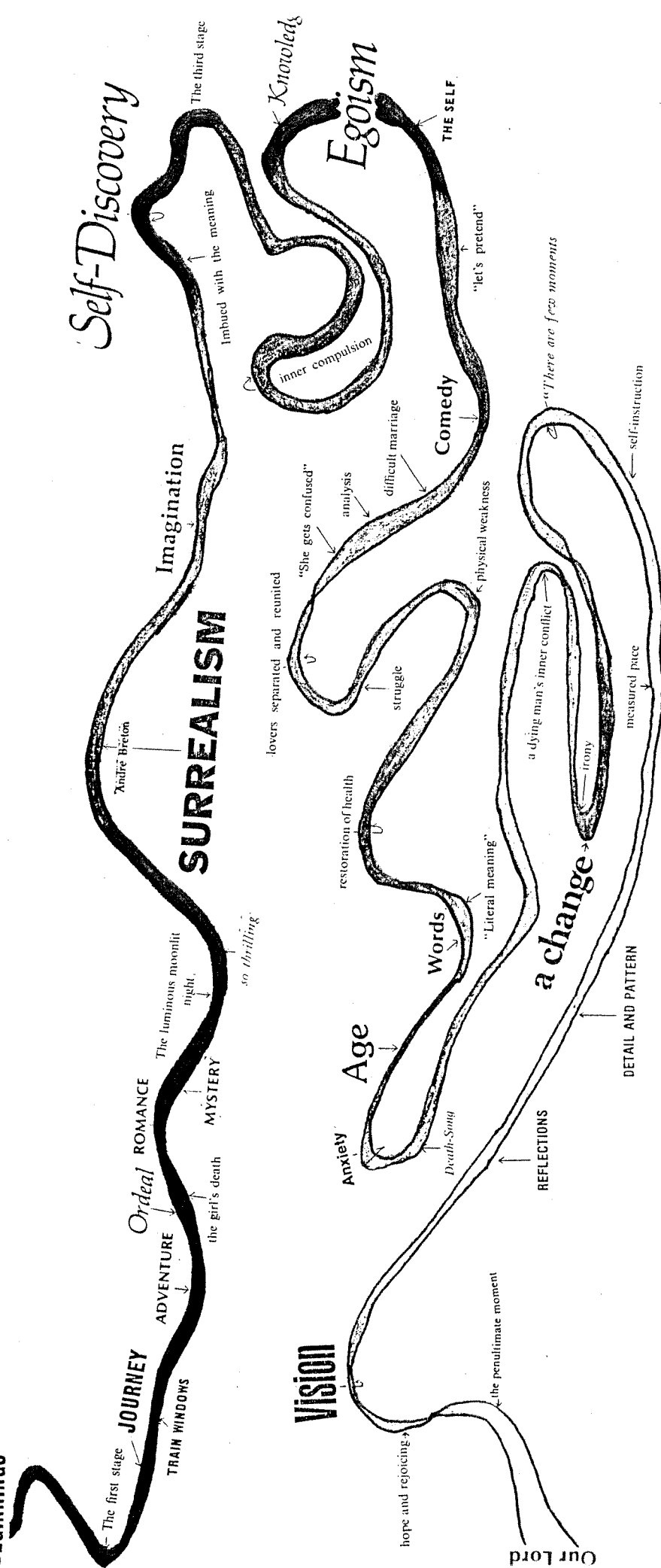


BEGINNINGS



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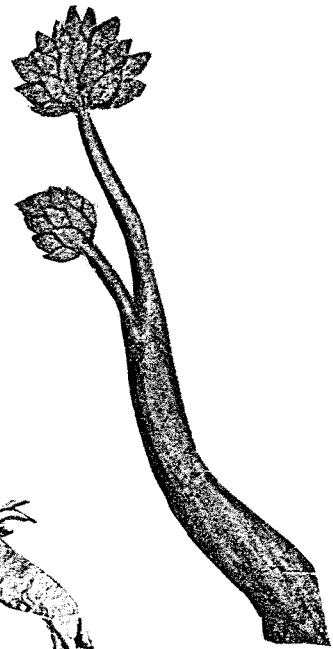
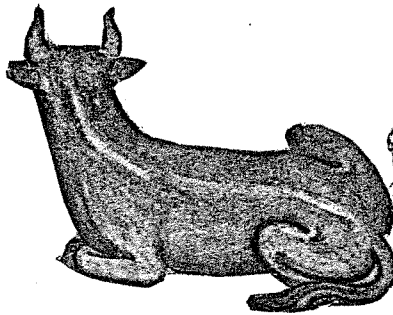
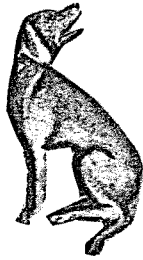
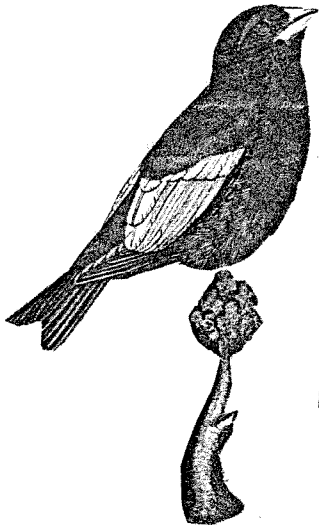
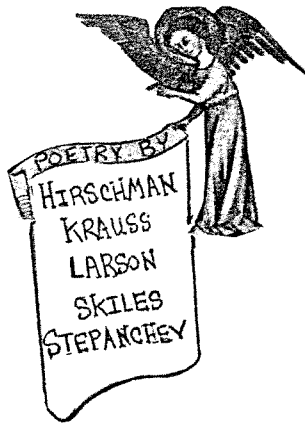
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LA-BAS: a newsletter of experimental poetry & poetics	:LA-BAS

LA-BAS 2 (September 1976)	LA-BAS 2 (September 1976)
poetry by	poetry by
Jack Hirschman	Jack Hirschman
Ruth Krauss	Ruth Krauss
Kris Larson	Kris Larson
Don Skiles	Don Skiles
Stephen Stepanchev	Stephen Stepanchev
Edouard Roditi	Edouard Roditi
Douglas Stalker(with comments by Larry Eigner)	Douglas Stalker
Larry Eigner	Larry Eigner
response by	response by
Gene Fowler	Gene Fowler

LA-BAS
Box 509, Hollywood Station
College Park, Md. 20740

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Douglas Messerli, editor



MORNING SONG

I want to let you
like a heron happen
to me as words.
Not one that flies or one
that is caged
but the sound
of its being
named in stillness.
So close to hereon
and heroine
and even that splits
like the drug of a bird.
Down the center of
the marshland.
Sentenced to lose its grammar,
its place
in the vibration of things
and the weather.
Morning. Grey sky over
the heather slopes
I walk down.
I haven't closed my eyes
since I last looked at you.
I swear, I swear.
Now I am going to
sew up the river.
I blink. There
you are, heron.

-Jack Hirschman

OKA OF MOONSTROKE

At the root of the night of the groin
where the Volga of thigh
and the Oka of moonstroke meet
before I am the blue morning
or the taste of sex with cream
and sugar runs
the gamit of the hand
into this poem,

painterly I catch the sickles
of the octorune lips of faces of comrades
spawning upspine like an upscreaming
calligraphy of cyrillic,
and you do the same, poetically
going down.

We are the piston of winches
of ether whose bite is soft,
the dancer's toes come together
like the diamondpoint
of a stylus diming
cadres of kinetics at the dawn,
the black artistry of africamerica
quivering with rhythmn
and content

to be not un nor nul or ill
amidst all the forked
tonguings of white
lightning
sick unto death with too much,
never reddenning enough
the hair of this idea we sprout
like flaming bushes
on the insides of our drumskins.

Every delta anywhere is
a singing king of rags
and a bilabial
cluster of stars audible
only to the radar
of our orgonomy.

Esoteric nothing.
Intellectual nothing.

[continued

OKA OF MOONSTROKE continued]

Whore-may-care or alphabets
on fire, nothing.
There is a line
whose name is bread.
There is one loaf
for all its teeth.
When I tear into it
it disappears

and I am left stupid
as I was at eighty-three,
dumb as I am
at ten.

I want to take your hand
with me to whatever
school I go.
I want to lift your dress
and see the sparrows
lift off from the small nest
where they've spent
the night like sperm.

I will paint it for my other
sister, the one the dead
tried to nun.
And for my brother, whose name
is as anonymous as my own
and therein famous
as the next stage of revolution.
It will be a line made
of letters,
an arm on the page
veined with sound.

And your waist
shall know it
by the poem
of its own supple flowing

of the liquid melodious
whirl and immersion
into the syllables

hip and deep as any wound
of truth, poor and

[continued

OKA OF MOONSTROKE continued]

profound as the brow
of a curb

summer kids sit on
talking about
angels, cigarets and the sunshower
that ran away

in red suede shoes
and left a rainbow
to take its place
for the rest of the weather.

-Jack Hirschman

THE RIVER

That it is not to be done away with,
anymore than the sea
can be erased by writing
it on a blackboard
and taking it away with a rag,
and that there are reasons
for hyssup,
and that the memory
of corionic villi
be a membrane
to foetal you
every so cycle often,
and that the silken revolution
be real, the satiny
almost music of the rest of
your month of hearing
lie in you tree-true,
protest filling your mouth
but going no further,
the reaction--
airy brine of a day scarlet
with softness:
blood, water,
the body thick
with history and it
is the institution of your depth
charge, your plumbline,
your sinking in a whirl
of poem into your own
fluid recognition:
this is the same differences are,
these the genetic waters
between sleep and waking
between a black flag of anarchy
and a thunder of stillness
this is the liquified space.

-Jack Hirschman

THE COKSOVIET

The nostrils of assassination stir
and the hearts in brows
bleed the idea ---:

What is it love forgets?

What is it the road dissembles?

Words out of mouths, alphabets
in the ear-drums throbbing, throbbing,
throbbing.

Heartbeats, this is what the trade
is:

This is the breath of exchange, the
seasons in the nutshell aorta where
the streams meet and the contraband
dances.

Between the living and the dead--
between the writing hand and the
stretch of the long canvas of
a sentence punctuated with
hieroglyphs,

I held a river in.

I let it stand up, blood of
a spine.

It took flame and idea from
the surrounding senses,

it pulsed and impulsed through
the body of my process.

I threw a skin around it called
you.

Raduga of the written eyebrows
l'arc-en-ciel of the anacry.

Clear brow of another life, coils
of Sotovayah Catushka.

Yes, I know. No, I do not know.
What is the measure of a third
of two? A fourthnote twelved.
The wail of butter

[continued

THE COKSOVIET continued]

Friend and comrade, I know only
your words meet me gently
at any crossroad
they are the recognitions
of that demure
and tacit
continuum of ether
that lights up the corpuscles
of summer
with my kind
of re-incarnating
good news good breath
and from toe to the red star mind
sensual forms of the fearlessly beautiful.

-Jack Hirschman

ONE OF THOSE

I had grown
simple
in the time we were
 together

these words
are sworn leaves
and the combing
back of the hair
indistinguishable
from the wind

"that is all"--

"out of order"--

these are visual signs
for the blind
and debrained.

I had grown simple
with you in here.

-Jack Hirschman

from seasalt

from seasalt to Victoria Station
I belong to your aftershave lotion
like the birds in September go bow wow wow or nuts
I shall look for it under the blankets I
shall feel in some couplet the unsung flower
pricko bello importo si
and far far away
for me
I almost faint

-Ruth Krauss

wits
stars tough and terrible
times two
boiled potatoes and you
in my bed

-Ruth Krauss

blues blues blues

I am blue is for bluebirds and for sorrow too
like an orange and
the world is blue
is the color of the wind and blue
is my procrastination

-Ruth Krauss

The roses of electricity are different when they break
out of the jail of the poet
and the factories of twilight are invented
the urinating multitudes involve the clouds
and burst the dams of the air in shock
peninsulas break their bolts and sail away incandescent
and the top of the world is in flower
gone my stir-crazy liver
 my cardiac liver
 my liver of feathers and nitrate
bees are switched on
a fuse of lions climbs by to the sun
Look! wheat and oranges and almonds are lightyears of rocketing
from Me The Earth is renegotiated through me bands of river run
and I am again a battery of firewater confronted
with eternal evaporation my time is spent
roaring back at the sea in my heart
songs go down on their knees
mountains arrive at morning in this wireless blue wonder
the leaves along the land are holding up the trees
as they bust and the thunder of the bust is green and
loud the day is born
and makes a revolution of
the night
and O the frail butterflies
 O the frail butterflies
under the tent of our sadness O

-Ruth Krauss

A GIFT FROM THE STORM

of the rose quartz
arrowhead on his windowsill
he cannot say
whether it is better
than the light
which gives it to him
but he will admire
and sup for them both

-Kris Larson

IN DER ALTE PINAKOTHEK GARTEN

To everything still
on the museum walls,
to the chaotic wind
that lifts the leaves
a boy replies
circling a ball
like a crane a fish
he would share
with those
his eyes approve
and their language
he sings.

-Kris Larson

DRUID'S CHILD

The night
I was chased
by the giants
of the mountain
I ran to him
and he took small sticks
and flung them
into the trees
from which they came
and when they burst
into fire
they screamed and fled.
I knew it was him
who drove them.

When I saw him grinning
at the edge
of a bog
with a fish
three times the size
of himself
I knew it was him
who caught it.

When the smokehouse
burned
and he picked
a carved stone
from its ash
I knew it was him
who found a Phoenix.

This is the man
who grows ferns of smoke,
man who lives
in the woods of his coat,
last man who spoke
with an Irish Elk.

-Kris Larson

BLUE AND GREY DELIVERY TRUCK

It has arrived
like the moon
infinite
blue and grey
delivery truck.

A Coca-Cola bottle fusillades
across the pavements
 breaking
silence

raps to rest

It remains:
 no lettering,
empty,
 apparently,
flickering like a dinosaur
in the sun
this truck,

 entire,
envelopes ground
becomes intense
 metallic
waves rippling;
it vibrates obliterates
and is
itself
 and nothing else
 entire
in that street
except thin dust
caressing
its stiff darkness

-Don Skiles

SLEEPING POETRY: BURNING OF THE LIBRARY AT ALEXANDRIA

When I awake, I dream
and sleep; rich ribbons
move the hands on clocks.
The bull urinates in agony
in the centre of the ring.
Being realized.

How many streets were out there today?
I think there were so many others
And the leaves, certainly,
turning on the trees, continually, continually.
I dreamed of the ocean's time
Squid-ink, the battering of stones
slowly pushed, heavily pushed,
in the sand
which is quartz four million years
old
once diamonds

That was like
the burning of the library
at Alexandria

II.

The Sufi master:
He permitted, he allowed,
he understood
his execution by the community
And I listened to motorcycles,
eating an apple in the sun
It burst in my teeth; I find
my mouth
is alive.

III.

Gold nitro-glycerine hair
Silver ochre obsidian
shadows of some cave
A precise mind dug deep
And burning of the witches
A prize-fighter
incarnating the monster
My teeth convince me
this is the taste
I was born to.

[continued

SLEEPING POETRY: BURNING OF THE LIBRARY AT ALEXANDRIA continued]

IV.

They say he dreamt
of dark disasters in the sun
Of coments turned out through holes
in space,
where other universes
turned
like black whales rising
over the moon
Fire, water, earth and air
redeeming
And that he made a ritual
like a circle full of air
being known as an idea,
laid out in colours
that could not be
but were
And it was drawn in sand,
and healed.

-Don Skiles

MORNING GLORIES

What bright pressures
they dream
Climbing into air
and nothingness
with certainty
true toys
without sentiment
and deliver
the poem
like racehorses
or peeling skin

-Don Skiles

THIS IS THE RAIN

This is the rain
Come here, rain!
with wet streets
young feet
bare knees
Run all night
Shine
all day
Find
the oranges

-Don Skiles

A LONG NIGHT

Thinking of you,
I skin-dive into bed.
I cover myself
With a quilt of silence.
But I can't sleep.

I count drab sheep,
Some amiable and dumb beasts,
Dressed in their granny-gray wools
And chewing grass.
But I can't sleep.

Those unwashed windows,
Your eyes,
Have mistaken me for what I'm not,
And I'm glad.
Love is an error in judgment
For which I'm grateful.

My sore cock stands up
In its grove of public hair.
I itch and scratch:
Is it motorized dandruff?

Moonlight drips on the window sill.

A night on Venus
Is as long as a year.

-Stephen Stepanchev

RECOVERY

His brother is asleep at nine o'clock
When his girl friend arrives. Jimmy
Takes her to his own bed and fucks her.
Then, as she takes her leave, his brother awakes.
"I'm sorry, Charles," she whines at the door.

"If you make your denominator small enough,"
Said Thomas Carlyle, playing curmudgeon,
"Whatever you put in the numerator
Will be pure gain and happiness."

Charles' denominator is zero as he walks
Out to the lake and watches the fingers
Of wind stir **ripples** on the mirror
In which the sky sees itself and the tossed trees.

"Damn it," he says, skating stones on the surface.

His shadow lies underground at noon
And surfaces softly as water in the afternoon
And soon enough widens into night.
The moon is floating on the lake.

"Damn it," he says, walking back to the house.

-Stephen Stepanchev

THE NIGHT FLOWED

The light ebbed and the night flowed in
With its experiments in dream.

"Robbery is not my motive," the stranger
In the nightmare remarked, ordering the handicapped
Woman in the wheel-chair to disrobe.
He liked to rape cripples. He was queer that way.

He felt a stick of dryness in a wet looseness,
Horning in. The stinking pipes of the house
Underpinned the scene. He smelled rubber
Boots and became a plumber. He cut lead pipes
And old electric wires. He felt the touch
Of clay, moss, and underground water.

It was darker than a death, and he woke up,
Put the light on, and drank a glass of water.

The sun came up like a marigold,
And he walked out to Sarah on the porch.
She was in her wheel-chair, untouched, as usual.
He smelled peppermint on her breath; she must
Have been drinking. She was watching her poodle
Lolling in ruminative lassitude in the yard
While birds circled over a piece of bread
She had flung them. They quarreled over it.

"I'm cold," she said. "Get me my sweater.
You're so inconsiderate."
He saw the marriage, suddenly, as a deposit of coal,
Taking on hardness and combustibility over the years.

"Yes," he said, "it's very cold,"
And pushed the wheelchair down twenty feet of stairs.

-Stephen Stepanchev

A BURGLARY

A thin, spaced-out boy
Of eighteen broke into my
Room yesterday (my neighbor,
Mrs. Tsitos, saw him kicking
The door). He looked through my
Books and clothes, found no money,
And stole one object from the closet:
A Nazi dagger, a World War II
Souvenir, given me by a Russian
Officer in Braunschweig in 1945,
When I was a lieutenant. Emblazoned
With swastikas, it bore a chilling
Legend: Alles für Deutschland.
What could Hitler, the Luftwaffe,
And barbed wire encampments--all
That ancient history--mean to a
Poor, drugged boy robbing my room?
"He could hustle a buck or two
For it," said the locksmith
As he hammered a second lock
Onto my scarred door.

-Stephen Stepanchev

A MINUTE

I have walked all night along the shore,
In the puddles of darkness and damp air,
Listening to the bay, the moan of nausea,
And thinking what I feel: how day by day
Love exhausts itself in knocking on a closed door.

I have walked all night and seen the moon
Fade toothless in the east and the blue blotter
Of the day soak up the darkness.

Now I walk on the rocks, moist with
Self-pity, and reach a wall where the sea
Steams in a smell of fish, kelp,
Rotting bananas, and cans of beans.

A gaunt man, looking like my dead father,
Rattles by in an ancient Ford. He stops.
I hear the tinkle of a spoon in a cup,
I smell the coffee in the stranger's hand,
And suddenly, like a sock turned inside out,
I open to a feeling beyond time.

-Stephen Stepanchev

FINCHES

In Thailand
The Buddhists buy
Caged finches
And set them free.
It's a matter of
Soul's merit.
The demand for finches
Is now so great
The boys of Bangkok
Make a living by
Snaring birds.

I sit on a root
Under the bo tree
Where Buddha sat.
Night circulates
In the branches
Hung with
Damaged souls.
A finch is singing.

-Stephen Stepanchev

CATERPILLARS

Like cowboys chewing tobacco
At a rodeo,
These caterpillars spit when they meet.
Now they part, undulating.
Two of them are eating their way
Through the leaves of a lilac
And hang precariously
From green perches.

I sit beneath them, and, predictably,
One falls. I feel it crawling on my head.
I pluck it gently and set it down in grass.

The lake at my feet is warming now,
And I test the water with my scarred big toe,
Thinking of the kiss-worn toes of Buddha.
It is right for swimming, I find.

Gnats are murmuring their morning prayers.

-Stephen Stepanchev

A CONVENTION OF WITCHES

The Bishop of Bogotá objected to the convening
Of the World Congress of Sorcery in his bishopric.
"It will surely attract Satanic powers," he said,
And the PR people at the convention quickly
Announced that "Satan was definitely not invited."

But Satan came, anyway, to admire
The belly-dancing of witches in the moonlight.

He erupted at will, of course, and was most present
When he persuaded one that he was no longer here
Or there or that he did not exist. Bishop, beware!

He came out of nowhere, seemingly--
Like the eye of the sculling alligator
That slid toward me craftily just above
The water line in the Bogotá zoo.
He also came with the thief who slipped my watch
Off my wrist in the lobby of my hotel.
And I remember the slaughtered lambs that sustained
The witches in the restaurants. Satan incarnate!

Contrast was provided by the Hindu ascetic
Who wore a mask to avoid inhaling gnats
And carried a whiskbroom to sweep ants out of his way.
Poor man! He reminded me of the Colombian llama,
Which always races in a straight line, unlike a horse.

But I really think one must emulate the horse
And adapt to the curved race track of Bogotá.

-Stephen Stepanchev

I LEFT JIM

I left Jim gyrating in the discotheque
And walked out to where an old inner tube
Was bobbing in the sour, stinking sea. Two terns
Pecked and hissed at each other, squabbling over
Their territories like vacuum cleaner salesmen.
I sat on a rock and took notes on what I saw
Even as a civil war was raging
Under the cedars of Lebanon and a new
Monarchy was geing installed in Spain:
It was a front-page, back-page sort of awareness.
Thus writing a poem is a rough trip through new country.
It's like driving up a sliding sand dune
To a top from which one can see, unsteadily,
The stars hurrying on their way. What keeps me
Moving is the competition on the road.
I can't let those bastards pass me by--
I step on the gas and let the sand fly!

-Stephen Stepanchev

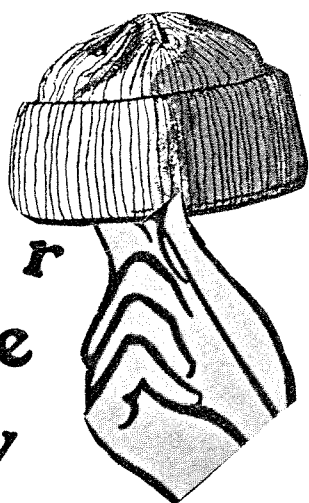
REASSURANCE

A slip of paper, a rejection, puts the "supreme self"
In a panic of awareness, sensing
A middle meanness in the gut.
Reinforcement: it is an inside job: and the
Emeralds of hope run off with the thief.
At such moments I'm afraid to carry a gun,
Like Lincoln. Life is a seeded orange.

It is then that, wise and indifferent,
You stand at my elbow and heal me
With your king's touch: "The Wall of
China is the only man-made object
Visible from the moon."

-Stephen Stepanchev

revisions



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odign
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A HOPEFUL POEM (1929)

Where the rain drops
white flowers rise palely from the pavement

where my foot treads
flames leap up from the concrete

where my head rests
I hear the buzzing of insect wings and the whirring
of diffidently hushed wheels

where my hand rests
small yellow birds fly out of the woodwork
that opens its thousand mouths or are they wombs
the birds circle around my head
and taunt me with their chirping
that sounds like a cracked record on a very old phonograph
till it all ends in a clatter of smashed tea-cups

I then look down at my own belly
which undulates harmoniously
with green ferns sprouting from its navel
and something very ugly and incomprehensible
squirming at its base

ah

I see

it's a fish
swimming forward and propelling me
through a maze of dark submarine caves but
what would happen if it swam into
my own mouth would I

swallow myself

lift up
your heads and all difficulties will be solved
except sex

-Edouard Roditi

4/18

(i) the slow
sad accretion of
trees

elements so
pensive in
air

definite

in the
eye

(ii) wood
into fire
into wood

river of light

boundless
space

obdurate
green

(iii) one
thought

continuously
one

opening the totally
dark

the few leaves
on the proud floor

I got dissatisfied with
repetition of "in"
and then "to"
seemed so-so too

(i)

the slow
sad accretion of
trees

elements so
pensive in
air

definite

in the
eye

(ii)

wood
into fire
into wood

river of light

boundless
space

obdurate
green

(iii)

one
thought

continuously
one

opening the totally
dark

the few leaves
on the proud floor

4/18

the sad

slow

accretion of
trees

different places

divide

elements so
so pensive pensive in
in air air

definite

to the eye
anywhere

anywhere

moments

seen

wood
fire
wood

into this light

river pouring

-Douglas Stalker
(comments by Larry Eigner)

Aug 16 - 19 72

head-on

gulls

low

how far

you may

look

out

the gradual

steep

-Larry Eigner

(This was in THE, in 1973 (Boulder, Colorado)

(Morning of the 18th, from reading something by T. Enslin
(on page 2 of TUATARA #6 "... truncated / steeple") I got
gulls / head-on / low / above steeples or in some differ-
ent arrangement, while before I only had gulls head-on /
at various heights Went to the Salem Willows the 16th where
I saw these gulls above the trees.

you look as well as vv 1-3 above yesterday evening and
vv 4-9 just before and during typing. Last two lines were
one for a minute or two and at last minute I considered

the gradual steep

and then the gradual

steep

the gradual steepness too

Oct 24 - 27 71

what a moment
186 000 ← 186,000
any start
is simple ← is simple enough
enough
a time
how mute
rough dense ← rare dense
rising
setting
-Larry Eigner

§This was in EARTH SHIP #8, 1972 (Southampton, U K) - a solo issue.

Nov 2 - 8 71

(for Wm Costley

a paper a paper how the
scenery's together

how can
i imagine lives

some
ball
rolling

to open up the world it's
like a flower

1 foot in the rain

a cloudy day

trips

corners

-Larry Eigner

\$This was in CURTAINS, 1972,3,4,5?, a mag. out of Yorkshire, England.

\$\$Nov 2 on bck of env..., the only thing handy, i had, after i imagine lives :

some ball rolling

a cloudy day

1 foot in the
trashy street

trips

corners

In a letter to Costley, Nov 8...10 I guessed the last word as "concerns"
He sent me THE COMMUNICATER, the newspaper of Cambridge Model Cities,
which he edits.

Nov 11 71

the squirrel's
still serviceable

phonepole
up and down

the earth twists

bushes
topped by the snow
falling

-Larry Eigner

\$Original ms/ts

\$\$This in my head before I came out here on the front porch to the typewriter, except for v. 5, which got changed to "the mass twists" and then, just now, back to "earth"--in consideration of how much of the earth around this place the clouds may cap right at the moment, as today is overcast and we're having the first snow of the season. And

bushes/ the ... twists

bushes / falling / snow

crossed my mind also.

Sept 23 72

Nightmarish

years

nightmare
weeks

the world

home

shutter

open

mail

hit

tuber

response

flower

carve

greek

building

corner

or

cell [continued

continued]

-Larry Eigner

{Original ts; this is among the 30 pieces of mine comprising
TOTTEM's #15 (Nov. 75) mimeo from San Francisco
{Hostages from Munich Olympics, letter bombs, and Dad came home from
temple one Friday night then with a swastika on his fender, so I
felt a little scared next day and put under the old sect flag

J Bronowski in a tv interview contrasting openwork eg electron-
orbit sculpture in his house with windowless cell-like chthonic
old greek temples...(on PBS in maybe '71 or even '70)

On Sept 22 72 at the end of a letter to Paul Mariah of ManRoot:

Nightmare years // nightmarish weeks // the world // home //
mail // tuber // hit // response // shutter open // carved //
flower // built // greek // corner // or cell

response



Comments on the poetry & poets of LA-BAS 1 were received from Guy Beining, Bill Berkson, Christopher Buckley, Larry Eigner, Gene Fowler (see letter below), Dick Higgins, Michael McClure, Rochelle Ratner, Don Skiles & Stephen Stepanchev.

Clayton Eshelman challenges LA-BAS to print revisions by those poets (like himself) whose worksheets number several pages (more than 5). I think it's a good idea, & I'd be interested in your reactions to it. Would you like to see special issues or long portions of regular issues of LA-BAS devoted to such worksheets?

Edouard Roditi reports that "A Hopeful Poem" (printed in this # of LA-BAS) is a revision of a poem just recently uncovered which dates back to "the transition days." The poem has never been previously published, and had he not misplaced it, it would have appeared in his EMPEROR OF MIDNIGHT.

Correction: the Larry Eigner revisions published in LA-BAS 1 are the same versions which appeared in SPARROW & THINGS STIRRING. Those publications did not print the "original" versions as I had stated.

LA-BAS seeks news of interest to poets: information of moves, new addresses, new publications, awards, readings--whatever you want to share. Send it to LA-BAS (Box 509, Hollywood Station, College Park, Md. 20740), and it will appear in this section.

The following letter was received from Gene Fowler:

September 1, 1976

La Bas --

La Bas #1 a base to start from. I'll poke at odds and ends I find there. But I'll leave the poems alone. Even if I was interested in instructing my peers, and I ain't very, I'd move away from changing the poem and toward changing the poet. Less futile.

Start with anything. Take Harold's comment about avoiding poems which are "poured into moulds." Can't possibly disagree with that, eh? But it irks. Reopens the whole business of form, etc. More basically, the idea of knowing what you're doing as opposed to being some kind of slack jawed "channel" for various reflective and reflexive automatisms. Irked... but not ready to say anybody should pour a poem into a

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mould. I recall running into Creeley's statement about "form as an extension of content." Wondered how he missed all of the 20th C's "revelations." Content, of course, is a blurring of form. Form is there first--at every level. The doing, the making. Where it blurs, like the blurring of small events into a table surface, the blurring of frames into a projected "moving" picture, the blurring of a scatter of body sensations and pictures into a present "anger," we get rhythms, sounds, images, cues to feeling, and all the rest of what we call "content." "Content is a settling out of form."

That leaves the poet an artificer, though. He's putting things together--and that, I guess, smacks of a kind of dishonesty. Unconsciousness is honest. Must be right, because it's what the Pirate-King told us, eh? So if we're going to be good guys, why, we better damned well just spew out all them good, honest contents. Right? If I put together a good moving poem, working out the movement you're going to undergo, why, I'm a "form-ridden" son of a artificer.

When Doug Blazak started Ole, I wrote him a letter (for publicn)(he didn't publish it) pointing out that a poet was an engineer; and the sooner he became a conscious engineer, the sooner he'd start making bridges that'd stand up. From that day to this, the "meat" poets've bin sniping at me. Blazak, of course, expected a letter about how the poet was a shaman. That'd be something about the "mystery" of it all. Of course, my letter was about the poet as shaman. Y'see, the shaman is an engineer.

What about the form? Is it a mould? Sure...but you don't pout the poem into it. It is, as you reduce it to practice, the poem. You suck the reader into it. It's the old mirror trick. Everybody thought Jupiter was the God of "authority" (the "author"). He threw that lightning bolt into the reader. Everybody knew that. But it was an illusion. He throws a zero, a null set, an illusion. The lightning is a flash of "electrons" he evokes from the Earth. The ground. Jupiter is the "educator." He pulls the content out...get's you to blur the form, smooth it, fill it in, and extend it.

What I'm saying is, I guess, there is no content until there's a reading. The poet, as maker, works purely in a realm of form. The transactions. It's the geometrical (if pictured, not kinesthetically felt) realm from which Ouspenski, a Russian mystic, not a poet, came back dizzy and bewildered and able to say only, "Think in other categories." Naturally, it's too heady a place in which to open your eyes, if you are ordinary folk, as most poets are, so the poet leaves the

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making to his "automatic pilot." He comes in as critic; he reads the poem as it is coming. That's why no one talks about a poet knowing sound, but why he is assumed to have an "ear." He listens to what comes, like any reader, fleshes it with response, call it content, and accepts it or nudges the computer for something "a bit different."

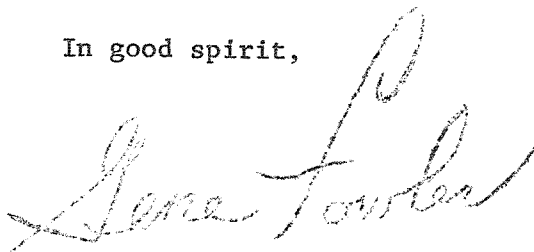
Sounds pretty cold, eh?, the idea of going behind the content, doing your work consciously? Even a little inhuman. Maybe the poems'd come out inhuman? But the thing is, that's where humanity is born. And borne. It only looks inhuman when you first wake up. To demonstrate, walk over to a mirror. Stick your tongue out--way out. And really look at it, look at its color, shape, texture, the waves of movement in it. Focus in a bit myopically. If you're like most, it'll begin to look strange, alien--a thing apart. And not human, not familiar, not with that "at home" feeling wrapped around it. It's something from another world, eh?

As Larry Eigner says, "Revision is, like writing, more or less lucky, a windfall." To be sure. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Athena, with her glittering eyes, her considerations, is thought, I guess, to be Scorpio, eh? I wonder what Homer'd hev had t'say about luck. Spelled backward, out of the mirror image, it's cul.

Well, that's probably enough to get everybody hot and bothered. Conscious poetry? Well, I never.

In good spirit,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gene Fowler". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed text "In good spirit,".

Editor's note: Harold Norse's statement about writing a poetry which is not poured into moulds, was not a theoretical one, but was an aside made in connection with my request for an "experimental poetry." Dissatisfied with the word "experimental," I asked him if I might paraphrase his comment.

