Series 2, Box 6: Work by Rakosi - Naropa, Yaddo.

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Naropa Institute Summer Session I 1979

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SIXTH SESSION ON WRITING

Carl Rakosi
POETRY WORKSHOP
June 22, 1979

The Jack Kerouac School
Naropa Institute
Carl Rakosi: You remember last time we talked about the energy of language in the poem "Behold the Rib" and that the source of that dynamic language, language energy (I talk about language as if it were a human being, but as a matter of fact, language as a medium for human beings is not a dead thing out there somewhere. It really does seem to have, in poetry and in literature, an inner vitality of its own, which by the way is one of the reasons why it's risky to tamper with language, because that energy, that life, and the source of it, has been developed over centuries of use by people, millions of people), came from two places: one was the wonderfully imaginative and creative use of language which American blacks developed; the other was the passion of the author in his own subject matter. I mean he was overwhelmed by it, and when it came out, it came out with the energy which his imagination had put into it.

Language energy can come from a different source, too. I'm going to read two poems by Jonathan Williams to illustrate this. Williams comes from North Carolina, so this is a language of Appalachia, of rural folk. It has a strange vitality--I can't put my finger exactly on where it's coming from, but when I see it and hear it inwardly, as one can do, I hear its personality and the extraordinary energy of that personality. You'll see it in a moment when I read it, but when you read it on the page, you will get it too. It forces the reader to hear it. So this is white Appalachian idiom. It's called (by the way, it's very amusing, the poem itself), "Lee Ogle Ties a Broom and Ponders Cures for Arthuritis"--not "arthritis" but "arthuritis." Now "arthritis" of course is standard English but when you say, "arthuritis," immediately you're alerted; what comes to your mind are certain people who
hadn't gone to the university but who are talking folk speech. Folk speech has a distinctive character of its own.

LEE OGLE TIES A BROOM & PONDERS CURES FOR ARTHURITIS

lands them fingers really
dreadfulled me I
couldn't tie
nary broom one

had to soak em in water
hot as birds blood

then I heared this ol man from Kentucky say
takes a jug of apple juice just juice not cider
pour the epsum salts to it and
take as much as you kin

bein fleshly I kin take
right smart but
boys you know it moves a mans bowels
somethin terrible

well boys it just
naturally killed that arthuritis
lost me some weight too
and I
still tie thesehere brooms

pretty good

I'll read the other which is in the same vein: "Ol Man Sam Ward's History of the Gee-Haw Whimmy-Diddle." I have no idea what a Gee-Haw Whimmy-Diddle is but it doesn't matter. I think you have to be in North Carolina to know.

OLD MAN SAM WARD'S HISTORY OF THE GEE-HAW WHIMMY-DIDDLE

some folks say
the injuns made 'em
like lie detectors
called'em
hoo-doo sticks

feller
in Salisbury, North Caylini
mide the first
whimmy-diddle I seen
I whittle seven
kind: thisuns king
size, thisuns jumbo, thisuns
extry large

here's a single, here's one
double, here's a triple and why right here
here's a forked 'un

been whittlin' whimmy-diddles come
ten year, I reckon you'd
care to see my other toys,
boys, I got some fine
flipper-dingers, fly-killers and bull-roarers, I can

kill a big fly at 60 feet
watch here

(both from Jonathan Williams AN EAR IN BARTRAM'S TREE, New Directions, 1969.)

It just bristles with energy. It's electric with it. Where does the energy come from? I don't know, it's just there, one has to hear it.

This happened before with John Synge. Synge heard the remarkable folk character of Irish speech, especially in the Aran Islands where he spent some time. After which he kind of got lost in Paris for a while, and then wrote his plays in which the characters had this speech, this electric energy. You know that it's solid. This is the language of a people, not of an individual; no man, no single man, made it. It has a singular beauty, singular beauty. It is far more beautiful than anything Yeats fancied up in his poems. What happened with Yeats was, he had an idealized image of the Irish, for which he wrote in an idealized language, but he was never able to capture the actual language of the Irish. It's as if he were writing out of a myth. And the language is therefore much softer, it doesn't have the realistic brilliance or solid character of the actual speech that Synge heard. Yeats himself recognized this and brought Synge back to Ireland, and he was then honored for what he had achieved.
In Williams' poems another thing that gives the language energy is that it corresponds to and reveals the individual character of these two people. The man who is old Sam Ward is not Lee Ogle. So that in really good human speech, you get individual character, which you never get from a more standardized language.

I don't know how we, living in big cities, can get this kind of brilliance. As I said, language has been deteriorating. Something dreadful has happened to it actually, and it's getting worse. It's homogenized, it's reduced to a tiny vocabulary, it's unimaginative, and we've gotten into the frame of mind of not using our imaginations when we speak. We take the easiest way of expressing something, and that's deadly to a language, deadly. But the writer must not do this. If he's going to be a writer he must exert himself and break loose from that kind of easiness and comfortableness.

In that connection, one can learn something from Mallarme's definition of poetry. His friend, Degas, had been struggling without success to unravel the obscurities and grasp the ideas in a Mallarme poem and in vexation had complained that he couldn't understand what Mallarme was driving at, to which Mallarme, in his very superior, sophisticated manner, responded, "My dear Degas, poems are made with words, not ideas." Well, there's an important point there, and that is, that it is, in the final analysis, the language that you use, your mastery of it, your skill with it, that will determine whether a particular poem is good enough to re-read again and again. It's the language that counts. As well as, of course, the other things that have to do with the spirit of poetry. All that has to be in. But you can have marvelous spirit, great imagination, you can have a great human experience to express, it will do you no good unless the language that you use is notable. Now this is one reason why we must distinguish between writing a human document --there's a lot of writing that is serious, that is well-worth reading as a
human document, that is not poetry at all—and writing a poem, it does no good to put the format into poetic lines, that will not make it a poem.

One of the other characteristics of poetry which I mentioned earlier, was music. The music, the cadence of lines. That we see less and less of these days. I don't know what is happening, whether people's ears are worse and we're actually becoming deafer (it's a possibility) or whether we're just oriented in other directions. But surely one of the most beautiful aspects of language is the music that's in speech and writing. Here's a piece by Joyce in which he forces the reader to listen to the music of his lines, you can't avoid it. This is in conventional form with regular rhymes. Now Joyce, as you know, had a beautiful tenor voice and almost became a professional singer, so he must have had a great ear, one of the greatest ears. In fact, the great beauty of *Finnegan's Wake* is the music there. (By the way, I regard that not as a prose piece but as an epic poem. It's been mis-classified. That is an epic poem if ever I heard one.)

This is a poem he wrote as quite a young man.

All day I hear the noise of waters
Now Joyce used perfectly standard English in this poem but he heard a music as he was conceiving it, in relation to what he perceived; he heard it inwardly, and he then transmitted it. Now there's great beauty there. So I can suggest that the next step for you to take—at this stage you're naturally absorbed in subject matter, in something to write about—but the next stage is to be aware of the language for expressing this. After all, millions of people have subject matter to write about but millions of people do not have this intuitive interest in language. That's a specialized thing.

Would you like to—anybody—comment on this? May I have some feedback from you on this part?

Q: What's the best way to go about that? Reading other people's poetry?

CR: I think so, yes. I'm glad you asked the question. Read the good poets, and listen. I mean, pick up *Finnegan's Wake* and listen to that music. It's remarkable and it's very clear, very clear.

Q: I like to walk down the street and listen to what people say...I lived in Ireland and I stayed in the same places as Joyce and the others, but I noticed how patronizing people seemed on the street, as if they were talking to little children. In America too, it's worth listening...if you really open your ears and listen to how people do talk, not only just the dialect but the arrangement of the conversation. Like this morning I was walking down the street and heard a conversation that was like a part opening to a play, it was exactly the same as *Malanchtha* by Gertrude Stein. It was this emotional argument between two lovers and it just repeated each phrase three times and I realized that in real emotion, in a really turbulent emotion between two
people in love, it is exactly the same...people will repeat something exactly
the same or arrange it to stress what they think because it's almost inarticulate,
but yet on the outside, just walking down the street hearing this, it's not so
beautiful-sounding as in a play. So outside of reading words, I'd say to
hear, to appreciate music, to realize that we all do talk in rhythmic pattern,
we are our own grammar, and how we produce our meaning systems by the rhythmic
measure of where we put intonation or stress, or what words we use more than
others becomes a musical arrangement and that you'll be walking down the street
and hear some musical arrangements, so keep your ears open.

CR: Yes, you're making a very good point, David, that is right, it can still
be heard in some places. I'm not saying human speech has become totally
devoid of imagination and character in this country. You'll still hear it
among working men, for example. You will hear it in bars, where men are
relaxed. I don't know about women, I must ask you about that, where you might
hear it in the conversation or talk of women. I don't know. What's been your
experience?

But you do have to look for it, I mean that's true, so you point is good.

Q: In churches?

CR: You hear it in churches? Really? Working wives maybe, working women?

This is a problem in England too. The curse of contemporary poetry in
England has been the standard university English, which is perfectly adequate
to express ideas, very suitable, but not to express poetry. The young poet
in England who I think has introduced something new and fresh, a vigorous
quality, into the language of English poetry, is Roy Fisher. I met him a
couple of years ago when I was giving readings in England. I said, "How
come in your poetry I can recognize something authentically British and I can't recognize that in the other English poets? Is it because their language is too smooth, too stylized, too much alike?" And he said, "The reason is, I never went to a British university." He's made his living as a jazz pianist in Birmingham.

So this is a problem. As society becomes more civilized, more centralized in big cities, and everybody goes to universities, our speech tends to become standard university English. It's a great problem.

Q: Carl, who was the guy you were trying to remember the other night?


Q: Yes, I was trying to get hold of a book of his. I've been reading a book called *Five Back Country Poets*. It's right in that area; the dialect and the accents are just incredible. You know, one neighborhood can't understand another. So when you were talking about where is this--for me, that's where it is.

CR: Yes. Well now, the Scotch poets, that's a different story. They've held on to speech idiom. It's wonderful, really wonderful. You know when you hear it all right that it's the real thing. The only point I wanted to make to you on this is simply to shift your attention a bit from subject matter to language. Mallarme was absolutely right, poems are made with *language*, not ideas.
OK. I now have something to show in a specific way, what I mean by the particular. You remember I was saying that a poem has to be proved, in somewhat the same way that a theorem in geometry has to be proved. In a poem it has to be proved by the particular. You're making some generalizations, and the reader, who is a very sceptical cuss, is not going to believe it unless you prove it by the particular, by something that would demonstrate that you must in fact have felt the way you did or that what you've concluded rests on some particular facts. There is in France a very curious poet, now in his 70s, called Francis Ponge. He himself doesn't think of himself as a poet, and maybe he doesn't write poetry, but the French regard him as a poet. What he does, you see, is look at the tiniest object in nature, and as he looks at it with more and more concentration, his imagination begins to work on it, and something is created as a result. So he actually starts from the other end. Where the poet will usually start with the general and then introduce the particular, although it doesn't have to be that way of course, he starts from the particular, from the smallest possible particular. He is a little like the French entomologist Fabre, who looks at a bee, for example, the life of the bee, and it goes on and on and on and before you know it, you have an epic poem about the bee. Similarly the ant.

This Ponge piece is called "Notes Toward a Shell." He is looking at a shell. "A shell is a little thing but I can make it look bigger by replacing it where I found it."

I'm going to stop for a minute. Just think about that. He's introducing something highly metaphysical at that point. "A shell is a little thing but I can make it look bigger by replacing it where I found it." As a matter of fact, this is actually what happens. Once he's taken it from where it was lying, looked at it and then replaced it, it is not the same object any longer. I don't know why, but it does, in fact, look bigger, if you've ever had that experience.
"...by replacing it where I found it on the vast expanse of sand. For if I take a handful of sand and observe a few grains, then each grain individually, at that moment none of the grains seems small to me any longer. And soon the shell itself, this oyster shell or lumpet or razor clam, will appear to be an enormous monument, both colossal and intricate..."

Now, you see, he suddenly leaps into imagination. He's looking at this thing running through his fingers and there are a few grains of sand left and at that point the shell will appear different (he's holding the shell in his hand apparently), it will appear to be an enormous monument. So you've got this transformation—you've got the shell in a different perspective than when it's lying in the sand and you're at some distance from it. Now it's very close to you, right up to your face, and there it appears "...an enormous monument both colossal and intricate like the Temples of Angkor." The poet now has moved in on the scene. Now if he had stopped short of that, you know, it would have been interesting observation, worthwhile, but no more; but then as he's looking (this might be a lesson in writing, the creative process of writing), as he's looking and continuing to look, and changes the perspective of the thing from where it lay to close up, this way, that way, the poet moves in, the poet's imagination moves in. "...like the Temples of Angkor or the Church of Saint Maclou or the Pyramids and with a meaning far stranger than these unquestioned works of man." And the metaphysician has moved in, the philosopher, the thinker. Not simply the imagination of the poet, but now the thinking poet, the speculative, philosophical poet. "If I then stop to think that this shell, which a tongue of the sea can cover up, is inhabited by an animal, and if I add an animal to this shell, if I add an animal to this shell by imagining it back under a few inches of water, you can well understand how much greater and more intense my impression becomes, and how different from the impression that can be produced by even the most remarkable
of the monuments I have just mentioned."

Well, Ponge is a very modest man, very unpretentious, you know. He's just following his actual observation, and then his poetic imagination moves in and the thinking part of him moves in and he lets it go where it will go. This has charm, therefore, because of his unpretentiousness. He doesn't pretend to be a philosopher or a great poet, he doesn't even regard himself as a poet. The thing to learn from this is that there are great possibilities in the particular, limitless possibilities perhaps—well, I don't know about limitless, but great. To the person who has imagination, who has an accurate eye to start with (Ponge's powers of observation are precise; he also has imagination), who's able to have his imagination move in on a particular, and then have the thinking part of himself move in on it too, the particular becomes a poetic reality. The shell here has become a poetic reality. Absolutely convincing, nobody could dispute the authenticity of it. What I see so much in writing courses, unfortunately, is not this great talent in observation, nor the patience to wait for penetrating observation, or the modesty to go with it. I find instead very pretentious kinds of generalizations that lie out in the atmosphere somewhere unbacked by any actual, particular experience. Or the experience may have been there but the author simply either didn't feel it necessary to put it in or didn't know how to do it.

Let me get some feedback from you on this.

Q: Intellectually I'm very aware of what you're saying, but sometimes when I write a poem, I think I've got the particular in and I'm very proud that I've got the particular in there, but it may sometimes be remote from really what I was writing about. You know, it may be a detail to describe something that maybe the reader won't get, yet it is really real... Something that Larry Fagin pointed out to me the other day. I mean it's not real for the reader, necessarily, even though it may be a detail. It's almost as if you had taken
a detail and plastered it on like stucco or something.

CR: Well, when I use the term particular, I don't mean just any detail. Novels are full of details but they are not essential reality. In poetry the particular would be that particular which is the basis from which generalization is made; in other words, there's a functional relationship and dependency between the particular in a poem and its generalization or its overall statement and feeling. We get into the most difficult problem in poetry when we try to particularize feeling, or feelings, because feelings are, in fact, kind of free floating, and they don't have a specific shape. Therefore, to provide the particular is not so easy. It's much easier to do with an intellectual generalization.

Q: Thinking about what you're just saying now, there's a quote by Bertolt Brecht about politics, that it's a springboard into creativity but for the inadequate, politics are a crutch. In a way, it's sort of what you were just talking about, because I think a lot of people are afraid to talk about their feelings, because they're afraid of being alienated, that people won't understand them, that everyone's very cynical, and that if you expose your private self, it's dangerous. You know, in today's kind of television mythology everyone wants to talk in generalities, so there's mass communication. So if you do want to talk about passion, you use politics or you use social issues rather than going behind the feelings that have created politics and social issues. Everyone is just saying it's all breaking down but no one is prepared to go back in and try and find out the reasons, because that's really jeopardizing your own self.
CR: Yes, yes, that certainly is true. But even in ordinary everyday human relationships we have that problem of expressing feelings. I don't have that problem myself, maybe because my origins are European, not English. After all, a great part of my own professional life as a psychotherapist dealt with that precise problem of, say, a man and a wife not ever being able to express their actual feelings towards each other. Certainly not negative feelings. Scared to death of negative feelings. But surprisingly, almost as frightened of positive feelings. I mean, you would not expect people to be afraid of positive feelings, of feelings of affection, yet they are almost as afraid of them as of hostile feelings. This comes out of the natural life situation in American society. And the American poet of course has, then, in writing the same problem. After all, he was born into an American family.

This is worth talking about, the psychology of self-expression. Let's get some feedback on that, because it really could be more helpful to you than any comments I could make on the texts of your poems.

Q: I was thinking of a project that I'm working on in California to do poetry with individuals that are recent discharges from psychiatric institutions. They're in residential treatment facilities...and that's one of the things that I'm interested in, how to get them to express their feelings, their poetic sensibility...in terms of like distancing themselves from it, like say OK choose an object of nature or any object to describe their feelings.

CR: Yes, yes.

Q: What's been your experience in encouraging that? How does that work? Because you can see these people are angry or depressed, but they don't express it.
CR: It takes a lot of time and a lot of concentrated development of the other person's confidence and trust. First of all, he has to begin to understand that he will not be destroyed by the expression of his feelings. As a matter of fact, far more problems are created in a human relationship by the failure to express strong feelings than by the expression of them. This is because feelings can't be totally concealed from the other person, and pretending that they are not there forces the two people into a pact of dissimulation and prevents the situation that is causing the angry feelings from being resolved. And a situation that is unresolved, festers and metathesizes. The fact is, angry feelings never hurt anybody. The feeling that they do is an illusion formed in early childhood.

Curiously, love too is feared. Now why should the expression of love, deep love, feel threatening? This has a curious basis. It has to do with perhaps a fear of being hurt, first, of being rejected, that the other person may not love so deeply, for we expect reciprocity and assume that the relationship can't endure without it—a somewhat illusory game. On the other hand, love does demand personal involvement and a person may, therefore, avoid expressing his feelings in order to avoid being forced into something in which he feels insecure.

So these are some of the curious grounds for the reluctance, the fear, of expressing deep feelings in human relationships. They carry over into writing, simply because we live as human beings before we live as poets. And yet what do we expect of poetry? We certainly do expect affection in poetry. What would it be without it? Pretty cold; just objects of intellect, the things that produce so much intellectualism in poetry.
Q: The thing that I find hard in all this, you know, is that writing a poem is pretty much digging deep in and conveying a feeling. The thing I'm so pissed off about me is that I'm so dependent upon other people's response. So you know, I'll write this thing and I'll say, "Damn, it's good," you know, and then I'll read it and maybe I'll get a good response, you know, like, "Gee, that really hit the nail on the head," and maybe hit another group and they'll say, "Gee, it just doesn't do it for me," and I'll be crushed. And I'm really finding that out incredibly—not incredibly, excuse me--

CR: (laughter) All right, I can put on my evaluation of you that you've learned something. (Note: I laughed because in a previous session I had cited the word, incredible, as an example of lazy, sloppy English).

Q: But I'm finding that out in this class too. It's just that I don't know, it's a whole different experience, it's a tender thing, poetry is, especially when it's new and I'm so susceptible to whatever people feel. In a way, it somehow contradicts the essence of poetry.

CR: Well, I must say I'm a little uneasy at the tendency of the present generation to always stick with one's peers. Uneasy about it because poetry is individual, a poet has to be an individualist. Poetry is written in a solitary place where there's quiet. It's a private matter and if you're always mixing with your peers, if your whole life is with them, and certainly if you depend for reassurance or confirmation of your work on the feedback of peers, you're going to be in trouble. It'll drive you crazy. Somebody's gonna like it and somebody else is not going to care for it. And furthermore, are they giving you what they really believe? And is their opinion worth a damn to start with? Are they good critics? Why assume that your peers are
good critics? I wouldn't. I wouldn't.

My experience in the only writing class that I was ever in was interesting from that point of view. The teacher was William Ellery Leonard, a famous poet in his day. He demolished an early poem of mine and made fun of it in class. Now I could have stood his criticism but he made fun of it. You would have thought that would have destroyed me, but it didn't destroy me at all. I thought, "Well, that son of a bitch doesn't know what he's talking about! Really, he's just old-fashioned, he doesn't know." Well, it wasn't a very good poem and I didn't keep it, but it doesn't matter, the point is not to be dependent on the opinion of others. There are some people of course, whose opinion I value highly. For example, when I was in my 30s, I used to get feedback from Louis Zukofsky which was useful to me. I could have done without it, but it was useful to me and I respected it because he had a great critical mind. But there aren't many great critics around. So don't depend on your peers' opinion. You may be much better than they are. I'm not saying that your work is necessarily going to be good for that reason. But psychologically there has to be a core of confidence in you. Otherwise you can't move ahead. A center, a hard center of confidence.

Q: ...which comes from peer opinions, and--

CR: No! It will never come from peer opinions, never. I don't know, frankly, why I had it. Maybe it had something to do with the integration of my personality. I knew if I was going to depend on all kinds of other people, it would just fragment me. But young people of my generation had a tremendous amount of self-confidence. They were individualists.

Q: Did you find that it built up as you went along, kind of?
CR: I had it right away. Right away, yes.

Q: I think that's just the essence of maturity for anyone who works a profession or job. It's a matter of confidence and inherent strength. And the difference, I think, to start, might be that during and after the 50s it was a credit system and so people were insulated psychologically much beyond other individuals who when they reached around 18 or 17 would either go to the university or they'd go out and work. They had to have that innate sense of character to realize they were going to do it themselves. They were going to have to cough up. So as a masculine trait, you know, the father would take the child and throw him out in the water, and make him swim back. So these harsh cruel things worked. And the best image that I could say in being strong as a person as regards myself personally is that it's like the essence of forging. You fire the steel and then you put it in water and temper it. Being a creative person is even more delicate because you're on an edge where there's an enormous amount of tension, which if you're an artist you create in order to develop your subject, whether it's a poem or a piece of sculpture, especially in the arts because for the most part, people demand so much in their ignorance or out of their slothfulness from the artist that the artists themselves have to make even more tension, so what I would say is that 80 per cent of all conversation amongst all the writing students has to do with confidence: please tell me that I can write. Now let's say that to establish yourself in a field, or to appreciate someone's work, means a lot of hard work, but the main thing that young people have to realize is that they're going to have to construct from their self, they're going to have to be their own critic. Then they'll be respected because something will emanate from their own strength; something will come out of the poem, once they can do that, but until they can do that, I don't think any poems or an art or anything will ever really appear except
by accident. Because that emanates from who the person is. And that gets all the way into your particular. To me the most particular would be the kernel, the essence, and in everything is a diagram, whether it's a shell, a blade of grass, a microcosm, and in that diagram, as the philosopher said, the smallest point, can tilt the whole universe. That point is probably unfathomable, or it's a belief itself, but it holds us--well, it holds my self together. That quality, that's what life's all about. When you throw that in the fire, what remains is what you really are. And everything else will eat at you until you are the person that you truly are. And if you can accept that quickly and stop crying about it, and then draw from that each day, each moment, where there's a confirmation of that in nature, either you see the shell, or you see a snail climbing up Mt. Fuji or something impossible, something, any confirmation of the life force which is the human spirit, then that's all the greatness that one has to be in contact with, and then greatness will arise through any kind of articulation of it.

CR: Yes. Well, to get back to my own case, I think one of the things that gave me self-confidence was that I was a good reader of the greatest poetry. I read it avidly, it gripped me, and having that in me, I knew when I was good and when I wasn't. In other words, the only teachers, the best teachers, are the great writers themselves. Everything else comes secondhand. The greatest teacher is Shakespeare. The greatest teacher is Blake. The greatest teacher is, you name it—Sappho. Now, does every person have the capacity to get into great poetry and to learn from it? I don't know, really. But if you can do it, you have the only teacher that you need. Nobody needs to go to a writing class in order to learn to be a poet. That's a foolish idea. You can learn grammar and punctuation from writing courses and you can get some
little help, yes, but you will never learn how to be a poet that way. No, never. Gee, maybe I shouldn't say that. But this is your problem, relationship to peers. Maybe you should talk more about it. I'm on the outside when it comes to this. I'm merely an observer.

Q: I think you have to develop a sense of humor, to work with that. I really enjoy taking the same poem to several different people and get completely different reactions. And, you know, if I've finished a poem, I've finished it and I'm not usually going to change it. But it's really interesting to see, because, like, what one will hate about it, another will really like. It becomes just really funny, because you've expressed yourself. All you're ever really expressing some ways is yourself, your own essence, so it's there, and what one person likes about me is probably what the other person can't stand. And it's in the poem. So that's part of it too. You have to have a sense of humor about yourself.

CR: But would any of your peers be competent to help you with the language of a poem? With language as a medium?

Q: Yes. Then also I can show it to teachers too. However, if you take everything that everyone says about you all that serious, you're going to be in a lot of trouble.

CR: Well, you'd be very confused. I can see nothing but confusion ahead for somebody who keeps taking his poems out for a reaction from peers. For one thing, there's a very great difference in taste among people, let alone competence to react to a poem with a good head on one's shoulders.
Q: Also, what Pound reiterated many times about "making do." I feel that at Naropa it's very typical to make do because of the political workings of groupings of personalities, whether for money or because this is how artists do cohere together in order to make themselves credible. So one has to be strong when merging with a group and have a sense of humor, not take himself too seriously; otherwise the group becomes arrogant and can't hear its individual members. I feel that it's very healthy for young poets now to leap, to listen to the drum of their own heart and to beat their own path because I feel that the influence of some of the people who teach here can, you know, if one's open, lead to something, to making something totally new. But for the most part if one is to interject oneself into a group, he will more or less assimilate and be co-opted into changing his sensibilities in order to get published or to make money and win acceptance. I notice a lot of artistic groupies, and how that changes. Ted Berrigan says the same in Talking Poetics: he says, "Watch out." Historically you can check it out. Every group that's at the forefront has done that, has listened to the group that came before them but they had something a little bit different that they wanted to say and they understood how one gets co-opted. Because loneliness, being alone, is strength, and then the loneliness of being alone possibly attracts other minds and new forms develop, not so much as an antithesis to, but as a reaction to the fact that it's a different feeling, it's a different world. We do have change. So on those questions, you know, mostly one has to be his own critic and have his own confidence, but not so he can't see or hear others, and realize that the masters or the professionals or people who came before went through the same trial of endurance, the same situations, and merged to become the voice, and that they truly wanted that voice rather than any old voices they could draw from and wanted to create their own sensibility which would be their own voice which would be new, because everyone is different.
We're not clones yet.

CR: No, we will never be clones, no. The human spirit fights against that, it doesn't submit entirely.

Q: Only if the spirit wishes to go along with comfort. That's why the sharpest hit of today was when you said the word "comfort." That's the biggest enemy for any real sensitive person; not to take the easy way out.

Q: But for me the easy way out would be to sit up in my cabin and write this stuff and just say, "Wow, I'm a poet! You know, here it all is." The hard thing is to come here and to put it in front of you, for example. Not just peer groups. I can rationalize peer groups, you know, but I can't rationalize someone I respect. When I heard your poetry the other night, I was just taken back, so when you say something about a poem, it really penetrates. It really hits. Now maybe that's because my core isn't as strong as yours, but that's taking chances and I think you have to take some of those chances.

CR: I can suggest one other thing to you. I don't know whether you're at this particular level of critical power but it's helpful to lay a poem aside for six months and then come back to it and see what you have, and ask yourself the question, "Is this interesting language?" "Is the subject matter interesting?" Some very unfortunate conclusions have been drawn from Williams' efforts to see how far he could go in making the ordinary events of life into poems. This was a necessary direction to go when he began to write, in terms of where poetry was then. But there must be a million young people in this country today who believe that all they have to do is to put some particular observation down on paper and they have a poem. Not so. The
subject matter also has to be interesting. Now I'm not saying that it has
to be poetic in the conventional literary sense, just interesting. I remember
when I was Visiting Poet at Michigan State, a young woman handed in a poem
that was about her fingernails. Well (laughter), you know, you've got to use
your intelligence too. You know damn well that you're not going to make any-
thing interesting out of your fingernails no matter who you are—you could
be Joyce. There has to be judgment here as to what is going to be interesting
to other people. By the way, that's another criterion; it's not simply being
interesting to yourself, because you can be fooled there. If you've gone through
a certain human experience, sure it's interesting to you. Or if you're writing
about yourself, of course you're interested in that, it's you. But is somebody
else going to be interested in that? No, not necessarily, not at all.

Q: I don't agree with you. I feel that the imagination can make everything
interesting. And Whitman said the same thing, every part of his body was
as holy and equal as every other part.

CR: Well, you can make the fingernail interesting if you can do what Francis
Ponge did with the shell. But his was not simply a poem about a shell. What
you're talking about now as a possibility would not be a poem about a finger-
nail. This girl had written a seven line poem about a fingernail, period.
No, we must recognize our limitations. Don't take Whitman too seriously
on this. Or Blake. Blake, you might say, could do all sorts of things that
the rest of us couldn't do. One must recognize one's own limitations. And
the limitations of one's imagination. It's not limitless. It's not limitless.
And if you expect it to be limitless, you'll write a kind of grandiose poetry
that is not good. You see, Ponge is solid because he doesn't try to go beyond
his limitations; he doesn't pretend that what he is writing is everything. He doesn't go beyond what he knows he can do with his imagination and his ideas. Now I love Whitman, but I don't take him seriously when he talks that way. You go as far as you can, yes. I do differ with you on this, therefore, David. It's very easy to say, "The imagination can make everything interesting," but you produce a poem that will do this. If you do it, I'll retract my statement.

But to get back to Dan's point now, the important thing is to develop your own critical faculty in this respect. What can I say about that except to tell you what questions to ask yourself when you're looking at your own poem after you've laid it aside for some time. If you look at it shortly after you've written it, you're not going to see very much that's different from what you were seeing at the time you were writing it, you're not detached enough; you're not seeing it as it is—that is, as an entity outside yourself. A poem really doesn't have anything more to do with you once it's written and completed. So in a sense, you have to wait until you are removed enough from your absorption in it to be able to look at it objectively as a thing outside yourself. At that time, you ask yourself, "Is it interesting enough? Are there other things that should be put in to make it interesting? And not merely interesting but also significant? Is the language interesting? The language must always be interesting no matter what—and the language must have energy, enough energy to move you. Has your imagination really done anything with your subject matter? Also, are the particulars in there that would bring this poem to life? It's always the particulars that bring a thing to life, not generalizations.

Q: Getting back to talking about feelings in poems—it seems like when I try to do that, it becomes stale, it's just myself always there and not getting
away from myself, the "I," expressing the feelings that I'm having, that big persona, that big ego...

CR: Oh, I know. There is behind your question your knowledge, apparently, that this is not pleasing to others when they read this. That's true. Who wants to read about somebody's I I I all the time? That's just a human characteristic. Well, why must it always be about the I I I?

Q: I'm talking about personal feelings that I'm trying to express.

CR: Well now, personal feelings are not quite the same thing; they're universal. They are yours but they are also universal because others also have them. I may not understand your question.

Q: To me the expression of feelings is personal and I'm getting the message from various people that there's no room for that in poems.

CR: Who are these people?

Q: I guess it was Creeley the other night that pointed out the difference between private and personal, that the private is the creative and the personal is not, in writing.

CR: I fail to get the distinction.

Q: The private coming from that inner place like you were talking about, that center.
Q: ...like basically instead of having I I I dealing with personal feeling, becoming the private without it, and that is the I without the I I I.

CR: Somebody is not thinking very clearly here. I don't know. If you're talking about feeling, then it's personal, it's in the I. No one objects to that.

Q: I guess the question is how to express that without having the I in there.

CR: Well, you have other options. You can express it fictionally, by changing from the first person to the third person, or even to the second person. Ashbery's always talking about the I in the second person: "You do this, you do that." In other words, you can remove it from yourself a bit. When you do that, you do have far more latitude for movement. I don't do it very often because I sounds more suitable to my character, my own personality. I like the directness of I, but I know nobody wants to have too much of the I, no reader, so one has to do it with restraint. But there are these other options open to you. Or you can make it completely fictional. Put it into an as-if world.

Q: I guess sometimes that dilutes it so much that I feel I'm really not expressing myself.

CR: It does dilute it a bit, you're right, because it is not direct, that's true.
Q: What I've been hearing is that if the I is in the poem physically, there's still a problem. But I agree with you, I would much prefer to say I.

CR: It's a matter of preference too. And also a matter of one's ability to carry it out as I. The psychology of the I poem is really quite different from the psychology of the You poem and the He poem because you detach yourself from responsibility for what you've said when you fictionalize it in He or You.

Q: You can also use One if you've got a bunch of complicated information to get over succinctly.

CR: Yes, but not in poetry. I can't remember a poem that expresses feeling that can get by with the use of "one."

Q: Anyway, these arguments about keeping I I I out of the poem, just keeping the word "I" out, sound really ridiculous to me.

Q: I think what you're saying is the essence of what he's saying, to keep that gushiness, the self, out of it.

CR: Also, one of the considerations is, how big is that I that's speaking here? The reader will tolerate a small I but not a big one. Unless it really is a big I.

Q: It's actually more presumptuous to use you for something like that. When poems say, "you," it's implied that, well, everybody does this. You walk out on the street, and you pick your nose... I walk out on the street, I pick my nose, is what they really want to say.
CR: That's true. It's an evasion, yes. And You is much more of an evasion than He or She, because the real person in it hides in a universal.

Well, this has been great fun. Our last session is over, and the time has come to give you back your manuscripts. OK.
TO CERTAIN LANGUAGE POETS, NOT TO TAKE THEIR IDEAS SO SERIOUSLY

To the tune and words of The Willow Song in THE MIKADO

By a tree and a river an exiguous linguist
sat singing, "Zukofsky! Zukofsky! Zukofsky!"
And I said to him, "Superbird, why do you sit,
singing, 'Zukofsky!, Zukofsky!, Zukofsky?'
"Is it lyric astheninga, birdie," I cried,
"or a concept too big for your little inside?"
With a shake of his tight little head, he replied,
"Oh Zukofsky, Zukofsky, Zukofsky."

P.S.
Try Wittgenstein.
"Because I'm sitting on bottom."
"Because I've hit bottom.
And I've hit bottom."

LANGUAGE POET

LANGUAGE POET, TOM-TIT

TOM-TIT, A LANGUAGE POET

RE TOM-TIT, A LANGUAGE POET ON TOM-TIT, A LANGUAGE POET
To certain language poets, not to take their ideas so seriously

By a tree and a river an exiguous linguist
sat singing, "Zukofsky, Zukofsky, Zukofsky!"
And I said to him, "Super-bird, why do you sit,
singing, 'Zukofsky, Zukofsky, Zukofsky?
Is it lyric asthenia, birdie,' I cried,
or a concept too big for your little inside?"
With a shake of his tight little head, he replied,
"Oh Zukofsky, Zukofsky, Zukofsky."

P.S.
For more
consult Wittgenstein.

P.S.
For more
consult Wittgenstein.

P.S. For more
consult Wittgenstein.
so on through to the climax. The second character, the female, is a romantic virgin:

Speaking of beaus sartorial,
perplexed young girl hands laugh to love-wise.
I am a lovely, irresistible girl
of seventeen, with wonderous witching orbs.
Why do I blaze in my intangibles
like any mandolin romantic,
you, stable as the sterling?

Her subtle, mysterious charm contrasts with the overt showiness of the male. She is perplexed; her power is a covert magic which neither she nor those she impresses can resist. Rakosi ridicules these roles by the manner in which he exaggerates them. The "millions" are "gaping"; his "entertainment" is a "miracle." Her "orbs" are "wonderous" and "witching"; and she blazes in her "intangibles."

"Wanted" is a preposterous advertisement for writers:

WANTED

Expert experiences black on white
by men who are all white from the midriff
to the arches through the lowest joints

Their required whiteness seems an ironic indication of their acceptability to the American public, a superficial innocence.

We train you in accepted imagery,
the sights of love, and other popular sports,
and keep your eyes peeled for the gems of gab.

So far, this seems to reveal the young Rakosi's scorn for the popular, accepted poet, but the next two lines suggest that he's also talking about himself, as a Jewish poet whose "larynx" is "without gentile deformations."

Diction or fact; it's all one to the larynx, that is, one without gentile deformations.
By a tree and a river an exiguous linguist
set singing, "Zukofsky! Zukofsky! Zukofsky!"
And I said to him, "Wittgenstein, why do you sit,
singing, 'Zukofsky! Zukofsky! Zukofsky!'"
Is it lyric asbhenia, Wittgie," I cried,
"or a concept too big for your little inside?"
With a shake of his tight little head, he replied,
"Oh Zukofsky, Zukofsky, Zukofsky."
ON TOM-TIT, A LANGUAGE POET

By a tree and a river an exiguous linguist
sat singing, "Zukofsky! Zukofsky! Zukofsky!"
And I said to him, "Wittgenstein, why do you sit,
singing, 'Zukofsky! Zukofsky! Zukofsky!'"
"Is it lyric asthenia, birdie," I cried,
"or a concept too big for your little inside?"
With a shake of his tight little head, he replied,
"Oh Zukofsky, Zukofsky, Zukofsky."

Note: To the tune and words of The Willow Song in The Mikado.

Carl Rakosi
ON TOM-TIT, A LANGUAGE POET

By a tree and a river an exiguous linguist
sat singing, "Zukofsky! Zukofsky! Zukofsky!"
And I said to him, "Superbird, why do you sit,
singing, 'Zukofsky! Zukofsky! Zukofsky!'
"Is it lyric asthenia, birdie," I cried,
"or a concept too big for your little inside?"
With a shake of his tight little head, he replied,
"Oh Zukofsky, Zukofsky, Zukofsky."

Note: To the tune and words of The Willow Song in The Mikado.

Carl Rakosi
A grouping of poets under a name is always misleading because it implies an entity that is not there and characteristics that apply to some members and not to others. A poet is an entity. It is not safe or wise to say more. Nevertheless, it does happen. Take the Objectivists. When Harriet Monroe, the editor of POETRY, yielded to pressure from Pound to let Zukofsky edit a special issue, she insisted on a name for the poets he had selected for inclusion, and he had to make one up, but he didn't want to name them anything because all he had done was ferret out the best young talent in America at that time and select their best work. The only name that would have suited all of us, therefore, and been accurate was one that denoted Z's critical standards, which he had derived from Pound, and his personal taste. Of course once the name was used, it made us a group, but in reality we were not and never thought we were. The same sort of thing must be true of the Language Poets, and I am not willing to go down that path and try to respond to them as if they were an entity.
The emotions and the intellect mix very poorly. In fact, they don't mix at all. They exist on different planes, and when they do meet, their tones clash. No sooner does a person feel something, then the mind butts in: looks, describes, interprets, denatures, absorbs, controls, encapsulates. Its wit and precision make it so complacent that it assumes it has improved on the original, or at the very least, made an even exchange. The trouble is that when it's through, the emotion is no longer there, only an ectoplasm. This is a fundamental problem in writing.

Ah, youth! With what condescension and disdain it spurns all poetry it would it do when it is itself a lyrical impulse,
One by one then. I won't use names. A, for example, has an amazing
talent for extinguishing poetry. How he does it, I don't know,
and I'm not interested in finding out, but I heard him give a reading once
and I sat there, dumbfounded, trapped, the minutes creeping mercilessly as
he read what sounded like a treatise, and I cursed him for it. I didn't think
anything outside an engineering handbook could be that dreary. Talk
about dead! Yet A has a strong, lively intellect. He is the only language
poet I have heard read.

I have, however, read a few poems by others. These poems deserve high
marks for mental boldness and nimbleness, for a very refined sensibility in
language and ingenuity in managing it, one poem by Bernstein, in fact,
Z's nimble way with language, reminding me of Zukofsky, and for a thick
imposto of rich word-sounds and
imagery and metaphors. They deserve credit too for the watered-down
Wms. type of poem and the products of the Iowa School and the trumped up "tragedy"
of the confessional poem. Nevertheless, these poems are not where I want to
be.

William-esque poems

and metaphors, for making an impact of rich-sounding words,
George Oppen and I have been friends for over sixty years although we did not meet or correspond with each other until 1971. This is understandable only if you know George. The way it happened was that we sat around his kitchen table in San Francisco and talked and ate cheese and bread, and the more we talked and the more I looked into his steady eyes, the deeper down we got to something solid and brotherly between us, older than he or I. That is how we became old, old friends in one night.

George is a tough old bird. He's the only man I know who can get away with the curious notion that feelings don't have to be expressed in poetry; they can be assumed from the situation. He gets away with it because he's patient and his eye will not let itself be distracted from its object.

George has a great eye, precise and irreducible. If you sit still and look hard enough, you can see what it sees. What it sees feels like the gnarled bark of an oak tree. The tree is there too. You can put your weight
They are hermetic not because the author's nature was hermetic or because the nature of reality seemed hermetic to him or because his experiments have been hermetic but by linguistic assumption and fiat. As a result the poems are artifacts devoid of the human qualities in hermetic poetry of the past, their mystery and unresolved yearning. These poems are sealed casks with no air moving in or out of them and I find myself unable to relate to them in a human way. All I can do is recognize their linguistic excellence.
We use so little of our imagination that when we create the unexpected, it looks as if we have transcended even ourselves.

Left alone the imagination confounds more than it clarifies. This shows that it was not meant to be utilitarian and belongs to a different faculty, the aesthetic.

Thoughts and emotions are attracted to a work of art but when you talk about its meaning or the emotion it evokes, you are not talking about its essential character.

Now that philosophers have entered the modern world and turned their attention to utilitarian subjects, the field has been left to the poets.

Does our ancient interest mean that there is some correspondence between our quest for form and the impulse to discover the nature of being?

If one is not really turned on by poetry, he has no defence against mistaking facility for the real thing.
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I can't make anything of their work because I cannot refer to the words anything in the real world or in the world of actual materialization as I know it. It is a self-contained universe, the linguistic one, on a rampage. Nevertheless, I am impressed. They are quite bright, I think, and I always think well of new and go on to something else, having acquired something new and valuable out of it all. They can use in their new work.

It has the fatal weakness of all such things, it operates from a theory which is to act on premises, assumptions, hypotheses were the truth of fact. Find the reality of fact.
More on language poets — the problem for me is not in adventures in language but in the degree of intelligence in the poems. The degree to which it retreats or subverts the material.

This confronts me with the question, which I have never had to address myself to before, of the role of the intellect in a poem (as it accretes to reader, not of course the poet), what it does, what it undoers, etc.; of course it seems. How the text, as in other matters, is, do I want to read it again? And again? And again? — that is, once we have been impressed or entertained or enlightened by the poet’s intellect or ingenuity, do I want to be impressed again? Can I be surprised again? The content has been received by the reader and approved; there’s no place else for it to go — it’s a one-shot bolt.

Refer to my opinion: the pure poet has no fight against his intellect. But in addition to that, poetry that can be read with satisfaction more than once, has to be existential, not just mental.
poetic impulse; who professes to have feelings which the poem shows he
doesn't have; who does not write out of his own experience; who uses
words deceptively to give the appearance of substance; ......I could
go on. The interesting thing to note is that sincerity in all this, in
the sense of honesty and truth, exists as a product of the poet's relation
to his medium and that the test of it lies, therefore, in the writing,
not in anywhere else.
Language Poets

look on with amusement as they hang a rook around their necks and proceed to hang themselves, ranting the most polemical theory, etc.

as if one decided to see what happens if one uses only the lower left lobe of the brain.
Assembly
California Legislature

WILLIE LEWIS BROWN, JR.
SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY

February 1986
mained a hero for Rochberg. In the 1972 “Reflections on Schoenberg,” he accurately describes Schoenberg as a man who “lost touch with the primitive instinct of the musician’s ear,” who “succumbed to abstraction and rationalization,” and who sought “salvation in methodology.” Yet his final judgment on Schoenberg’s career is that “miraculously he succeeded more than he failed.” The loyalty is touching, but the logic is baffling. Rochberg seems finally unwilling (or unable) to admit that Schoenberg’s perverse granting of priority to the mind over the ear brought about the failure of his own career, and that it is Schoenberg who is directly responsible for much that is wrong with twentieth-century music. This is one of the two grave faults of this extraordinary book. The other is Rochberg’s failure to understand that what he now sees as the great disaster that has overtaken all the arts in the twentieth century—a kind of “rational madness . . . which delights in manipulation for its own sake” and has produced “forms of art totally devoid of human content”—
Some form of tonal implication seems almost to be necessary if music is to satisfy the ear as well as the mind. Finally, a reading of the McCarran-Walter Act—or dangerous subversives—in refusing to enter this country.

The Baltimore Sun points out, is that pro-wolf and, worse, pro-seal and anti. Small wonder the Immigration and Naturalization Service looks askance. What Mowat has done,” observes the Globe, “is write a book called Sea of the Sea of feeling and sound documentation, of species of animal life.”

What else asks The Globe. “It could be, in the bureaucratic guardians of our borders.”

What has been banned. But Sea of which The Seattle Times describes as “must” reading that Rachel Carson’s was once was” refuses to be silenced. As in your local
language: excellent

They have lots of brains. One who, not knowing from their poems that they had been hunted and mesmerized by vacuum - fascinated by the poetry of vacuum, rejected the dual at times - regret, structure too small.

Lydia Davis/lyn hejinian

People moments, but see no one: the space, nothing inside.

Mysterious strange excitement from alternating human.
Some well-intentioned efforts to make language poets out of them &scape steel with them. The linguists, we have been a little naive, of that they are, but language poets have a poet's - an aesthetic idea - for they do not understand the common interest in linguistics. Let's not call a fiction a language poet in the same sense a composer composed, for as it possible for a poet not to be a language poet? In fact, a case might be made out for calling these Anti-language poets, for are they not trying to weld language into a medium of communication (i.e., reference, meaning, idiom) & substitute word objects for them?

Also read Sagatibar, Winter 1987 (my desk). Interview with Bernstein & Measelle.

The hunger to extend the boundaries of language, to create infinitely expandable systems of thought. Like science, always moving ahead, the future unknown, limited only by the limits of one's own mind. Science as a paradigm of art. The art business (promotion, etc.).

However, so far as the young poet himself concerned, the all-consuming need to discover & make something new, something creative, powerful & original. This objective, the past - the enemy, what he must renounce.
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Language Poets

(1) It's where the action is.
(2) The coldest experimentation long before the seduction.
(3) Most fashionable nuxes. Bachtel will be excellent, aggressive potentials.
   (A theory of the past)

Parallel to abstract expressionism reduction to the medium itself, painting + language.
But in painting = no subject. It's because his colors & movements in the lines, these can communicate emotion & there is always a design of some sort there.
But if you remove reference + meaning, you short-circuit communication, everything stops.

The argument:
What about the reader = left free to make up his own meaning? It is regarded as a form of freedom but a reader does not go to a book in order to make up his own meaning. The understanding = that he is going to relate to the author, etc.
If it's a virtue for the author to make up his own meaning, it's surely better for him to write his own poem in the first place. He doesn't need the criticism of the author's objections.
Did one use language for what it is best suited to do, communicate? (which means of personal meaning & reference) — define it to convey color, rhythm, cadence, pace instead of conveying mere technology — color, etc. = better conveyed in painting & cadence = better conveyed in music & association — yes but if the association (which does have meaning) is walled out of context, loses very thin.

Be the reconstruction of language because it is the medium of corrupting capitalist thought & manipulation; this absurd to spend time on.

Why they take away from the masses (who today is not a bourgeoisie) the one medium of communication they do have, language of dissent & hence of protest & attack, etc. of organize, jeer, & leave. Such a sort of communication only come from the academy & those unrelated to people of the breeds of people.

This idea that have been useful to the Nazis. They couldn’t have used it themselves because they are not used to use & control, but they had the found it desirable for the masses because it would have left them powerless.

So this the 20th century’s state of the stock intellectual appropriate to the technology.
Deconstruction of the 20th Century's "true scale intellectualism," elegant and effective as the 19th Century's was so way as deriving from the nature of our technological age and the social isolation of the nature of a radically young wing of academia, which stays out with honorable Marxist and winds up with slightest indeed does not know what.
Linguistics as part of learning to an art. Poetry is not legitimate and worthwhile for study as any other subject. However, for the poet who is thinking only of the own work it is not into this field working poet enters by its to the writing of a poem. Analyzing a poem by its sounds, linguistic structure, and effects does not give the drawer

an \textit{exclusion psychology}

Language poetry expects the reader to perform a lobotomy on himself.
It has taken me a long time not to bring this up. One to question one's own premises. It base and that intent, wholesome. I approach the question from this base; the poet's theory (of theory of language - interesting as that of composition (as culture). His intentions are meaningful to the poet (at other poets), but these are irrelevant to the end. The only thing there is one between the poem and the reader.

The independence of the poem from the poet. I insist on that and I'm willing to wager on the correctness (over).
of that—indeed, come to think of it, I have very little interest in the poet. I have some linguistic speculations about my interest in the poem and its relation to a reader now a poet.
No need to be bothered by their theory—sellman grows his own garden, etc. I feel threatened by them, I feel one is facile, & = our problem.

Abstract expressionism tends to act. It communicates with one's aesthetic sensibility but this doesn't work in language. Because reference & meaning are not built into language in fact its reason for being? Without them, one can simply stop.

Language, an artifact, is no longer a medium, in the sense of passing communication from both to the reader but as language—object the parallel of an object.
Yet it is by its nature restricted to its ability to elicit associations of sound, color or painting metaphor, or metaphor already implies individual word associations. The ability of the reader to make his own associations and build something out of the individual words.

I have read some of the solemn attempts to interpret and poem's interpretation on the part of the interpreter of a total projection not related in any way to the poem that I was reading. It was a disaster.
Their poetry sat odds with the neo-classicism that I know that at least 2 of their professors, for Marx & Engels specifically suggested, not to mention Trotsky, had an honored place in society for it. The whole direct drive of their theory, etc. — in the opposite direction towards the most every of ivory towers.

Poetry, at best, already has a great problem with having readers (develop) — The solecism of much of its makes the prose worse. If not, in addition to the solecism, there is added ingenuity and reference are removed, what we have left is a solecism, if it may stretch the word of language itself & only language — which makes the situation of poetry duplicit.
one is always ready for the new — it is the
nature of the beast. To examine the reactions to
language poets. An interesting or
what the living poets leave to say
initial.
1) excitement at a something new —
new discoveries, new forms, a
better than my language.
2) appalled at the prose one asked to
be at the force of engaging reference.
3) feel that appalled were they come
from — (a) the deconstructivists,
ultra-smart, weisenheimer
experts at int exercise
who do not have an answer done in their book
— who are only out to show that they are one-en
everybody else.
We are, in any case, not (c) the use of themselves — (c) from statistics or a substitute for meaning (c) new left theory — that in some way this was serving a social left political purpose

Contrast with objectivists and (2)’s unwillingness to categorize.

Without meaning & reference (so is it possible to express feelings?)
Without meaning & feelings, what do you leave? something not human
Language poets: basic fallacy—
that words are not just sounds, rhythm, cadences, etc. They are by their nature, referred to meaning—even if the want color we can't get to bit directly as in painting we have to refer to it. From the speed-up of meaning of the word.

Spirit words without meaning are impossible. If we want any effect at all we can get is a combination of abortive meanings (the nature of our medium) then all we can do is manipulate the meanings (more or less this way that way, new meanings by juxtapositions, etc.) and hopefully get special effects or atmosphere from manipulating cadence, section, form, etc.
Bougé's Advice to a Young Poet: 'Little Reader. Alas! from above! I'm not consistent in trying to bluff people. Work shows, there is no substitute for it; holding one theory or another doesn't get a man over the difficulty, etc., etc.

use this for language poets. They can't do my last three since. The poems do not come from the heart, hence I do not move me. — develop.

(1) Can they stimulate me intellectually? Not if they block out meaning & reference — can only relate to it as to a crossword puzzle, aesthetically only, then
(2) can I relate to it simply as an aesthetic object, a language object with musical sound,
(3) can I relate to it just aesthetically, i.e., as to a collection of words which individually & of the aggregate, which make up a richness of rhythm, novelty, etc. (4) Of it an appealing aesthetic object? Yes, & even if so, why did I want to shut out so much of my mind & feelings? Answer: the feeling is that, only the cue words are missing & feel like. (5) Bougie, the feel is that, only the cue words are missing & feel like. It makes no sense. A feeble heed.
The bottom line is... Do I want to take this route & the answer is no. Too little in it for me. Consider this to be... does not mean that there was no point to it. And it doesn't mean that the effort has been wasted. In the sciences perhaps nothing is without some use—someone else will come along & use it for his own purpose... The role of the language poet is quite different from the reader's. That is, I know from my own experience a tremendous excitement of discovery & of limitless possibilities along this.

Present in any combination of words, the old words are simply absent route. Also, as the reader, I do not care about that. It is of no interest to me—that is not my concern at all...

Beginnig 1. The first thing that's wrong is the title: Language Poet. Everyone after all is a language poet. What we did call 'Language Poet' is like calling a composer a 'main composer'. For its linguistics that they've introduced into their poetry—for some it's half their subject matter & their parameters (the subject if art is a

question is, and the study of linguistics, is of great reference) but it's a wait & see...

The second thing that's wrong—the radical confrontations in stages of Poetry. First of all, it have been the direct result of the behavior of two of the 'architects' & Barretta & Whittington & not fact they paint the others with the same brush—but I have read things by L. Bein, etc. & I do not feel that in any way provocative.
The remedy—to forbid these 2 to speak for anyone but themselves...

Like the minimalists (Steve Reich + John Adams), the language poets will look (or turn) to something else ("Obviously Adams was attracted to minimalizing...""). He takes surface characteristics — its sesquiox sound but no "emphatic" meaning — "bust the bounds of the aesthete’s deliberate austerity."

Read p. 58 for roots of language poets.

Dettmold
What they attempt = psych. Very ambitious: for nothing less than breaking off parts of poetry as a whole — vi. rhythm should stand + words from their syntax + context entities. Using them as if they were wholes — using them as if they were wholes & does not make the whole & creating a whole universe of sound or rhythm wind up having to be purely arbitrary of juxtapositions (which)
"What's wrong with that? Has no interest to the reader. The arbitrary & the serendipitous happen to the author in the course of composing, but that same arbitrary & serendipitous can not happen to the reader, for he is not the poet."
"For reducing painting to its elements Cubism made it possible to separate each element from the others and deal with it as sufficient for painting. "(Rothenberg)

I do this not like the language poets?"

The arguments of the language poets regarded me of the arguments of the philosophers who prove that life is not worthwhile living. But does anyone kill himself for such a reason? It is not that an argument not taken seriously by anyone who does not support my rational. The argument is not because it leaves pretentious活得, or applicable the language poets leave out the will to meaning, which is a construction of the mind it way an idea can..."
Language Poets

If meaning & reference = eliminated or blocked (that is, as close as one can come to elimination), then character & person also blocked, alike like, the poetry tends to look alike. Why are they alike?

One can excuse the pretentiousness on the grounds of youth & inexperience & sense of discovery, but the aggressive dogmatism makes them an easy prey because they are being certain about things about which one cannot be certain & about which they obviously have too little knowledge. I suspect dogmatism = always objections, but if least tolerable it is an attack on our beliefs felt by others as an attack & they're simply not going to sit down & take it. Follies of youth.
To be dogmatic in a field in which the best one can do is to offer speculation, is to show a lack of understanding of complexly obscure and to believe that what cannot be believed that poetry can be reduced to understanding and controlling its linguistic nature.

almost anything, dialectically opposite things can be said about poetry & the true so if one gets off into speculations, it is for the pleasure & excitement (or sometimes enlightenment) of the speculation & not for the sake of poetry.
Re the abandonment of reference.
It seems to me the opposite goal:
the greatest possible concentration of reference
in a single word. That's how a text
achieves richness, scope, density.
The magic that is possible in
language, that it has to be robotic, despite
images, rhythm or what have you.

The whole objective of the formal metaphor
of modern poetry - to enlarge meaning
- to introduce fresh & original illumination
of it. To make it fruitful, to show it
an aesthetic place.

All this moves in opposite direction to them

To lift meaning into an aesthetic plane,
ot to create a new aesthetic reality for language
alone (sound, rhythm, color).
Words, sounds, rhythm, denotations of color,
+ chance juxtapositions of words alone,

And imagine not only the their opposition, but
its their cause, for which they are willing to
march out and do battle with one & all,
*color* of *Good Soldiers*, D. H. Lawrence.
To read what they have to say about writing — a strange expec-
tation. I have read of writing, & will agree with some points. I do not
agree on its usefulness, or of relevance or emphasis, or accept its validity for some but
not for me (i.e. that it’s a matter of taste of particular psych. read &
object). These non-agreements will be non-agreements of others.
But my non-agreements with these ideologies are not non-agreements of
opinion but non-agreements of facts. I’ve read the odd 
reality — with them. I’ve read anything.
If not anything, they assert write
something as if anyone who
knows anything at all knows
that. But what they assert
are not true at all. This will not be
strange if it occurred occasionally
but when it happens every single
time I feel as if it’s been described 
the life cycle of a man from birth, but not
anyone I’ve ever met in a long
life as a robot. I’ve worked on a computer
with a level operator. I’ve composed on a computer
the formula of a robot.
the in thing | they're criticized | avant-garde | they at look | eneaged | community |
that we meant to | rate other |
they demasure & demolish | their adversary | by | cit ways |
they expect too much of human | which no ant. of scolding
is going to change that |
they confuse & what goes on | in the writer with what
goes on in the reader |
the text necessary to | clear human nature. to refer
the reader to the project text
on linguistics
Their chief interest is intellectual exercise—more interested in the theory & the semiotics of poetry than in poetry itself. They value poetry as an intellectual and/or semiotic exercise. Hence, they are not lovers of poetry. I'll give them the benefit of the doubt & say that they are friends of poetry. They undoubtedly think of themselves as friends & proponents of poetry, but I am not sure that one who values poetry for its providing, & semiotic exercise, can be a friend in this young generation. A basic change in values (expand) —

People, particularly, they make a point; they make the point by putting the opposition down. The reader notes does not seem to agree with the point is then identified with the enemy & feels he has been put down—not just put down, but annihilated by the implication that an one who doesn’t understand the point or an one who simply doesn’t know how to read what’s in front of them, is hopelessly backward & ignorant. The result is that cackles & the perpetrator finds themselves being attacked & protests that people are picking on the language of poetry, that they use the objects of a nasty vendetta, etc.

But they write as if they didn’t trust the work to stand on its own & to stand or fall on its own feet. They didn’t trust the judgment of the reader. They’re going to foist all that by telling what they should be finding & about the work & what they should be finding in it again, cackles rise & suspicion sets in. They shut up & listen to others. They would learn something from that. This way they’ll just be talking to each other.
The ideology of linguistics, which Bernstein initially possessed of possibilities before long, was a dogma not for poetry but for the reader and the written word. It's dead because it lacks a psychology. The psyche of the poet, the psyche of the reader, the psyche of the reader, the psyche of the reader. Between the reader and the writer, there is no communication. From the mean body of language meaning, which is the association of words (which is also a psychological phenomenon), because those associations are in the memory of the poet, as they were in the memory of the poet, and are recognized by him to be read to them as the poet did.

All this I understand somewhat that the capitalist, the Marxist, argument for dialectics, the necessity of the displacement of language by re-organizing the language in the capital, had stopped laughing yet about that. I can imagine the look of dismay and surprise on their faces at finding people who were not men to every vestige of voice, of language, the one thing they are determined to keep contrary to the future. These working-class writers who can understand and write it all. Whether to laugh or to explain.

It's strange to the new, like mine, when I was there age. My fascination with early work of your writers of that period, with the development of their humanist and psychological possibilities of compassion, selection, and understanding the fact that more interested in the new affair.
What's wrong with a poet simply exploring his head and his opportunities in language? (Reflecting if he's going to be the only reader/recipient.) But if there's nothing for a reader to do except try to follow the poet's path, try to follow it. Even if he succeeds, the chances are he won't be able to explain it. The mental exploration and self-sufficient system -- i.e., the mental exploration and self-sufficient system -- i.e., the mental exploration and self-sufficient system -- i.e., the mental exploration and self-sufficient system. --rationally, it still only be a means to an end. Now that you can do this with language, what are you going to do with it? It's that that's going to be judged. A contempt for communication that sense a benefited component edition.

That that will involve the reader.
Have obviously analytical powers & skills - in fact they are very much taken with these powers & these - their met - they poetry judged on this basis: superior intellect = superior poetry

A generational gap is not just a difference of ideas or point of view. We have here a fundamental psychological difference - i.e. a few of my generation didn't find that theory interesting as poetry because this world not be involved life etc. sometimes as a joke, a wise-crack.
All this comes, I think, from too much reading and too much listening in books, or explanations, interpretations, etc. of poetry. And in this case, language itself of how poetry 'works.'

The impulse to think here is strong and clear, but where is the poetic impulse? I have found it only in Bob Prepelka.

Historical Determinism

Also, if one views poetry, like some poet critics view art, as a historical process which is ever progressive and evolutionary, then the latest innovation will get the most attention and will assume great importance. Out of all proportion to its inherent value, the language poets are beneficiaries of this, because of the whole intellectual, economic, social and political nature of the poetry which is the basis for assessing these poets, will be in high favor among the general public and avant garde. But not among other poets.

Are they the wave of the future? I hope not. In the age of the reader, only of the wave of the future is the wave of the reader. The new wave of poetry is the computer-generated commentary. And not to be able to say that there is not enough heart in this poetry, there is no heart, perhaps almost by definition. Most is not true to say that there is too much intellect. To simply say that the intellect is just its own universe. Does one need to comment on that? That is a defect that cannot be corrected by perspective. That poetry really is interesting. This = (an ideal) universe. And there are moments when I do have that depth and don't mind, poetry around in this universe, but not for long.
AMONG THE EXHIBITING ARTISTS ARE

Robert Arme
Hyacinth Brown
Allison Lee Brown
Sherri Cavan
Cecilia Czerwinski
Elizabeth Dante
Ray Der
Dan Donegan
Dorothy Drew
Victoria Durkin
Ron Emery
Rodney Entrekin
Bill Farfan
Dorise Ford
Joe Gans
Teddy George
Nina Goldfeather
Beth Goodsit
Alvin Greening
Thomas Habersack
Isabelle Howard
Elizabeth Jacobs
Willma Jackson
Le R. Williams

Ann Jerome
Elliott Kai-Kee
Sheree Kaslikowski
Elsie Kelly
Ben Linsey
Hazael Mejia
Eva Michael
Lorraine Olser
Helen Orth
Mary Pafford
Helen Phillips
Betty Podchernikoff
Miguel Raggio
Leah Rawley
Emily Reznik
Sandy Riker
Henry Ritzick
Thomas Shuster
Takehiko Sugimoto
Alexandra Swavoc
Jerome Vloeberghs
Burgess Webb
Craig Wiblin

FORT MASON SCULPTORS invite you to their
Annual Holiday Show and Sale
December 8 and 9, 1984
10:00 am to 6:00 pm
Building B
Fort Mason Center
Marina Blvd. & Laguna St.
San Francisco

ADMISSION FREE
PARKING AVAILABLE
because when I do, I prefer the good prose of the original thinkers, who write in prose (don't want to waste time on interpreters when I can go to the source), why didn't anyone say (or) spend his time reading commentaries & applications when he could go to the source, interpretation & transcription

re-arrangements of poet's applications to poetry of original ideas
interpretations & applications of some else's ideas when one can go to the source

Note from Pasternak (interview) - not really interested in poetry - read one day more - more interested in philosophy, social thinking

After reading the poetry, a part of me cries out, "Come out from behind those words & let's see what you are & what you are ! Be a man! Don't hide behind words

Having spent time exploring their minds & using their thoughts on language, to discover an array of the possible variations & connotations & etc. This - a spirited personal searching, exciting to them, no doubt. But isn't it exciting to others? That it depends on the reader & the poet's understanding of his reader, elaborate

But does that make it exciting to others? That depends, of seeing awareness in that writing, that they are aware of what it is, aware of any interest in that product that depends on, or any interest in that product that depends on, or any interest in that product that depends on, the position of the reader's advocate when myself do not write for a reader (elaborate)
Poetry means so much out of the mainstream,
and it's a joke.

Try this: I leave a ranch so big, I get into my car
at sun-up and drive East all day until sun-down
and never reach the end; I drive West all day
from sun-up to — etc. I drive North, etc., and
drive South, etc. That's how big it is.
Nebraska, considering their thoughtfully
pocked and a while, then camp. Knowing
it had a car like that once.

The notion of alchemy may be as old as language, and
the idea that language and magic are somehow related is
also old. Grammar, after all, was a word used in the Middle
ages to denote high learning, but it also implied a practicing
grammer, signifying occult learning. Grammarism, however,
was the Scottish word for grammar and it meant arcane
curiosity.

There's an unspoken belief in language pedantry, a belief
that every poet feels to some degree. But linguistics is the
interest in language itself, not in pedantry. It has likely
to deal with phonemics.

So we're curious to

They seem to have reached the conclusion that
we have exhausted the possibilities of subject matter
and the truth. Periodically they come to this conclusion:
how many times must the young have come to this conclusion?
that we must explore the possibilities of
language itself, not in very phrases
that there's a wave of the future, this is the great
discovery of that about it with countless emerging fields
leaving me behind because I have to give up
on the possibilities of matter.
It is no longer subject matter (in the sense of a writer with a particular payload, presence, personality, style, etc., being present to a particular esp. objective reality). Language not be proclaimed will take the place of all theft. Yال‌ليا! Are they kidding?
the impulse comes from reading other poets —

determinize/de-socializes and to that extent determinizes the language on that —
The Humanist School —

The interest is in exploring with language and not in mere life-stuff.

Are we willing to settle for that?
we thought that there were only 3 ways of a

Next before there have been

footstep

(1) network to the world outside (eg. nature

(2) inward and (3) a combination of 1 & 2.

The beauty of (3) - activity of balance - is exemplified in

900th I quote from Eikenben, p. 57

For Reading is a form for Eikenben, you stand now at

that point where you ought to look to the really

highland difficult part of art, that of english on what

is individual in objects.

He goes on: the apprehension & representation of the individual

in the very life of art. Furthermore, when you content

yourself in generalities, nobody can imitate you, but in

the particular no man can, because no one has had

your exact type of life. And you need not fear that what is peculiar

of your will will meet with sympathy, each character, orbetter,

may not meet with sympathy, from a stone to a man,

could scarcely it may be, from a stone to a man,

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could scarcely it may be, from a stone to a man,
that doesn't come naturally out of the poetic impulse—"that means that it can be a
construction of the imagination, a play with words, a mental game, a mental construct,
a word construct."

Any distinction between poem and composition has been wiped out & nothing found, the distinction between poetry & prose is really arbitrary & somewhat pointless—it is only a step further to Bernstein on these poets repeatedly tell us, the distinction between the theory of poetry is a arbitrary one. (Rilke) (Kestner) they've made the poetry the subject matter of their poetry, once they've done that, Bernstein can say, "Theory is over most than the extension of practice!"

Also, all kinds of folk many ideas possible—go into them.

On this ground,
(1) feelings are not necessary
(2) life exp. = not necessary
(3) idiom & syntax = not necessary, for they are expressions of life exp., soc. relations, etc.

This leads to a de-socialized language (too dead) & to de-humanized content

Since the people smart—nothing but lacking in intelligence & prospicity one suspects the worst that one is being attacked by sophisticated jen of a peculiarly Godless kind—thought of as the motion of a con game—that those young men imagine they are king cavite that the mind can do anything & that the mind can do anything they wish—King Canute

High on the power of the mind
which claims that the self is not the primary organizing feature of writing (Bernstein) and that the individual is no longer privileged (who the hell said so?) that the distinction between theory and poetry is an arbitrary one, that the trouble with the conduct theory of communication is that it 

what we leave is a sophistical punnity of the worst kindless, senseless

what we leave is a newly kind of sophistical punnity in which

xx presupposes ideas to exist as separate entities outside of language” (Bernstein) — amateurish pedantry

a theory that is more than human nature can bear.

We do not have to concern ourselves with meaning, say Silbernan, “When words pre, meaning soon follow.” I don’t care to make the effort, not when all I’m going to get is language, just as language.

meaning by that that the reader will construe out of them, even if he has to make it all up himself. Knowledgeable as all my him is.

(As for me, I have to say, no, thanks, I don’t care to make the effort.)
Exhilarating to confront "enemies" - we learn from this who we are, what we are, etc.

We don't have to take their theory seriously as they do.
We have the advantage of distance & uninvolved, disinterested look -
& a sense of humor, which I find lacking behind all of theirs
& a sense of the invisible paradox & ambiguity in the story.
They lack all sense of what they have left out,
not to mention a sense of the ambiguity of distance
behind all explanations, and a sense of humor & distance
from their own hallucinations to judge them critically.

I do not reflect indelicately at their

Anxiety as in playing there a sense of thing as
in pure mathematics. Frequently sound, but without any significance. Perhaps
its parameters? Thus they look pure linguistics
without significance for factory

Not competent to judge their linguistics but
I'm willing to give them the benefit of the doubt &
proceed as if they were sound. The first thing that
strikes one is a lack of all sense of what they have
left out - the psychological, etc, not to mention a
sense of the ambiguity, etc

They have some highly theoretical gambits. Too easy to say whether
they are only gambits or whether the right language parts
move into. Too easy to say whether
one is or whether the right language parts

How much one's critical stance is what to
positionable depends on one's mindset. Whether one's
one's recent exposure or frustration, frustration
of one's recent exposure or frustration, one's own work -
especially on how one feels about one's self -
very positive, successful.
written language, the reader reading this line, assumes it is part event - and in space, it is an event; it is after all those on the page, somebody wrote it, etc. but when one tries to penetrate it, one finds it is a possibility which means that at least the reader is in on something - but it stops short of making the reader think if the reader wants to go further, he has to make up his own mind. Not a bad thing, one might say. But if he’s going to have to do that, and if he has the ability to do that, then what does he need the poet for? He can do the whole thing himself. Simply to point out possibilities to him? He has his own possibilities to develop and can do the whole thing himself.

A language - i.e. not that the self is the only reality but that language has an independent reality - a computer solipsism - automation - animism

"The world as such" does not exist and cannot exist as an entity. It does exist as an element in an entity. When more is claimed for it than that, it is a form of animism which cannot have a life in the poet’s imagination but lies neither the life nor the power which is attributed to it outside of that.
This is apparently how they first meet. Williams will remember in his Autobiography: "one day I met Louis Zukofsky in the city after I had been sketched for a caricature by a person named Hoffman. Louis and I became good friends."61 This friendship brings Zukofsky to Rutherford by April, and repeatedly thereafter, affording, as Pound will write, "some pleasure and consolation" to them both.62

Williams at the time feels that he's been working in isolation. Attention from other writers does more than flatter him; it provides the "natural friendly stimuli on which we rest, at least, in our lesser moments."

William Carlos Williams was born in Rutherford on Constitution Day, 1883. Mike Weaver writes:63

His father was an Englishman, said to have been born in Birmingham; his mother in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, to a basque mother and a Jewish father. His middle name was taken from his mother's brother who practiced medicine in Panama City. If his ancestry was in any way Spanish it was more by cultural adoption than by blood. He was half English, one-quarter Basque, and one-quarter Jewish.

The facts of Williams' life are well-known. His Autobiography can be supplemented by Reed Whittemore's biography.64 The facts
Justice

"there is a claim being made to a syntax... of absolute attention to the ordering of words’ syllables... the music... is built into the sequence of the word’s tones, totally saturating the text’s sound." — Bretonstein

"the principle I went for in this model here is that castellos... a word that language which, into the English language throws the worst spellcasting. Contrast with Eichendorff, it is largely informal... which Bretonstein was willing to do because he was progressive in its history.

"What happens when a language moves toward fascism into a capitalistic stage of development, an aesthetic transformation of the perceived tangibility of the word, with corresponding increases in its descriptive narrative capacities, frequented by the invention of realism, the optical illusion of reality for the invention of society, the emptying of capitalisation into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the theses transformed (deformed) into objectivity (as against the..."

Are we interested in how such ideas came about?

"Both in S.F. & N.Y. the language movement arose as an essentially Marxist critique of contemporary Am. Capitalist society on behalf young poets who came of age in the wake of the Vietnam War & Watergate" (Norberto Piştoff)

"Their revenge is the Capitalists watching.

"The attempt is not to articulate the curve of a particular stuff, but to create a formal linguistic construct that shapes our perception of the world around us." (Pistofoff)

"The linguistic sounds the signified gives of something beyond language... it must come to feel as being central to capitalism (the fetish of commodity). To demystify this fetish is to reveal the..."

"War is not meaningful, soon follows," Billiman.

"Nothing can be further from the truth."

"Some meaningful, I suppose, never mind what. Freud and deconstruction until it has collapsed of attributed some meaning to the words, but in my case I don’t care to make the effort because..."
Ideas

1. "the resonating of the wordness of language (Bakhtin)"

2. Distinction between communication... characterized as a two-way
   more with the message shuttling back & forth in blissful
   ignorance of the transform (rad: ideology) & a sounding of
   language from the inside, in which the dwelling is already
   always given. - Bernstein "language apple"

3. The trouble with the conduit theory of communication is
   that it presupposes into to exist of separate entities
   outside of language and to be communicated by language
   "communciation systematized"

   - The doctrine has to imagine that knowledge is an "object" outside
   of the language in which it is a part (Bakhtin), so it doesn't make sense
   to transcendentalism if they may rather than being part
   of a language which itself produces meaning in terms of its presence
   in the communicative, it's a process in itself.

   - Bernstein's idea-making in a mean of particular discourse to which the writer must conform

   "dry out the way a treatise is dry
   subject old fashioned enough to exclude everyone who
   is experimenting with syntax, etc.

   These boys are planning for very high stakes.
   And they're talking to everybody, etc. I can't see what
   they propose

   Their concerns (i.e., escape the conduit system of language
   list others) aren't "alive," concepts, except to a few poets-

   A romantic approach to language / pretty even more,
   a romantic approach to innovation - by insinuating "I mean, expecting
   more than can be realized" itself because one has idealized

   "A romance to young academicians, Ph.D.'s, 37, college
   exhausted - can feel the next decade reflecting
   the past (no need to evaluate those time and then)

   An attractive prospect, it's not gardening. Among
   bright, they can be used without replication hence read for their-"
The loss of idiom = terrible price to pay

quote from Robert Hobbit's poem
planted from Samuel Beckett's inspired translation of Blok

and a sense of lightness separable from idiom —

Tomy saw: my blood quickened.

From Harold Norse's to: Bello's Roman Sounds:

"God said to Noah: 'Noah, Patriarch,
 You and your sons, go and take a turtledrool
 Froot; my delight you must build an ark.
 So high, so strong, so pure, as so thick.

quote next stage too. (§ XXXV)

There are polar extremes in poetry today:
at one pole, the language poets; at the other, the poet in a suit —
with such an idea (performant poetry) — the intentional polar extremes too.

Polyphony

Performance
The linguistic approach: like a surgeon disecting a body and examining the parts and how they connect to each other and function in order to understand a man's life and know how to live.

This approach, if I am not mistaken, derives from recent French literature which has made a big splash in academic circles (among Young Turks) and a big name for its proponents... a theory which has made hash of poetry... derived from Wittgenstein, who in his intellectual rigor has been therapeutic for poetry, but is after all a philosopher in pursuit of truth as it is discernible to a philosopher... in the context of philosophy. Furthermore, the apercu, in fact, in their high compression and density and their high abstraction are already in the mode of poetry and nothing more can be done with them without doing violence to their integrity.
When I heard one of them say, what I see is not what I can hear. A pipsqueak imagining that he's King Canute.

In a sense a pipsqueak can be King Canute. In fact, he needs to be. But in the battle of ideas, a man professing to be King Canute better be King Canute acting as if he were.
Where is the mystery of language here? the magic? That has no 
longer here. Part of the romantic attitude of the past I suppose, 
whose time has passed.

The art of put-downs by categorizing. But a lot of people do that.

Abstraction to an abstraction, sometimes to an authority.

One tends to read attentively. If a meaning may or may not emerge — 
the question is how much effort shall beforehand. This is not to 
solve the problem the solution to which is going to benefit mankind. 
This is not a situation to test a person’s intelligence.

If I know anything about poetry it is that it is a

God’s respite. Is it worth reading, etc.

I’m reassured. I had feared that I had been left behind.

Albert Einstein’s work attempts to tell just

how lucidly all this fussing around is.” What purpose?
The language of poetry is an attitude - an optimistic American attitude - always forward, onward, upward (never ending improvements).

Attention to language is to the exclusion of the poem (at the expense of exp. the foot - leading and split off from one's basic premise: one has a poetic impulse to write a poem because one has had an exp. If one writes because one has had this reason, it is pushed from within a poem by cause one has a need to be a writer. 1 is simply drawn on what is available without an exp. one's memory of what has been read and been talked about.

(1) Poetry as poetry, i.e. do something between a poem and a reader.
(2) Poetry as a part of history and transformed by language. (i.e. poetic impulse - imagination always ready to act.
(3) Poetry as a catalyzer in history. (i.e. poetry is not theory is not in the interests of poetry. Limits set determines it - does not concern itself with #1, poetry as something between a poem and a reader.

A poet needs no theory - does he, after all, have a theory about the way he did or is he writing before he writes? If the poet doesn't need a theory, who does? (c) Non-poets, heterogenous critics.

Incisive analytical power's, great powers of concentration, attention.
I don't know much about them but the little I've read & seen that
they have learned from Zeyde wrote with meticulous
precision but also, in prayer, with his talmudic
discourse of songs true as far back some of
I have heard, for example that Proust's work
attempts to be just sound. I can say, 'God help anyone
who takes Zeyde's Catholic as a model.'
Poetics are not poetry. A group of poets may have a great theory of poetry. A group of poets may have a great theory of poetry. Neither the quality of individual poems nor the quality of their poetry can be used to justify or to condemn their poetry. In fact, each poem must be examined on its own merits. But the only thing I can relate to it, since I am not the author but a reader (or listener) is to ask a set of questions. Where am I? If it doesn't even tell me where I am, where is there I want to be? etc.

Whether this is where I want to be or not depends on...

poetic intelligence of a high order

Certain poems do not have single, simple, straightforward meaning and must be judged by other standards. For this reason, we must, in the analysis, structurally a language. In fact, as I wrote in the beginning...

I agree with great poems that I will want to come back to for other readings in which the meaning is not ambiguous, tentative, kept partially open, or into another extended order altogether, other than everyday meaning, but in the way to explain this structural? There is too much, because...
language poets --- made for critical experts --- we'll reach a time when the rich of poetry poems will be examinations of language of the readers and critics of the academic condition for whom this poetry is to order for the author and the same critics they are making an academic exigence ---

There is something mysterious of magical and non-verbal in language but it does not come from analysis (refer to what I say about language in my letter to Drexler)

If a written poem had been put into a bottle and thrown into the ocean, it a computer print-out instead. Nothing to be sure that he written by a human being, an extinct man, a no-man, no-shot, etc. --- the assumption that the human consciousness will catch up to where they are? That like abstract expressionism, can confidently be left to the future their appreciation.

It goes far to demonstrate that a human being is like a computer but that is a computer, not a soul or an it. There are those who have believed this for some time + to leave a whole school of poetry confirm this if they are aware. I must give them a respect of satisfaction + for it by writing poems showing that a computer can write poems an advanced world this is the wave of the future. There's no reason, therefore, to claim having any truck with the likes of you and the like. We don't understand. Exactly what appeared a few years ago (meeting with Chao, Bernstein) as a reminder that this is not a mind reflecting on itself but a mind engaged in digesting itself of mind + being + language, language...
There is a point at which lit. considerations cease to be lit. considerations and necessarily human considerations - that is, they cease to be got so far that they break into human considerations. This leads them, forcing one to re-examine one's basic (human) values, that what do we believe in? stand for? etc. Do poetry to have no rel. to the real world? no rel. to human aspirations? No rel. to the human condition? ever to a reader? only to itself?
Enthusiasm

The object of its invention was to attract & disarm the ladies by means of an ingenious & playful style of high artificiality—astonishing regularity for so young a

the publisher, Edward Blount (1632) wrote—John Haring: “our

nation are in his debt for a new English

in order to secure refinement (i.e., substitute "originality")

it sought to be as affected, so artificial as high pitched

pleasure used for purposes of ornament

of similes taken from fabulous records of zoology, for relating

mythical birds, fishes or minerals. fashionables

Queen Elizabeth herself the most affected & detectable

Conc. strong

When I was young, I was fascinated by Mallarmé.

But there was only one Mallarmé & it never occurred

to me that there could be more than one—in a period

I assumed that it was an expression of personality that

that in the effort to attain the utmost purity, this

I didn’t think there could be more

I didn’t think it could have such an obsessive need for purity

But now I fear not one Mallarmé but 20 or more

Mallarmé is order! Mallarmé is

In fact Mallarmé has fashionable

And it will take only a prestige critic like

to convince young people that this is where the action is

& this is where the influence is.
Add your own text here.
Ordinarily it's not worth while for a poet to spend time stewing over somebody else's reasons for writing the way he does. In the last analysis only the individual poem matters, and one is judged by that only. We have had great poems from people who not interested in theory and lousy poems from very persuasive theorists. However, when a theory, such as I understand the Language School theory to be, deliberately sets out to remove all referentiality and hence meaning from poetry, except in the somewhat mystical sense in which they claim language per se, words as such with their conventions and sounds have meaning, it crosses the point at which literary considerations cease to be literary considerations.
I can understand how they might have become what they are. A young poet starting out, feeling the continual presence of poetry of the past and present, feeling its power and influence, knows in his bones, and he is not wrong, that to get anywhere he has to do something different, be his own man somehow. The force of his own creative impulse also brings him to this conviction. But how? He can't do it by drawing on his life experiences; he hasn't had enough yet. And the chances are that he's not going to be able to do it by drawing on the distinctness of his personality, his individuality, for that may not be there either yet, either because it's not developed enough to make itself known strongly or because, for one reason or another, he represses it from expression, justifying the rejection by protective rationalizations. In this situation there is one thing he can draw on, the seemingly boundless potentialities of language as it interacts with his imagination and intelligence. Note, I did not say, the boundless potentialities of his imagination and intelligence as it interacts with language, because with them, language comes first.

I say I can understand. But I can't be sympathetic. How can one be sympathetic to a poet who excludes so much of his own humanity and above all the humanity of the reader, of whom, it must be remembered, I am one, and who fancies himself a little Wittgenstein and who will commuone only with other little Wittgensteins, I in the meantime, busyly promoting themselves, with manifest manifest, who run around promoting themselves

This is an awfully long answer to a question. What did you have in mind when you asked it, George?
In a recent issue of Expose one young frustrated poet wrote, "From the beginning we had the academic stake."

Will I must give some thought to the young poet writing about C. B. B. (or,

people. One young frustrated poet writing "From the beginning we had

the academic stake." This word "academic" is but

The word "academic" can be perhaps be discounted as emotional but
the word "academic" will occur. I want it so far as all that

it seems to me far too serious. So they've steered me up
sit singing, "Zukofsky, Zukofsky, Zukofsky." I cried,

or a single thought concept in your little inside?"

With a shake of his was a little head, he replied,

"Oh Zukofsky, Zukofsky, Zukofsky."

( Gertrude Stein or Laura Riding can be substituted)

To Certain Language Poets Not to Take Their Ideas So
Serious

For variation, J. S. or Laura Riding (not thought processes)
can be substituted

For further information consult Gertrude Stein
or Laura Riding
(the thought processes)

These p主持人 practices, Ad thei variations, post-egumenic, minute
minute, textbook, egumenic. All our Reach others work
practicing unbearable situations but - what the hell - they're
practicing young ambitious, without being deferred

One read not to pay attention to what anyone says about

what they bump up against another a work

The most social credentials, as is a kind of knowledge one

sentiment. The deed is not by itself - seeming as if

they are at work, nevertheless seems like a textbook - yet does not seem
if they are true or not — one didn’t sign up for a teacher.

Being pretentious: one of the prerogatives of the young

word robots —

Nobody can object to their investigating linguistics if it can benefit poetry — but their objective seems to be to eliminate everything personal — they’ve succeeded with word robots but oddly they go about acting as if their is the work of the future, a need unacknowledged, order of reality closed off, to lesser realities they’ve succeeded in a removing every trace of a human nature — being everything personal as well as all personal for that too half personal a person passion a disguise is, after all, only another kind of personal, a person pretending to be someone else, another person —

look on these with dismay that anyone should wish to do this, but for they were led there by an attractive illusion, apparently they have such ideas on such noble but deformed society that as with the masters of the first atomic bomb, the negotiators,

The question with them is not how much are you willing to sacrifice for an invention, but how much are you willing to sacrifice for an ideal (Heinrich E. Fischer, for instance),

The length to which abstraction will take one who is inclined to be foolish and absurd in an intellect to the

not of sentences but of an essay — and the tone and the force of the language of the essay in the

but no fewer of ordinary essays — but only ordinary ordinary meaning for a sense that are in what popularly believed to be the future of 1930 (journalists won’t make a grand discovery), the computer everything and everybody.

This is the real conspiracy in which they have placed themselves.
ideas are in poems but if they are the subject matter then they seem to be misplaced. I'd always rather read them in a good essay than in a poem.

The linguistic approach: like a surgeon dissecting a body and examining the parts and how they connect to each other and each function in order to understand the conflicts in the life of a poem in a man's life. And reproduce it.

We must atomize a poetry in order to write it, what is needed is not linguistics but psychology most and better psychology.

This approach, if I am not mistaken, derives from recent French criticism which has made a big splash in literary theory and has even become deadly for poetry—a theory which has made the poet, and from Italo Svevo, who was not bad. Poetry whose themes are abstract, in their second degree and density of like abstractions are in the poets' mind. Poetry, despite that they are not written out as such, letting the reader know that what is seeming is not poetic truth but real truth, that's what the reader feels expect to be in a philosopher. What may be philosophically true is no guide to how to write in pursuit of truth without the镢d post it is discordant to a plain that truth is no guide to how to write without doing violence.
What I see is a bright
vision of youth imagining his King Canute
flushed in the eagerness of youth imagining his
master's
loves
and
I
am
amazed
by
the
power
of
his
mind
into imagining his King Canute.

R. C. Silliman's "When words are
meaningful, will follow," meaning
does not, in the presence of words,
will try to make something out of
nothing, but without referred clues
one can only do it if one is willing to
use the whole story and create a projection
of one's own.
Subject
Seems to be interested in
ideas (elaborate)
Do this poetry?

Sans the lyrical...
In place of the tension... power of a life is as subject
matter, we can't manufacture... excitement generated by purely
linguistic means... the sentiment... of the challenge... of the mind

Assault with a deadly
tempo? Pedantry?

Assault with
The connection with Marxism: (1) Anti-capitalist (2) they're idealists, & idealists = scream for Marxism so long as it doesn't get down to everyday things. Its purpose is not to "write" or "create" Marxism = not to be confused with literature. It is not only of the real world, but the nitty-gritty real world. Thus, when the language poets in order to reject capitalism that have the language poets in order to reject capitalism — they who be for them an example of how capitalism drives men mad, the ultimate insanity, contradiction, corruption, bourgeois decadence, etc. — how strange & juvenile & unrealistic Australians are.
I was startled to read the other day—
the most important to be said about language poets
Pascal spoke of the joy one feels when,
extpecting to encounter an author, one comes
face to face with a man.” So opposite
is the question can be said with certainty.

One thing we are sure of: the word comes
face to face with a man, that out of dialects,
one can, that one is case there.
1. But, Renaissance Critical poets — not so much. Sensitivity to language, power, concentration which force attention to the poet's words, force the reader to work to his utmost capacity to reconstruct and find a meaning.

2. Tacky in their name — sounds as if they're a good thing — probably have already established themselves in lit. history as a hot Sheng. At the moment of the 1980's, apart of the ongoing Sh. of Am. poetry — they're making history.

3. Very able poet — Leftists (Bersheen, Sellman), ready at a moment's notice on every occasion to defend and to attack each other —


5. They have beautiful language & musical sound & effects.


7. Inventive.

8. Rich, even lush, metaphors, analogies, alliteration, assonance, dislocations, connections (Rilke, Cassirer, Eluard, Hopkins).
Bruce Andrews: "I said, tell you that Bruce Andrews never answered letters. " A character defect objection - it is not that it is not moral - it expresses a character defect and withdrawal from the human that characterizes their work. Otherwise, it would be irrelevant in speaking of this, so that their practice is an extension of themselves. (This is quite plausible - what sort of it?)

And their theory was an attempt to only a specification of their person. And that extent in an extension of their practice. That's why they want to keep out the ego from their work?

Also: the romantic idea of the poet as being above the world - old, sickening idea.

And these people = Marxist?

Formerly the romantic idea of poet = built into the tradition, and hence was imposed on him, he was educated in it, so went along with it, somewhat uncomfortably.

But = no longer true today, hence = still narcissistic.

It occurs to me. How large will their audience be? As large as the no. of people with this kind of character or attracted to the kind of character. Which could be many, but not many with the intellect for it.
In language poems...
The subject of poetry = language...As in abstract expressionism, the subject of painting is painting...And as certain painting if the critic tells us what we...see in the picture, the size will obey and will indeed "send" it there (as put at there) = So it is possible with this kind of amenability on the part of a reader (or book) anything can be made to be talked the poet artist...set up...et.

But is the reader that2 pensable? Except for that handful of silly people who worship everything that passed for poetry, the reader is very tough and it takes very hard to provoke. and more and more as time goes on, to convince him. So telling him, what he said, and in a poem won't do it.

One said, be wary of paying much attention to the work, particularly the apology of one's, contemporary...will drive one crazy, and locate the Delight finding, but like one's...

It doesn't matter what theory a poet holds. The only thing that matters is the poem that's on the page. And that can't be judged by the power of the theory that the author says is believed the poem. A poem can be judged only on its own merits.

Their power as a group, as a movement! The Delightists
take interest in movements, events, in lit. history, literary history, literary history, than in poetry (social, cultural)? There is an assumption of importance of a movement, esp. one defended as learnedly or meticulously as language...

What are they against? Of Silliman & Kunitz speak for the others, they are against (diet & develop)
Don't trust anything from theory, including
your own.

Comes from 3 things: (1) Scientific studies
(2) The role of theory to practice in psychotherapy
(3) The absence of any need for theory in my work
as a poet.

Re: it doesn't matter. Nobody reads poetry anyway. So let
it be "one-up" game among those who think the
way we do. But another reason why
literate people don't read poetry is that the poet
is too far from his own exp. & the reader sees
no reason they lie. Too sad. Leave the perfectly satisfying
base of exp. In order to follow the poet in this game
—in other words, the problem is not simply that the
(literate) reader expects the literal & the familiar in
some interesting form & we have to change exp. &
get outside himself in order to enter the poet's
metaphoric/symbolic imaginary etc. universe
transforming imagination.
startling from an intellectual impulse one tries to construct the appearance of poetic impulse. This leads to the second problem about seeming genuine.

Do it assumed that with enough linguistic knowing, one can do this?

Accusations + counter-accusations who are accused, usually correct and the accused who know very well how to defend themselves both lack the poetic impulse.

In fact, from living constantly with concepts and analyses, it is easy not to know that one is lacking a poetic impulse. To create a concept and the act of writing for it. After all, does writing poetry, isn’t it? How then can one be without the poetic impulse?

Look at all he knows about it.
Their concern are too esoteric, their references, they don't destroy them altogether, too recondite. At my age I can't afford the esoteric & the recondite. I need a bounce, immediacy, joy, humor, I love all, illumination, light meaning, not the darkening of readers.

Yet the esoteric is what I was reaching out to in my youth. It seemed to go with my domestic, melodramatic longing (elaborate) & my intense need for privacy, ceremonial & ritualistic reverence, original individuality. So I don't know whether I've progressed or regressed. Yet the esoteric & the recondite present signs of youthfulness, youthfulness possible only in the real world, but rather for that stage in one's life you when one was child-like, innocent, present, present. After that stage, in one's maturity, when one has socialized, socialized, socialized, socialized, present, present, present, present, present. If it had never existed — or first as soon as there is another human being in front of one, listening, ready to respond, my esoteric & my recondite, revealed to mine alone, of interest to me alone, to which he can engage only, if by chance, he is also interested in the esoteric & the recondite and can enter my esoteric & recondite & find that they express little of his own need for... etc.
Language subjects engaging in the manipulation of language itself, sometimes just words, which look and sound beautiful, a universe of sound and shape created by a cadence which needs nothing else but a reader, not even the person of the poet to be what it is, a particular reading or reference to meaning, a thickening of metaphor, a thickening of language as language, each word in a universe of that full metaphor, a thickening of language as language, each word in a universe of that full metaphor, a thickening of language as language, each word in a universe of that full metaphor, a thickening of language as language, each word in a universe of that full metaphor, a thickening of language as language, each word in a universe of that full metaphor.

No. of possible word combinations almost infinite, there is no limit to.

His love for language is such that he has frozen for them.

For them, the problem arises when the poem realizes a fact or objective; (2) from their explanations of the method; (3) their behavior

But what is language? It is communication that moment, only when there is a reader or spectator, it is language as language, only when there is an audience, only the poet author is present.
Too little of the self - needed, a special part of the brain, a small (linguistic) part of the brain that occupies on the problems of the world, of existence.

Too remote from experience, too far from the mainstream of people's interests and concerns, etc. This poetry, for that, is in the wrong direction - already losing readers.

Language will be read only by other language poets.

A somewhat disturbing slip for me because Antipodal to me. It does not seem to be even interested in the existential in that sense, pregnant to be a literally specialized concern of the brain. Which - fine, if you want to be pleasing to offering their gymnastics.
Marjorie Perloff, quoting from Selman's *Carson*, "When Ron Selman reads a single phrase from a word "false start" -> "false start" The writer intriguing plot possibilities. He meant this as a compliment. But that's precisely the problem. It is just a possibility, and a possibility is just an event. And what we have here is a possibility pretending to be an event. This pretense will immediately be evident in conversation. A written fact is not because of the nature of written language."
language of poetry rationale.

Morally outrageous and abominable.

All these lucubrations of mind linguistics? What the hell are they? Are they to take off in place of the poet as whole men?

All these linguistics lucubrations give me a pain and robbed me of perspective.

The narcissist has a rel. only between himself and his image of himself.

Two things stand in the way of relating to poetry.

Their political linguistic ideas and the behavior of some of them.

A grouping of poets under a name is always misleading because it

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hermetic - a sealed case, with nothing getting in or getting out
at "absolute inwardness" (Rilke) - true of Hallam (language
state of
but language be to be absolute outwards, outwards
out into what lies outside the individual but into what lies
within the reverse of language
Rilke's -
We have dedicated ourselves to write as Cezanne painted, to
enter completely into the thing seen, and to force some kind
of metaphysical transformation on it.

You might say the language seek to enter completely
not into anything experienced but into language and to
force some kind of transformation from it.
HH: Recommended in Poem

To ma other world, you will be told not to expect that. You will be told that you will not

expet that that's a thing of the past that poetry must let more objective, delete the

ego something created by the magic of words, metaphor, sense.

Nothing wrong with words, process, writing, etc. subject.

Still at the know if all age. They make pronouncements.

Dont leave the personalty for it.
I must not forget that clarity has not much interest for the young. The romantic, hermetic, inexpressible is fascinating, exciting.

The closest thing to the mystery of expression of writing of language is inevitable perhaps. Too little life up to make clarity interesting or perhaps even possible. Also their hero needs, knowledge of self not yet fully formed.

Also, preoccupied with exploring trying to discover who they are, etc., what it is right for them to be.

Not willing to make any sacrifices (imagination, etc.) for the reader, in fact, might think it unworthwhie, but in fact, it is the sense of a reader that brings the writer back to earth, where he is (not in the writer's mind) and returns the writer to the fullness of his own being.

Basic criticism; the references are too narrow in range, too distant from life, etc., too frequent or formal, too much of particulars individual categories, too conventional, too much theorizing. The lack of personal, individual illumination. The sources of poetic practice, sense, all seem marginal.
Those who regard the end of art as aesthetic because they believe the other ends have been exhausted or depleted, or not suitable for those times, or because aesthetic bliss is greater than the others, or the only one suitable to the medium, or most suitable, or the only one they're interested in - obviously their reason derived.

And what are those ends that we mean? From the point of view of the self-expression - self-exploitation
(1) Self-exposure
(2) Self-indulgence
(3) Self-pity
(4) Social problems - social compassion
(5) Problematic didactic - something to teach
(6) Destruction of what one loves
(7) Fave of medium - need to construct in words, make something beautiful

Excludes the reader. I can not attach much value to any form that excludes the reader.

If a writer comes along to "explain" the text, what we get is an explanation + interpretation, the reader may very well like the criticism, but then it's something between the critic and the reader, not between the text and the reader.
Fundamentals

What can one be sure of? One's poetic impulse—only that. Corruption begins when one transgresses that principle—But one has to begin somewhere.

What is a poetic impulse? Try this: It is not
(1) the main reason why one writes or
(2) the excitement generated by

... moving poems by others—

... an impulse to continue perpetuating that excitement, that greatness.

The dividing line is here—The true poet understands what he is going on inside himself (patriotically) but not about it: he does not pretend to claim that he is expressing a poetic impulse when he is merely having

... But many really don't perceive the difference... can't be accused of insincerity. They just don't know any better. (The reader, however, does—it can't be concealed from him because he's not a party to the self-deception of the egoist).

... and the true poet is also known because when he comes across the real thing,

Corruption is the material beginning when one goes beyond one's actual poetic impulse. At that point the reader begins to feel that the poet is imitating (otherwise, why use the padding, exaggeration, pretense?) and the begins to lose interest and distrust. (This may be one of the reasons for specificity; you're proving the truth of what you claim."

Once you've pushed beyond your actual poetic impulse, anything is possible because—
you're carried along on the impulses of (1) and (2) the content of your poem can be anything and everything.
Would I be drawn to this poetry if I were 21?

Given the alternates today, it's possible. I wrote some hermetic poetry myself in my youth and am still hooked on Malherbe.

For my case, my hermeticism arose out of a need to find a way to express for the

In fact, it seems to me, hermeticism arose out of the need to reach the absolute, sometimes a state

Voir Rilke: state of absolute invariance —

or its rites completely into the thing seen or experienced and extract its absolute essence/truth/sensation/thing only.

These poems seek to enter the universe of language and to extract its absolute essence/truth/sensation/thing only.

The assumptions they make to support this —

The first assumption, of course, is that language by itself has something to say:

Strangely exciting in its intensity,

breathtaking in its depth/profound inhabitants/overwhelming.

My hermeticism arose out of a deep, intuitive yearning for the absolute, sometimes to reach/express an absolute inwardness, or to enter completely into the thing seen and extract its absolute essence/truth/reality/sensation of an absolute in the outer world in which I tried to exist.

Turns its back on the quest for an identity/individuality on individuality.

[Signature]

[Handwritten note]
Language Poets. Poets like Waba Sabine who do not make poems describing an "apparition" of even a "vision," but seek a language whose source is in a world beyond the "merely" spiritual—more especially for her: in language itself. "The search for a new poetic language..."

"We are no longer satisfied with the spiritual..."

"Poets and discoveries..."

"Poetry out into a new mode. Well, not exactly new. There was Stein, to make a point, otherwise..."

"to stop, to make a point, otherwise..."

"only two participants..."

"the post mundane and poetic universe of poetry..."

"and a rather..."

"partly past..."

"a reader..."

"Society is assumed, but..."

"we would understand anyway or be interested..."

"that leaves only the poet, therefore and his art..."

"We know a great deal about the poet..."

"the poet can do anything he wants to do. There are of course..."

"So much for..."
is therefore a variable in the poet's 
work, that leaves a variable in the poet's 
work, participant 3 can be anybody 
whoever., so that, poetry being with 
the fragment, being with the 
poetry because he's being moved by it but 
fragment, fragment and to be illuminated, it's 
how are all experiences, the objects one in the 
frame before this. 

You can say you're going to make something beyond 
that you discovered by concentrating on 
language, sense, reference meaning, 

You then have the situation of the poem as told 
by a reader, and the poet in the usage with this 
theory of crying, poem's, no longer play 
'monster', but suggesting that the world is what 
that they are people of there on 
the power structure to try to get them 

You don't have a sense of the State of affairs 
You saw this in a play by West, we'd laugh.
The individual Poem

Once completed and in circulation it has severed all
connections back to the poet. It is no longer his to
speak for itself. Only it can speak for itself.
It does not make the slightest difference what
the poet intended the poem to be. It is, the
poem = now public property and belongs to the
reader. The only existence the poet of the poem
can have is in the mind & imagination of the
reader. The hol. is between him and the poem,
being read by him and not between him & the
poet. Certainly not between him & the poet.
One slips into error & irrelevance if one does not
keep this constantly in mind.

All this is abstracts from the
Fun & the excitement of exploring broken ground
which no one can take from them or that wants the
natural recognt of salubrity.

My skeptical nature which tends to cloud with them
new thoughts yields something to my knowledge
that they must have a great deal of excitement.
Pooping around & breaking new ground. They're
believing they're not enough dressing to be
bold, but it's years people tend to.
Besides, by the time this gets into print, they're
probably be into something else. Then it's too late
& intelligent to stay put.
and lead to take reap. for my ideas + behavior + self to the needs of others. I think my I (never the time after) a boats professionally that plagued), suffering. As clearly from that, only slightly + really related a world of the a world. Of all. This is...an act of self-willing to that fragment of my personal I which is fabulat litera. It is in the imagining Leon + stragio them in language producing, in the process the illusion of autonomy. 

The illusion feels no longer + is very real. 

This illusion feeling leads to the illusion that language can be used/manipulated so if it were autonomic force meaning + references are been removed that > quite feasible. All this comes not from the pragmatic needs of any poem that has started in the mind of a poet but from theory, that this is the way it shall be.

Analogy to Schoenberg - of article by Kochberg.

"Schoenberg lost touch with the primitive instinct of the ear, who succumbed to abstraction + rationalization who sought salvation in methodology. "Postmodern" a perverse pointing of priority to the mind over the ear. The great disaster of talent has overtaken all the arts in the world. The variety a kind of rational madness which delights in manipulation for its own sake + has produced art devoid of human content."
"The primary impact on language of the rise of capitalism has been in the area of reference. It is directly related to the phenomenon known as the commodity fetish." Seliman.

What happens when a language shifts toward a language into a capitalist stage of development and becomes increasingly transfigured by the perceived tangibility of the commodity, with corresponding increases in its descriptive and narrative capacities, becoming part of the invention of 'realism,' the optical illusion of reality in capitalist thought." Seliman.

Language under capitalism is thus transformed into referentiality. "It thus becomes transparent.

"The words are not our own. Rather, they are our own images of a determinate coding passed down to us like all other products of civilization." Seliman."
"Theory is never more than the extension of practice." (Barnes, 1973) — Actually, the other way around (self-deception) their work (practice) reads like an extension of theory. They reject the concept of communication (one→to) instead of "The trouble with it presupposes individuals to exist as separate entities outside language to be communicated in by language." Bernstein

"The question is to imagine that knowledge has an "object" outside of the language of which it is a part. How does one know? I don't know that and neither does it. It is only a possibility. Thus leads to the position that the truly real is what we can know is in language. If this is so, we need to seek it outside language. Language is the subject matter of poetry." Bernstein

"It is a mistake, I think, to posit the self as the primary organizing feature of writing. As many other have pointed out, a poem exists in a matrix of social and historical relations that are more significant to the formation of an end text than any personal qualities of the life or voice of an author." Bernstein

"Individual voice is no longer privileged."

"Refused to separate philosophy from poetry" (Perloff)

"Absence of effort."

"Chime, alliteration, assonance — To emphasize the word of such is to pay special attention to sound patterns - fluency, play, and music; rhyme, recurrence." (Perloff)

"Both in NY and San Francisco the language movement arose as an essentially Marxist critique of contemporary literature."
MEN ON YACHTS

After the bath she touched her hair with Orange Leaf and smiled.

Henry is gone. Who are you?

Famous ashwood stationary violins all night made bright da capo constant as specific gravity.
So the umbrellas were put away.

We were together on yachts and beaches.
breakfasts on the ocean,
taxi’s through the Brandenburger Tor.

Along the Danube
  onion stew and cart hack.
sheep under the Carpathians,
the cheese upon the rack.
The heifers licked their noses.

Along the Boston limited commercial service.
The table in the boarding house was cleared, the cloth folded.
The rooms contained a few flowers, chocolate boxes, women,
a laundry bag,
the lipstick on the dresser.

The men fled military service in the Empire.
THE LOBSTER

to W. Carlos Williams

Eastern Sea. 100 fathoms,
green sand, pebbles,
broken shells.

Off Suno Saki, 60 fathoms,
gray sand, pebbles,
bubbles rising

plasma-bearer
and slow-
motion benthos!

The fishery vessel Ion drops
anchor here collecting
plankton smears and fauna.

Plasma-bearer, visible sea
purge, sponge and kelpleaf,
Halicystus the Sea Bottle
resembles emeralds
and is the largest
cell in the world.

Young sea-horse
Hippocampus twenty
minutes old --
nobody has ever seen this marine freak blink.

It radiates on terminal vertebra a comb of twenty upright spines and curls its rocky tail.

Saltflush lobster bull encrusted swims backwards from the rock.
This is Pamphlet 7 of The Poetry Series
THE MODERN EDITIONS PRESS
725 Greenwich Street
New York City
Examples of Obj. Poetry

Include my poem, The Lobster (p. 49, Amulet)

West of see in the ocean — Strange little animal & plants
Plasma
Benthos + fauna + flora found at bottom of the ocean
Sponge
Sea-frettle (Latin name = Halicystis)
Sea coral
Plankton — microscopic plant food that fish feed on

Also, To a Collie Pup (p. 30)

Also, Credle's poem: influenced by Regard Cott, Specifity, Standard...
1913  Pound's Principles

1. Direct treatment of the thing, whether subjective or objective.

2. Avoid abstractions.
   “The natural object is always the adequate symbol, not a symbol for something else.”

3. Economy. Use no word that does not contribute to the presentation, which does not reveal something.

4. Present vs. subject, don't describe it or comment on it.

5. “I believe in an absolute rhythm,” a rhythm that is, in poetry, which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed. A man’s rhythm must be interpretive; it must, therefore, in the end, be his own.

6. There is a fluid as well as a solid content. Thus, some poems have form as a tree has form, some as water poured into a vase.
Budapest

(1) History of Cubist "movement" - who were in it -
(2) Bukovsky's definition
(3) My definition -
(4) Other predecessors: Antecedents
Pound - prose writings
Williams - free verse -
Joyce's Ulysses -> free association (the way the mind works)
Eliot raised the artistic level of psychology, sophistication, and psychology, understanding the poetry
(6) Parallel movement: Phenomenology (Husserl) -
(2) Freuchen Forster
Maybe derived from Nietzsche, his constant battle against:
this sense that it reduced man from realizing his potentialities and prevented further
and from Wm. James -
(6) Read poems, as examples of Cubist poetry
They landed and could see nothing but meadows and tall trees...cypress, nearly three fathoms about at the roots, rising straight for sixty or eighty feet without a branch. In the woods were cedars, oaks, and walnut trees; some beech, some elm, black walnut, ash, and sassafras mulberry trees in groves; honey-suckle and other vines hanging in clusters on many trees. They stepped on violets and other sweet flowers, many kinds in many colors; strawberries and raspberries were on the ground. Blackbirds with red shoulders were flying about and many small birds, some red, some blue; The woods were full of deer; and running everywhere fresh water... brooks, rundles, springs and creeks. In the twilight, through the thickets and tall grass, creeping upon all fours...the savages, their bows in their mouths.

REZNIKOFF

Obj. principle: Let things speak for themselves.

Savages: because (1) Not Christians/ heathens; (2) lived Simple, unindivided lives in nature; (3) Early settlers afraid of them carried arrows in a sheath at their hips but their bows they hid to carry.

Rundles = small brook
Brook = a small stream (smaller than a river)
Spring = water flowing from mountain a flout of water from the ground
"three fathoms" (John Smith was a sea captain, hence used nautical term) - Width 18 feet

ASYLUM PRODUCT

Brown and black felt, unevenly stitched with purple thread; what unhappiness is perpetuated in the brown and black of this pincushion, lunatic?

Obj. principle: be simple, direct; get to the heart of a thing immediately.
Disasters

of wars of western
wind and storm

of politics I am sick with a poet's
vanity legislators

of the unacknowledged
world it is dreary
to descend
and be a stranger how
shall we descend

who have become strangers in this wind that

rises like a gift
in the disorder the gales

of a poet's vanity it our story shall end
untold to whom and

to what are we ancestral we wanted to know
if we were any good

out there the song
changes the wind has blown the sand about

and we are alone the sea dawns
in the sunrise verse with its rough

beach-light crystal extreme
sands dazzling under the near
and not less brutal feet journey
in light

and wind
and fire and water and air the five

bright elements
the marvel

of the obvious and the marvel
of the hidden is there
in fact a distinction dance

of the wasp wings dance as
of the mother-tongues can they

with all their meanings
dance? O

O I see my love I see her go

over the ice alone I see

myself Sarah Sarah I see the tent
in the desert my life
narrow my life
is another I see
him in the desert I watch
him he is clumsy
and alone my young
brother he is my lost
sister her small
voice among the people the salt
and terrible hills whose armies
have marched and the caves
of the hidden people

Fear

once once only in the deluge
of minutes a tree
a city
a stone in the road waiting
stones eagles seagulls sliding
sideways down the wind I cannot find
a way to speak
of this the source
the image the space
of the poem our
space too great
or too small where the world rides the words
speak of too little
time remaining
fearful
of sorrow in this once once only
among atoms, eagles, and alone

The American Poetry Review
Objectivists - first letter from T.Z. in 1930

Parallel movement — Husserl, Phenomenology

Francis Ponge — Nietzsche's seeds of phenomenology in James successfully bridged the gap between subjective objects.

Also, solved the problem of the abstract (meta-physical).

Fright against abstraction in Nietzsche's codification essence, Heraclitus (awareness).

Also, because of it, be in other words, psychology.

Great respect for reality 

They don't need commentary. 

They don't need to be expanded or developed. 

They don't need to be improved by meta-physical hypotheses (they can be).

(a) By reality was meant the whole reason of the poet — not just the external reality of the outer world — but also beyond realism / were not simply realist._iff well dimension.

Also, quote from Pascal: "The more we pretend, the quicker —"

(b) Dead serious — never played games with language —

(c) Life significance

(d) Extraordinary (super)

(e) Full comprehension of object

(f) Next page
Add to this: Another dimension of our "comprehension of an object." Take the opposite:

"A true revelation & understanding, can only emerge from stubborn concentration on a single problem. The simplest & the quickest way to arouse the sense of wonder is to stare, unafraid, at a single object. Suddenly—miraculously—it will look like something we have never seen before? — What has happened? Is it the same thing?

I. Do we now see "inside" the object—see its true nature?
II. Has something happened to us which changes our perception? (Like the doing of LSD—cocaine
III. In this state (hypnotic, meditative), the imagination—aroused and works on the true transformation it
IV. Finally, when it is expressed, the medium of language transforms it (not an exact equivalent or representation)

All this = what = meant by full comprehension of an object

Another dimension of Alg: = clarity in the sense that all 3 have to clear: the altered perception, the imagination at work, the language
FOR MY MOTHER

Tender/ semi-articulate flickers/of your presence, all/ those years/past// now, /five, impossible to// count them// one by one, like// addition, subtraction, missing// not one. The last/ curled up, in// on yourself,/position you take/ in the bed, hair/ wisped up// on your head, a/ top knot, body/skeletal, eyes// closed against,/ it must be,// further disturbance—/ breathing a skim/ of time, lightly/ kicks the intervals...// days, days and// years of

Breathing a skim/ of time, lightly/ kicks the intervals...// days, days and// years of

days, days and years of

Dignity's faded dilemma. It is your life, oh no one's// forgotten anything/ever.// They want/ to make you// happy when/ they remember. Walk/ a little, get// up now, die/ safely, easily, into singleness, too tired with it to keep on and on. Waves break at the darkness under the road, sounds in the faint night's softness. Look at them, catching the light, white edge as they turn... always again and again. Dead one, two, three hours... all these minutes pass. Is it, was it, ever you alone again. How long you kept at it, your pride, your lovely, confusing discretion. Mother, I love you... for whatever that means, meant... more than I know, body gave me my own, generous, inexorable place of you. I feel the mouth's sluggishness, slips on turns of things said, to you, too soon, too late, wants to go back to beginning. Smells of the hospital room, the doctor she responds to now, the order... get me there. "Death's Tet, you owe. That comes true, this, that, endlessly circular life, and we came back to see you one last time, this time? Your head shuddered, it seemed, your eyes wanted, I thought, to see who it was. I am here,/ and will follow.

Read with Remer Koff's Kaddish——

Braude's Kaddish
foreshadowed in surrealist night speech on the media, its first robot.

Carl Rakosi
“A few don’ts” — Poetry, March 1913

(1) Direct treatment of the thing whether subjective or objective
(2) Use no word that does not contribute to the presentation
(3) Compose in the sequence of the musical phrase

It’s in fear of abstractions
Use no superfluous word, no adjective which does not reveal something.

“Don’t use such an expression as ‘dim lands of peace.’
It degrades the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer not realizing that the natural object is always the adequate symbol.

“Don’t be maudlin” — leave that to the writers of pretty little philosophical essays. Don’t be descriptive, demand that the painter can describe a landscape much better than you can.

Used in my talk on the Objectivists in Budapest
When I started writing poetry, after total immersion in the Romantic poets, it seemed to me that metaphor was the god in a poem, the body in which he showed his splendor and transcendence, the motivating force behind writing itself. This belief led me to write some dreadful poems, which in time led me to my re-education. But the feeling that there is an affinity between some deep part of my nature and the metaphor never left me, and I remained loyal to it at heart and continued to woo this invisible bearer of bountiful gifts, too rich at times for my stomach, who seemed to appear on call from some higher power in the imagination. In time I learned to choose only those metaphors that would stand behind their promises and be accountable for discretion and accuracy. Metaphors with a conscience, in other words.

"Metaphors with a conscience!" (I hear someone screaming.) "Are you out of your mind? How can a metaphor have a conscience? What are you trying to do, Judaize aesthetics?"

I can make my point by examining a stanza from a poem by Delmore Schwartz,

THE MIND IS AN ANCIENT AND FAMOUS CAPITAL:

"The mind is a city like London,
Smoky and populous---------------"

A grand opening! A grand view. Large meanings resonate from it, imminent. Yet the metaphor fits. The reader is content to be carried along at this great height wherever this Prospero has a mind to take him. Then follows:

"it is a capital
Like, Rome, ruined and eternal."

The field now is in danger of becoming overpopulated. Is it possible that the author did not realize what he had in the first metaphor? Or is this a case of pushing on in grandeur for still more effect, insensitive to the thickening of the atmosphere and the confusing side-effects? Whichever, the possibilities are still there but they are no longer charismatic. And the serpent whispers, "Art thou really Prospero?"

Nevertheless, the grand view continues in the second modifier, eternal. It goes with Rome and what we feel is true of its referent, the mind. But actual ruin stares the poem in the face and disbelief rushes in at the word, ruined. Why "ruined?" This term for the mind is no product of thought or soul-searching. It is the oldest and most hackneyed conceit in Romantic
The fellow has made me forget that the metaphor has a referent, subject matter, and that the best argument for the metaphor is that it endows the referent with these qualities. We expect more of a metaphor, therefore, than of a flower. As long as it has a referent, we must expect it to be for the referent.

But not entirely. Entirely would make it a dull fellow. A certain amount must be allowed for an existence in language, an existence always there and never identical to subject matter. The question is, how much? And the answer comes from man's connection to earth: it doesn't matter how much so long as it doesn't detract from subject matter. For why should one be willing to give up one jot of that? I see no need to. One can have both.

But this now plunges us outside literary considerations, for the amount of subject matter that a poet is willing to sacrifice or compromise depends on his individual psychology. If he is turned primarily inward, there is nothing to restrain him from going all the way to EUPHUES. But if his feelings for the outer world are solid and grounded in character, he'll keep his head against the charisma of metaphor. He will not settle for charisma alone.

But isn't it grand that we can have both the earth and metaphor?

Next rascal is metaphor for the poet's own aggrandizement which turns attention away from the poem to beam in on his powers of imagination and language. One is entitled to so much self-aggrandizement as one can get away with in this fictional world but not at the expense of the poem. This is a form of integrity.

Then come metaphors which and perpetuate writing for the sake of writing... e.g., writing as an ego need, as against writing out of lyric impulse. Some ego need is always in a person but if that is the driving force, it leads to poetry without an inherent reason for being, the ultimate contamination, and to a mindless overpopulation of writing in which no one's individuality can survive. A plague of locusts would be preferable.

Then there are metaphors in place of think subject matter and thought, and metaphors in which the poet can escape from personality, and metaphors by which he can slip into a drugged state, and metaphors that take over and lead him by the nose, and so on.

But I have run ahead of myself. Looking back to my beginnings, I see now that there was only one kind of poetry which moved me then, the lyrical. With what condescension and disdain I expelled everything else! Out! Outside the pixxi pale! The memory is embarrassing.

Then one day I myself transgressed. It happened after reading Cumming's poem, Buffalo Bill, I think in The Dial. What delight! It touched a nerve in me...
that I didn't know I had, and a poem came to me as a counterpoint, a take-off on early Westerns. It was the opposite of lyrical, of romantic, of mystical, the opposite of everything I had done up to then; and it was without metaphor. I didn't have to "compose" it. The poem practically wrote itself. Form didn't seem to matter to it. It was fun writing, but I dismissed it as negligible.

Some time later, on another binge, I wrote THE EXPERIMENT WITH A RAT. This poem took more composing, more form, but again no metaphors, and the opposite of lyrical, etc. This poem I took more seriously. With the writing of my AMERICANA suite, mostly done without metaphor, it became apparent that a different aspect of my nature had broken out.....humor, satire, my bond to the everyday world. These poems had certain things in common: they all had a point to make, a realistic matter to reproduce, for which they needed no assistance from metaphor. It would have been extra baggage, a distraction, an enemy to the simple state in which mental points have to be made.

In Narrative poetry, too, spurns metaphor. Who wants to be stopped in the flow of a story by the ambiguities and inner richness of metaphor? Similarly, in poetry in which the action itself stands for a larger meaning, the metaphor only impedes the symbolism. But no matter, the metaphor still haunts me. I know that what I was at my beginnings.....romantic, lyrical, idealistic.... had to have metaphors. In addition, I was possessed by the music of poetry; by overpowering, inchoate feelings.....elegiac, rhapsodic, mystical; by a sense of supernatural presences close by who would move out of their shadowy limbo and make themselves known to me if I allowed myself to go to them and listen. I stood at the edge, waiting. Would you try to express these things in literal language? Would you even be willing to admit to them as non-metaphorical states?

In this duress, metaphor came to my aid.....as it comes to everybody's, for it is a primary tool invented early in our evolution to cope with imperfection at both ends of the communication process: with some defect or inadequacy in the cognitive faculty, in its capacity to know exactly and in full what we are experiencing from moment to moment and what is before us, and with imperfection in language, in its capacity to reproduce exactly and fully. Thus the metaphor is staple in everyday talk. The moment we are stuck for perception or words, we reach for an analogy, this is metaphor in its simplest functional form.

If we are meditating, the cognitive and lingual imperfections are far more complex. If, for example, I am looking at a tree, what am I experiencing?
There's no point in asking that question if no demands are made on me to reproduce the experience. In that case, experience is knowing. But if I have to reproduce it, neither my self-observation nor the language of direct statement is equal to the task.

If I further ask the question, what is before me?, I run into a maze just trying to understand my own question. And if I can get past that, I run into a wall, for the real tree is not penetrable to my inquiry. Of course, if I assume that the tree is what I see, there's no problem. I wind up with a physical description. But if I sense, as I do, that there's something more there, something sui generis that is not I, a character/presence/ambiance of its own purpose and destiny that is not what the scientist knows of its structure or its composition and function, then I'm in trouble because I do not have access to these things. I must invent something to represent them. The chances are, I'll start with a metaphor.

And if I want to reproduce the tree's aesthetic effect on me, its particular beauty and grace, or my connection to it when I think of its durant heart, its destiny relative to man, the mystery of its great presence.....the enumeration, however true, is never complete and does not bring me any closer to the integral that is so moving about a tree; that is on a different plane from its parts and attributes.....if, as I said, I want to reproduce all that, direct statement and descriptive words are of no use. If, in addition, I want to express my feelings about all this, for sure I need help and must invent the metaphorical tools for it. I see that, almost without thinking, I have already done some of this in the words I used.

It is possible that I have no more entrée to a tree than a spider has to the wall on which it sits and spins, but does that matter? Metaphysical riddles never stopped anyone, not the solipsist himself, from following his natural bent and intuition.

Pierre Reverdy plays this theme to death. "Poetry," he writes, "is not in the datum but in the observant mind." I see no basis for such a dichotomy except in Reverdy's own natural bent towards solipsism, for if it held, it would follow that the only subject of poetry is the mind itself, the poet/solipsist himself. We know that heavy presence, that long, millenial dream from which one can not awaken because outside stimulus has been removed. We know its working principle, that subject matter is not the important thing, only the art of expressing it; that poetry has no responsibility to anything outside the poet himself, the man of evolving surrealist excess and
extravaganza. Unfortunately for him, the nature of the reader, has the last word; whatever exercises in solipsism may be to the poet, they are boring to others.

Leaving the metaphor for a moment for a larger field, I have to add that it is a fundamental problem in writing that the emotions and the intellect mix very poorly. In fact, they don't mix at all, not only because their tones clash and they exist on different planes, but no sooner does one feel something, then the mind butts in: it looks, describes, interprets, denatures, absorbs, controls, encapsulates. It imagines that it has made an even exchange because it does this with great wit, precision and eclat. The fact is that it has no choice. If it did not move in on the emotion, it would have nothing to do and no reason for being. The trouble is that when it's through, the emotion is no longer there, only its mental ectoplasm. Yet emotion without intellect is slob. Only the mind can give it form and make it look and act the way it should in a poem.

How to do this, then, with as little loss to the emotion as possible. By confining the intellect to suggestion, and by expressing the emotion in the medium in which it is most directly expressed, music; in a poem, the music of the lines. Or in a medium which uses the associations that go with certain images and configurations. This excerpt from Denise Levertov's poem, ILLUSTRIOUS ANCESTORS, is an example.

"Well, I would like to make poems direct as what the birds said, hard as a floor, sound as a bench, mysterious as the silence when the tailor would pause with his needle in the air."

The first three similes here need no comment; they are definitive. But who is this tailor in the 4th simile? Well, from the context, "The
dr
dr
of Northern White Russia declined in his youth to learn the language of birds because the extraneous did not interest him; nevertheless when he grew old it was found he understood them anyway, having listened well, and as it is said, 'prayed with the bench and the floor.'"

he is that slightly mystical character out of Yiddish literature and folk-
lore, the ubiquitous Jewish tailor, lowly, obscure, philosophical, which
God had made him for reasons known only to Him. He and the RAV evoke the
shtetl atmosphere, as we know it from this literature, in Czarist Russia,
from where LEVARTOV'S father came. As such, the poem is a figuration of
nostalgia. This much is on a single plane. The words, mysterious and silence
and "would pause with his needle in the air, however, transport us to another
plane. This simile is so much richer than its referent, so much more profound
and resonant, that it displaces it at once. One no longer remembers that the
poet was saying that she wished her poems to be like that. The wish seems
unimportant now.

This tailor is a far more hypnotic character, in a poetic sense, than
the historical tailor or the tailor out of nostalgia. The myx simile has made
him a figure of mystery wherein the author has a heraldis existence......
heraldis, at first glance, of a Jewish past unknown to her; on a deeper plane
heraldis of the mystery of silence, of the mystery of our inward state where
meditation sits timelessy on the question, What is Being?

In this heraldis universe, all know, the inhabitants are not subject
to mortality. it is as if the mind had made a pact with language to that effect,
Once its word, its metaphor, is on the page, it shall live in perpetuity,
independent of its referent and its author. The conditions in this habitat,
the standards, the associations, the voice, the thing that is matter there,
were not set by referent or author. When they enter it, therefore, they have
to undergo a transformation and abide by those conditions. Balzecian reality
is taken in by them and ceases to exist as such. It becomes depersonalized.
Its life space becomes aesthetic space. Above all, it becomes enhanced, a
distortion not tolerable in the real world. In this enhancement looks lies
the poet's field for expressing his deepest longings for transcendence......
is this not the very air of the soul?.....to go beyond the ordinary, and
beyond the excellent too, beyond what his mind can know and his eyes can see
and his hand can write, to settle for nothing less than magic in language,
to have no limits, an impossibility broken when the word as symbol and metaphor
transforms its referent into a heraldis thing and its author into a heraldis
being.

Are these aspirations not romantic? As writing itself.
And also lyrical? .....the romantic sings. Where else can one's lyrical
impulses and rhapsodic feelings go but in this enhancement? Or all these
vague, elegiac feelings and premonitions of the mystical that dog
the poet. Or the grandiose impulses of his ego, and his need for immortality
......his double.
Enter this metaphor and you take off in a self-contained, timeless space capsule, where William James once sat when he wrote, "Immortality is one of the great spiritual needs of man" and Lev Lunts when he wrote in the Serapion Manifesto, "Art is as real as life itself, and, like life, has no goal or meaning. It exists because it must."

From matter to trope, into imago.....the image as our way of knowing, of making matter conform to our mode of perception.....how well I know this divine transmutation! Yet I am pulled equally towards the other pole, and yearn to do what the stage designer, Nicolai Akimov, longed for. Writing during the early, sanguine period of Russian Communism, he said, "My fondest dream is to develop the expressiveness of things to a point where I need not be ashamed to put them on the stage beside the best of actors. As yet, this waits in Utopia, but if I should ever succeed in bringing upon the stage a chair, the sight of which would make the audience, to a man, sob, I would die in peace."

Exactly how I feel! So I stand by what I once wrote:

"Matter,
with this look
I wed thee
and become
thy very
attribute.
I shall
be thy faithful
spouse,
true
to thy nature,
for I love
thee
more than Durer
loved a seaweed."
Foreword to American

The American started as a past - to get an idea of stereotype, but I wrote it as an experiment. The results that seemed to come out of it were

the type of personality, that seemed to me, one of the most important
doing of all the outside. It is the people who first told me, and it was a surprise. I was led to believe that it was a few Americans for laughs at reading.

the audience regarded them as no less important than my other book. Only the serious ones regarded them as important.

among some critics, only the apologetic ones regarded them as important, and most of the others

put this down to a peculiarity of the young audience for a generational gap, one of the consequences of a reading audience.

I don't know if I'm confused.

The first thing I realized that it didn't always be a past. The N.O. poem - changed, and the whole world to tragic (that treat a Black man as a joke) -

and the Depressions, and Vietnam, the war, and I have beennode to be detached.

These were not caught on the wing as stereotypes.

in fact, didn't start out as American - they were very much on the level. I added them because despite the difficulties, it was in tone.

these were the other traits of the American, not quite as unrelated to reality, almost so predictable. The real difference: one could no longer laugh at them.
First of the Am. poems, all this not seen as such was
Three Clashes for the Star Spangled Banner

for this came from Cumming's Buffalo Bill poem
in the depth of Frank's newspapering.
Commencing for the - opened up a vein in me that
I didn't know I had.
Ideas for Preface to Americans

(1) All my adult life I have been in search of the true character of America, without being aware of it.

(2) The writing of Americans is usually after reading something in the news — didn't leave to work on it (after exceptions) came as a delight because already something like found poems — discovered in the news

Their tone is (usually) slightly comic ironic tongue-in-cheek because = stereotype = half in reality = in stereotype

(3) A poet can only as close as we can get it? Half in self-fulfillment in real = as long as there are men

there are Amer捐赠 will be

as long as we are vulnerable there will be Americana

and indeed on a poem what is now

more accurate to say, an unending long poem in

writing this for sale really working in other places Chicago Boston Milwaukee Cleveland

to go in search of the true character of the American Character

no such thing after World War II — Sherwood Anderson, Harold Leventhal
O great Psychology, you are everywhere. I found you even in ancient Babylon, in Gilgamesh.

"This epic," you cried, in your sure, tutorial voice, "Is a story of man's boundless potentialities, but it was too early in history to dare to avow them, so the authors made a hero whom no one on earth could stand up to but not so daring and mighty as to provoke the gods and bring destruction down on the people. In fact, to make sure that no one could mistake their intentions, they kept some things out of his grasp, proof that they were not setting up a man to rival the gods. And they left certain things unclear, such as his origins and the circumstances of his birth, while other things were unmistakably definite: viz., that this was a lone case and only Gilgamesh could have done what he did; that the events in the story happened long before memory and there were no survivors to hold responsible; that it was, after all, only a story. We're not going to be held accountable and punished every time our mind plays at make-believe, are we?

Then for good measure, they slipped in a Serpent. Here was our hero, celebrating the greatest event in his life, the possession of the plant of eternal youth. You can imagine the collossal shindig that was! In the midst of it, he could not resist taking his eyes off the plant/to congratulate himself. When he came to, the plant was gone. The Serpent had slipped in during the hubbub and stolen it. the gods at ease and incline them towards compassion.

Thus, as far back as Babylon, Psychology was already on the side of the gods and disclaimed any intention except to entertain.

"Very astute," I thought to myself. "Psychology must be the prototype of the proverbial cat that always falls on its feet. But tell me, Puss, aren't there powers higher than Gilgamesh? And if so, where does that leave your analyzing?"

In any case, it is clear that behind Gilgamesh were sensible men who liked to tell earthy jokes. How else account for making the gods themselves favor Gilgamesh, as if the very heavens had to admire so much daring? And why else would the goddess Aruru, in order to save the people from being destroyed by Gilgamesh's violence, make a counter-force out of the raw stuff of animal life and then tame it by mating it with a knowing woman? I can hear men laughing in their beer at that.

And if the gods were listening, they must have chuckled when Gilgamesh, after much danger and travail, crossed the waters of death and made contact at last with Utnapishtim, who possessed the secret of eternal youth, and
discovered to his amazement that this hero par excellence, this savior of mankind, was doing nothing in his everlasting existence but sit quietly in the shade with his wife.

Carl Rakosi
old country ballad

God,

"if I had known
I was going
to live to 97

I would have
took better
care of myself."

Carl Rakosi
Dear Frau Hesse:

Mr. James Laughlin has asked that I trace my connection with the Objectivist movement for you, to go along with the mimeographed biography you already have.

My connection with Objectivism began with a letter from Louis Zukofsky, then unknown to me, in 1930, inviting me to contribute to a special number of the magazine Poetry which he was going to put together and edit himself under the banner of Objectivism. He was a great admirer of Ezra Pound's, of both his critical ideas and his poetry, and had seen my work in Pound's magazine The Exile, and wrote, "Permit me to say that your poems are the best in America---these U.S.A.---that I have seen since, well 1926." My poems led off that issue of Poetry and a considerable number appeared in 1932 in The Objectivists Anthology, which Zukofsky also put together and edited with infinite care. From that time on, Zukofsky, George Oppen, Charles Reznikoff and I became known as The Objectivists. In fact, this is how we are known to this day. This is interesting because Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Kenneth Rexroth, Basil Bunting, William Carlos Williams and Robert McAlmon were also in the Anthology, the only ones to get stuck with the name.

Since I lived in New York for only a short period, I did not get to meet Oppen and Reznikoff, but Zukofsky and I had a long, intensive correspondence on questions of poetics, mostly having to do with my own work, and we used to get together when I was in New York. We had quite a few critical ideas in common but our poetry was as unlike as two poets could be. This was true of all the work in the Anthology. Only Reznikoff and I can be said to have had some affinities. In spite of the diversity, however, all of the pieces in the Anthology did live up to a very rigorous standard of what a good poem must be.

What was that? Zukofsky tried to define it but was not really successful, at least to my satisfaction. He was better at saying what it was not: "Fake, mere word mongering, the lack of a process of words acting on particulars show up as rot in all times."
For myself, I found the term Objectivist useful. It conveyed a meaning which was, in fact, my goal: to present objects in their most essential reality and to make of each poem an object....meaning by this, obviously, the opposite of a subject; the opposite, in other words, of all forms of personal vagueness; of loose bowels and streaming, sometimes screaming, consciousness. And how does one make the subjective experience from which a poem issues into an object? By feeling the experience sincerely, by discriminating particularity, by honesty and intelligence, by imagination and craftsmanship......qualities not belonging to Objectivists alone, obviously.

Let's see how this system works when applied to a few contemporaries. Take A.S., an American poetess who has just won the Pulitzer prize. Her experience is sincerely felt but not objectified. The result is dull, pretty awful. Which proves again that it is not the experience which provides the basic interest (experiences are not different from each other) but the nature of the objectification. An example of a different kind is W.H.A. His experiences are thoroughly and ingeniously objectified, but the experience conveyed in the "object" moves very weakly. The impression is that the experience was not thoroughly felt, whether sincere or not, and that the whole person was not involved. Therefore not all of the reader is involved. Next we have to settle here for W.H.A.'s intelligence and skill, which are sufficient to be interesting and pleasurable in themselves. Going back now to the making of an "objectivist" poem, as the basic form for a particular experience is found and the poem begins to take shape and fill in, all the insatiable tyrannies of language, which we only borrow....the form, the cadence, the associations, etc.....set up requirements of their own which must be followed in order to complete the writing. In this sense the author experiences the poem as an object; a real thing outside himself which works on him; an organism, as it were, with distinct characteristics. Once the poem is completed, the author becomes like everybody else, a reader, and it is no longer possible to experience the poem as anything but an object, which is there now to reenter the poet's subjective if it can.
Well, I hope this will do for the time being. And thank you and Dagmar Henne
for your great help.

Cordially

Carl Rakosi
society which Marxists, ever intent on persuading people, proposed, writers, as communication experts, including poets, had an honored place, and if one could get to the center of the action, which was the magazine, The New Masses, a place of power. But the honor was paid only to social realism or to exaltation of the working man. If you didn’t write...and I didn’t, I wrote lyrical poetry...you were flayed and boiled alive for pandering to the decadent tastes of the bourgeoisie by the editor, Mike Gold, and his editorial assassins. This happened to Reznikoff, for example. It made me feel there was something wrong with me (and of course with lyric poetry) for not being able to write what was expected of all good men. Sounds outrageous now, doesn’t it? but it was deadly real then. This had something to do with my stopping to write but the main thing was that I couldn’t work all day as a social worker and psychotherapist, spend time with my wife and children, socialize with our friends, do the chores around the house and write. I would have had to be up all day and all night.

Your N.Y. Times essay didn’t get it right. The problem after World War 2 was not a pressure to conform. The problem was the Cold War mentality, “us” against the Communists (as it still is), which swept Congress and the President (Truman then) like the Black Death. The difference then was that you could lose your means of livelihood and even wind up in prison if you were found to have associated with a Communist (and McCarthy labeled any dissident a Communist) or with someone who had ever been seen with someone who was said to have been seen with an alleged Communist or fellow traveller. You get the picture.

About your book of poems: I was struck by its great variety and honest observations and found a true poetic sensibility in it.

With best wishes,

[Signature]
I should marry & have a family. & altho my wife never stood in my way, it became more & more impossible.... there were too many things I had to give my time to. My profession absorbed me completely during the day, & no way was possible, in that profession. & at night, I had to spend time with my wife, my child, & then, when I tried to write at night, my mind would be jumping all over the place & I'd be awake all night. It was impossible, it couldn't continue. Another factor was, I was a Marxist. during this period, & the communist journals & magazines were just annihilating the poetry unless it had some social purpose & it. So that that had a great influence on me. So I... I had to stop, & I stopped reading all poetry too. I couldn't read poetry without being tempted. For either a year or two, I almost died, I thought I really was going to get physically ill. I got all sorts of symptoms, but I finally stopped. Now, the poetic impulse however does not die. That isn't something that can die in you, if you have it. You can stop the expression of it, but it won't die. I wrote many articles in my professional field which, when I read them now, are really very good literary prose - in almost any aspect of social work that I wrote on, casework, cases, supervision. I couldn't not use my literary powers, so they were coming out there - but I never thought I would write poetry again. What started it, but most people who know this already - a letter from Andrew Crozier, just a year before I retired from social work, in which he expressed interest in my work & said he had first come across it at the University of Buffalo when he'd come here as a student, under Olson. I read everything he could find in the magazines & copied them down, & he wondered whether I had any new work or what was happening. That's what started me off again. As a matter of fact, 6 months before I decided to retire, I started to write again, & I've been writing ever since... this was in late '66. But your question, about the poetic impulse - I wanted to emphasize, that does not die. You express it even in your relationship to people. The other social workers didn't know I was a writer, but they did know my pen name, Carl Rakosi, & they admired these prose writings of mine.... I wrote over 60 articles on different things... so it comes out in some way...

JC - When did you begin work on the Collected Prose? How far back does the work go?

CR - Not very far. I can't give you a date...

JC - I find the book most fascinating.... of utmost relevance... the poignance.... what it says about criticism, the critic - what it beckons for.... we're experimentalist, we're not supposed to overtly show our brains, & yet you have shown, with a sense of honesty in your book, there's a need for a reader, a need for a critical response, an undeniable, basic need for recognition...

FINISH tape runs out
20 March 1988

Dear Andy:

So much time has elapsed since the interview that I was unable to fill in the obvious lacunae and the missing last portion. Will you please mention this in the introduction as well as the fact that the interview took place late at night, long after my bedtime, and that my brain felt as if it were wrapped in wool.

With best wishes,
Dear Jim:

A thousand apologies for taking so long to answer your letter. Perhaps "taking so long" is not the right way to put it. What happened was that Leah (my wife) got cancer about a year ago and I became completely absorbed in its practical and psychological consequences. She's now in remission, and my bondage to it is too, for the time being.

In your letter you said you had unanswered questions in your mind about what force in Marxist thinking would make one stop writing and "not knowing precisely what was behind that force, what underpinnings in this country so work against the poet, continue to work against him." Two different matters. I'll take up the second first. It's not that structural forces are working against us, it's that they're working outside us, we have no place in them, are not a part of them, meaning by that that American society from the very beginning has been and is materialistic, practical, commercial and has never had a national culture to counteract that, a national culture like the national cultures of eastern Europe or Persia or the Middle East in which poetry has an honored place. Here poetry is just not a part of things. That's bad enough but our macho-esque mores make it seem rather unmanly for a man to be doing. We can write or not write, of course, as we please. Nobody is going to stop us; that's our private affair. But nobody but other poets and critics are going to be paying any attention. Which doesn't keep us from writing, of course; what it does do is deprive us of social backing and respect for our work. To fill the void, we make frantic efforts to win respectability and admiration from people in the business, critics and other poets, but this doesn't work because that's not where the void is. We pay a heavy emotional price for this omission. I have no doubt that it distorts our work, and especially what we write about it.....we constantly overplay our hand. But we go on writing anyhow, as I would have too if two other things had not happened along the way.

One was the Great Depression of the 1930's when I became convinced along with millions of others that Capitalism had failed, was finished, that the only remedy was some form of socialism. The suffering of people was so great that we were all swept along in a mass movement of such extraordinarily imperative moral urgency that it subsumed our critical faculties. In the ideal
society which Marxists, ever intent on persuading people, proposed, writers, as communication experts, including poets, had an honored place, and if one could get to the center of the action, which was the magazine, The New Masses, a place of power. But the honor was paid only to social realism or to exaltation of the working man. If you didn't write... and I didn't, I wrote lyrical poetry... you were flayed and boiled alive for pandering to the decadent tastes of the bourgeoisie by the editor, Mike Gold, and his editorial assassins. This happened to Reznikoff, for example. It made me feel there was something wrong with me (and of course with lyric poetry) for not being able to write what was expected of all good men. Sounds outrageous now, doesn't it? but it was deadly real then. This had something to do with my stopping to write but the main thing was that I couldn't work all day as a social worker and psychotherapist, spend time with my wife and children, socialize with our friends, do the chores around the house and write. I would have had to be up all day and all night.

Your N.Y. Times essayist didn't get it right. The problem after World War 2 was not a pressure to conform. The problem was the Cold War mentality, "us" against the Communists (as it still is), which swept Congress and the President (Truman then) like the Black Death. The difference then was that you could lose your means of livelihood and even wind up in prison if you were found to have associated with a Communist (and McCarthy labeled any dissident a Communist) or with someone who had ever been seen with someone who was said to have been seen with an alleged Communist or fellow traveller. You get the picture.

Finally, about your book of poems: I was struck by its great variety and honest observations and found a true poetic sensibility in it.

With best wishes,
Employment Agreement between The Naropa Institute and Carl Rakosi, a faculty member for summer 1987.

Faculty member agrees to teach 2 classes (6/29 & 7/1), give 1 Poetry reading (6/29) and interview a select # of students (6).

Dates & Times

Honorarium $500.

Travel 1 Round Trip supersaver San Francisco/Denver

Housing Apartment at Varsity Townhouse Apartments

The Naropa Institute reserves the right to cancel the class, intensive or workshop if by __________ at least __________ full paying participants have not registered. In the case of cancellation, The Naropa Institute shall immediately notify the faculty member by telephone and follow-up letter. No compensation shall be payable in the event of a timely cancellation.

All salaries are subject to withholding deduction unless other arrangements have been made. Salaries will be paid upon completion of class, intensive or workshop.

Director, The Naropa Summer Institute

Faculty member

Address 2130 ARAPAHOE AVENUE • BOULDER, COLORADO 80302 • 303-444-0202

A NON-PROFIT EDUCATIONAL CORPORATION
Dear Jacqueline Gens:

The time schedule looks fine. No need to change the Wednesday evening class to Wednesday afternoon. I'll be leaving Thursday morning, as I had planned. However, I'm thinking of coming in to Boulder on Monday morning instead of Sunday. Any problem with that?

Since there's going to be a class on me on Monday afternoon, I'll add to it by filling up my evening class that day with reflections on my development as a poet and with ICLESXXXXCXXXa recollections of the other Objectivists. Then for my second session on Wednesday evening, I'd like to take up student work. So would you please ask each student to submit one poem on which he/she would like feedback?

Cordially,
SHIRIM:
A JEWISH POETRY JOURNAL

SPRING 1988
THE POETRY OF CARL RAKOSI
AND A STUDENT SELECTION
Now in his eighties, Carl Rakosi continues to search for clarity and honesty in his poetry. The directness of his poetry illuminates the world of concrete objects while it explores the ground between desire and fulfillment.

Michael Heller writes concerning Rakosi's poetry: "This poetry, then, is concerned not only with rendering the concreteness and feel of an actual world but also with accurately depicting the life of emotions as they swarm between object and person. . . ."

Carl Rakosi inspires a movement of poetry begun in the 1930's called the Objectivist Movement. Other recognized leaders are Louis Zukofsky, George Oppen and Charles Reznikoff, all with concerns of clarity and honesty of expression.

In the following introduction, Rakosi not only explores the connection between his poetry and his Jewish experiences, but also tackles the question of a Jewish aesthetic and the Objectivist Movement. Why were so many of the Objectivist poets Jewish and is there something in the movement that struck a cord in their Jewish experience?

The following poetry can be found in Carl Rakosi's recently published book, The Collected Poems of Carl Rakosi.
FOREWORD BY CARL RAKOSI

In my youth, in the 1920's, I would have scorned appearing in a Jewish poetry magazine. It would have meant that I didn't have enough talent to be published anywhere else. The last thing I would have wanted was to be pigeonholed as a Jewish writer. That was too parochial and, in addition, would have put the kiss of death on what I was trying to be, an American poet... or, more accurately, an international-style poet, since Pound and Eliot, the poets that mattered then, were showing strong French influence. Another deterring influence to Jewish subject matter was the strong secular, Marxist atmosphere of the period. I was caught up in that. So were my contemporaries.

As a consequence my literary self connected in only a weak, nebulous way with my Jewishness despite the fact that my step-mother kept a kosher house and my father was president of his shul. At heart, however, he was an agnostic...and a Socialist and had been chosen because the congregation admired his integrity and fairness. In the end, my parents' strong Hungarian identification and interests (they spoke Hungarian to each other and to me, and knew no Yiddish) affected me more than their Jewish ones, which they carried faithfully as an obligation. In any event, I was not having Jewish experiences, as such, which could move me to want to write about them, and I was not about to go looking for them out of a sense of obligation. As a result, only a small portion of my work is about anything Jewish, and when Rabbi Dworkin asked me for poems for a small collection in SHIRIM, I was afraid there would not be enough even for a small collection. There's more than I thought, and I'm glad, for although my literary self still maintains its independence, my personal self has had a solid, unambivalent connection to my Jewishness.
Looking over what there is of mine in this collection, I see that I have been moved by the great lyrical passages in the Old Testament, by the medieval Sephardic poets, by the spiritual power of synagogue music, by the experience of anti-Semitism, and by Jewish humor. What is not there is Jewish mysticism. Alas, I was not aware of its existence until late in life. I regret that because there is in me a deep, mysterious affinity for the mystical, and had I encountered it sooner, I would have responded from a part of my nature which has not been tapped.

Is there something Jewish in my overall work despite my usual independence from Jewish subject matter? I suppose so, since there is no way to escape one's identity, but I don't know. I may have a clue, however. In the 1930's a new movement appeared in poetry. Its members were called the Objectivists. What characterized them was their extraordinary clarity and objectivity, their conciseness, and the unwavering honesty of their subject matter. The leading members were four Jews: Louis Zukofsky, Charles Reznikoff, George Oppen and I. We were all very different from one another. No one could mistake a poem by Reznikoff for one by Zukofsky, or one by Oppen for one by me. At the same time, our work was very different from the work of our non-Jewish contemporaries. One could tell an Objectivist poem not only by its greater clarity and objectivity and honesty but by some other qualities in the writing, and it is these that may be Jewish, not exclusively, but recognizably Jewish in its mix, a mix of utter seriousness and earnestness and a great candor and responsibility, and a great compassion. This mix seems to me to characterize modern Hebrew and Yiddish poetry too.
SERVICES

There was a man in the land of Uz.

Who's that at my coattails?
A pale cocksman.

Hush!
The rabbi walks in thought as in an ordained measure
to the Ark
and slowly opens its great doors.
The congregation rises
and faces the six torahs
and the covenant,
and all beyond.
The Ark glows.

Hear, O Israel!

The rabbi stands before the light
inside, alone, and prays.
It is a modest prayer
for the responsibilities of his office.
The congregation is silent.

I too pray:
Let Leah my wife be recompensed for her sweet smile
and our many years of companionship,
and not stick me when she cuts my hair.
And let her stay at my side at large gatherings.
And let my son George and his wife Leanna
any my daughter Barbara be close,
and let their children, Jennifer, Julie and Joanna
be my sheep

and I their old shepherd.
Let them remain as they are.

And let not my white hair frighten me.

The tiger leaps,
the baboon cries,
Pity, pity.
The rabbi prays.

There was a man in the land of Uz.

I, son of Leopold and Flora, also pray:
I pray for meaning,
I pray for the physical
for my soul needs no suppliant.
I pray for man.

And may a special providence look out for those who feel deeply.

MEDITATION

After Moses Ibn Ezra

Men are children of this world,
yet God has set eternity in my heart.

All my life I have been in the desert but the world is a fresh stream.

I drink from it. How potent this water is!
How deeply I crave it!

An ocean rushes into my throat but my thirst remains unquenched.

MEDITATION

After Solomon Ibn Gabirol

Three things remind me of You, the heavens who are a witness to Your name the earth which expands my thought and is the thing on which I stand and the musing of my heart when I look within.
In Yiddish folk humor Chelm was a city of half-wits whose absurdities were so preposterous that the listener laughed and instantly felt more kindly toward his own.

We are the unacknowledged legislators of the world ....but we mustn't let it go to our heads.

There is no higher authority than theory.

Substance is no longer decisive. For every poem now there are a dozen exegetes to supply it.

In today's world the only viable reality is to pretend to be playing a game.

On the other hand, the world we live in is so monstrous that genius now must be measured by its capacity to create commensurate monsters.

You can disarm criticism by writing surreal as if it might be a comedy.

It takes great discipline to be spontaneous.

My poems keep getting smaller and smaller not because I have less to say but because I have become more rigorous.

On the other hand, the more impenetrable a poem is, the greater.
They go in different ways.
One hog is stationed at the far end of the pen to decoy the others,
the hammer knocks the cow to his knees,
the sheep goes gentle and unsuspecting.
Then the chain is locked around the hind leg and the floor descends from under them.
Head down they hang.
The great drum turns the helpless objects and conveys them slowly to the butcher waiting at his station for their jugular.
The sheep is stabbed behind the ear.
Gentle sheep, I am powerless to mitigate your sorrow.
Men no longer weep by the rivers of Babylon, but I will speak for you.
If I forget you, may my eyes lose their Jerusalem.
ASSOCIATIONS WITH A VIEW FROM THE HOUSE

What can be compared to the living eye?
its East is flowering honeysuckle
and its North dogwood bushes.

What can be compared to light
in which leaves darken after rain,
fierce green? like Rousseau's jungle:
any minute the tiger head
will poke through the foliage
peering at experience.

Who is like man sitting in the cell
of referents, whose eye
has never seen a jungle,
yet looks in?

It is the great eye, source of security.
Praised be thou, as the Jews say,
who have engraved clarity
and delivered us to the mind
where you must reign severe as quiddity of bone forever and ever
without bias or mercy,
without attrition or mystery.
I felt
the foetus stir
a foot
below my wife's
breast

and woke
the neighbours
with my shouting
(a day
for silly asses)

and greeted
my first-born:
"Listen, I am
your provider.
Let us get to know
each other."

TO AN ANTI-SEMITE

So you fought for the Jews
in the last war
and have become a patriot again!

Why you thick-skulled liar,
as impossible to offend
as to trust with an order,

you were never within
three thousand miles
of the front.

You fought the war
in Camp McKinley,
cleaning stables

and stealing out
into the moonlight
with the kitchen maids.
EXERCISES IN SCRIPTURAL WRITING

1.

The king shall understand
that Yahweh is
Lord of four kingdoms.
There is the kingdom of fire
that is the compend of His word.
And the kingdom of the earth
of which men say that it was Eden
(now but merchants).
And the kingdom of the air
where birds make offering to our Lord
for His benevolent attitude.
And finally there is the kingdom of water,
history of many winds
and sailors in their salty coffins.

Certainly
our Lord is like the apex in the south
and like the scepter of the north.

2.

Sandalwood comes to my mind
when I think of you
and the triumph of your shoulders.
Greek chorus girls came to me
in the course of the day
and from a distance
Celtic vestals too,
but you bring me the Holy Land
and the sound of deep themes
in the inner chamber.
I give you praise
in the language
of wells and vineyards.

Your hand recalls
the salty heat of barbarism.

Your mouth is a pouch
for the accents of queens.

Your eyes flow over
with a gentle psalm
like the fawn eyes
of the woodland.

Your black hair
plucks my strings.

In the foggy wilderness
is not your heart
a hermit thrush?

You are timeless
as the mirrors,
Jewess of the palm country,
isolate as the frost
on the queen of swans.
Now that I have seen
the royal stones and fountains
and the tetrarch's lovely swans,
I am satisfied that you are
a mindful of white birds
in the folly of an old Jew.

Because of the coral
of your two breasts
are the prophets angry,
but I have my lips upon them
and the song shall go on.

3.

At Stagira lies Saint Belle,
and there lies also the body of Aristotle.

And you shall understand
that her bones are anointed
with the gum of plum trees
and that all men are used
to attend her grave on Lent.

And men say that in her youth
she was led into a garden of Caiaphas
and there she was crowned
with the sweet thorn called barbariens.

But now this is no more
but a tablet seven cubits long
above her head
on which the title is written
in Hebrew, Greek and Latin
and the date
when it was laid in the earth.

And the body of Aristotle
stinks too in a casket
at Stagira, but the eyes
are in Paris in the king's chapel.
Yet the emperor of Almayne
claims he has them,
and I have oftentime seen them,
but they are greater
than those in Paris.
1. Four Characters

Antonio, a special breed of existential cat: a Christian, merchant, friend, yet suffers from an enigmatic melancholy. Spits on the Jew.

Nerissa, a gnat who'd make an outstanding critic. Pricks a literary convention before the bubble has a chance to be launched. A Sancho in Quixotic clothes.

Gratiano, a hot head. If there are Jews in Venice, let them lock their doors. This man will hate them and be itching for a fight. Prick him in his little finger and he becomes the very foreskin of an anti-Jew.

Shylock. Is it possible a man can be so real in the conventions of a tale of love, he has the smell of boiled beef on his breath?

"The Jew," says Gobbo, "is the very devil incarnation" and fun to taunt and defy.

Therefore after Shylock lost his child and fortune, "all the boys in Venice follow him, Crying his stones, his daughter, and his ducats," for did not Shakespeare give the signal of impending villainy himself by calling Shylock sixty times "the Jew"?
What should one say? That the age had not heard of the man of Sinai yet who baked compassion into moral order? Should one not say, this family man had tenderness and ancient humor built in like the glow-worm's light? That it appears that Shylock is an afterbirth left by the monk's dame that begat the Devil, the one who wrote the special dossier on the Jew which split the Middle Ages like a lightning bolt with this syllogism:

Man was born in sin. Only Christ can save. Christ is spurned by Jews. Therefore Jews are sinister or perhaps not really men.

So when Antonio's bond was forfeited and the gracious duke said in his best melodious voice: "We all expect a gentle answer, Jew!" Shylock rode implacability to the end.

But so did Lear

and there were tears for Lear!

But we forget this is an early play, a midsummer night's dream stabbed by the long black caftan'd quiddity of an earlier Italian villain, before Barabbas!

that England had not seen a real unbaptized Jew in three hundred years, having banished these proto-bankers (not before reneging on the notes due.)

Yet Shylock is a stronger brew than dreams are made of, straightforward as his ducats, yet not so real as flesh and blood.
Doggett, a famous low comedian of his day, played him as a sharper.

"But suppose," as one apologist for Shylock wrote, "that Shylock had subjected Antonio to the same indignities, what would be thought?"

"Our sympathies are with him," Hazlitt wrote. "He is honest in his vices" and the only way to play him is as Kean did with a "terrible energy"

or with scorn for Gratiano, as Irving did, hurling a thunderbolt of understatement when the trial was over and he said, "I pray you give me leave to go from hence, I am not well," and "walked away to die in silence and alone" or like Mansfield on "I am not well" to gut himself

or chuck it all

and outfit Shylock as a low comedian in pants pouched like a kangaroo with gravel voice and sad, repeated pratfalls on enormous pancake shoes, but keep the poetry in Venice in a cubist blue-and-white stage.

2. Belmont

a country of the mind held subject by the harmony of friendship and the perdurable vows of lovers whose perpetual desires pump systole and diastole.
Chafing like a captive princess, a fifteen-year-old suburban Jewess, Jessica, fled with her father's jewels and a monkey and eloped to Belmont with a neoplatonic youth, a handsome nonentity, and the crusader Godfrey of Bouillon drove the Jews of Jerusalem into the Synagogue and burned it down.

And Shylock said, "Let not the sound of shallow fopp'ry enter my sober house."

"In such a night Medea gathered the enchanted herbs that did renew old Aeson"

and in the sacked ghetto two men wrestled for a pot.

"In such a night stood Goebbels with a willow in his hand upon the wild sea banks" and the dead Jew lay face up, a dog chewing on his hat.

All "vanish into thin air" but the heavenly bodies which the ear of Shakespeare heard in English, the lovers buzzing in a hive of small acts and the revellers materializing into bone and gristle when they meet a Jew who grounds their euphoric charge.

All their ploy is jell'd in clearest amber, but the Jew remains in Gratiano's craw.

"What's that for?" "To bait fish withal!"
10 August 1988

To: The Fund For Poetry
From: Carl Rakosi

My heart brims with warmth and gratitude for your gift "in recognition of my contribution to contemporary poetry." With astonishment too, as you will see, for my wife, Leah, and I had just returned from the grocery and had brought in the mail with the bundles. The various items looked like junk mail, which I throw away unopened, or appeals from organizations. Your envelope looked like the latter except for "c/o Accounting Management Co." "The Fund For Poetry?" I wondered. "I've never heard of them. I wonder what they want." As Leah went about opening the envelope, I with only half an eye on her, she was griping, "Everybody wants money from us. Why don't they send us something once in a while?" Just then the check appeared and she exclaimed, "There is a check in here. For $5,000!" You can imagine the rest.

I should tell you too that your recognition comes at the most troubled time of my life because for two years now I have been absorbed by Leah's cancer and racked by her suffering. Your recognition was therefore a hand leading me back to literature.

In appreciation,

Carl Rakosi
The Poetry Project
1988 Symposium

April 7-10, 1988 • St. Mark’s Church
2nd Avenue & 10th Street • New York City

POETRY OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Thursday April 7
8 pm
5 Lectures: *Poetry of Everyday Life*. Bernadette Mayer, Alice Notley, Ron Padgett, Ron Silliman and Lorenzo Thomas.

Friday April 8
3 pm

8 pm
Reading: Kenward Elmslie, John Godfrey, Barbara Guest and Charlotte Carter.

Saturday April 9
1 pm

3:30 pm
Panel discussion: *New Forms/New Functions*. Mei-Mei Bresenbrugge, Joel Oppenheimer, Carl Rakosi, Lorenzo Thomas, Paul Violi and Rebecca Wright.

8 pm
Reading: Michael Brownstein, Rashidah Ismaili, Kofi Natambu, Joel Oppenheimer, Ed Sanders, Carmen Vallé and Anne Waldman.

Sunday April 10
2 pm

All events $10 contribution, $7 for Poetry Project members.
Symposium passes $50. Sponsors’ passes $100.

Information:
(212) 674-0910

The Poetry Project receives generous support from these public and private agencies: New York State Council on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs, The Jerome Foundation, Doris Jones Stein Foundation, Film/Video Arts, Inc. for film screenings, the Aaron Diamond Foundation, the Foundation for Contemporary Performance, the Mobil Foundation, Morgan Guaranty Trust Company, Gramercy Park Foundation, New Hope, Inc., and Apple Computer, Inc. Also, the members of The Poetry Project and individual contributors.

Design: Marc Nasdor
Dear Ed:

I've been waiting for the letter of confirmation from you. In the meantime I'm making my travel arrangements on the basis of what I've learned from others, that I'll be reading with Allen on Sunday afternoon, April 10th and taking part in the panel discussion on Saturday evening, April 9th, on the subject of New Forms, New Functions, with five minutes allotted to each participant for starters. I know what new forms are but what do you have in mind when you say, new functions? I need clarification on that. Also, who will be on the panel? Also the time of day on Sat.&Sun.

If anything in the above is not correct, will you please let me know right away?

I won't need Allen's guest room.

Best,
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The Poetry Project will host its 1988 Symposium: Poetry of Everyday Life at St. Mark’s Church-in-the-Bowery, April 7-10th. There will be a number of public events including an evening of lectures on the theme “Poetry of Everyday Life”; three programs of readings and performances by poets; and three panel discussions: “The Poetics of Liberation,” “The New York School: Painters and Poets,” and “New Forms/New Functions.”

Thirty-two of today’s most influential poets, artists and critics are being brought together for The Poetry Project 1988 Symposium. Among the participants are Allen Ginsberg, whose “Howl” and “Kaddish” became signature works for the Beat Generation writers; Carl Rakosi, an original member, with William Carlos Williams, Charles Reznikoff and Louis Zukofsky, of the Objectivist movement; Ed Sanders, lead singer of the poetry-rock group The Fugs; Dore Ashton, author of American Art Since 1945; Anne Waldman, Director of The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado; and Joel Oppenheimer, a leading figure among the poets and artists gathered at Black Mountain College during the 1950’s.

The Symposium opens Thursday evening April 7th with five short lectures on the theme “Poetry of Everyday Life.” The lectures will consider how daily experience informs the reading and writing of poetry and examine poetry’s impact on the lives of people who read and/or write it. Speaking will be: Ron Padgett, poet, translator, and the director of publications for The Teachers & Writers Collaborative; Lorenzo Thomas, Professor of English at the University of Houston and author of The Bathers; Bernadette Mayer, author of Sonnets and creative writing teacher in the New York City Schools; Ron Silliman, central figure among the “Language School” writers and editor of The Socialist Review; and Alice Notley, recent winner of the General Electric Award for Younger Poets and author of At Night The States.

There will be three programs of readings and performances by poets. Friday evening April 8th at 8 pm, the readers will be Kenward Elmslie, publisher of Z Press and author of 26 Bars; Barbara Guest, author of numerous volumes of poetry and a biography of the American poet Hilda Doolittle, H.D. Herself Defined; John Godfrey, author of Midnight on Your Left; and Charlotte Carter, author of Sheltered Life. Saturday April 9th at 8 pm will be an evening of extraverted, intense and joyous poetries by writers who share an ability to connect strongly with their audience. The program will include readings by Joel Oppenheimer, Anne Waldman, Ed Sanders, Michael Brownstein, Rashidah Ismaili, Kofi Natambo and Carmen Valle. The final reading of the Symposium, Sunday April 10th at 2 pm will feature Carl Rakosi, Allen Ginsberg, Leslie Scalapino and Michael Scholnick. Together, the careers of these poets span three generations of avant-garde poetry. All four of them convey accounts of daily experience that continually evoke fresh understandings of how poetry shapes the world in which we live.

The first of the Symposium’s three panel discussions, “The Poetics of Liberation,” begins at 3 pm on Friday April 8th. The panel will examine how poetry serves the liberation of language, thought and society. A wide range of poetries will be discussed in terms of their literary merit and their effectiveness as ideological statement. Panelists include Rachel Blau DuPlessis, author of Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth Century Women’s Writing; Roberto Echavarren, a member of the Spanish and Portuguese Language and Literature faculty of New York University and leading translator of John Ashbery and Wallace Stevens into Spanish;
Kofi Natambu, editor of Solid Ground, a highly regarded interdisciplinary journal on the arts; Carmen Valle, author of Vivir No Es Sinonimo De Maroma; and Gary Lenhart, Associate Director of The Teachers & Writers Collaborative and editor of Transfer magazine. Charles Bernstein, author of the collection of critical essays Content’s Dream and co-editor of The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book, published by Southern Illinois University, will moderate.

The New York School: Painting and Poetry, beginning at 1 pm on Saturday April 9th, will consider an important moment in American art when a loosely associated group of poets and painters enjoyed a mutually inspiring dialogue. The discussion will center on the relevance of “New York School” as a critical term describing painters as diverse as Jackson Pollock, Larry Rivers, Fairfield Porter and Jasper Johns; the correlation between the aesthetics of New York School painters and New York School poets—Frank O’Hara, John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, James Schuyler, Edwin Denby and Barbara Guest, among others; and the continuing influence of New York School painting and poetry on subsequent generations of poets and painters. Panelists include: Dore Ashton, Professor of Art History at The Cooper Union and author of The New York School: A Cultural Reckoning; John Yau, poet, art critic and curator, a regular contributor to Artforum and Art News. Charles North, poet and member of the English faculty of Pace University; Tony Towle, poet and art critic, author of North published by Columbia University Press; and Jane Freilicher, painter and member of the circle of poets and painters associated with Frank O’Hara—her works are in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum, Whitney Museum and the Museum of Modern Art. Moderating will be Anne Waldman.

The third panel discussion, “New Forms, New Functions,” will examine innovation-of-form as a central concern of contemporary poetry. William Carlos Williams wrote in his 1930 essay “Caviar and Bread Again”:

“On the poet devolves the most vital function of society: to recreate it—the collective world...in a new mode, fresh in every part, and so set the world working ...” and

“We must invent, we must create out of the blankness about us, and we must do this by the use of new constructions.”

The panel will consider how the emphases of newness and formal innovation, brought to the fore in European and American poetry of the early 20th century, continues to invigorate poets and poetries soon to enter the 21st century. Panelists include: Carl Rakosi, author of Ere-Voice and Collected Poems; Joel Oppenheimer, long-time columnist for The Village Voice and author of New Spaces; Rebecca Wright, St. Louis-based poet, author of Ciao Manhattan and Brief Lives; Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, author of The Heat Bird, on the faculty of Brown University, The Institute of American Indian Art and the Naropa Institute; Paul Violi, widely published poet, author of Splurges and Likewise. Lorenzo Thomas will moderate.


Roy Lichtenstein, one of the originators of the Pop Art movement, has contributed Still Life with Table Lamp (1976) for the Symposium’s brochure, poster and commemorative program. A signed, color version of the poster is available from the Brooke Alexander Gallery.
Biographic Notes on the Participants

DORE ASHTON is a distinguished art critic and scholar. A Professor of Art History at The Cooper Union, she is renowned for her knowledge of 19th and 20th century art. Among her 19 books are Fragonard in the Universe of Painting (1988), Out of the Whirlwind (1987), 20th Century Artists on Art and The New York School: A Cultural Reckoning (1973). In addition, she has written major critical studies on Mark Rothko, Rosa Bonheur and Joseph Cornell, and has curated exhibitions for the Museum of Modern Art and for other museums in the U.S. and abroad.

CHARLES BERNSTEIN is the author of 12 books of poetry, most recently, The Sophist, Artifice of Absorption and a collection of essays, Content's Dream. He co-edited, with Bruce Andrews, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E magazine. In the 1988 Columbia Literary History of the United States, Henry Sayre refers to Bernstein's work as demanding "...a sort of active reading that ...violates habits of passive consumption."

MEI-MEI BERSSENBRUGGE was born in China, and now lives in Rhode Island and New Mexico. A poet who has collaborated with dancers Blondell Cummings and Theodore Yoshikami, her books include The Heat Bird, Random Possession and Hiddenness, with drawings by Richard Tuttle. Empathy is forthcoming. She teaches at Brown University, The Institute of American Indian Art, and at The Naropa Institute.

MICHAEL BROWNSTEIN is a poet and prose writer who lives in New York City. His new book of stories, Music From The Evening of The World, is forthcoming from Sun & Moon Press. His other nine books include the volume of poetry, Oracle Night, and a novel, Country Cousin.

CHARLOTTE CARTER is the author of Sheltered Life and a former editor of The World magazine. A recipient of several awards, including a CAPS grant, she has taught widely and studied, herself, with Paul Bowles in Morocco. She also teaches the prose and fiction workshop at The Poetry Project.

RACHEL BLAU DUPLESSIS’ most recent book of poems is Tabula Rosa. A scholar of modernist women writers and contemporary poets, she is the editor of Feminist Journal, a contributing editor to HOW(ever), the author of Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies in Twentieth Century Women's Writing (University of Indiana Press) and of a study of the poetry of Hilda Doolittle, H.D. The Career of That Struggle. Rachel Blau DuPlessis is on the faculty of Temple University, and has lectured widely on the poetics of gender.

ROBERTO ECHAVARREN is a poet and leading translator, into Spanish, of the work of Wallace Stevens and John Ashbery. He is a member of the Spanish and Portuguese Language and Literature faculty of New York University, and has written a number of books of poetry, including Animaccio and the forthcoming Aura Amara. His work has appeared in The Partisan Review, The Portable Lower East Side, the Anthology of Contemporary Latin American Literature, 1960-1984 and will soon be included in an anthology of poems on Mexico, edited by Octavio Paz.

KENWARD ELMSLIE, the author of six books of poetry, is also a prolific librettist, playwright, songwriter and performer. His work has been performed by the New York City Opera, the Houston Grand Opera, and the Washington Opera at Kennedy Center. His most recent books are City Junket, and 26 Bars, which was illustrated by Donna Dennis. Kenward Elmslie has won two Ford Foundation grants, a National Council of the Arts Award and an NEA Librettist grant.


ED FRIEDMAN is the Artistic Director of The Poetry Project where he founded The Monday Night Reading Series. A unique force in the New York performance-poetry scene, Ed Friedman’s books include La Frontera, The Telephone Book and Humans Work. His multi-media performances and readings have taken place at The Kitchen, The Public Theater, MOMA, and P.S. 122. Ed Friedman is also a songwriter and has collaborated with visual artists such as Robert Kushner and Kim MacConnel.
ALLEN GINSBERG is a Distinguished Professor of English at Brooklyn College, and Professor Emeritus at The Naropa Institute. Harper & Row has published his Collected Poems 1947-1980, the Annotated Howl and White Shroud: Poems 1980-1985. He has just completed a record with Tom Wait’s band, and lectured on photography this spring, in Israel, with Robert Franks. A book of Allen Ginsberg’s photographs is forthcoming from Twelve Trees Press. In 1956, Mr. Ginsberg’s historic Beat poem, Howl, published by City Lights Books, was seized by U.S. Customs and the San Francisco police. Now, over 30 years later, the poem has again become embroiled in a censorship battle, due to recent FCC regulations.

JOHN GODFREY is the author of Dabble, Where the Weather Suits My Clothes, and most recently, Midnight on your Left, of which Clark Coolidge wrote, “In a time when most poems seem overlit as sitcoms, John Godfrey stirs up the necessary darkness.”

BARBARA GUEST is one of America’s most distinguished poets. Her books include Poems, The Blue Stairs, Moscow Mansions, Seeking Air (a novel), and Biography. She received critical acclaim for her biography of the poet Hilda Doolittle, H.D. Herself Defined. A new collection of Barbara Guest’s poems, Fair Realism, is forthcoming from Sun & Moon. An important member of the New York School’s original circle of writers and artists, Ms. Guest’s poems are included in the influential early collection, The Poets of the New York School.

RASHIDAH ISMAILI is the author of In Woman Rise and Onyibo. Her work has been anthologized in Confirmation, and included in the Journal of the New African Artists and Writers and Hoo Doo magazine. Her long piece, Elegies for the Fallen, was recently performed as a libretto by Joyce Solomon at Lincoln Center. Rashidah Ismaili is on faculty of Rutgers University, and has lectured widely at colleges and universities including a recent talk, “Alternatives to Feminism from an African Perspective,” presented at Hampshire College.

GARY LENHART is the author of One at a Time, Bulb In Socket and Drunkard’s Dream. A former editor of Mag City, he’s now the publisher and editor of the new literary magazine, Transfer, as well as Associate Director of the Teachers & Writers Collaborative. He hosted and organized The Poetry Project’s first lecture series, and coordinated the reading series at The Ear Inn, in New York City. Gary Lenhart’s critical reviews have appeared in various magazines, including Sagetrieb and Cover magazine.

KIMBERLY LYONS is the author of Strategies and Six Poems. She co-edits Red Weather magazine and Prospect Books. Her own poems have appeared in Sulfur and Giants Play Well in the Drizzle, and she has worked as a publicist at The Cooper Union and Simon & Schuster. She is the Program Coordinator (and lecture series coordinator) at The Poetry Project.

BERNADETTE MAYER is a prolific poet and active teacher of poetry in the New York City schools and at The Poetry Project, where she has also served as Artistic Director. Her awards include an NEA grant in poetry, a CAPS grant in fiction and a CCLM Editors Fellowship. She’s the author of Mutual Aid, Utopia and Midwinter Day, and has co-edited a number of New York literary magazines: 0 to 9, Unnatural Acts and United Artists. Forthcoming are Sonnets and Writing Science, a manual from the Teachers & Writers Collaborative.

KOFI NATAMBU is the editor of Solid Ground, a highly regarded interdisciplinary journal on the arts which he first published in Detroit. He is the author of a collection of poems, Intervals and he edited Nostalgia for the Present, an anthology of writings from Detroit. His work has been published widely in literary magazines including Obsidian, Hambone and The Black Scholar. In 1987 he was awarded a Creative Artist Grant to write a book of critical essays on Jazz and American Writing since 1945 called Epistrophy.

CHARLES NORTH’s most recent books of poetry are Leap Year and Gemini, a collaboration with Tony Towle. Charles North has written essays on John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch and others as well as critical reviews which have appeared in the American Book Review, Art in America and L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E magazines, among others. He is the Poet-in-Residence at Pace University and a recipient of a 1987 grant from the Fund for Poetry.

ALICE NOTLEY has authored more than a dozen collections of poems, including Alice Ordered Me to be Made, Songs for the Unborn Second Baby, Doctor Williams’ Heiresses and At Night The States. She has won the Poetry Center Award from San Francisco State University, and the General Electric Award for Younger Poets. Alice Notley
founded and edited the literary magazine Chicago, and has taught poetry workshops at The Naropa Institute, The Poetry Project, the University of Chicago and in universities in England and Wales.

JOEL OPPENHEIMER is widely known as an original member of the Black Mountain community of artists and writers. He has taught writing workshops at universities throughout the United States, including Manhattan’s City College, and was a long-time columnist for The Village Voice. He has published numerous books of poetry, including Houses and New Spaces, from Black Sparrow Press. Joel Oppenheimer’s most recent collection of poems is Why Not? and in the fall, Jargon Press will publish his selected earlier poems, Names & Local Habitations.

RON PADGETT recently edited The Teachers and Writer’s Handbook of Poetic Forms. Among his many books are Great Balls of Fire, Toujours L’Amour and Triangles in the Afternoon as well as collaborations with artists Trevor Winkfield, Jim Dine and others. Ron Padgett is a former director of The Poetry Project. He has translated major works from the French including Guillaume Apollinaire’s The Poet Assassinated and Other Stories and Blaise Cendrars’ Kodak. In 1986, Padgett was awarded a Guggenheim for poetry. Forthcoming is Among the Blacks (Avenue B Press).

CARL RAKOSI, along with poets William Carlos Williams, Louis Zukofsky, George Oppen and Lorine Niedecker, founded the Objectivist movement. In doing so, they challenged the prevailing academic notions of proper subjects and idioms for American poetry. Carl Rakosi’s books include Ex Cranium, Night, Ere-Voice, Amulet, Droles de Journal, and History. His The Collected Poetry was published in 1986 and the second volume, The Collected Prose, was published in 1987 by the National Poetry Foundation.

ED SANDERS is the author of The Family, The Party, Love and Fame in New York, Tales of Beatnik Glory, and Thirsting For Peace in a Raging Century: Poems 1961-1983, which collects poetry from seven earlier books. He is a founding member and “warbler numero uno” of The Fugs with whom he has recently recorded three albums including the full-length opera Starpeace. Ed Sanders is currently at work on I Don’t Want to Die: A Holistic Novel, and on an album of Ancient Greek philosophical and poetic texts in modern settings.

LESLIE SCALAPINO is the author of Considering How Exaggerated Music Is and that they were at the beach. She is the editor of “O” Books and is editing an anthology, O One, of extended works that transgress the boundaries between the genres of poetry and critical discourse. Her forthcoming collection of poems is Way.

MICHAEL SCHOLNICK is the author of Beyond Venus, and Perfume. A former co-editor of Mag City, his poems have appeared in magazines such as Roof, Jewish Currents, New Direction Anthology #37 and United Artists. His critical writing includes the 1987 Cover review on a Union Square Gallery exhibit, “The New Romantics,” and he wrote the catalogue introduction for Alex Katz’s recent show at the Robert Miller Gallery. He is a recipient of an NEA Fellowship in poetry.

RON SILLIMAN is the author of ABC, Paradise, The Age of Huts, and a collection of essays, The New Sentence. He edited In the American Tree, an anthology of “language school” writing, and he is the editor of The Socialist Review.

LORENZO THOMAS is the author of a number of collections of poetry including The Bathers and Chances Are Few. His poems have been anthologized in New Black Voices, Another World and Poetry of Black America. Lorenzo Thomas co-edited Roots Magazine, and has been a contributing editor to Hoo Doo, Black Box and Nimrod magazines. Recently, Lorenzo Thomas collaborated with artist Benito Huerta for an exhibition at The Museum of Fine Art, in Houston, Texas. He is a Professor of English at the University of Houston.

TONY TOWLE’s books include New and Selected Poems 1963-1983 and North. He has received the Frank O’Hara Award in 1970, an Ingram Merrill Award, a CAPS grant and a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Tony Towle’s work has appeared in the essential New York School collections, An Anthology of New York Poets and Poets of the New School. He is the editor of The Poetry Project Newsletter.

CARMEN VALLE’s books include De Todo de la Noche Que la Tienta (Ricardo Garua, Puerto Rico, 1978) and Glen Miller y Varias Vidas Después (Premia Editora, 1983). Forthcoming is a volume of poetry, Vivir No Es Sinonimo De Maroma (Living Dangerously). Carmen Valle’s work has been anthologized, in the Anthology of Contemporary Latin America Literature 1960-1984 (Farleigh University Press, 1986). She has lectured widely on poetics and Latin American literature, holds a faculty position at CUNY’s New York Technical College, and is completing her doctoral dissertation on the work of the Columbian poet Porfirio Barba-Jacob.
PAUL VIOLI is the author of *Splurge* and *Harmatan, In Baltic Circles, Waterworks, Poems and Likewise*. He is a past workshop leader at The Poetry Project, where he has also served as Acting Artistic Director. Paul Violi currently teaches writing and literature in several New York City area colleges and universities.

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JOHN YAU's books of poetry include *Broken Off by the Music* and *Corpse and Mirror*, the latter selected by John Ashbery for the National Poetry Series. Yau's critical essays have appeared in *Artforum* and *Art News*, among other journals, and he is a contributing editor to *Sulfur* magazine. A book of poems, *Cities*, is forthcoming from the Henry Art Gallery. John Yau is on the faculty at the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, and at the Pratt Institute.
FOREWORD

In my youth, in the 1920's, I would have scorned appearing in a Jewish poetry magazine. It would have meant that I didn't have enough talent to be published anywhere else. The last thing I would have wanted was to be pigeonholed as a Jewish writer. That was too parochial and, in addition, would have put the kiss of death on what I was trying to be, an American poet—or, more accurately, an international-style poet, since Pound and Eliot, the poets that mattered then, were showing strong French influence. Another deterring influence to Jewish subject matter was the strong secular, Marxist atmosphere of the period. I was caught up in that. So were my contemporaries.

As a consequence my literary self connected in only a weak, nebulous way with my Jewishness despite the fact that my step-mother kept a kosher house and my father was president of his shul. At heart, however, he was an agnostic...and a Socialist and had been chosen because the congregation admired his integrity and fairness. In the end, my parents' strong Hungarian identification and interests (they spoke Hungarian to each other and to me, and knew no Yiddish) affected me more than their Jewish ones, which they carried faithfully as an obligation. In any event, I was not having Jewish experiences, as such, which could move me to want to write about them, and I was not about to go looking for them out of a sense of obligation. As a result, only a small portion of my work is about anything Jewish, and when Rabbi Dworkin asked me for poems for a small collection in SHIRIM, I was afraid there would not be enough even for a small collection. There's more than I thought, and I'm glad, for although my literary self still maintains its independence, my personal self has had a solid, unambivalent connection to my Jewishness.

Looking over what there is of mine in this collection, I see that I have been moved by the great lyrical passages in the Old Testament, by the medieval Sephardic poets, by the spiritual power of synagogue music, by the experience of anti-Semitism, and by Jewish humor. What is not there is Jewish mysticism. Alas, I was not aware of its existence until late in life. I regret that because there is in me a deep, mysterious affinity for the mystical, and had I encountered it sooner, I would have responded from a part of my nature which has not been tapped.
Is there something Jewish in my over-all work despite my usual independence from Jewish subject matter? I suppose so, since there is no way to escape one's identity, but I don't know. I may have a clue, however, in the 1930's a new movement appeared in poetry. Its members were called Objectivists. What characterized them was extraordinary clarity and objectivity, their conciseness, and the unwavering honesty of their subject matter. The leading members were four Jews: Louis Zukofsky, Charles Reznikoff, George Oppen and I. We were all very different from one another. No one could mistake a poem by Reznikoff for one by Zukofsky, or one by Oppen for one by me. At the same time, our work was very different from the work of our non-Jewish contemporaries. One could tell an Objectivist poem not only by its greater clarity and objectivity and honesty but by some other qualities in the writing, and it is these that may be Jewish, not exclusively, but recognizably Jewish in its mix, a mix of utter seriousness and earnestness and a great candor and responsibility, and a great compassion. This mix seems to me to characterize modern Hebrew and Yiddish poetry too.