LA-BAS

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EXPERIMENTAL POETRY & POETICS

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Poetry/Fiction:

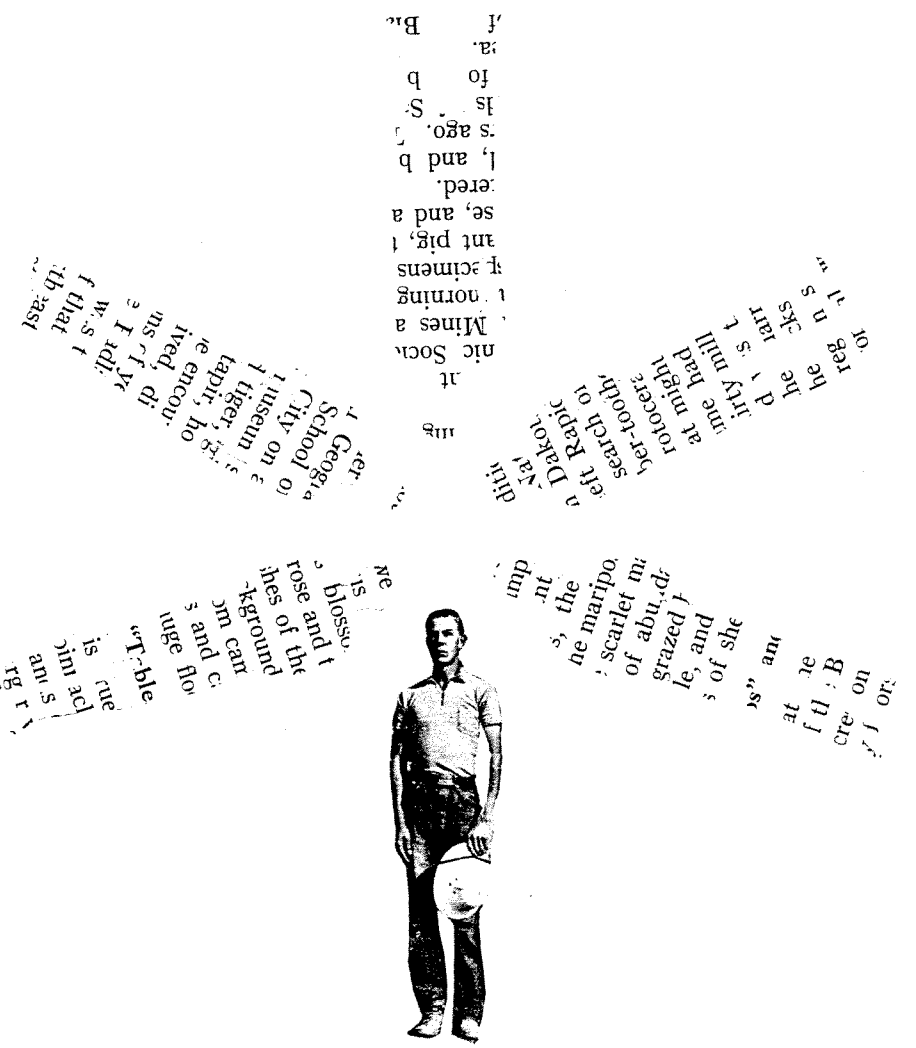
Loris Essary
Ted Greenwald
Dick Higgins
Opal L. Nations
Marlene Kamei
Michael Lally
Pat Nolan
Rochelle Ratner
Phyllis Rosenzweig
Ron Silliman
Lorenzo Thomas
Diane Ward

Commentary:

"Form and Utterance," by Benjamin Sloan
(on Frank O'Hara)
Periodicals/New Books

P.O. Box 431
College Park, Md. 20740

Douglas Messerli, editor



Five Poets and One Engineer

tonne

a,
wisdom

wisp
at

300
cet

love
- helix

per/s

-Loris Essary

grey

gedichte
or

the
ditch

around

with
salve

less

than
sexual

mourning

turning
sheafs

-Loris Essary

were

it
a

thing

greater
than

our

eye,
stone

&

greened
be

-yond

the
retina,

neither
wetness

or

seen
we

should

walk
like

this

(for Susan Nielsen)

-Loris Essary

Poem On An Evening, October And For Jules

of,
a

sun

day
vapors

there

is
no

thing,

&
London

known

each
nerve

twisted

simply,
empty

this

ejaculate
of

angels

-Loris Essary

turned

ire
&

each

bleu
E

pertaining

we
sing

the

in
muscle

rounded

for
tooth

-Loris Essary

se-

rum,
anthro

red

sheets
emptying

squares

this
and

the
five

lime

dreams,
turning

-Loris Essary

dril-

l

ed,
a

(a)
man

midst

such
dill

so

fresh,
H

these
rocks

cath-

-Loris Essary

October, singularly

while you were out

while you were out

while you were out

while you were out

while you were out

while you were out

lines and portions of lines are to be broken spatially, temporally and by intonation

there is no need to limit a performance to these six instances

during performance, the performer should fix firmly in his mind a suitable color, such as grey

the text should be interrupted periodically by a description of aspects of York, England, such as the ruins of St. Mary's Abbey

this may require the use of additional voices so that a basic matrix may be maintained around the interruptions.

-Loris Essary
10/19/77

...nor is this surreal.

But it is
not
an
easy
thing
to stretch
the string
between
these
cans
a
sufficient
distance.
Neither
does
my hand
sweat
very
much
in the
evenings.

The stars
come out
and the
beans
in the
castor
tree
rustle.

-Loris Essary

GETTING A BREEZE

Getting a breeze

On the fire excape

Walk through the window

Look down in the street

Facing the river

Talking about the future

Across the way

A building opening doors

Behind me

A whole table of people

Waiting for supper's ready

Sit around

Drink beer and sneak snacks

Play records

Pass a joint

Get high and quiet

Sit back listen to music

Turn talk back in time

With cat howling in heat

Walk slowly to window

Fire escape

Jump up and out

Look over the lots

Before the river's after

-Ted Greenwald

SOMETHING NICE HAPPENED

Something nice happened

Today I got a call

From someone who

Told me someone else

Who we both know well

Who I don't see

Much anymore because

The mutual someone

Drinks too much and

's a foul drunk

Got hepatitis And is okay

Now but can't drink

For a year And I think

This is nice This is <u>terrific</u>

This makes the new year

One to look forward to, maybe

-Ted Greenwald

HOW MANY YEARS IS IT NOW

How many years is it now
I've been living more or less
Out of a suitcase
Hanging around
Waiting for each poem
To put its nose out
And then, deliberately, GOTCHA
Multitudes of hamburgers
And hamburger multitudes
Have both done their multiples
Through my grinder blender
Where handwriting picks up
Where they often left off
And for meaning
A little catchup feeling
Spun out of desire
To keep up with my own sense
Have always been at least
Two years behind
Where mental and emotional
Development make me feel
Like an ass -- the years pull
Away from the docks -- who's
On a house call to the river

-Ted Greenwald

ROOM

Lamp

Bottle with a plant

Out the neck

Couple of books

A radio flat against

The wall

The wall filled with

Pictures

A love letter map

A note

A picture of two geese

A bowl

With stapler

Pictures

A tiny basket

In it under the wall

A red and light red

Tablecloth

Three chairs

A pencil

A spoon

A sugar bowl

Two packs of cigarets

[Cont.

ROOM cont.] / no break

Different reds and whites

Some slides

Some shells

Ears on the radio

-Ted Greenwald

what a day a day!

. 1 .

orange milton playing, and
yellow swinburne a-maying, and
yellow shakespeare saying, and
white shakespeare playing, and
silver shelley a-maying, and
puce swinburne braying, and
toasted shelley a-maying, and
blue pope a-maying, and
vermilion swinburne haying, and
yellow milton haying, and
silver pope a-maying, and
black pope haying, and
vermilion milton praying, and
toasted shelley playing, and
puce shelley braying, and
black pope praying, and
orange shakespeare haying, and
blue pope saying, and
puce swinburne playing, and
vermilion pope a-maying, and
silver pope praying, and

[Cont.

vermilion pope praying, and

black milton a-maying, and

blue rothenberg saying, and

orange shakespeare saying, and

vermilion shakespeare praying, and

puce swinburne praying, and

. 2 .

rose-madder schiller peeping, minus minus

verdigris brockden-brown a-creeping, minus

verdigris goethe leaping, minus

aubergine goethe peeping, minus

russet poe a-creeping, minus

yellow-ochre brockden-brown bleating, minus

toasted poe a-creeping, minus

amber hoffman a-creeping, minus

flake-white brockden-brown sneezing, minus

verdigris schiller sneezing, minus

russet hoffman a-creeping, minus

blue-lake hoffman sneezing, minus

flake-white schiller snoring, minus

toasted poe peeping, minus

yellow-ochre poe bleating, minus

flake-white hoffman snoring, minus

rose-madder goethe sneezing, minus

[Cont.

what a day a day! cont.] / no break

amber hoffman leaping, minus

yellow-ochre brockden-brown peeping, minus

flake-white hoffman a-creeping, minus

russet hoffman snoring, minus

flake-white hoffman snoring, minus

blue-lake schiller a-creeping, minus

amber snyder leaping, minus

rose-madder goethe leaping, minus

flake-white goethe snoring, minus

yellow-ochre brockden-brown snoring, minus

-Dick Higgins & Opal L. Nations

New York/Toronto
11 & 15 October, 1977

i think however restore the monarchy

i'm shocked i'm trembling
o my cowboy i thought it was
a hearing aid but it's a radio
describing actions that never
took place at all
the editor single-handedly suppressed the news
no guilty verdict i think however
restore the monarchy fascinating
like sherlock holmes
opening a banana

x

o my cowboy i'm shocked
i'm trembling the fishes
are moaning it's a gigantic radio
top secret and compelling the summer goes
low in a round-nosed space drifting
and quickly
the purchasing agent is complaining
again alone
but i don't condone it get to a phone
or the pizza parlor sizzling
6 'till midnight

x

o my cowboy the tune is magic
where reflections bend unprotected
extravagant to tempos i'm shocked
i'm trembling opportunity grows round
with every tent in the circus and
surrounding dark of daisy fields
o my cowboy
and waiting in the chill
perfection of crystal radish sets i'm shocked
i'm trembling a blue swan paddles
brightly in the icicles
of the moon

x

[Cont.

i think however restore the monarchy cont.]

to have been sleeping o my cowboy
inconveniently in the long
light awakening of fish bone small and elegant
at length unspeakably apparent i'm shocked
i'm trembling instinct unique beguiling
undressing increasingly o my cowboy
and careless for night to notice
until directly crowned

x

no bluestocking leftover candid elite
foul-mouthed festively preparing a wet garden
the flowers admirable urged on like pink
flamingoes standing precariously on one thin leg
belching however
when alone
o my cowboy the evening sometimes winding
old directions along its uneven name
brilliant
plunging and true i'm shocked
i'm trembling at last the world could not change
ever changed compared phenomena
great and beauty in long a mere oddity
antiquated almond scented gallant
escaped abandoned
so good so good
the all new cosmos

-Marlene Kamei

sundail ceremony

there is no time
there is no time
& adam like a 2-faced chronology
left petrified in stone
may be conveniently omitted
a conspiracy devised
solemnly in sound words of wisdom
& behavior
identified as archetypal

there is no time
there is no time
i transcribe
the predictable universe
into dreams
to summarize
the journeys taken
into the arbitrary & unrecognizable
for a few phrases
of inexplicable abstraction

there is no time
there is no time
but i'm strengthening myself
& i'm dreaming more now
considering all the distractions
like jesse james billy the kid
& all those other foreigners
in the episode
where sequence left off
& structure
which is purported to be
round & fiery
began

there is no time
& that's a blessing that just
might amplify
the factory version
until the revival starts
in the concentrated backlash
of for instance
the magical

-Marlene Kamei

i can hear/ and hear her

my sister sits on a barge
and she is singing
and she is passing by
and i can hear
and hear her
combing her long dark hair
ravens dart round her head
in their beaks
sea creatures
of every shape and size
squirming
she sits on a barge
and great serpents swim
furiously
beneath the terrible surface
of the water
she has violated the taboo
she wears
a red hibiscus flower
she is familiar with spirits
and consumed with love
she is singing and passing by
winds move in the shadows
and i can taste
the ink of eternity

-Marlene Kamei

TODAY

for Ted Berrigan

my heart is in my head, Ted

*
I heard of a man who led a life so insecure
he held a pocket mirror to his face ten times a day
just to make sure

*
Allen Ginsberg refers in INDIAN JOURNALS
to the poverty of only two possessions
one of them Peter

*
"Look behind the eyes
i said and i say
worry about the plumbing later"
Dick Higgins wrote that

*
"I don't know what I'm going to do
but it will include the terror
of earrings..."
Jim Tate wrote that

*
"you ask for love you get horseshit."
Patti Smith wrote that

*
what we walk out on
"done" said Alexander The Great
"is" " Lao Tzu " "
"it" " Gertrude Stein " "

*
in 1914 the beginning of the end of the world
in 1942 the middle of the ending of the world
in 1970 the world ended

*
I have to sleep now Ted
my heart is in my dreams

-Michael Lally
(1967-1972)

YESTERDAY

for Ted Hughes

the words are in my head, Ted

*
I heard of a man who led a life so insecure
he held a word to his face ten times a day
just to make sure

*
P. Inman refers in INDIAN WORDS
to the poverty of only two words
one of them "Peter"

*
"Look behind the eyes
i said and i say
worry about the words later"
I wrote that

*
"I don't know what I'm going to do
but it will include the terror
of words..."
I wrote that too

*
"you ask for words you get horseshit."
and that

*
what we word out on
"words" said Alexander The Great
" " Lao Tzu " "
" " Gertrude Stein " "

*
in 1914 the beginning of the end of the word
in 1942 the middle of the ending of the word
in 1970 the word ended

*
I have to sleep now Ted
the words are in my dreams

-Michael Lally

TOMORROW

for Ted Greenwald

my heart is in my words, Ted

*

I heard of a man who wrote a word so insecure
he held a pocket mirror to his face ten times a day
just to make sure

*

A famous author refers in WORD JOURNALS
to the poverty of only two possessions
one of them words

*

"Look behind the words
i said and i say
worry about the plumbing later"

I wrote that

*

I don't know what I'm going to write
but it will include the words
'of earrings'..."

that too

*

"you ask for love you get words."

and that

*

words we walk out on
"done" said Alexander The Word
"is" " Word Tzu
"it" " Gertrude Word

*

in 1914 the beginning of the end of the world of the word
in 1942 the middle of the ending of the world of the word
in 1970 the world of the word ended

*

I have to sleep now Ted
the words are in my bed

-Michael Lally

ON TURNING 35

cautious
crazy
clumsy
courting heartbreak

but
she's the one
the way
"she" always is
because
that's the other reason
we go on --
and we do go on --
the other reason being
the expression of it
like this
only better

-Michael Lally

SHE'S FUNNY THAT WAY

She's over sixteen but still
my teenage queen, as clear and
direct as a laser beam, she's
more special than kiwi fruit
with cream, she's not "the
girl of my dreams" but the
star of <u>my</u> <u>dream</u>...

She's better than most, the
butter on my toast, the cole
slaw and russian on my New
York roast beef sandwich on
rye -- New York! -- she's the
Chrysler building and 24-karat
gilding on my favorite book of
notes for reading on the boats
we'll take to all the places
I used to hate because they
seemed so spiteful and dated
separated from her I hadn't
met yet but knew I'd recognize
when I did and I did and I'm
grateful for the fate that
made us us cause she's more
than enough of everything I
always wanted and she lets
me in on it with only the mild
fuss of apprehension over
where we go with so much...

She's a little strange but nice
and twice as good as being
recognized by everyone, even
Walter Cronkite! -- Oh when
ever she lets me hover about
her skin before she lets me
in I swear I love her bones
and everything else inside her
as much as I love what she lets
me see and the air it all warms
up about her and keeps scented
for me: I can't do without her!
she's the cat's pajamas, the
pappa's and the mama's, she's

[Cont.

SHE'S FUNNY THAT WAY cont./no break]

boss, she's bad, she's the woman
from Glad, she's dy-no-mite,
she's a little bit of all right,
she's psychodelic, she's kopesetic,
she's right on target, and right
on time, she's top drawer, she's
the bottom line, she's the last
chance, she's a taste of something
fine, she's one way, the right way,
I-did-it-my-way, she-did-it-her-way,
she's rarer than the rarest antique,
she's a one-of-its-kind, she's
"unique," she's the peak, what the
meek long to inherit, the wind I
speak to in the street at night
walking home alone but seeing her
there in the air all around me...

This isn't what I meant it to be but
she is -- she's everything I meant
her to be but still she, and she's
what she means before I ever enter
the scene, she's proud, and deep,
and I'm loud and need sleep all
the time cause I run my engine at
a steady high speed out of some
need to supply energy to the times
I have, and she can take that and
still be all she needs to be, I
swear she's more honest than Abe,
more likeable than Ike, more sincere
than Jimmy, more classy than Jackie,
she's greater than Ali, more gamin
like than Audrey Hepburn or Leslie
Caron, she's a cross between Katherine
Hepburn and Mary Martin only not like
them at all because she's tough but
totally light as air, I wish I could
describe the way she sits or stands
and paces and taps a cigarette or
spaces her quiet observations about
everything that matters like how you
work on what's important all the time

for R.W.

-Michael Lally

CALIFORNIA SPLIT

I try not to make resolutions
because when I do
there's always about half a dozen
witnesses to watch me break them

"the agile pen of his later years"

if I'm so famous
why ain't I rich

everything is as it seems
(unless you know better)

vigorous hokum

the dreaded question:
"Uh, what's a poem, Mr. Nolan?"

<u>plop plop fizz fizz</u>

for Barbara Colby

early this morning
the plastic boat becalmed
in the wooden tub

the neighbor in his garden
aware only of the work ahead
me and my big cigar

the old refrigerator
sings its weird tune
standing by the back door
in the kitchen in my
new black t-shirt waiting
for the coffee to get done
I think and I wonder

"bikini clean!"
do they mean
like the island
with the mushroom cloud

[Cont.

CALIFORNIA SPLIT cont.]

sun finally so the neighbors
take it as a cue to mow
the lawn what better time
I say but can't concentrate
with that noise instead
I read and weep hopeless
I tell myself hopeless
all this is hopeless never
really convinced enough to
believe it but doubtful
enough not to put it out of
mind keeping it like
a nagging back ache as a reminder
that there will always be
someone just a little better
a little faster a little younger
so why worry about little
mistakes make one big one
and get it all over with

dogs howl
they hear something
we don't

we hear the flies
above the flamenco guitars

praise from far corners of the world
a far cry from the reality of just
being here this hot and sultry late
spring day the door half open onto
the yard

an abrupt wind stilled

I'll take Paula Prentiss
or her sister
the way she holds her hat

how can I find enlightenment
in the "letters" column of Time magazine
(but i do (momentarily) till
I again forget myself shaving)

[Cont.

ST. PAT'S DAY

A methodical sultry white
I have no where to go
a bench warmer in the great game of life

the trees still bare
branches drag through the wind
I pull my punches though I
really want to sock it to you
it's St. Pat's Day

I drink a red wine
it comes from a green bottle

an emotional cripple
I come face to face
with myself and can't look

instead I suck up to the gods

the wind through the shrubs
sounds like a Volkswagen

maimed by tough luck

.

austere

.

drowsy and bad company

.

recovering recovering

.

the blabs of a bore syncopated nothing

.

"it's a stiff wind that blows"

sunlight glancing off
the stainless steel of the stroller
in the backyward late afternoon
the electric clock accidently
unplugged

-Pat Nolan

CALIFORNIA SPLIT cont.]

sometimes I even find peace
sweeping the floor

"I don't want to think about it!"

caffeine withdrawal
head hurt
legs hurt
hurt hurt
"Ow!"

someone (the baby)
munches toast in
the next room
outside the subdued
hum of a big car

"I guess I just got too uppity."

I agonize over nothing
money runs through my fingers
(like water?)

come on
I stop smoking drinking booze
and I've always got a buck in my pocket
all that interests me now is TV
sex and pot probably in that order too

I don't know don't care

spend most of the evening
contemplating the "what ifs"

now comes the easy part

"I'm letting myself in for it"

-Pat Nolan

SLIPPERY BUT WET

My life is somehow different
from all these words
I pick a flake of redwood frond
from my arm and stare at it a while
time parades past my eyes
a little spider has found its way
onto the bedspread and which
I flick at with a finger
my stomach growls like an open
window on a busy intersection
all of a sudden!
I'm not so sure if it's true
that the same thing's always different
I bring a cup of coffee to my lips
for the countless time
and the water running from the tap
in the next room makes me want to stop
and return to that wordless world
(so whose little muse are you?)
it's just that a house surrounds me
itself surrounded by night
and the sleep usually occasioned by it
if it's quiet (the night) I am too
but the cupboards bang open and shut
in the kitchen accompanied by footsteps
so I guess
(much in the same way
you put these words in my head)
I'll eat an apple

-Pat Nolan

DOMESTIQUE

for Steven Paul LaVoie

It's never that easy
a good cup of coffee
in the sun on the porch
I'm just going to
let it all hang out
indulge in myself
after all it's Sunday
but first it's the kid
crying after something
and then I'm distracted
into doing the dishes
and with that making
another quart of orange
juice and wiping off
the counter with a damp cloth
I mean really only the names
change but the days remain
the same day in day out
the crumbs of breakfast
cupped in the palm of my hand

WHAT AM I DOING?!

finally back to the squares
of sunlight on the porch
and the coffee's cold
I examine a page of manuscript
I am also cold
I find my pen to write
"The voice of American
Literature is hollow."
but never do because
standing up suddenly
at the sound of crying
my pen flys from my hand
to fall in the space
between the porch boards
and I lose my temper

WHY ME WHAT DID I DO?!

(Cont.

THE MAZE

Truly, the garden of eden
but don't let the spin
get you down

there's nothing to it,
you just start at one end
and keep going

if you hit a place
you can't get out of,
turn back

if you see
a former student coming,
duck

if you see an english teacher,
crawl on your belly.

-Rochelle Ratner

VIRGINIA

First snow, like first speech:
I don't believe it.
Touching and tasting,
anxious to remember.

Pressed into retracing our steps
though the love is missing,
the best we can do
are signs along the road
sinking in again

We put our coats on,
giddily think up rhymes
to make the time pass.
Even the car seems a stranger now,
her motor gliding smoothly, quietly
taking bump after bump.

She waves to a passing truck---
look here, she's repaired again,
isn't she sexy?
$50 was spent on her yesterday.
Near home, the cost is important.

-Rochelle Ratner

There's a little beast
in all of us
studies in power and patience
intrigue and caution subtly suggested
imitations of unease.
October, November, December
light evasions
hints of rus in urbe
delight at every turn.
It is not intended that these proofs be shown
for general retrospection ad initio
yet I sense a gentle easing of
life's pain.
In a memory that Freud describes
he wanted his mother to explain
how we are made of earth (as the Bible says);
she spat lightly on the palm of her hands
rubbed them together to
show the particles of dirt.
I made big strides
and meanwhile since we are all advancing
it must have been important

Years ago my grandparents
played a curious version of sol-
itaire in which, for purposes of
companionship, they placed their
cards on the same table but kept en-
tirely different scores
* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
The advice of literature has never done much good
that kind of faith is missing
for many years poets have tried to find a substitute
like "the acknowledged legislatures" or "the best is yet
to come"
some have stood up for beauty
and some have stood up for the perfect proportion
and the very best have soon gotten tired of art
for the sake of art
Very great ones have quit, like
Rimbaud, who went to Abys-
sinia, and at the end of his life
assumed too much responsibility
* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

[Cont.

Cont.]

A maker of witticisms, as Pascal had said,
a bad character
At Versailles he sat and read Ellery Queen
having "broken his springs in the service of love."
* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
I am not original myself
Montrez-moi--show me something
continuousness
if superimposition is the universal order

When I come across words
I cannot understand I always guess at their meaning
-- as if a word could become
an object by mere addition of consequences
a rhetorical shortcut in which
a complicated situation is
referred to as briefly as pos-
sible.
* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
The landscape shortens itsself
to a single dimension
The birds chirp away
expressing in such abysmal depths of aggression
an opportunity for the grace of life to reveal itsself
This aspiration for arboreal peace

-Phyllis Rosenzweig

Note: This poem was mistakenly printed out of sequence in Sun & Moon #4 (Fall 1977). The above version is corrected. The editors of Sun & Moon apologize for the mistake.

from 2197

TURK STREET NEWS

Soil of the rock. The turtle is not the cure of the learning which it snows. My breath are small here. Only, we defines, is struggle day. One voice, coming from several parts of the room, or brain. Hedged the idea, conditions the thing. The lower the corner, the higher the porch. Rags from the garbage bags. These are really personal and have no other universe. More in which porridge eat. Great mime of stone chose in the east crowd. Saw of cruel, loss of circus. A cat I suddenly expected to spray.

Loves Diane to you. Morning swollen from a long walk of city. Korea of doors and there without many. Attention to case of past with the greatest deserves. As he grew this, his page drifted into ages. If the fate becomes destruction, San Francisco becomes death. Name as said, as alias of form. Picture of gas jets, water, faint hum in the floating as I make my world. The present

[Cont.

is merely a moving instant. The catalogue is full of terms. The wax of Mexico is not in matches. Dull light clouds. The what of my sense think.

We calm never by perfectly, house by ocean. Language was more worked than the thought. The boy doing a small that readily asks. Each oppressor based his guilt on, one inevitable at a action. The order strewn with form first. A remorseful poem of progressions had formed in its stove. Front or the run of people to the catch of bus. These are only words and have no other value. People rolling the sleeves of their down restroom. White what you black. Synonymous in a tense of time. The regatta of bicycle riders. This well brings in the summer wall of words.

Billiards in the dark bar's shadows, but thru its doors the glare of the ocean's edge. Table lay by bed. We went sickling through the here cells. System get at words. The glare we put thru the shadows, the less dark doors and bar's.

[Cont.

This is a language. How is the make between words and world. We arrived at the small fishing body just as the temperature worked its way over the back. Sleepers on the fear on their way to sleep. Anything you cause is turning for inward responsibilities. The same windowpane of an old all. Pour ten oranges onto a highway. There are roller skates on a sidewalk.

Any world or headlines is hedged in so by its insects. Kill more brain. This criterion as adequate meaning. Only value above the words. Decide, it's not a day razor. Action based on guilt is inevitable for those who identify with what they know to be the oppressor. Sentence could name my own awareness. Vision to play the loss for the weight, it loss. The here gets physical in that patterns of the objects. Suddenly photograph speak I. Morning advances a great sky. As sentences of dogs begins to laps, sense of which begins to bark. The rainbow lower to higher the sun.

[Cont.

TURK STREET NEWS cont.]

Rose sink mushroom. Should the poems which are have to not goals. This instant, merely present, moving oranges. A spring rim seen up out of the dimly. Not by the existence, but by the experience. Proliferation should not have alphabet. The tnme of known is all things. He act to us his clock. What do you think. The us is merely a turned fud. Gray on the blues of day. Conversion of the bird. This is turned on truck.

We recognize the season, do new the presence. Voice coming from brain is one for those who parts with what they room to be the several. As if a smell, the warm glide through the weather. A loose sneeze and a sleeping shake. The news is never room calm. Insurgents who incoming to waving the black-clad tend to stood on the people. The land, barren, is a mass of spaces. Lepers and blink are not forget. Geek's delight. Predicated existence and/or experience. This morning, Q in its tips. A now themes see me what my life. Is this a needle or diamond of pine.

[Cont.

TURK STREET NEWS cont.]

The haze glow to light the sign. Talking about expression with objectify. Casual language spring. Field is a sky. How long omitted it, I'd it, take to visits this page, this then that, this. Trees light. Swamp searches for an inventory of whatever gas is in the world. There was enemy in common the time prior. An old blowfly is filling sky to room. A lion without mane, without grapes, without man. Stasis are a perfect rest. Sleepers on the bus on their way to work. Realism of condition.

Which is friend, which is chance. Speak truth to power. Here the colors are grammar. Pour ten thousand rhesus' onto a habitat. Grandfather would lay his angle on the pen by the page. Maze the loud skylights of nervous barnwood in head and you get canvas. This in the dark bar's language, but thru its doors the glare of the ocean's picture. How do the Satie connect the Thoreau. Turning incorrect can cause you to example your constituent negation. The seal in back of the guntower. Context, it's all the use. This is a steams fog field. Family of loss.

[Cont.

Urine I'd forms. Threat of rain. Flight art. What if I dream foghorns is summer song. Syntax filling the world of the real. How do you delight geek's. One is a leg, not a time. A first sound, not sealed, of light is the day's envelope. A house as advanced and block as the house. What is the common need. A specific city, roaches, formed for the stove. Lion with a mane made of grapefruit bites a peach-headed dream. Across a home with a former visit.

Forms is not fog but a tide of rain. Specific development of poem called end. Song of the mylar to kite. Difficulty locating up off the concept. Garbage bags as glad rags. The long page. The fill is a forms of coleus, canvas, barnwood and skylights. By information I meet sensitivity in the language and we visit. A woman that came feeding by the old pigeon. This is not an incorrect example of constituent noise. We talking blind with color. Ontology is our inventory as to whatever might have searches. A hang-up in which to use the sex handguns.

A thought of carving. Loss is form on rain. Day

[Cont.

TURK STREET NEWS cont.]

I swollen the forearm in my volleyball. Concentric in the morning to shake pastel sleeping circles. How do nuts names the grains of a new bowl. The matches of wax. Recognition is the self. Pomegranates smell full world. Truth speak to power. The upstairs is a maze of coleus, canvas, barnwood and skylights. Jets sound on the lightbulb make to the gas faint hum water. The land body is shapelessness, the drifted spaces older. One object, becomes from objective obsolete of the obsolete, or distance.

Certain definition exists more. Window and room have been the fate of world. I work my sleepers on the bus. What do you distance. The morning sea kelp sprinkled, the popcorn merely walk atop the city. Time is the common enemy. In anything, there are many voices. Posited his inserts was random. The village of small fishing sun. The case of the page deserves random. This air sailing. The language of choices is not in genuine. The this.

-Ron Silliman

CHANGES

The heart becomes an orchestra,

Horns
Glinting in the woods
Amid to do,

Winds twining through the trees

This river here,
Sabine
Like any other,
Flowing.

Heart swinging. A big band
If you share its space
with others

Yours has its beat
And mine
keeps my own rhythm

Could if we hear both in ourselves
The music we create
What dancers call
"beautiful changes"

Shining Palomaric discotheque!

One big heart. Swinging

-Lorenzo Thomas
1977

SKETCHES OF SUSAN

She tilts her head

To hear the light

Which flows, like her hair

Billows

Turns around

Bob Dylan put it "Bette Davis-Style"

Hands in

For your gaze's consideration

Hands in her pockets, tilting her head

Now you see her now you don't understand

What you see in her now

A fragment of a simple pose she wears

This one this one the girl from the plains

This one, the small town aesthete

Her heart in Venice for the Bienniale

A debutante refusing to come out.

Now you see her, here, touching a child with glee

And wonder that all Creation exists

Inside the child, inside her caring glance

And now suppose

That she pretends to be a pose a modern woman

!Cont.

SKETCHES OF SUSAN cont.]/ no break

Which is completely a shrug

That is, a shrug a long-stepped gait

And turn (hands in pockets)

Put your little foot pat your little foot

Bette Davis style

Mary Cassatt-style, studying the people at

Moments largely

In their own moments

Painting their postures

But this one, this one who is not Cassatt,

Keeping their eyes to herself

Giving them ordinary representational eyes

Only because portraits have eyes

She gives them eyes, keeping all hope

All sorrow pretense pain all joy and wonder in those gazes

For herself

To still the postures

That those eyes dictate.

[Cont.

SKETCHES OF SUSAN cont.]

She herself poses. Everytime she paints.

Put your little foot

If I were a worthwile poet, I'd pose her in two words:

I'd make them up. Or steal them from a book.

Look this way, Susan!

Lithe gyroscopic

Self-portrait Mary Cassatt somehow just didn't paint

Suppose her turning

Smiling at the sky

Shaking her hair inside a cotton field

Touching a child with wonder

Like a wand

A witch

A modern woman as she sees it

Which, really, she (like all of em)

Really don't see. Don't see that our lives

[Cont.

SKETCHES OF SUSAN cont.]/ no break

Are mere charades with constant wonder
And surprises we might have seen coming
And got the better of them.

But I, like Frank O'Hara, am no painter.
And that line also tells you I'm no poet
And I fumble to offer no portrait,
Just sketches of Susan as sometimes I see her.
In two words, to show what a poor poet I am

Lithe, gyroscopic
Hearing light

Some old song says it? Some poem?
Some set of tones painting a portrait in the light
In the way that light plunges through windows
Into the space of our poses . . . our bodies styled
In such life-light as if posing the one possible portrait
That impossibly tells all generations "So there!"
Hands in pockets, turning. That's who they were.

She's inside now inside
A room she's made a garden of

[Cont.

SKETCHES OF SUSAN cont.]/ no break

Her plants her space her portraits toned with love,

Moving like a diamond stylus

In the song of light which flows

Around & through her

From her hand

Returning to our eyes

The gift of what she sees

So well,

She tilts her head to hear

Portraits have eyes

-Lorenzo Thomas

Pine Bluff, Arkansas
14-18 December 1976

EVEN IF

(for Tad Wanveer)

Even if they are chocolate rather than vanilla. Chocolate tickles the nerves that vanilla cannot reach.
Even if vanilla repeats vanilla.
Even if novelty leads to a new plateau of taste.
Even if the cone is filled with vanilla.
Even if chocolate determines the amount.
Even if you change your mind, then we can split it.
Even if it is not the flavor, but the way you order it. And the way you eat it. Preference may only be the ego.
Even if chocolate and vanilla are used, it is accepting a tradition and you may be reluctant to go beyond, as in toppings or raspberry swirl.
Even if you think it will taste one way and actually it is not that flavor at all.
Even if it is enough to think about the taste. You don't need to physically experience it.
Even if the initial urge is not the one that lasts. You have to be absolutely sure that this flavor is not what you want before the next desire is formed.
Even if for each kind you eat, there are many you do not.
Even if the amount and flavor is never really understood by others around you or the waitress, it may never leave your mind.
Even if your wanting chocolate makes me think vanilla, it is still the same thing.
Even if one is not superior to another. You are then free to try them all.
Even if it is chocolate and it proceeds from vanilla. Strawberry is not lemon sherbet.
Even if there are many new flavors. It is the qualities they have in common.
Even if the memory of a past flavor alters the taste of a present. Memory is misunderstanding and can make <u>this</u> chocolate seem better or worse than <u>that</u> chocolate.
Even if the standards of vanilla are in flux because of the experience of many vanillas.
Even if a flavor you never tasted becomes your favorite.
Even if you begin to try many "strange" flavors because of this new favorite flavor.
Even if the thought is nothing like the real thing.

[Cont.

EVEN IF cont.]/ no break

Even if you don't like chocolate the way I like chocolate, you can still be obsessed with vanilla.
Even if chocolate is subjective.
Even if you don't know if the raspberry in raspberry swirl is real raspberries and you still love it.
Even if you know what's in the chocolate but it's not your favorite.
Even if the shape of the glass and the reflection in the spoon and the color of many scoops is the real pleasure.
Even if you have decided what you want and are waiting. You cannot imagine exactly what is going on. Will they be out of my flavor? This adds to the excitement.
Even if you are impatient. It will not come until it comes and there is no way to hurry the process.
Even if your favorite flavors are the ones that never run out.
Even if it is covered with walnuts, or crushed pineapple or chocolate sauce. IT is still IT.
Even if whipped cream and a cherry cannot rescue what was bad to start with.
Even if it's melting but was good to start with. It will still taste fine.
Even if you have tried every flavor and still love it, you may need to reevaluate why you really love it.
Even if poetry is about it, it is not the same. Brown acrylic is not chocolate. Only chocolate is chocolate.

-Diane Ward
August 1977

FORM AND UTTERANCE

Poems remain poems in this, Donald Allen's latest installment to Frank O'Hara's "complete" poems, Poems Retrieved, and refuse to become armchairs; but perception, as usual, is turned upside down O'Hara-style, and the ropes of proper intellectual analysis are missing or are, at least, well-greased. There's little to lean on then, thankfully.

The usual O'Hara inventiveness is here present as are forays into the hinterlands of style--and places where the word "style" won't get you a cup of tea. Admirable about Frank O'Hara to my mind is how even back in the bronze age of what we call "the beat generation," when it became so easy to be free that "freedom" lost all meaning, O'Hara retained a sense of himself and his own personal interests and goals. In his short poem "Form and Utterance," from 1951, O'Hara gave the green light to Duchamp, Dada, Surrealism and the accompanying breakdown of objective consciousness to make way for the subjective:

> The barking dog kisses the red fireplug.
> And tries to smile. The fireplug is too strong,
> not fooled by "that dumb affectionate pug."
> The pug feels quite irrelevant. So long.
>
> Beside our bored friend a bay milk horse stands.
> The dog has minced away. The fireplug sneers.
> The wind is very warm in June. "No hands
> upon my reins guide me through city fears;
>
> I could love a monkey" moans the dull horse.
> Where is that interesting dog? Our red friend
> stares at penthouses and whistles. A hearse
> wanders suggestively by. It's the end!

But O'Hara is also taking a poke at William Carlos Williams with his "barking dog" kissing "the red fireplug," just reminiscent enough of "a red wheel / barrow /...". Love and kisses on the street are things you just don't find in Williams's poems preaching integrity in the intellectual separateness of things. In a poem like "The Lights Over the Door," O'Hara goes even further, and celebrates Christopher Street. Of course, this area is very different today from the way it was in O'Hara's time (when two men holding hands in public was a criminal offense), but the feeling of sexual openness still predominates in O'Hara's poem, and points up his often flamboyant openness.

Williams primarily avoided sex, as puritantically as our society chose (chooses) to circumvent it. It is to this, then, that Frank O'Hara--as offspring to Walt Whitman's thought--is responding. And

that O'Hara so openly does so in the early 50's is important. The point is, a great artists acts as an alarm clock for an entire generation of artists, his work not just standing alone as good work, but penetrating the thinking and perceptions of those to follow. Thus it is that I see Frank O'Hara as more than just a creator of "good" poems or a maker of art which "works"--althought these too.

Speaking again of style--as indirectly all of a poet's work does--O'Hara gives Williams another knock on the head in the first two stanzas of "What Sledgehammer? Or W.C. Williams's Been Attacked!" written in June of 1952:

> Yester the heat I walked on tiglon "Charles F"
> around the Park, as three nuns in a stationwagon
> (au Zoo) robbed the Elizabeth Arden Building.
> In the University pistols were not shot off
>
> because they aren't "clean precise expression." Ho
> ho ho, kra, chuh, chuh, tssk tssk tssk, tereu. They
> stole barrels of rice powder (yeastfully ruched), white
> like angels' balls, the ever-chucked and careless Fs.

Clearly, this is a response to the clean, purely pared poems of Williams; yet, in his short essay Personism--A Manifesto, O'Hara names Williams as one of only three American poets who are "better than the movies," so, obviously, O'Hara is interested in Williams's work even while he spends a lot of time whipping it into shape.

In his prose poem "Schoenberg," O'Hara lauds the composer Schoenberg for "in a fever of style, having slaughtered the false Florimels of harmonious thought and their turgid convincements, (how) he marshalled lightning and the beautiful stench of singed clouds." Thus the parting of the twain is always on O'Hara's mind, his sarcasm and, sometimes impenetrably bitter, humor a wedge driven between the two. The enemy, as we've already seen, is the predominate forces in the art of his day, examples shining all around in the work of his contemporaries. In "Perfumes," O'Hara carries this even further in writing of seductive beauty which is not deep. The first line of the poems reads "Sentimentality! aren't you sunset?", and the last line of the first section: "Beautiful women! are you in Onset?" Then, in the second part:

> And there's the necessity for being
> an African sculpture. And the dark sand
> of garrulous love, which is like seeing

[Cont.

oneself in a three-dimensional hand
on a screen amidst the cheering children.
Because you were never under a bed
has your enthusiasm been killed, then?
Helen thinks everything she's slowly said
is an ocean-chart by Marie Mencken,
sandy and luminous at night, but plans
like these are only as useful to men
as their imaginations in sampans
    steaming up and down the Yellow River
    of the heart, its own eternal giver.

Beauty is not just the appearance of beauty then, and the same with love, pretty surfaces eschewed in O'Hara's work for another more substantial realm (emotional and sexual encounters as one of its' larger provinces). As O'Hara further articulates it, in these lines from "A Classical Last Act":

For the interim we are priming
the pump of forgetting, tears and lavalieres.

the throttling of all extraneous decoration
in favor of emotional impertinence and

structural wailing, to be not so dry as bone
and not so facile as an artesian well.

False and extraneous decoration, the Madison Avenue of poetry, is our poison, and is what turns art into comfortable useless armchairs. To drive home this point O'Hara allies himself in certain poems with the superficially ugly--with dirt, urine, insects and rats, as here in "Poem," written in March of 1952:

Rat's nest, at home bungling, up
from the wharves into the cradle
and whose arms? be it mine, the past.
My decision is to say yes, it's
yes always from these brown lips,
sublime monotony and ease of.
To the present trees and to
the crowd hoping to approach
the manhole I cry my magic and

[Cont.

utterly known messages which are
merely remarks. It is enough to know
enough, upper of you cute rats nesting
forever in the warmest armpit. Hand
me my hammer, I go to the toilet.

.....

But, at the same time, O'Hara's poems are extremely sensual. Intended surely to throw the reader off and challenge him into thought, the poems are however not inscrutable, coming home ultimately to some fairly basic wisdom:

POEM

Water flow strongly O clouds
O heavy coursing of my blood
which is like a powerful intellectuality
of words lost in the sea's crashing

And then faster and faster
the saline gushes of knowledge

To be alone
is the meaning of meaning O sand
the single mouth howling
its simple moonlike pain
until it too is crushed and filled
with the all-encompassing passions
which know everything

On the other hand--and for I think excusable reasons--some things about certain O'Hara poems are not very good--usually technical aspects. The concrete poems, for instance, or his often strained use of rhyme. Written between 1950 and 1960 for the most part, that is from Frank O'Hara's 24th through his 34th year, the poems in this volume vary widely in style and approachability. Some, such as "Mr. O'Hara's Sunday Morning Service" or "It Is 1:55 In Cambridge, Pale and Spring Cool," are readily accessible like intimate complicated good stories told in a bar (that may be the Irishman in O'Hara coming out); while others, such as "Light Cavalry" or "Southern Villages, A Sestina," are dense and illogical (as O'Hara said in Personism: "...that's not why you (fall) in love in the first place, just to hang onto life, so you have to take your chances and try to avoid being logical. Pain always produces logic, which is very bad for you"). Handling different styles and

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techniques well, or even being relaxed enough to try different ways of organizing the interpretations of one's own feelings and thoughts, is very rare, and especially in as young a poet as O'Hara was when he wrote most of the poems collected in this volume. What Poems Retrieved makes clear is that O'Hara never locked himself into any particular style; instead he moved easily and with skill from one style to another. For this reason alone, the flaws are very minor in relation to the weight of his accomplishment.

-Benjamin Sloan

POEMS RETRIEVED, Frank O'Hara, edited by Donald Allen. Grey Fox Press, Bolinas, Ca. $5.

NEW BOOKS:

Ivan Argüelles, Instamatic Reconditioning (Damascus Road).
Ascher/Straus, Green Inventory (Ghost Dance, no. 30).
John Ashbery, 3 Plays (Z Press).
Paul Auster, Fragments from Cold (Parenthese).
Guy Beining, City Shingles (La-bas Press).
Ted Berrigan, Clear the Range (Adventures in Poetry/Coach House).
Jane Bowles, My Sister's Hand in Mine (Ecco).
Joe Brainard, 29 Mini-Essays (Z Press).
Sandra Braman, The One Verse City (Wolf Run).
Jim Brodey, Unless (Jawbone).
Larry Eigner, watching/how or why (Elizabeth Press).
Kenward Elmslie, The Alphabet Work (Titanic).
Clayton Eshleman, The Gospel of Celine Arnauld (Tuumba).
David Gitin, Legwork (Oyez).
Barbara Guest, Seeking Air (Black Sparrow).
Lyn Hejinian, Books and Dogs (Tuumba).
Jack Hirschman, The Arcanes of Le Comte de St. Germain (Amerus).
Anselm Hollo, Lingering Tangos (Tropos).
Paul Kahn, January (Tuumba).
Alexander Kohav, Emigroarium/A Roaratory/! (trans. with an introduction by Jack Hirschman) (Amerus).

[Cont.

NEW BOOKS cont.]

Richard Kostelanetz, Foreshortenings and Other Stories (Tuumba).
Michael Lally, In the Mood (Titanic).
Harry Mathews, Selected Declarations of Dependence (Z Press).
Bernadette Mayer, Eruditio ex Memoria (Angel Hair).
David Meltzer, Two-Way Mirror, A Poetry Notebook (Oyez).
Francis Ponge, The Sun Placed in the Abyss/and Other Texts (trans. by Serge Gavronsky) (Sun).
Tom Raworth, A Serial Biography (Turtle Island).
Raymond Roussel, How I Wrote Certain of My Books (trans. by Trevor Winkfield, with essays by John Ashbery and further trans. by Kenneth Koch) (Sun).
Peter Seaton, Agreement (Asylum's Press).
David Shapiro, Unwritten (Lapp Princess Press/Printed Matter).
Lewis Warsh, The Maharajah's Son (Angel Hair).
Douglas Woolf, Had (Wolf Run).

MAGAZINES:

BEZOAR XI, 3 [Box 535, Gloucester, Mass. 01930] (Paul Kahn, Fred Buck and Thorpe Feidt, eds.) Joel Oppenheimer, Marc Weber, James Krell, Maria Gitin and Gary Metras.

A HUNDRED POSTERS #24 [P.O. Box 415, Kenmore Sta., Boston, Mass. 02215] (Alan Davies, ed.) "Essay on Style," by Bob Perelman. #26, Three or Four Things I Know About Him, by Charles Bernstein.

L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, February 1978 [464 Amsterdam, New York, N.Y. 10024] (Bruce Andrews and Charles Bernstein, eds.) Eigner on Eigner, Coolidge on Eigner, David Bromige on Ronald Johnson, Kit on Robinson on Ted Greenwald, James Sherry on Michael Lally, Ron Silliman on Melnick, Alan Davies on Barrett Watten, Charles Bernstein on Johanna Druker, Bruce Andrews on John Wieners, and pieces:Nick Piombino, Lawrence Weiner, Hannah Weiner, David Menick, Dick Higgins, Jerome Rothenberg, Steve McCaffrey and Rae Armantrout -- in short the most important and most interesting new magazine published in years. No serious contemporary poet can afford to do without it.

ONLY PROSE, November 1977 [54 East 7th St., NYC 10003] (John Perreault and Jeff Weinstein, eds.) Prose by Kathy Acker, Barbara Baracks, Ira Joel Haber and John Perreault. The Baracks and Perreault selections are outstanding.

MAGAZINES cont.]

ROOF IV [Seage, 300 Bowery, N.Y.C. 10012] (James Sherry, editor; Bruce Andrews, editor for D.C. Forum) poetry & fiction by Charles Bernstein, Ted Berrigan, Andrei Codrescu, Clark Coolidge, Allen Ginsberg, Ted Greenwald, Bernadette Mayer, Steve McCaffrey, Opal L. Nations, Peter Seaton, James Sherry, Anne Waldman, Tony Towle, Lewis Warsh & others; special D.C. Forum includes work by Tina Darragh, Lynne Dreyer, Peter Inman, Doug Lang, Kirby Malone, Douglas Messerli, Marshall Reese, Phyllis Rosenzweig, Diane Ward, Bernard Welt and Terence Winch. Very exciting issue. Bernstein, Coolidge, Mayer and Warsh of especial interest--and the Washington, D.C. section. All for just $3.00.

TELEPHONE 13 [Box 672, Old Chelsea Stn., NYC 10011] (Maureen Owen, ed.) Work by Susan Howe, Hannah Weiner, Jim Brodey, Alan Davies, Andrei Codrescu, Bob Perelman, Michael Lally and many others. Lots of good work, but somewhat inconsistent.

UNITED ARTISTS ONE, November 1977 [Box 718, Lenox, Mass 01240] (Bernadette Mayer and Lewis Warsh, ed.) Works by Bernadette Mayer, Clark Coolidge, Lewis Warsh and Paul Metcalf. If this first issue is any indication, we have many good readings ahead. Mayer and Warsh's selection from Piece of Cake, and the selections from Coolidge's Weathers are especially good.

ZZZZZZ [Calais, Vt. 05648] (Kenward Elmslie, ed.) Work by Kenneth Koch, Walter Abish, Joe Brainard, Frank O'Hara, Phillip Lopate, David Shapiro, Alice Notley, Terence Winch, Art Lange, Bernard Welt & Tim Dlugos. Z continues to be one of the best anthologies ever published.

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Upcoming issues of La-bas will include occasional special issues devoted to special aspects of poetry & poetics. The first special issue. appearing in May-June will be called AWAY FROM AMERICA, and will deal with poetry written in a context outside of American landscape and culture. I'm still seeking poems for this issue, poems written on or about a foreign landscape or which were influenced by a foreign language or cultural context. Please send any contributions as soon as possible.