is not soft hard on you.

About my kids, I can't decide anything until my responses. Not until I get answers to a lot of questions from Harry; also until I know whether Medicare pays medical bills in Mexico and if they do, what restrictions and conditions they are. So you might get this information from the Social
Security Office, dear, while we're waiting. I wrote the girls a long letter. I also wrote Barbara and George and Leanna. Do I sound virtuous? Last night we went to hear Harold Rosenberg and a philosopher historian, Benjamin Nelson, speak on Art and Technology at Skidmore College in Saratoga. Very stimulating.

What else can I say? The weather has been not at all bad; the trees are lovely in color. I enjoy a little walking, but not as much as I used to, because of my eye. There you have the story of the last two days.

Don't forget, dear, I come back on NWA 1227 on Nov. 4th at 10:35 p.m. Won't that be nice?

Love,
Car.
Dear Boopie:

...you know, of course, your very very most astonished friend and reader of yours I only
write if I want letters from you, and want letters from you because I'm so good at writing and want letters from you.

Yes, I've got to see you, from Feiffer to Feiffer, very, very anyway. And I told you, I'm a Feiffer man, very, very witty and interesting, and before there's an
Blum, of very sweet woman about my age whose first book of poems published in 1967 I got having
more or less dropped out of sight, although she didn't stop writing altogether and I didn't until 1958 when she
begun to love pictures in newspapers last and again began to love pictures in newspapers last and
time. Her work is first-rate. She hardly enough poems
for four books, but she's too busy to get it published
for four books. She's not free to get published
any more. She translated his work into English
a few years ago. She translated his work into English
a few years ago. She translated his work into English
Then there's Chinary Ung, a Cambodian
composer, from whom I learned quite a lot about
composer, from whom I learned quite a lot about

I'm a Yiddish poet and short story writer, who died
I'm a Yiddish poet and short story writer, who died

Then there's Chinary Ung, a Cambodian
composer, from whom I learned quite a lot about
composer, from whom I learned quite a lot about

...and before I was told for five days for her first book because of what
...and before I was told for five days for her first book because of what

Then there's Chinary Ung, a Cambodian
composer, from whom I learned quite a lot about
composer, from whom I learned quite a lot about

They're aren't taboos in the painter
They're aren't taboos in the painter

whose work we tried to see at the National gallery. I had a hard time explaining why I had to see it, she said she
sold quite a few things, and was in town but didn’t know we lived there.

The weather has been cloudy, cold and very rainy.
Things seem to be tied in a knot in my head. I work but I’m not pleased with what I’m doing. No lift to any of it. So concentrate, though.

And exercise your benevolent influence. Don’t forget to take care of the medical animal.

Form and also, if there’s a check from the Tribune, it means my review was in this Sunday or last, in which case see if you can get a copy of the book review page. I fron the paper if I don’t have it. It’s a great comfort to have your photographs there with me in a drawer which I open periodically everyone in a while to take a peak.

Love,
Carl
Dear Boopsie: 

Well, every room is taken now and every seat at all four tables is occupied. And another large number of young composers live in all. One of them, Henry Miller, wrote the music for 'The Play' at the Beaufort, which we saw. He's also assistant conductor of the N.Y. Opera Company—a wonderfully honest, open friend. He spent his summer in Aspen and loves it. Has a great respect for Michael Kennedy. Some days he drives over to the Brooklyn heights, his old neighborhood from Iowa, the Bassetts, and his neighbors, and also here. Will be leaving a lot of wife painters, and also here. Will be leaving a lot of friends and will be leaving. The next day was the first nice day we've had today. And I was up and round and walked through the woods. Also visited my first good day at writing. The rest have been too cold and rainy, and when it rains here, it comes straight down in huge sheets. So maybe there is no such thing as a conjunction, do you suppose? Between what and writing?

I didn't tell you about Claude Persson. He's a negro writer whose 'Man Child' is an autobiography. He was a sensation a few years ago. Everybody everywhere was talking about him. He was a delinquent at the age of 11 and was sent away to a reformatory. He was a refugee psychologist whose name I had seen. And one day I was sitting on the road to the lake, and as I sat there, a jeep apparently got to him, and I heard a voice say, 'Get out of the road, man.' And he answered, 'Yes, sir, please.' And the jeep went on. In all, when the book came out, I got help from the negroes because the only part I hadn't
characters in the book were just and of course say in his defense was that after all, at the most Dante's character in the book was less mother! I very much
found working fellow, no telling where he'll go. Something rather exciting did happen to me this morning.

Tomash Salomek, the Yugoslav, just left and written about
Tomash Salomek, the Yugoslav, just left and written about
found two poems of mine in Chelsea (only two books in
the Yaddo Library wore out apparently) and was estatic.
We'll be going to Slovenia soon and thrilled that he has. We'll be going to Slovenia soon and
I knew he would be able to get the books, so I
offered to send them to him there. We said there were many
seen here excited he was. He said there were many
translations from the English. So there you
have it—Carl Ralli, having a vicarious influence
on Slovenian poetry.

At 6:20 P.M. and I hear sounds of cooking
announced before dinner. So down I must go.

You see,

Carl
Dear Mrs. Pooch,

Today was a good day despite my sore throat. The temperature in my studio is a bit lower than usual, but it's not too bad. I fixed a broken pipe outside and put some zip into my work, which is now getting back on track. I was still sick with a cold, but I discovered the rhythms of poetry and prose and am working along.

I've gotten to know the Perkods (from Ljubljana City) a little better and find them interesting. I imagine we'll be seeing them when we take a slow trip as I plan to invite them before I leave.

I told Tomaz, the Slovenian poet of my desire to visit Hungary and Israel and if I could spend the money and visit friend in Yugoslavia. He could get the Union of Writers to cover all expenses in Slovenia in return for something I'd do, maybe talk to the young poets. They knew enough English, Then if we went to Budapest, he'd give me the name of a friend a young poet who'd put me in touch with the other poets. Budapest and be put in touch. And on and on.

Wouldn't that be something? If only Tolerančnik came through. Incidentally, he was just informed that that Hungarian organization never answered my letters. That's the way Communist bureaucracies behave! They don't answer letters.
For the first time in my experience, Yaddo was a place that everybody backed off from. She’s a young com- pletely aggressive, presumptuous, unbridled, selfish, impatient, overpowering bore. Unhappily the table where she sits down to eat. People stop talking and one before they away. One day I made the mistake of telling her to disbelieve Praline. That was the matter with me? she demanded. And yet the poor woman is desperately seeking friendliness and acceptance.

From Chinary King, the Cambodian, I learned that Cambodia and Vietnam have nothing really in common. The Vietnamese are essentially and historically a Chinese stock; they mean that culturally they are entirely different. The Cambodians are Malaysian, like the Thais, the Lao, and the Indonesians. There’s no earthly reason why they and the Lao and Vietnam should be one country. They were until the French conquered them and established rule there. Their language, by the way, is largely part in Sanskrit, the ancient language of India, not Vietnamese. There seems to be no earthly reason for our being in Cambodia. It’s a separate and different military adventure.

Chinary, by the way, was the former leader, Prince Sihanouk. The problem was that he couldn’t delegate responsibility, had to do everything himself, and broke under it. Now the present leadership is now rejected by the student, the only leadership in the country. But there is no one to take their place. He was pessimistic.

Oh a few things. Remember to pick up the tablecloth at the laundry. Plunge the oil and grease in the car (it’s important, Overdue) and call up an air conditioner maintenance service to clean and service our air conditioners and replace the filter — before the hot weather arrives. And they’re too busy to come out on a small off-hours job.

The pictures I took with me continue to replenish me and keep me from becoming lonesome. Love

Carl
Dear Morrie:

Well, lightning struck today & wrote two and a half poems and a stretch of twelve prose. I told you I had something to do with weather; today it was warm and sunny. Or maybe with somebody said this morning at breakfast? Tomorrow is Thursday already. Jesus Christ, I wanted to get some chocolate milk but wasn't in the mood either. I went and took the train twice.

A funny incident came to my mind. I was sitting with Etta Pfeffer and Ruth Herlberger, a well known "enlightened" poet and we were talking about Israel and how... romantic Etta and I felt about the country, etc. Ruth wasn't saying a word. So I said, "Don't you feel romantic about it?" "No, naturally." So Etta, reaching far out, asked, "Aren't you Jewish?" I laughed. Ruth, I'm just Amish, English and she yelled off a member of ancestral stories—everything but Jewish. Then Etta and I were, looking sakles. Who'd thank somebody with a name like Ruth Herlberger wasn't Jewish? Apparently it's Pennsylvania Germann.

Incidentally, when she came, she looked drawn and old—in her early sixties. Now the book, after two weeks here, sold about 40, which is probably her actual age. That's what Yaddo does to New Yorkers! She's written a best seller book of poems called "Adam's Rib." Have you heard of it?

Glen Krueger, the painter, friend of the Scherics', showed me the wall he had done there. Remarkably reinforce and juicy. All the war since a stroll so left her whole forget side and neglect eye paralyzed, and she had to switch from the rejectland.
the left. When he paints trees, they're all in theory, one of them. He's a big,基本的にしのぎな人。Then he had to stop working — everyone else left. A family photograph shows him with three grown boys, all standing, and a girl with a pleasant smile. He's thinking of going to Mexico City for Ed's funeral. If not, we'll be in New York for the winter.

Jules Feiffer is funny and sharp as all hell. His patrons, he's working on a novel, which I have no lunch is a mistake. His medium is the play. The 4th for dinner calls, and I go.

Love,

Carl
Dear Boojie:

Another great day for me. I love you.

Again the weather favored it. Sunny and warm.

Before I forget it, I must tell you that a group of writers in N.Y. are giving a poetry reading there as part of a public campaign to save the trees (I think in Washington Square). They're using poems about trees.

A couple by Marianne Moore and T. S. Eliot on Sunday afternoon, the first poem I wrote after I stopped writing, the ones you like so much.

Fireside, isn't it? Though when these things happen, they don't seem altogether real, yet a while to the note that if they're leading me on a public occasion with the name, Moore, I've made it, but the feeling, alas, won't last. Tomorrow I'll need another event like that.

One of the few advantages of being in the Mansion is that you can listen to the phonograph after dinner. That keeps me from getting too loud.

I'm interested that only the first, Fisher, the painters never do the technical difference, I'd expect the composers to listen the best they seem to do it only when they want to consult a certain piece for their own use when they're-composing.

I don't want to give it any more thought for fear of blocking my work.

Love,

[Signature]
Dear Beej-

Not to the Port Authority in good time, so had to wait in line with a porter and buy a ticket and had half of it before getting on. Had the call for washout. $2.00 (including tip). The bus ride, an usual, very slowly, an hour out of New York and "your felt confused."

My room. The turns out to be the one I had always cast a longing eye on. Very elegant. High triangular ceilings. With a heavy beam at the apex of the triangle from which hung a long chandelier. With chandeliers and candles, and enormous red stone fireplace, bookcases and cabinets, the walls panelled in fine oak and maple. I think from an age prior to plywood, dark-stained glass windows.
Learning to shape a great balcony deck, a bust of Brutus cast in bronze—candle sticks (clar, I shouldn’t have picked one up to examine it. It turned out to be hollow—a piece of junk which someone after the death of the tract must have substituted for the real thing). Apparently this was the master suite for one massive door locked with a foot-long iron slide bolt which must be several hundred years old, leads out to a secret balcony where Trask is supposed to have brought his mistress.

"Raja Rao, my Indian admirer, is lurk again. Also, Douglas Nichols, a poet, and Susan Cole of The Hall, address from Cleveland, a painter whom I told you about. Used to be a heavy drinker, on analysis seven years ago. These I knew. About nine others here, so the group is not too small. Among them is Jules Feiffer, "mother of a baby-bear face, and bright eyes to go with that vision..."
I identified the man from among the other witnesses because his features looked a little like him. When I told him, he groaned and exclaimed, “Oh no! Well, it’s too late to do anything about it.”

Weather dark and rainy here.

I haven’t forgotten to write George & Leonard. Hope you can enjoy yourself the rest of your stay.

Love

Carl
Dear Mrs. Pickwick:

I don't know why I should call you that. I have no reason not to be in high spirits. My work hasn't gone that well. A few little things completed, but I haven't gotten a strong stride yet. I think that's the way it will last time too. Though this time it may be different. For one thing, I'm working on prose and I find that more difficult I'm used to language appealing to me when I'm looking at things poetically, in prose when I put something down, it doesn't satisfy me. It doesn't sound good enough, and my lodgings may be elegant but they're not fairy as good for working as the studios in the woods which I have had.

Much harder to shut things out here.

The weather has been wet and cold. I've had to sleep under a blanket. So I've walked if
the woods only once

The composer, late in life. Ned Rorem, who is as famous for his stories of his left ear as Pan for his oracle, of which I have the piece at hand, is coming shortly. Also, England’s best poet, Ted Hughes. His latest book, Saw, is one of the batch Sorenson sent me for review for the Tribune. I have a feeling that book will win the National Book Award this year.

Julia Teller is pretty much like what you’d expect her to be from her cartoons: always a humorist; a bit of a clown, quite outgoing and yet deeply involved at the same time. He’s been working on movie plays. Imagine, he was in analyses for ten years! Apropos of my remark that he looked like his characters, he said, they plague all cartoonists. Steinberg, for example, looks exactly like Lita Jorgez.

Appropriately I am not the only one who feels lonely here at night. The
other, cluster together, drink, and run off to the movies. I tried to do some work after dinner but it was impossible. My habit is to do something different. So I went down to the music room to listen to records. It was OK.

I haven't written to the girls yet. Now that I'm not in the woods, I don't have anything of interest to say to them.

Love

A less than ebullient

Pete Corick
June 1, 1974

Saturday

Dent Brockmole

Big party tonight at West House for the departure of future Tennessee. I had two stiff drinks before only over last as it was after full dinner the guests had to eat first. Clean Krause a meatloaf whose wife is in surgery. Played the piano with his right hand and he swall ot came out sounding strong and vibrant as Rubenstein. He got a big hand. He’s liked and adored. His speech and manners have been improved but he’s right.

Then Robertson Schmitz, a recent move from Sarasota, Florida. Sung live and sang for us with accompaniment. Great and witty, perceptive, full of humor and a talent that might be sold for the radio. The newspaper mentions he is a children’s book writer and illustrator. But he isn’t here for none of these things. He’s...
He's doing a fifteen-foot painting of a boat stand (with a dog on it). He has long black hippie hair and trashy but very neat and he has the sweetest gentlest smile and moustache I've ever seen. Twenty years younger than he is. This was his age daughter. There's always a woman at college, you like best. I told her finally, because we had a warm, rainy day and walked gloriously walking around the campus. My work is finally not going so well. I've done some good things.

On Tuesday a ghost out of my past arrived. Matryn. I had a violent reaction to seeing we were undergraduates in Madison. She's a poetess. The wife of Horace Gregory, margery gilbert. One of the best poets. She tried to take money from me and was kind of sneaky. I read the encounter. I remember her as a skinny little gallet, desperate for attention. She doesn't want me to know that I'm here and my changed looks will be a shock to her.
I finally got off a letter to the girls but it wasn't easy. And if I had to do another, I don't know whether I could.

All for now.

Love,

Carl
with art, Susan. I always envied him. He was so brilliant in philosophy. I was astounded to be remembered for that because I'm not sure I remember myself at the U, although the philosophy professor we collected did try to. I remember that now. She was brilliant. Somehow after that exchange, it was one straight monologue. She was a former battle prize winner and readily accepted by Harvard. Actually, she's interesting to be with because she has lots of memories of Eliot and Pound and Cummings and Williams and other avant-garde stars and the like. In all of the most prestigious circles of all, the Bollingen Award has known me in New York during all these years. In addition, she is a critic, an intelligent, informed way. So it's been stimulating, despite the one-way ride.

And I can't be helpfully about her. The poor soul has had terrible problems. Hope she has had three spinal operations and twice she was told not to come to the hospital because they wouldn't be able to go to it. How she's yapped still, constantly in a school chair. She has to manage and tend the house, tend the care of the house. She paint her nails out of the house for ten years.
she says, because they can't go anywhere and even when they have guests in, she doesn't have a chance to talk because she's always in the kitchen and that is not all. She's had a great removed and all that goes with that. What she feels water on the lungs, which makes her gasp for air if she were going to die.シェルゴン? We have been so lucky!

Raja Rao tells an interesting story of visiting Zakobsky and by way of introduction telling him he knew an old friend of his, Carl, and how much he admired him. Suddenly realizing that Louis didn't want to hear the tale, told Louis, actually, that he knew me, and that was the end of it. Raja felt he had made a mistake to press the point. What do you think of that? Exactly, George? It's the idea, too. I began to understand.

The mansion is not so lonesome at night as the White House. More people around to chat with and until then there's music of some kind or the phonograph, and if there isn't I can put it on. Nevertheless it's cheering to have those little snapshots with me.

Love,

[Signature]
June 7, 1974

Dear Boojie:

I was furious about Max hold bothering you. If he tells again, you must not do what you did, let him talk on. Then you do that, he gets in deeper and deeper and paint I stop, and is tacitly encouraged to call you again. I don't think this will help if he does, tell him firmly that he's not to call you and the moment he identifies himself hang up! Don't let him get started on anything. That's a better way to deal with his paranoia than to listen. He won't call you bright back if you hang up.

The letters from Jennifer and as reflecting upon re-reading Huckleberry Finn which I'm doing in snatches in the evening if I'm bored or at odd moments deciding the day when I have to take a breath from the concentration they give everybody else here a lift too.

Allen Kransae, the painter whose bright side is paralyzed.
that he had done it. It was sad and I missed him. We became so fond of each other that I am glad she came.
moved. He calls himself Elia and signs his paintings Elia too, to
distinguish them from the work
he did when he had two hands
and used his full name. The paint-
ings are pointillist and childlike, not an
interesting or expressive as his
improvising,

This morning, Marya told me that
E. E. Cummings had visited found in
St. Elizabeth’s Hospital and that
after a perfectly satisfactory chat on
literary matters, Pound declared him
into a corner, where they couldn’t
be overheard by any attendant or
whispered, “Tell me, don’t you think
Milton (the latest Milton) was a ‘Jid?’
Marya in full of little affects to
speak this. Then in the great found
about led to said, what I thought
of being in the contemporary literature
interview.

Well, back to work!

C. R.

P.S. Oh yes, Marya said that her uncle asked
her once a couple of years ago to help
get a hang glider for a project he studied
mysteries.
June 8, 1974

Tuesday

Dear Boojie:

Two letters of yours were yesterday. About your situations. Pay the bills (do the book-keeping). You can put the screens in the study yourself. When they're standing in the room, you'll find faint Roman numerals on them from 1 to 12. The windows men from 1 to 12, starting &

Act conditioners? Northern states no, it will have to be stored, although and odors, at opening in my filter of some ashen ash, that's isle & if you don't want to wait air-conditioned. For the yellow pages, asking servicing and a repair filter. Better if the man came watch what did. Did and do it. Might not be able to wait. Last week & went to bed early and slept through the night.
thunder and lightning that the other
say shook the building, there was
in the middle of the night I woke
and ideas came in my mind and
peacefully at my desk, and worked
for an hour or two, then went
back to sleep, quite content.
But this morning my eyes are bulging
out of my head. I feel almost
working from 9 to 6.
I've been having interesting
talks with Raja. The conditions
he's set for working are romantic
but his young wife doesn't seem to
mind; it seems to fill his need to
because she's also a creative artist.
I know from
the way the creative process
flows for me here at this
sleep, that it needs absolute
quiet and concentration and that
I must discipline myself to protect
myself. The regimen of going
to try, therefore, is necessary.
Of course, I must get up early
in the morning, maybe as early
(not sure) and have breakfast, don't read the paper, lead
work all morning, talking to come
answering no phone, reading no mail — just the steady, little lunch & do the other things that need to be done. Will you help me?

So back to work, work, work.

The weather has gotten hot.

Love

Etc.
June 10, 1974

Thursday

Dear Boogie,

I could weep when you deprecate yourself and say you're good only in bed. Hell, I've seen the worst of the painters here for several summers now and the only difference between your talent and theirs is that they keep at it and never let up. So don't talk about not having it. You've got it — and are gorgeous too!

Could be you're Frazied?

The news about Chotzie & Raep is frightening. I suspect what happened is that Judy was caught giving the drug to her. Maybe she's just for it herself. The phone call was probably from the group of young mice who've been taking it with from her. It would be extraordinary if they had to have the children for life. Judy will want them back. But it is weird all right. Strange goddamn going on all around.
I was not pleased to hear that Ruth had been of the opinion that Barbara might not have the same class. This lack of information I can do without, but can you imagine how hard it is to fighting this influence, if other relationships worked the heart of her, threatening to put him out of her will? I would like to be able to say to her, if she asked for my opinion, only the marriage had broken up that it was because Barbara did not have enough class? Incidentally, when she says that she isn’t going to see the children, it might do just that that she can’t stir enough emotion to be playing with them and being affectionate. I mean that it might be a massive emotional reversion rather than shallowness we have ever met, nor have I ever been friends there. Boy Williams, the eldor story writer who had an one of the Yaddo snapshots, sitting with me on a cocker, and Erie W. Selkirk, the guy I’m so crazy about here. Erie, by the way, barely made it through Idaho school, so is too restless. Learned everything himself.
He was one of the founders of the Urban Blues School of White singers. Bob Dylan learned from them. Bob doesn’t do much performing any more, partly because the younger artists have developed much more versatility on the guitar than he has, but mainly because he prefers book illustration. He’s married to an ornithologist and has two teen-age daughters. She’s just finished a book on terns, which he is illustrating. She says he’ll take me into parts of Florida on a boat, which will be really interesting. Let that

Damn bureaucratic nonsense there off the pills came. Kind of. See you soon, honey
Dear Boojie:

The first day was discouraging. A cold, merciless wind blew through all my clothing. It was dark and gloomy. Then the apartment without draped carpet, pictures. There was not a single lamp in the place or overhead fixture. Not a single coat hanger. Terribly depressing. I felt desperate. On top of that, distances from everywhere were enormous. It’s one mile to the closest grocery store and one mile to my class room, and five miles to the English dept. and all the eating places. The bank, the weather were alike. I wouldn’t mind it if the kids were all wearing heavy ski jackets (it’s begun to snow), so you can imagine how penetrating the cold was.

Anyhow, Linda Wagner came through. She was in her black and green sweater, her black pants, and pillow. When I opened the door, there she stood with two of her three children, all carrying something. They had brought me a few dishes, a lovely dish cloth and a almost a whole apple pie! That did it! Douglas, flower the young writer who picked me up at the airport, spoke with admiration of her, her great energy, despite the fact that she is married to an executive at Pontiac and has all the responsibilities of a large family. She struck me as a pleasant, good-natured woman.

The first day of class went off as well as a first day can. Ten people showed up, an ideal number; just enough to be lively and not too many to feel free and unfurnished.

My phone is 517-area code 355-7804.

Love,
[Signature]
May 5, 1975

Dear Bojazie:

I just arrived in Yaddo (3:30 pm). No one visible but Polly and a solitary walker wrapped in thought. I have a large room with 2 beds, 4 tables, 2 dressers, 1 chiffonier (at least), and a superb view of the ground. This will be my studio too. Down the hall is my own bathroom, which is almost as large as my bedroom, with built-in wardrobes, etc. All left one can expect of an old mansion.

Spent a relaxed Saturday afternoon with Sol & Pat. Her vision is so bad now (cataracts) that he has to be fed much of the time by Pat. She's extraordinarily gentle and patient about it all. I wish I could say that about George & Alina. They were very officious to each other. The attacks were loud and furious and on the most senseless things.

My reading in N.Y. was really in a bar, a side room, really some twenty people, but very attentive. All writers, all writers, all writers! I was afraid the collection for me would be embarrassing...
but it wasn't. It came to $47, mostly in singles, quarters, dimes & nickles. Amazing. Must mail this off for 4:30 mail.

Love,

Carle
Dear Boopie:

How lovely to hear Jennifer is asking you to spend the night so that you wouldn't be alone when you're not well! I'm sorry I couldn't have been there to hold your hand. I'll tell you that this letter will reach you after it's all over. I hope it was no worse than your experience, which tried my patience but was not really painful.

That was good news about neurologist being willing to see you at $10 a session. I'll keep my fingers crossed. Incidentally, we must find out how we could get a blood pressure gauge ourselves and learn to read it.

Strange that after leaving George & Alma & too had a moment of discomfort. Then I thought oh brother the day is left & need more patience and tolerance.

Very good working day today. Very good. The events of this year are not bad but so lonely. Somebody is always around to talk to, and the people are very sociable and lively.

Did you find out whether I got my April check ($8.50) from Manufacturers Trust & my $250 April check from John Hancock? Also did you pick up the lawn mower? Maybe he'll deliver it
If it's too hard for you to wheel it back. If it's not picked up, it's left outside the store. Must get this into the basket before 4:30, when the mail is picked up.

Love,

Carl
Dear Jennifer:

After each of your letters I vowed to sit right down, before I was distracted, and write you a long letter in return, from the heart, as yours always is. But each time I put it off a day, then two, then three, until finally so much time had gone by, I could no longer make connection to your last letter. Grandma is much better at this sort of thing than I. Anyhow, now I write because I'm going to be reading my poetry at The Woodland Book Pattern Center in Milwaukee (720 East Locust St.) on Saturday, May 11 at 8pm, and I have the crazy idea that you might be crazy enough to want to hear me. However, I don't know whether it would be feasible because you might be studying for exams or because the reading is at night and how would you get back to Madison after it, etc.?

Whatever, I had to let you know, honey. And we'll be seeing each other soon, tra-la-la.

Love,

Grandpa
Dear Jennifer:

My turn to answer your letter. Grandma wrote last time. I promised to do it but didn’t, so just now, as I was sitting at my perennial desk, she stuck your letter under my nose without a word, but not without a slight look of reprimand. So here goes.

First, your great bubbling enthusiasm and spontaneity, and the full, natural way in which you reveal what is happening to you (I wonder if you realize how rare that is!) is a thing of joy to us....always! Yes, it’s wonderful to have you as a granddaughter.

What is obvious from your letter is that you have been forced overnight to become an adult.....your mind, of course, told you that you were but I would be surprised if your feelings told you that too....and whether you were ready for it or not, the only way the girls would, or could, relate to you was as to an adult, and that’s the way only way they, and the camp personnel, expect you to respond. So there you are, willy nilly, in adult shoes, expected to act, not only as an adult but as a quasi-social worker kind of an adult, who knows more than they and has had more experience, and who has responsibility, in the absence of the parents, to lead and help them through an experience. That means, of course, as you have already discovered, that you can be rejected, challenged, even disliked and ganged-up on, not so much by them as individuals, since you are altogether personable, but by them as a group, since it is when they are together as a group that they feel your adult, substitute-parental authority.

With regard to those girls who didn’t want to be in the camp in the first place, you have intuitively taken the right attitude: it’s their responsibility to work their way out of that problem and join the others. Fun, as you say, can’t be forced. You can only be yourself and trust that that will be a model to them. And I think it will. In fact, by the time this reaches you, it may have happened already. The constant spectacle of the other girls having fun will be a hard thing to withstand. In any case, we can see from your account that the adult shoes in which you’re standing seem to fit you just right. Bravo, honey!

Our return flight from Minneapolis was not without adventure. We had United Airlines tickets but United was on strike, so we had to find a carrier that would honor our tickets. Republic would but they would not give us reservations: we had to be on stand-by and take our chances
and that could not be known until all the passengers who had reservations had checked in. Although we got our names on the list of stand-byes the day before, there were six others ahead of us. So with some trepidation we waited at the check-in counter until all the passengers, one by one, checked in. By then it was almost time for the plane to leave, and it looked as if every seat would be taken. Even if they weren't, I didn't see how there could be seats for us after the six on the standby list had been seated. Tension mounted. I told mommie & grandma, laughing, that I had enough books with me to wait it out in the waiting room for the next three days, if necessary, without becoming bored, but I was just having a nervous reaction. Finally all the reserved passengers had checked in and the ticket agent started reading off the stand-by list. We held our breaths... although very little was at stake. Name no. 1 was called; no answer. Called again; no answer. He went on to the next name; no answer. Name no. 3; no answer. At that point the impossible began to look possible. Name no. 4; no answer. Yes, possible. Name no. 5; no answer. Not only possible; maybe. Name no. 6; this time there was an answer, and the lady checked in. We were supposed to be next. Would we be? The ticket agent looked down on his list: "Mr. and Mrs. Rawley," he called, and clutching our tickets nervously, I leaped up and rushed to the counter. And so we hurried down the ramp, beaming as if we had won a great victory, and waving good-bye to your mommie. Which goes to show that you don't have to go to Timbuctoo to have high drama in your life.

But our troubles were not over. It was a very long plane and we had seats in the very last row, which had less leg room than the others. Apparently these had been the last two available seats. Grandma's seat was at the window, mine in the middle, and the aisle seat was occupied by a very surly, fat young man, who squeezed me in like a sardine in a can, and who took his time to stand up and very reluctantly and with distaste let us pass by. Then he began to smoke and blowing in our nostrils all through those three hours we were trapped with his damned smoke in that scummy. You can imagine how we felt about that fatso! Thus ended our travels from Minneapolis to San Francisco.

Write soon, honey, and much love.

from 3 & 50 (grandma and grandpa)
5 Oct. 1985

Dear Jennifer:

What a joy, as always, your letter was! Grandma and I wrestled to see who would get to read it first. She won. She was beaming as she handed it to me, and after I read it, we looked at each other with a big grin on our faces, and a warm glow penetrated us and we felt as light and young as you.

I'm not surprised that you got a kitten. Much as I love puppies, I'll have to admit that kittens are equally delightful. But alas, as you well know, kittens grow up and what they were as kittens becomes only a distant memory. But in the meantime, here's to Nanook!

Your courses this semester sound interesting but, with the exception of American History (Cultural Pluralism in Education, I take it, is part of the required courses for a sequence in education), aren't they rather peripheral? I'm thinking of three subjects absolutely indispensable to an education...philosophy, psychology and, to a lesser extent, anthropology. Philosophy I found, to my surprise, exciting, irresistible, for there I first discovered what my mind was capable of and how to use it deeply and precisely. So enamored was I of it that I would have majored in it if I had not been a writer and equally enamored of literature. In any case, a course in the history of philosophy, a course in logic and a course in ethics seem to me fundamental, and you'll miss something exciting and infinitely rewarding, it seems to me, if you slip through college without them. As for psychology, I don't need to say anything about that: the need for it a good measure of that is obvious, especially for a would-be teacher. Ethics, incidentally, is a far more subtle, complex subject than you would imagine from just the name.

Events in South Africa are made to order for the Madison campus, and in my imagination I'm marching and demonstrating with you down State Street and up to old Bascom Hall.

Grandma and I splurged yesterday and bought five lottery tickets in the new state lottery, which opened the day before and in 24 hours sold 21,400,000 tickets. Considering that, we didn't do badly. Each ticket has six numbers concealed under a thin coloring which is easily scraped with a coin. The same three numbers on any ticket entitles you to the amount of that number. So we started scraping off the coloring. The first number
that emerged was $5800. The next number was also $5000. Oh, boy! My hand began to shake. But the next number was not $5000; it was $1000. And the number after was also $1000. All right, $1000 wasn't bad either. And we still had two chances and we could still win $5000. But the fifth number was $100 and the sixth a lowly $5. A close shave, however.

Tickets number 2 and 3 were pretty much like no.1, lots of close shaves. Then on ticket number 4 we got three $5's and on ticket number 5 we got another three $5's, so we were $5 ahead. So we decided to buy five more tickets but our winning streak went no further, and we left, quite satisfied at having played the game without any cost to us.

Your exultant memory of your camp experience, your feeling fulfilled in it, "every day so exciting and rewarding," your missing the experience of being needed and helpful, caught my particular attention because that was exactly the way I felt on my first social work job, in Cleveland (your camp experience was a form of social work, make no mistake about it, not teaching) when, interestingly enough, I was exactly your age, 20 (I was two years younger than my graduating class). But it will take too long to get into that now. I'll save it until you visit us during the Thanksgiving or Christmas break, the prospect of which makes our hearts lighter. As grandma probably mentioned, George and Leanna and the girls will be here for Thanksgiving. I myself have no preference about the time. Whichever would be best for you.

All our love,

[Signature]

[Handwritten note]
Dear Jennifer:

I can't tell you how the words, "Greetings from MADISON" on your envelope flooded me with nostalgic memories and what a good feeling I have about your being there. I don't know why that should be, since not all my experiences in Madison were pleasant by a long shot, but it's as if a circle had been closed and you and I were in it and now had something in common which we didn't have with anyone else. This may be because my feelings about myself and my experiences when I was a student there are ambivalent, as you know if you've read Scenes From My Life in my COLLECTED PROSE, and you somehow are going to make them right, as my granddaughter. In a quite irrational way I feel as if I'm having another go at university life in Madison through you and that my youth there, which in fact is over, in some small, abstract way is not over.

Anyhow, when you mention Bascom Hill, the first thing that comes to my mind is flying down that long, icy slope on my shoes in January and as I picked up more and more speed, not knowing what I'd do when I got to the street below, maybe smashing into a car and dashing my brains out. And later, much later, when I was Writer-in-Residence on campus at the peak of the student rebellion against the Viet Nam War in 1969, when the National Guard was called out and soldiers in helmet and gas masks stood at the entrance to each building, bayonets on their rifles, staring straight ahead and never speaking, for they had strict orders against talking to students, an incident happened on the Hill which I can't forget.

Many students had become quite radicalized by this time and had endless meetings, planning strategy, primarily against the police, and stirring up each other's passions, and the police knew this and were pretty careful not to make things worse. On this particular day I remember I was on my way to a nine o'clock class. There was the usual slow movement of students up the Hill, to their classes. They were jabbering away like always. I wasn't aware of anything unusual until some students up ahead stopped and looked over to the right. I followed their gaze and saw a police car in the middle of the street and two officers walking down the other slope towards it with three students in custody. Immediately everyone stopped and waited to see what was going to happen. The atmosphere was electric because there had been some nasty clashes with the police and some members of the radical left had talked openly about retaliating and killing a few cops. So everybody stopped talking and watched
anxiously, expecting the worst, that the three in tow, who were being taken in for picketing and obstructing entrance to Bascom Hall, might be hot-heads and start a fight and all hell would break loose because then the students would have to do something. Everybody was so quiet. We seemed to be in a frozen movie set, waiting.

But the walk down to the police car proceeded without a hitch, unobtrusively in fact, so much so that at one point the figures disappeared from view in the crowd. And when they appeared again, being escorted peacefully into the police car, a wave of relief seemed to pass through the students, and I thought to myself, "At last, things are under control again, back to sanity. Maybe the newspapers have been exaggerating." It was at that precise moment that the incident which I said I couldn't forget, happened. Out of nowhere, it seemed, a youngish man appeared, bellowing like a bull-horn. His face and eyes looked terribly agitated, his hair practically on end. From one side of the Hill to the other he ran like a crazy man, shouting, "The cops are beating 'em! The cops are beating 'em!" We looked over to the police car. Nobody was beating anybody.

Our gaze was now fixed on this mad-man, spellbound. Nobody knew who he was or had ever seen him before. They were suspicious. What was he up to? Nobody moved a muscle. Seeing that, he redoubled his efforts, shouting, "Didn't you see it? Are you going to stand there and let 'em do it?" Then, as the students still didn't move, he suddenly disappeared, as mysteriously as he had appeared, and the students resumed their climb up the Hill, asking each other who he was. This was my first and only encounter with a police spy, an agent provocateur, than whom nothing in this world is more vile. What he was obviously trying to do was to incite the students and flush out the ringleaders so that the police could find out who they were and arrest them. Dictatorships use spies of course, but Madison?!

All this came to me in a flash when I saw Greetings from MADISON on your envelope. I hope I haven't gone on too long about it. From your last two letters I feel that I have not only a dear granddaughter at my alma mater but a mature friend with whom I can talk.
Dear Julie:

When I heard about your experience with Seventeen magazine, how you were chosen from an estimated 1,000 applicants to be among the top six and how you survived an interview to be one of the three finalists going to New York for a final selection, I did a little dance of joy in my mind, a dance of celebration. That you have a pure kind of physical loveliness, a bit sad but all the more poignant for that, I have been aware of for some time, but it's great to have it confirmed by others who are better judges than grandfathers. That the judges chose you to be one of the three finalists after an interview fills me with particular delight, for obvious reasons. It is at such moments that I realize with a rush what tends to get dimmed by the distance of our physical separation, how much I love you.

I must tell you, in passing, that a number of years ago I wrote a poem called SIXTEEN. It is my perception of the loveliness of a seventeen year old girl, no particular girl, just an ideal composite of many that I have seen. I couldn't have had you in mind because it was written long before you were, or are about to be, 16, but the astonishing thing is that I perceived that girl as pretty much what you have grown into. This is not to say that this is necessarily what you are, just what I perceive. The second part of the poem has her aging in a particular way for purposes of dramatic contrast. If it turns out that you age in the way that the girl in the poem ages, I'll begin to think that I possess powers of prescience.

Love,

[Signature]
Dear Jennifer and Julie,

It was fun getting your presents because they were both surprises. We'll brew the coffee as soon as we have guests (much too rich for our blood for daily fare). Then when they taste it and exclaim, "Say, where did you get that great coffee?" we can say, "From someone with exotic tastes" (I don't even know whether you drink coffee yet but it'll make a good story). The Guindon book also was a pleasant surprise. If a present is meant to give pleasure, then yours certainly succeeded: I got lots of laughs and chuckles out of it and will keep it on our coffee table for the delectation of our guests friends. Thanks muchly to you both.

This is the time of year when we get long letters from old friends recounting all the good things that have happened to them during the past year, and to their children and grandchildren and cousins and aunts and uncles and nephews and nieces (why don't they ever narrate all the bad things that happened?). Not that we have ever encouraged our friends, God forbid, to tell us that much about their kinfolk, but they partake of strong spirits at this time of year and feel so benign and loving towards everyone that they can not even imagine a friend not being as interested as they are in family particulars. Nevertheless, I was going to write you one of these year-end, summarizing letters, but I couldn't remember what happened during 1981. December 31, 1981, yes! March 13, 1962, ditto! But not the whole of 1981.

You ask whether Mom and Dan behaved themselves during their visit here. I am sorry to have to say that they did not. They were constantly looking into each other's eyes and smiling and kissing. I tried to restrain them but to no avail. San Francisco has that effect on people, even on grandmother and me.

I'm sure you know from Mom and Dan by now how fulfilling it was just to be together with them, how lovely the weather was (the day after they left, it turned cold and wet...but of course when I say "cold", I mean around 45), how much fun we had just talking (and eating), and driving down to Chico on Christmas day to visit George and Leanna and Joanne and Miriam (who get very excited when the discussion turns to the two of you and can't wait to see you again). And finally when the time came on New Year's Day to part at the airport, we all felt weepy and sad; for which there is only one remedy, to see you all again as soon as possible...which will be in May.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Grandpa
Letter to Barbara from Michigan State University
Oct. 2, 1974

Dear Barbara:

I must tell you about my experience with Mommie on Saturday night before I lose track of what happened. I think she brought up the subject, although I'm not sure of that. Anyhow, we got to talking about her inaction and I was pointing out her low self-esteem and the connection of this to the care of her body, as well as to anything creative. It turned out to be more than she could take, at least from me, despite the compassion I was feeling. The whole thing became monstrous. Everything was turned around by her to seem as if she was a failure-----the opposite of what I was saying and feeling, since I was working from the presumption that she was creative and was merely blocking it herself......that I was dissatisfied with her, which I am not.....etc., until it became unmistakably clear that she was without any hope for herself, at which point she walked to the bathroom, saying, "I don't want to live!" She had the water on and for a few mad moments I was afraid she was actually going to take her life, that is how desperate and low I felt her to be. It was a nightmare the reality of which I had never even remotely suspected. Bear in mind, I had not been aggressive or critical, I had just questioned her defensive defenses against creativeness. It's clear that I can't ever talk about this with her again because she sees it as critical, no matter how I put it, but she did say that when you talked to her, she felt you were trying to be helpful. So it has to be taken from there. Could you and George get your heads together on this? I'm heartsick over it, and frightened because, for once, I'm helpless to do anything about it myself. Perhaps my absence will be a stimulus to her.

My phone is 517 (area code) 355-7804 in case you want to reach me.

Love,

Dad

P.S. You'd better destroy this letter to make sure no one else sees it.
Jan. 3, 1975

Dear Barbara:

We never did get the Galinson address in San Diego. I'd like to write to tell them about my reading there on March 5th. Also, would you be kind enough to call the Social Security office for me and tell them I was working during the months of Oct., Nov. & Dec. and was not getting benefits then and that my benefits should, therefore, be resumed as of Feb. 3d to cover the month of January. My social security no. is 477-34-1002A. I'm listed, of course, as Callman Rawley.

Did I get a $25 check, or thereabouts, from Michigan State University? That was a deposit that they're supposed to be returning to me.

I was awfully glad that you suggested going to see a doctor in Kansas City. I had thought of this myself but the idea was just floating in the back of my mind and your suggestion turned it into a resolution. Of course, when the urinary obstruction occurred the next day, my practical choices were reduced to either returning home or seeing a urologist in K.C. on the chance that it was not as bad as it looked (on the phone even the urologist thought I would have to go back). The gamble paid off. The cystoscopic showed that I was in better shape than could be expected of someone my age and that I was just suffering from an infection. I was one relieved, grateful hombre, and the urologist, a very friendly, interested man, was very pleased to be able to send me on my way to Mexico with the good news and a bottle of sulfa pills.

The little casita we live in is charming. We are not the only occupants, however. We share it with the medallion-shaped, tropical spiders which neither spin webs nor bite humans; and probably with a scorpion or two, which have not yet wandered into view. Because of them, I always shake out my shoes in the morning before I venture my foot in. But the trees on our terrace are full of tiny, yellow warblers, and we have hibiscus and many tropical flowers whose English names I don't know, with a little garden in which lettuce, tomatoes and Swiss chard grow, which we have been eating.

Poor Mommy was struck down suddenly yesterday afternoon by some flu bug, it seemed to be, which brought on violent retching most of the night. She's better this morning, but weak and not able to eat. She was lying in the sun until a few minutes ago, but I see she's back in bed now, sleeping.

We had a delightful letter from Jennifer, which you must not have read, since it was sealed. Her comment about Nanna Ruthie was hilarious. You must get her permission, however, before I can tell you what it was. Confidentiality, you know.

We spent New Year's Eve with the Scheier's, making shish-ka-bosh over
over an open charcoal grille on our terrace and toasting each other's health and yours and the girls' and all the Rawleys.

We are beginning to miss you all, yes.

Love,

Dad

P.S. Thanks for forwarding the mail.
Dear Barbara:

Thanks for all your clerical labors on my behalf.

Yes, I did file an annual earnings report for 1973, so you don't have to do anything. But I've run out of blank checks. Would you please send me six? My checkbook, as I wrote earlier, is in the middle drawer of my desk. Did Steve send a $50 check for utilities yet?

That invitation to read at the Museum of Modern Art in N.Y. had a special interest for Mommie and me: it would give her brother George and Alma a chance to participate; also some of my old social work friends in New York City. I couldn't, however, accept the invitation because the fee was too small to cover transportation, but if I can get the date changed to coincide with my going to Yaddo in May, we'll be in business. Guatemala

Mommie left a few days ago with three other women for (in a Volkswagen). They'll be gone ten days. You should have seen how chipper she was. It had to do with her doing this without me. She was all smiles and excitement. They left before dawn.

I'm so glad you & the girls will be visiting George in March. Their going is a great wrenching of the relationship that was beginning to form between you and which could have meant so much, but visits and phone calls may be able to keep some of it alive. Distance might even enhance some things, who knows?

Fifty hugs for you and Janno and Julie.

Dad

c/o Schaefer
Apdo. 672
Oaxaca, Oax., Mexico
June 9, 1981

Honey: If you must have these, slightly sarcastic, probably unpleasant, poems, at least let me help you with some of the references. Numbers 2 and 3 refer to the boundless egotism of young poets and their efforts to equal Walt Whitman, who was the first to write about all of America; 5 refers to the over-intellectualization of a great deal of contemporary poetry and to its long-winded character; 6 to a succession of absurdities in modern poetics; 7 to the self-dramatic grandiosity of some poets; 8 to the pious conservatism of T.S. Eliot; 10 to the over-abstract poetry of the French poet, St. John Perse; 12 to the fuss made when my friend, Louis Zukofsky, was able to write a sestina, an Italian verse form considered too difficult to do in English; 19 mocks poetry itself and the fact that it usually takes a couple of generations for people to recognize the significance of a great poet.

Dad
Dear Barbara:

About a month ago I wrote Jonis Agee (at the College of Saint Catherine), who used to be in charge of the poetry readings at Walker, to ask if she'd like me to give a reading at Walker in May, when I'll be in Mpls. No word from her yet, so would you want to call the chap in charge of the over-all program at Walker, whom you say you did call before our last visit, and find out if he's interested? The latter part of May would be the best but is not a must.

Mommie's birthday party was like one of those loving, wonderful, family parties in a Dickens novel, everybody truly glad to be there, a real heart-wormer. I thought I was in on the surprise but I was mistaken. When we entered with the other couple we had come with, the Hofers led us into the living room. Mommie noticed an awful lot of chairs there and wondered about it. For a moment I thought she would catch on but she didn't. We chatted for a while and then settled down, and then in burst all our friends, embracing and kissing her and congratulating her, a whole multitude of beaming people. Only mommie, I thought, can draw such total, genuine affection from her friends. Anyhow, when the commotion finally settled down, there, all of a sudden, stood George, grinning, then Leanna and the girls crowding around her. Well, I was not in on that surprise, and Mommie and I just stared, and then I realized that my jaw had dropped (as the novels say) in astonishment and that my mouth was open. Mommie's too. Then followed a great toast by David Jenkins, the former Longshoremen leader, whom, I think, we've told you about, and a spirit of joyousness in everybody that made mommie's cup flow over. Indeed, all that was missing were you and Dan and Jennifer and Julie.
Jan. 21, 1976

Dear Barbara:

Where, oh where, is all the exciting mail I've been expecting from all over—like last year? Have we lost faith with our correspondent? Don't they care any more? Under the American postal service helped put mail somewhere while they go out for their siesta? Anyhow, all you've sent so far are those first two letters—right? Incidentally, is the air-mail postage to Mexico still 13 cents or has it gone up to 17 cents, along with the mail to other countries?

Last Monday was a historic day for Connie. She went on a 36 hour fast, I along with her, with some trepidation as to its effect on her. It was my idea and I did it too to make sure she would do it. The results were surprising. We felt no hunger pains and except for some loss of color and Connie's feeling cold at night, she felt fine. Connie felt particularly good the next morning, lots of pep and sparkle, and she was all ready to fast another day, but I thought that would be too risky without medical approval, so she didn't do it. Towards the end, my hands began to be a bit unsteady and my energy very low. So next time around I'll skip only tough metals, but now that we know what that effect is, Monday will be fast day in our house.

The weather here so far has been a great disappointment. Never in the memory of Oklahoma has it been so cold—strong winds from the north and lower of 43, with highs of 70 from 11 a.m. to about 4. But I think it's about to warm up. Of course, we're not complaining. If it's cold here, we can imagine what polar winds you're going through!
We miss you a lot, dear. And the girls. Hugs and Kisses to you all.

Dad
Dear Barbara:

I hope, I say I hope that you haven't joined the conspiracy that seems to be underfoot to convince me that I'm beginning to lose my hair. Not my own daughter, no, I couldn't bear that. Despite this, I love you and the whole Rawley/Nordby/Ebin clan.
1 Round trip ticket to Israel or the European City of choice

Leah Jaffe Rawley

1 Round trip ticket to Israel or the European City of choice

Callman Rawley

These coupons made possible by the Rawley family lineage

George

Crima

Julie

Barbara

Beverly

Mini

Johnny

Jennifer

DIY

TODD

WE LOVE YOU

YOU

VERY MUCH!
Dad,
I couldn't resist this!

love you,

XXXOO
Wizard of Id / By Brant Parker and Johnny Hart

MY BALD SPOT IS GETTING BIGGER!

YOU DON'T HAVE A BALD SPOT

...I DON'T?

...YOU HAVE A HAIR SPOT
Dear Jennifer:

What a pleasure your birthday gift was. I had heard Bora Neale Hurston's name mentioned before as one of the important fore-runners in Black literary history, with a decided personality and talent of her own, but had never read her. And probably never would have, there being so many other books of large import to read, if you hadn't enrolled in Black studies and sent me this one. Now I must try to get her autobiography. Thanks, dear.

The only new thing in my life since I talked to you last is my new compact disc player and the wonderful sound coming out of the new laser discs. It has discombobulated me slightly. Grandma is waiting for me to settle down. She's more sane about this.

Your coming during the New Year holidays has also discombobulated us. We're counting the days.

Love,

G (for grandpa)
Dear Henry:

Your letter caught me on the run, as I have a couple of appalling deadlines to meet: one to finish a long poem in time to get it into my COLLECTED POEMS, which is being set up at the printers right now as I'm writing (a National Poetry Foundation book), another to write a lecture on the Objectivists for presentation to The Poetics Institute at New York University early in May, at which time I also have to give readings at five different places in Chicago, Milwaukee & N.Y., so I can't do justice to the surprise and delight of hearing from you, I can only acknowledge it, and after Leah and I get back to the city on June 3d, after a few minutes to catch our breath, I promise to give myself to answering your letter properly.

Love,

[Signature]

23 April 1985
Dear Jennifer:

Thank you for your lovely birthday note.

Since we are old friends, I cannot lie to you: I am not really 85. I am, I regret to say, 105. But nobody would believe that, so that some years ago I changed my birth date to avoid confusion and awkward questions.

I have another confession to make: I’m a committed fan of yours (ever since you beat me so badly in games) and when I hear about your goings-on at Brown, excellence after excellence, I can’t tell you how cheerful it makes me feel. Who would have thought it would mean so much to me?

You’re right, we’re old friends, going all the way back to Oaxaca when you were all of two years old and would come running as fast as your little legs could carry when you saw me from a distance as if you couldn’t wait until you got to me and was picked up and hugged, but you would never make it. For some reason which I could never figure out since there was nothing in your path to stumble over, you’d fall, collapse, drop just before you reached me, and become shy. What did it mean, that the idea of being embraced looked great from a distance but the actual reality was too much? We’ll never know because you don’t even remember these episodes.

Anyhow, let’s promise to remain friends until I’m 175. What do you say?

Love from your best friend of all, Leah, and from me,

Your old friend,

Carl
March 9, 1986

Dear Herb:

I'm sorry, deeply sorry, to be the bearer of bad news, but I have to tell you that we learned a couple of weeks ago that Leah has lymphoma, a cancer of the lymph glands. It is in an intermediate stage. Treatment will begin in a week or two.

I should also tell you that since your last letter in which you indicated that you did not want to hear from her again, she has been afraid to approach you for fear of being rejected. She still feels that way. That is why it is I and not she who is writing this. But a lot of time has gone by since then and perhaps your feelings have changed. If they have, I know she would get some comfort out of hearing from you. If you still have those feelings, however, it would be best to leave things as they were and say nothing. I'll understand.

In any case, I hope all of you are in good health.

With best wishes,

[Signature]

[Leah's Brother, Herbert Jaffe]
Dear Ali:

What a happy coincidence, your running across Donald Davie's piece in The Threepenny Review. I can guess how you got to my daughter in Minneapolis but how did you know Callman Rawley was Carl Rakosi? I thought that was a secret, until a year or so ago, that nobody in social work knew.

In any case, the Davie review was of special and extra importance because he's an older, distinguished English critic and poet who's very choosy....in fact, cranky....and praise from him is quite an thing. My previous books had always gotten admiring reviews in the N.Y. Times and the Village Voice from young, avant-garde writers...and this time was no exception...but to be praised so perceptively by such a conservative, and mature curmudgeon of a scholar was an altogether different matter and one hell of a bonanza.

All in all, this past month has been a fortunate one for me because, in addition to the Davie, I received a $5,000 award from The Fund for Poetry for my "contributions to contemporary poetry" and was notified that in October the National Poetry Association, a Bay Area organization of writers, would be giving me a Distinguished Achievement Award at a big shindig, along with Maya Angelou.

You wrote that you assume that I would remember you. Well, I remember the name but I can't remember the person that goes with it. So help me out. I seem to remember your being on the tall side and having a rather pleasant relationship with you, but that's all, except for seeing announcements of your printed work years later and thinking to myself, "He's certainly a go-getter!"

My, my, St. Louis. Brings back memories of Frieda Romalis, a woman of some integrity but rather hard to take....left-wing political rallies, parties, dances....the birth of my daughter, Barbara and the death the same day of my dear little dog Jeff....a surprisingly Southern atmosphere in the city, amiable, friendly, almost lazy. After St. Louis I went to Cleveland to work for Bellefaire and the Jewish Children's Bureau, and finally, as you apparently know, to Minneapolis. I retired in 1968 and we moved here ten years ago to get away from the winters.

I can well imagine what you went through after losing your wife
because for the last two years Leah, my wife for 49 years, has been fighting lymphoma. How lucky you are to have your daughter with you.

Fill me in mon more of your life. It would be fun seeing you again. We could put you up if you came for a visit.

Best,
Dear Jim:

Leah's lymphoma has put me far behind in my correspondence. Hence, I am late in thanking you for going to the trouble of copying the references to me, etc.

I don't know whether there is anything earlier than the 1944 Gomberg you refer to. My impression is that there might very well be. The place to look would be The Journal of Social Work Process (ed. Taft & Robinson, Pennsylvania School of Social Work...or where they already a part of The University of Pennsylvania?...the early numbers), where the first explorations into family case work were made.

I can't resist commenting on the quote from Robert Frost. What he says about the metaphor is quite familiar to poets and would be regarded as true by them and by artists in general. It might also be true in atomic physics because that is not a world of observed facts but a theory, a system of conjectures about the nature of the sub-atomic universe and, as such, call for the same kind of creative imagination that the poet observes. I don't know where else in the physical world that's true, however. And when he extends it to thinking itself, he doesn't know what he's talking about: thinking precedes metaphorical formulation. The error lies in confusing metaphorical formulation with the creative imagination. The two merge at some points but they are not the same thing. The biologist who wrote the letter was merely advocating using more of one's creative imagination. I have no doubt many scientists do need to open up more and do that.

Best wishes,

[Signature]
Callman Rayley

18 Sept. 1987

Dear Joe:

Harry Freeman's observations in the July Ex Exec strike a fresh note and tell it as it is. My own experience with aging since 1969 when I retired, started out with what I know now is the usual response, the discovery that nothing whatever had changed. My faculties were the same as before. Hell, I was not limited in my interests to social work. I had started out life as a writer, interested in art and music as well, and when I retired, I simply went back to writing, with great gusto and pleasure, under my pen name of Carl Rakosi. What was all this to-do and concern in social work about the problems of the aged?

Of course, this is not the usual case, and I realize I was lucky. On the other hand, nowhere among my contemporaries did I find anyone wasting away in a rocking chair, not knowing what to do, as the situation used to be pictured. No, everybody seemed to have some creative or intellectual interest, which he had not followed before for one reason or another, into which he moved after retirement, as I had done, to his great surprise, and it was almost as if he had just been waiting for the time and the opportunity. All the horror stories were a myth. At least for a decade after retirement.

I can't say that I ever disliked old people, as Henry says he does, but I paid no particular attention to them and tried to avoid them when I could do so without giving offense. Their world of irreversible horrors was not yet my world. I was not one of them. And if for a moment I let myself think that I was, I was sure it would be all over for me. I'd be finished as a creative person. So for me the first decade after retirement was a breeze. But after that, events began to jolt my equanimity. Little things, like a young woman giving up her seat to me on a bus. Good God, did I look that old or was that just something that she had been taught to do with elders? Or the pointed, kindly smile I get as I walk by a young woman on the street, not unlike the smile I myself give when I see a toddler. Unwittingly she has put me into the same situation and there is nothing for me to do except to bear it and smile back. Perhaps, I console myself, she had a particularly loving relationship to a grandfather, and that's all that means. But I am not sure. But there was no mistaking what happened the other day. As I drove up to a service station, the attendant, a man in his 60's, whom I was surprised to see there because of his age, called out, "What can I do for you, Pop?" That beat all! I just stared back at him angrily. But this sort of thing happens only now and then.
and does not seriously affect one's sense of well-being. However, it does show that there are people out there who do not see you as you see yourself, and that, God forbid, they may be right. And that is momentarily unsettling, but not more than that.

These considerations ceased abruptly a year or so ago when I learned that Leah, to whom I have been married for forty-eight years, has cancer. From that moment on, I was inside a totally different reality, an underground cave, it felt like, not accessible to outsiders, a cave of terror and despair, despair for Leah and the ending of our whole adult life together, and terror at the sudden confrontation with my own mortality. My biological clock had suddenly caught up with my chronological age and I would never again be a nonagenarian. In this state I was not fit for human company and had Henry come to visit me then, he would not have liked me, for pretty much the same reasons he did not like the old folks whose plumbing he was fixing. All I want to say here is that when old people are self-absorbed and whiny and immobilized in depression and all that, I know now that the chances are that there's a damned good reason for it. Which doesn't make them any more attractive. It's just an existential fact. Anyhow, Leah is in remission now and I am again fit to be in civilized company.

While I am on this point, let me recommend to those who have not read it, The View in Winter by Ronald Blythe. It is a collection of interviews with old people in an English village, men and women in their 80's, who pour out their hearts and minds at great length. It is a riveting, astonishing book, astonishing because one would not have believed that the testimony of people living alone in the very last stage of life, who have every imaginable physical and social loss and disability, could be so rich and cheering, even therapeutic, without departing one tittle from reality.

Writing this, I have become aware that we need some new terms with more accurate associations, for the plain fact is that there is as much difference between men in their 60's and men in their 80's (or men in their 70's whose biological clock is set in the 80's) as there is between a six year old and a forty year old. They have almost nothing in common, and it's futile to talk as if it were all one generic age. In fact, I wonder if it's even possible for people in the first decade of their retirement to be as good friends with people in their second decade as with their own contemporaries. The problems
of the former are not theirs, and the relationship, I'm afraid, comes to feel like something of a drag.

What does this make me? I'm willing to concede that I have a chronological age, to which I feel totally unrelated; that somewhere I have a biological age and a biological clock, to which I don't have to pay any attention because I don't know what they are, and nobody else does either; and that maybe, maybe I am elderly, but I'm not sure.

With best wishes,

Callman Rawley

P.S. Will you please use my full name, Callman Rawley, Joe, if you wish to use this for EX EXEC? My close friends do call me Carl, but others will not be able to identify me, I'm afraid, unless Callman is used. Also, a change in address, from 128 to 126 Irving St., San Francisco.
Callman Rawley

Maurice Pearlstein

12 June 1987

Dear Moish:

How nice of you to send me your congratulations and your well-wishes for Leah. Since you heard last from Bernie, we have had good news: she is in remission and for the time being is off the chemotherapy. So you can imagine how different the world looks to us just now. Our spirits are positively frisky, especially since it coincides with a two week visit to my daughter and granddaughter and old friends in Minneapolis and the purchase of my archives (letters, manuscripts, working papers, etc.) by the University of Wisconsin library.

It’s a funny thing, I remember very clearly what you used to look like, your voice, your jokes, etc., but I can’t for the life of me remember where I used to see you. I left New York in 1940 after working in JFS in Brooklyn for five years. From N.Y. I went to JFS in St. Louis, then to Bellefaire in Cleveland, then to JFCS in Minneapolis (not St. Paul). The name Carol Langnes rings a bell but nothing clear comes to my mind. It seems to me I might have known a social worker by that name, and a good-looking face is associated with that memory, but it’s all in a far-away mist. Was she a social worker, that you ask? I know from Bernie that she’s been very ill and your heavy concern with that. Alas!

You ask about reviews. Ordinarily books of poetry, because of their tiny circulation, are not reviewed at all in large circulation newspapers and magazines. The few that do, get reviewed because they’ve won some prestigious prize or some important literary critic pressed for its review with the editor, or because the book review editor, or more likely the paper’s customary poetry reviewer happens to be familiar with a particular poet’s work and thinks highly of it. But since there are so many tastes and styles in contemporary poetry, it’s to a large extent a matter of happenstance and luck. So don’t expect to see a review of my book in the N.Y. Review of Books. They have almost no interest in poetry, despite an occasional poem in their pages, and when they do run a review, it’s by Helen Vendler, who doesn’t care beans for my work, The Nation, however, is another matter. I have a long association with them, going back to 1924 when they published one of my first poems. They may still do a review. If they don’t, it’ll probably be because they have so little space or because they’ve changed editors.

Wish you could have joined Bernie & the gang on my last N.Y. visit.

Good, good health to you both. Care
Dear Dick:

How glad I was to learn from Joe McDonald of your 50th wedding anniversary. All the best, the very very best, to you and Frances from Leah and me.

When I think back on my life in social work, which is really not often, since, as you know, I've been into another life as a writer since my retirement, what I remember with the greatest pleasure was my association with you and Dick Brown and Art Kruse and Earl Beatt and Sid Berkowitz, when we were gleefully cooking up a storm, formulating the rationale for certification of family agency practitioners and working out a program for family agencies that would have professional distinction. We made one hell of an effort to break out of the box we were in but there just too many of the others, the milk-toast characters and the weak sisters. But what fun that was, what excitement. For a moment it looked as if we were going to break free. So I remember you with a bit of a glow. I only wish we lived close enough to visit.

By the way, I did see Dick Brown in Milwaukee a few years ago when I gave a reading at the University there; also Art Kruse in Chicago when I gave a reading at the Art Institute; and Earl I saw here briefly last year at some FSA meeting. Sid seems to have disappeared into lotus land....succeeded to the soft life and the sun of Florida. And here Leah and I have been for the last eight years, I in good health, Leah not so fortunate.

Do write if you feel the impulse. And good health.

P.S. Joe wrote that you've been hunting for my books in libraries. How nice. On that score, only three now are in print: COLLECTED POEMS, published by the National Poetry Foundation at the University of Maine, which also published my COLLECTED PROSE two years ago, and DROLES DE JOURNAL, published by the Coffee House Press. The earlier books have either been sold out or pulped (too expensive to keep in warehouses).
Dear Dick:

It was sad, very sad, to hear about your braces and nerve-stimulator. Like always being in a tight cage, I imagine, never free. I've been lucky to escape that sort of thing but Leah's relentless cancer has had me locked tight too into a vise of anguish and fear, and only worse ahead. The goddamned thing just has to be endured.

I, too, often think about old working group of Midwest executives, the best in the lot. Do you keep in touch with any of them? We were at our peak then, but we were up against slow-moving freight. Always women, apparently. They always seemed to be our adversaries. Where did these characters come from? How had they gotten to be executives? I had the feeling when I was with them that they were fiercely guarding their turf and that there was something indelicate, something I should be slightly ashamed of, about our strong, new ideas and that if we had been brought up right, the way they had been, we wouldn't have such ideas. I'm glad they're gone, though I don't know what's in their place. Anyhow, I have the impression that the present administration at FSAA are live wires and would have snapped up our ideas.

Leah and I have a son and a daughter and four granddaughters, none of them living here, unfortunately. My son and his family live in Chico, about 175 miles N.E. of here. They come down for a visit every other month or so. My daughter we see only a couple of times a year, not nearly enough. She still lives in Minneapolis. But how dismal, utterly dismal, our lives would be if we didn't have them. How could one face the future? Now, I imagine, is when your large family pays off. Does one of your children live in Reseda?

I'm intrigued by your finding three references to Carl Rakosi in something you read. Wish you could remember where. Doesn't Frances remember either?

Best,
Dear Bonny:

Forgive me for being so slow to come up with my suggestions for poets to read. Here's the list. For poets of my generation I suggest Charles Reznikoff and George Oppen, also Hugh MacDiarmid (Scottish), Samuel Beckett (he wrote only a few poems but they're very, very good), and three fine Greek poets, two of them still alive, Cavafy, Yannis Ritsos, and Odysseus Elytis (all available in good translations). Also in this generation three French poets, Francis Ponge, Pierre Jouve and Philippe Jacottet, one Ecuadorian, Jorge Carrera Andrade, and Milosz, who as you know, won the Nobel and deserved to. In the next generation are the Americans, Thomas McGrath, Robert Duncan, Robert Kelley, James Wright, Charles Simic, Frank O'Hara, Anselm Hollo, Philip Whalen, Kenneth Koch and Jonathan Williams. Assuming that you know how to enter the imaginary planet of poetry and enjoy being there, you will find the above very lively and interesting and moving and sometimes profound.

We are all agog here at Michael's new prospects on Senator Bentsen's staff, the opportunity to be on the inside of national politics at the very top. What a break! We're delighted and waiting avidly, as you must be, to see what happens next.

Love,

Carl

Her husband, Michael Levy, a political scientist, is Senator Bentsen's chief administrative aid.
Dear Ed and Mary:

I don't get the impression that Helen is either helpless or senile or even badly confused. She strikes me rather as someone raging with anger and torn by powerful conflicting impulses. Hence her bizarre behavior, which seems irrational and self-destructive, and is, but is the only way she can express this rage and conflict. She has something to be furious about, of course, in the amputation of her leg, but I have a hunch that she was seething with anger long before that and that the two of you are not exempt from its orbit: the operation simply brought it to a head.

She obviously could benefit from psychotherapy but I can't see her going. I suspect the idea would add to her rage. Is there anything you can do? You can be sympathetic and ask if she'd like any practical help from you. For the rest, I'd stay out! There is nothing you can do to prevent her rage and conflicts from being self-destructive. And bear in mind that she has several assets: she's intelligent; she's headstrong (yes, that's an asset; that's why she's not helpless); and she has a history of strength, of surviving. So there's no sensible reason why you can't relax, even when she's off on some wild whirl.

We miss you.

Love
Dear Sol:

The photograph of you was just what the doctor ordered to reassure me that you were still "working (?)", doing (a gallant phrase, under the circumstances), thinking" (could one give up?). There you were, the familiar physical you, the eyes pitted against the hard light and not quite able to master it, the lips slightly parted, showing perhaps a little shortness of breath,.....and what is that? an unmistakable bulge in the bowel.....but there you were, unmistakably thinking and undaunted. Swell.

I remember your vivid description of your 80th birthday party. Well, I had mine. Or rather I had two. Ordinarily, I dislike birthday parties for myself and never have them. What is there to celebrate? But this birthday was a biggie, and after some internal questioning and conflict, I gave in to the feeling that I had a social obligation to acknowledge it. So Leah gave a party, a Sunday brunch, for my writer friends and their spouses, which was pure fun. Then a friend gave a big party for our non-writer friends, to which my son George and his family came down from Chico (CA) and my daughter Barbara came from Minneapolis. All I can say is that my age was thoroughly impressed on me. I hope I'll recover. These messages from the outside are insidious, all the more that they are well-meaning. The mind likes to think that it is quite able to keep them at a distance and go about its business as usual, but the body apparently has listened and has its own time-table for unexpectedly confronting us with its irreversible response. But you know all that better than I.

Although a small book of my poetry has just been published in England and my collected prose should be out any day now from The National Poetry Foundation at the University of Maine, my productivity has fallen down alarmingly in the last six months. Part of it has to do with my feeling sleepy often during the day and part with a reluctance all of a sudden to undertake new projects. I find myself reading, playing the phonograph....everything but sitting down to my desk and getting something going. Need I say more? But don't count me out yet.

As for health, Leah and I have been fortunate and blessed. She has high blood pressure and arthritis but under good control, and I don't seem to have anything wrong with me (due, I like to think, partly perhaps to an exercycle which I've been using for over a year and which has become as indispensable as brushing my teeth, but George, my doctor son, assures me it's all...
genetic) except a recent attack of diverticulitis, which sent me to the hospital for a few days but which I didn't really mind because I didn't feel sick and had a good time with the young nurses.

Anyhow, stay well and have a good year, both of you.
8 August 1985

Dear Fellow Nonagenarian:

You and we both know that birthdays after 75 should be left unobserved, but that is not the way of the world. There are times, however, when this disclaimer is not appropriate and this birthday of yours is one of them. So we join the multitude who have a great regard for you in sending our joyous greetings.

Affectionately,

[Signature]

[Handwritten note: To Flora Armstrong, a poet, 100th Birthday was on Aug. 10, 1985]
Dear Sidney:

Lesh and I have pondered your extraordinary offer and could come to only one conclusion, we have to decline. You will understand why. To accept help from a friend when one is in need and can not help himself is a blessing in friendship and has a moral base, but a trip to England is not a necessity, only a pleasure, and we can find no moral base to it. What threw me off momentarily when we were talking about it was that I could see that you really wanted us to accept and that you would get pleasure out of it if we did, and for a moment I felt confused, wondering if that might not have its own morality; but it doesn't; it would simply be a matter of our taking advantage of your generosity for something that is not a necessity, and that has no moral base and might, in addition, encumber and skew our friendship. Better not. But thanks for the most friendly offer possible. If we do ever really need your help, we'll know where to turn.

Hope you and Fredelle come back soon, real soon.

P.S. I'm sending the novel I mentioned, Joseph Roth's JOB, by separate mail.
Dear Barbare:

Doubly dear for remembering to send us the Ginastera. There you are on the record jacket, looking up at him, expectant, irrepressibly buoyant and joyous, and he, surprisingly soft in feature, considering the classical tightness of his work. Stravinsky, at least, looks classical and tight. But Ginastera has tender, reflective moments which Stravinsky never has....he is too self-disciplined, too pre-occupied with structure and style....and these moments, as you write in your notes, are a thrilling counter-experience to his great kinetic bursts. As you perform them breathlessly on the piano, when the sound, in response to his feelings, shades off more and more quietly, it brings out goose-pimples in me. No point in saying the obvious, that you have brilliant technique, but it is worth saying that you're wholly inside the music. Nowhere can one hear your technique, as such. So you've given Leah and me great pleasure. The only thing I regret is that Telarc didn't do your record.

You've made me want to hear more Ginastera. Which of the records in Schwann do you recommend?

And when are you coming to Stanford? Will you be able to stay with us?

Love,

Carla
Dear Fredelle:

Would you believe that the moment my disparaging remark about Milton left my lips, I knew that I had made a mistake. What had got into me to say this to someone who cared enough about Milton to have done part of her dissertation on him? But I wasn't thinking of you at all when I made it. I wasn't even thinking of the inherent qualities of his poetry or his place in the Pantheon. What I had in mind was the situation in English and American poetry when I began to write and what we needed to learn from the past in order to continue it with fresh, original work. High on the list were the Elizabethans, the Metaphysical poets, Chaucer, Blake, the Scotch poets, Herrick. But Milton? Nyet! Something about his Latinate, neo-classical language and temper was simply incompatible with modern man. You might say he was a terminus for that style. You couldn't go anywhere from it. If you tried, you'd wind up "dead". That's what I meant by his deadening influence. However, I haven't read him since college. And I must remember that he was a guiding light to Blake, who stands next to Shakespeare in my pantheon. So who knows, one of these days I may investigate Mr. John Milton with my present perceptions and needs. I have the great three volume 1890 Macmillan edition to do it in.

But my real reason for writing you was to tell you what a kick I got out of your review of Irving Layton's book. Wow! I take it, it came out in the Toronto Globe and that the newsprint was slightly singed from the heat. Seldom have the unclean been taken to the cleaners more thoroughly and decisively. We are unaccustomed to such things in literary circles, madam. You must prepare us before you blast off.

Thanks for the mending wool. With it in hand, we gaze in astonishment at the gape in the sofa and watch it getting wider and wider by the minute.

What a week this has been/will be: The Dance Theater of Harlem on Wednesday, the Symphony on Thursday, The Yiddish XXX theater on Friday and an opera by Allessandro Scarlatti on Saturday!

From us to youse, love.
21 July 1984

Dear Nat:

Thank you for letting us know about Ida. It's sad. How we wish we could "drop in" and be with you, but as an 89 year old friend of ours living in New Jersey wrote recently, reflecting on how his children and grandchildren were scattered from one end of the country to the other, "Everybody is so far away, so far away."

Stay well, Nat, and keep in touch. It would be great if you could visit us. We have a spare bedroom and bath, waiting.

Love,
Dear Ed:

Sorry to hear about Mary's brother. Did you visit him on your last trip East?

I can't tell you how pleased I am at the turn of events. Max When you say, "There was a long while when I seemed not to be able to do anything that gave me real satisfaction" and "I have been making some really good pots, which makes me happy", I know things are going right. You're not one to use the word "happy" hyperbolically. The long absence may even have done your ceramic imagination some good.

I'm so glad you found John Levy good company. But I'm afraid it won't be for long. He's planning to spend a year in Greece with a friend, a young Greek-American poet who writes in English. He's pretty good too. John'll be teaching English on one of the islands.

I finally finished my book of prose. It's scheduled to be out in time for my birthday in November.

We miss you both.

Love

[Signature]
21 June 1985

Dear Bernie:

THE VIEW IN WINTER is everything you said it was, and I have become its addict. It's not just a book, and one is not just its reader: one lives it. Of course it's not comforting but like life itself, one feeds on it and grows stronger. Over the years one forgets how hardy and resourceful a person is, not in an imaginary crisis, where the imagination seems incapable of rising out of a state of helplessness, but when the real one comes along. In any case, if I were stranded and alone on a desert island, this is the book I would want with me.

THE FIFTY FIRST DRAGON is a different kind of gem. I had forgotten how well Heywood Brown writes. This thing is like a vaudeville act: you think you've heard the denouement but it's only a decoy... the real one doesn't come until the end. When Brown was around, we thought of him as a very good journalist, but he was more than that. Wish he were here to enjoy a literary reputation. You see how beholden (an old-fashioned word from a not so old-fashioned gent) I am to you.

Love from Leah and me...... and please visit us in San Francisco.
Dear Pat:

This time, by gar, I'm going to make it (to your show). I'll be in New York the week of May 3 for some lectures and readings and will most definitely stop in (any chance of your being there then?). How devoted the Zabriskie is (are?) to your work! Tell me about them. And how did your Parish show go? Ruth K. Meyer's comments about your paintings seem accurate enough but, of course, an analysis has little to do with the visual life of a picture.

I'm surprised at how little first-class art there is in San Francisco; or theatre, for that matter. Minneapolis has it all over S.F. in these arts. Nevertheless, S.F. is a great city, so I guess a city can be great without them. We do not have an artist among our friends here except Jess, who seldom leaves his studio. His N.Y. dealer is Odyssey. His friend, Robert Duncan the poet (I leave out the comma after Duncan because it's impossible to conceive of him as ever not being a poet), who has become a close friend, has just gone to Paris for a month to write the text for a book by Phaedon Press on Kitay, whose paintings move me profoundly. Do you know his work?

My writing comes in splurges. There are weeks when I'll be in a semi-catatonic state so far as writing goes, and then out of the clear a day will come when almost anything I think of will turn to gold, and I'm off, flying. How can one understand this? Anyhow, no one can accuse me of working obsessively. I become activated only when I sense something interesting in the making.

Very hard to go along with the fact that your boys are now old enough to be in college. But then I already have four granddaughters, one of them in Senior High.

Did I tell you that my archives are now in The Houghton Library at Harvard? So if there's anything you'd like to add to it, send it to Rodney G. Dennis, Curator of Manuscripts.

I've given up on ever seeing you again, so it's nice to get an occasional note from you.

All the best,
Dear old friend,

How sad your letter was, and full of heart, as always. We could have wept. But what can we do? what can we do? The only consoling (small) point is that Esther ended without long pain or anguish. A greater genetic gift I can't imagine. In the meantime, you have filled the void with very interesting experiences. I can't wait to hear more about Tanzania & the ambassador, and the other things.

Leah won't be arriving in New York until late Monday night, so she won't be able to join us that day but we'll be going to museums, galleries and just plain bumming around during the day after that, so perhaps you could join us and be with her that way.

In any case, I'll be seeing you soon.

Love,
Dear Mr. Bruckner:

Would you be interested in having my COLLECTED PROSE reviewed in the Sunday Book Review? If you are and need suggestions as to who to do it, I have two: Michael Heller, who has a chapter on me in his new book on the Objectivists, and Paul Auster, who would do an equally good job. Michael's address is P.O. Box 981, Stuyvesant Station, N.Y.C. 10009; Paul's is 18 Tompkins Place, Brooklyn 11231. Still another is Cid Corman (Fukuoji-cho 80, Utano Ukyo-ku, Kyoto 616, Japan).

I am sending a copy by separate mail and writing you directly because Harvey Shapiro thought you would know my work and be interested.

Sincerely,
19 Aug. 1984

Dear Steve:

Glad you'll be having my two books reviewed. Let me know who'll be doing it and I'll send him the books and I'll get a photograph over to you.

Cordially,
9 Aug. 1984

Dear Steve Abbott:

Would you be interested in having my two latest books, COLLECTED PROSE and SPIRITUS, I, reviewed in Poetry Flash? If you need suggestions, I can give you a few in the Bay Area who know my work and whose judgment I would trust: Michael Palmer, Bill Berkson, David Bromige, Jack Marshall. I think Stephen Rodefer also knows my work, but I'm not sure.

With best wishes,
Dear Mr. Fogel:

Your invitation with respect to the position of program director came as a pleasant surprise....very pleasant, very surprising. Alas, it comes at a time in my life when I am unable to consider it. A stint as visiting writer, however, would be a possibility, and I would be willing to consider that.

I don't expect you to check up on my academic degrees but if you should have to, please note that I changed my name legally to Callman Rawley in 1925, retaining Rakosi as my pen name. Thus, my B.A. is made out to Rakosi and the other two degrees to Rawley, which is how I was known also in my positions in Austin and Houston. All the other items are under Rakosi.

I have thought of two people who would, I think, do a bang-up job as director of the MFA program, Anselm Hollo and Ed Dorn. They have the talent and the know-how and are truly innovative and creative. Whatever they did would be out of the ordinary. To some degree this would be true also of Anne Waldman. A more conservative but thoughtful and perceptive fourth possibility would be Hayden Carruth.

With very best wishes,