

MISC. PROJ.

a poetry informatic

number two

April 1997

incomprehension is the subtitle



"The function of poetry is to waste excess energy."

--Rosemarie Waldrop

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edited by Mark Prejsnar
Atlanta

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near there the forest flame as against the fact the slow as a scene in the face as
hostile as holly day the forest as a scene in thorough flame

now all walls
and seen with a cloak
of domicile

frown
cat leaps up

the porte
in fact a fine
imperial government
---for exiles

if you know how to tread water

careful knowledge

midway thru life's journey
I muttered, ashtray

two thumps from
the stage director's baton
you feint straight down
(concretely

accompanied
by distances

the statue of limp or greed

however

if for a moment we may leave my fascinating life---

ire as to madden

tone-deaf
to the weals within weals

a nice tribe

a careful knowledge

pewter

dull sheen of men

well meticulous
centurions
with plastic
machine-guns
staring out at an
audience

pure singing violence

roll on the wall roll on home

trade for here absolute

free access to their holy places
soldiers generally don't get well equipped

a headline has nods
a carriage house
gives an inn its music

a careful knowledge

in that signs burn

Memo

the word Word copywrong of the poem

a program in disjunction

microsoftened at church

try living where the
paint runs thin

a necessary addition and grey holding sky in eyes

complimentary pen with advertising
on the side, a phone #

cranks exist
outside advertising, the increased volume level flipped off

intrusion
in a sacrelight blend fewer calor, fewer with tar and nic

if you try
talking you try a singing
the attempt oh, to go on, to sustain

résumé
breathless

rat fiber with a slung need

a trumpet on the turntable, a life at greed

when you sign off on it
they begin breakout groups
escape as the dim
sorrow escalating on
escalators
"there's no need to, escalate"

shadow who

from a corporate story board

all the clouds in a drone frown for the day, a downtown deader
than culture, slope angled for an inert roll
antlion verb

a program in disjunction ("get with") nearify hiding

troubled voices
a wire tied to the wall our
bo diddle return-time

many don't know the code except a shrug

call and nonresponse, the last trump
the post-horn joke an unreal-estate
city, playing possum
check check bland midday surface

it won't fly that far
yet, but it's fun
building things like this

FYI: IMBY IMHO, DIY

~~~~~



Mark Prejsnar  
essay

## Savagery Aimed, Across Light

It may be bounding like a kitten but slash. Problem--poetry can't be (or even feign to mime, to carry out thru mimesis) the world. A problem, & not a problem. We don't actually want to magnify that violence. It's a violence that has three faces (sources): patriarchy, capitalism and America (amerika). National culture is the lens for violence. Focus, as in sun on a dry leaf. In Georgia, a man already in federal prison for life without parole is tried for the same murder by the state. They actually admit that this is so they can kill him. I take the reimposition of state murder, by the power structure (an act despised by the rest of the late capitalist world) as a signature for U.S. culture: the love of violence as a structural premise of life. It will forever perpetuate the fury that grew out of frontier & dissettlement; "capital punishment" creates street murder (home murder) by teaching a love of killing.

\*\*\*\*\*

Poetry that responds to violence will have a violent character. Fundamentally, not good. Or good only sometimes. I do feel that good work has to have the sense of being broken apart, of having been broken apart. At the same time, through a determination as central as rebellion, and not separate from it, good writing tries to hold itself together. I think of A, and also of Oppen.

\*\*\*\*\*

One of the best approaches to writing, is fecundity. One of the best ways to get enough is to produce too much. (Not necessarily publish it. Though in practice, here in the tough real world of poetry, the distinction isn't always easy to make.) More importantly: a poet should (does) try to affirm. Temptation, a purely negative dialectics. Create as much as possible in as many modes as possible. That allows living breath to ground itself. The bounding kitten gets tired out. Writing has to have a warmth; it's not easy in the physical & social worlds & there ought to be an assessing of beauty, which can plug into all our circuits. The same response as to paint or wood. Words are a physical & plastic medium, performed as music. There is the same sensuous response, leaving analytic response in its place--for it does have a place, but if it is put first, placed before the performative ardor of the work, it gets to be carping. This will be the pull back & forth (or so I feel it): hurt breaking apart & the sense of injured word play creating a newer space in which we (a problematic we) start.



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Pedro Corte  
two poems

### Cornered

Unfolding,  
a tree  
a grass leaf  
I'm  
erect, erected

turned down Main,  
volk:

back & almost  
forth, round-  
about,

poetary  
crackup;  
rock  
hard,  
drilled--

mainlining  
soft hammered  
yellow  
fetish  
rush.



## Landing

At that  
promo'd look at  
the quick wink  
(a decade)  
it said: This  
was me, a  
mild sedative  
of an america,  
waverphone  
against  
winking  
the star  
keeled on over--

it was  
shock.

\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%\*^0/%

Mark Prejsnar  
essay

## Shards of a Capital City Rinsed in Stray Song

1.  
One of the most underappreciated moments in our poetry, is ***An Anthology of New York Poets*** (New York : Dutton, 1970). The range of the book staggers. Clark Coolidge's foundational work is there, and plainsong in street clothes.
2.  
The New York School (the NY Concatenation?? .... should be called something loose & contingent). Begun by O'Hara, or at least typified by him: spontaneity inside the poem's torque. Calibrated against jazz and the street. In insisting that things live, in a song-unfolding that is primarily not discursive, they constituted our main domestic surrealism. A surrealism of the gestural phrase,

rather than of the image. And this does seem to reflect in part a loud, gesturing, yakking city. The surrealist painters were denizens of the image space; and that was the fundamental modality for the corresponding French poets. In a parallel way: the New York painters were painters of gesture, and the verbal euphonies & disphonies of the NY poets, poets who right up to today so active in the visual art scene, are performative gleanings of american word-stuff.

3.

There are NY poets with a directly surrealist meander. David Shapiro and Joseph Ceravolo. These are my personal favorites. What lived moments mean can only be felt inside a language incommensurate with them. But any further contemplation of those lyric choices, finds them perfect and irreducible in and of themselves.

4.

This quality of a lapidary numinal presence, can seem archaic. At least, it would seem like modernism in its most unreconstructed and "literary" guise (Ceravolo as Mauberly) if it weren't for the new-yawk jazz-identified ferment, in rhythms and in diction, that cause the U.S. reader of this work to feel nationally implicated.

4.

1955-1970. A moment when things seemed to open up. A sort of chronological New York.

5.

James Schuyler. Narrative with an insistence on lost connections. The peculiar intuitive turnings that present a world, which (if it makes sense) makes only a continuously-renovated sense. Found, & made. Musical form allowing narrative scraps to suggest structures of feeling. It's easier to find mainstream approval for such a poet. He **seems** to be playing by naturalist rules.

6.

Ted Berrigan represents one angle of vision on what typifies NY writing: "whatever works." Opportunism as the central esthetic principle. This is a basic guide for a lot of us, even outside the NY concatenation. But some poets, such as Berrigan, pursue opportunism with a special integrity. If the final sum of poems doesn't always please a given reader, that goes with the territory of exploratory intensity.

7.

This same unevenness, as a basic artistic approach, can be noticed over the



entire anthology. And also as characterizing O'Hara's poetry as a whole, to take one defining example. The very idea of writing constantly, publishing little, dying young, and leaving scads of works that fly off the page like firecrackers, very hard to sort into an "o'haral canon," is one condensation of New York. The city too busy to cohere. Also notice the tensions: canonization is there, if not a canon. After all, there's someone anxious to edit those hundreds of lunchtime napkins, and there are important presses anxious to publish what results. Lunch poems: a myth, an urban romanticism. Wordsworthian (a life surprised by joy, the very real hard work hidden under the cafe menu).

8.

Some of the concatenation's vibrancy, is from its peculiar tension with the historical mission of New York. This I take to be best imaged by the Yankees. **Money, money, business, manifest urban destiny of power over people; dynasty created out of will and capital.** Dominating the World Series like the marines bloodily cleaning up attempts at third-world democracy. Unlike the disturbingly-nicknamed Bronx Bombers, the Manhattan makers were (to get excessively alliterative) marginal. Very much not champions--defining an outside space. The anthology gives us work that claims its own space, but unlike the academic pomposities of much institutionally respectable work, it doesn't claim a sacred mantle of anglo-american culture, a space and dignity far beyond itself; nor does it unintentionally reproduce the arrogance of the american century. It's firmly quirky. One of our most kinetic books.

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**FURTHER READINGS**.....some favorite books (& a tape) named by associates of Misc. Proj....

- \*An anthology of New York poets / edited by Ron Padgett and David Shapiro. NY : Dutton, 1970.
- \*Selected poems / Ted Berrigan. NY : Penguin, 1994.
- \*The green lake is awake : selected poems./ Joseph Ceravolo. Minneapolis : Coffee House Press, 1994.
- \*Spring in this world of poor mutts / Joseph Ceravolo. NY : published for the Frank O'Hara Foundation at Columbia University Press.
- \*Transmigration solo / Joseph Ceravolo. West Branch, IA : Toothpaste Press, 1979.
- \*Selected poems / Barbara Guest. LA : Sun & Moon, 1995.
- \*Fair realism / Barbara Guest. LA : Sun & Moon, 1989.
- \*Human rights / Joseph Lease. Cambridge : Zoland Books. forthcoming.
- \*Collected poems of Frank O'Hara / edited by Donald Allen. NY : Knopf, 1971.
- \*Early writing / Frank O'Hara ; edited by Donald Allen. Bolinas : Grey Fox Press, 1977.
- \*Poems retrieved / Frank O'Hara ; edited by Donald Allen. Bolinas : Grey Fox Press, 1977.
- \*Great balls of Fire / Ron Padgett. Minneapolis : Coffee House Press, 1990.



- \*Hymn to life and other poems / James Schuyler. Washington, DC : Watershed Intermedia Tapes, 1989. Signature Series ; no. C-216.  
\*A few days / James Schuyler / NY : Random House, 1985.  
\*The morning of the poem / James Schuyler / NY : Ferrar, Straus & Giroux, 1980.  
\*After a lost original / David Shapiro. Woodstock : Overlook Press, 1994.  
  
\*January : a book of poems / David Shapiro. NY : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965.  
\*Lateness : a book of poems / David Shapiro. Woodstock : Overlock Press, 1977.  
\*The page-turner / David Shapiro. NY : Liveright, 1973.  
\*Poems from Deal / David Shapiro. NY : Dutton, 1969.

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"The writing is quite restrained. The word *war* isn't used in the whole story. The headline sells the paper. You learn practically nothing in the rest of the story about what actually happened (nothing happened). It is mostly reassurances. It is not flashy writing. It's quite impersonal. Did a person write it?"

--Alan Bernheimer

TRY@POETRY@POETRY@POETRY@POETRY@POETRY@POETRY



Ell Perlmutter  
two poems

Burnt

plain palm to grow in a tropic  
plain pain is a titled wild  
into the trounce mild as the ticket  
these horns crease more against  
than you seek in the one hammer  
a full time was demon in its awarded  
slope this mud I saw it was  
time transgression  
full to the hang-out those  
who have the projects  
dilly dally was there the  
new speaking as  
a concert for pain ride  
plain palm to wither almost slip  
in the cityside  
kids of injustice working  
at the one traipse  
here you slot angrify

Semiotic Transformation

Language as a sign.  
Faithless as the wine.  
Breaking into time.  
Heritage, to find.  
Bandage — just like mine.  
Cambridge on a dime.  
Anchorage: certain: blind.  
Rampage over crime.  
Bondage ... in a bind.



--Charles Olson

[illegible]

Sculpture / Stephen Ratcliffe.  
Los Angeles : Littoral Books, 1996.

Happening into an area marked as an enclosure, the trajectory of the ball as it moves across lines to the edge of the chain-link fence followed by the body of the one who is about to respond. In theory the dog will stare at the hole until the gopher comes up, at which point if he's fast enough the ball will be struck back down the line.

The book consists of numbered stanzas, one to a page, eight lines each. In its insistence on its own built quality (maybe the most sculptural thing about it, which is rather different from the strained metaphors of the cover blurb) it is finally a very radical and off-putting work in its cumulative effect. Intermittently, disturbing contemporary edges emerge in the shadow talk, suggesting personal contacts awry on sexual, emotional and cognitive levels. The overall sense is quite frankly unprecedented in some ways; like Silliman it is indirect anti-

pastoral, weaving images out of the street of the late capitalist city, badly fragmented.

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Cal Taubman  
three poems

### Eyes for Coals

An audition continues  
back in the photo  
giving up  
haunts  
who  
agoraphile  
twisted in the wind  
post-malleable--  
sold guitar  
busted  
javelina dark.





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### Gross of Metal

Look in the geeks!  
a laminated where  
not having to remember  
all amounts  
(if any)  
larger than a stash,  
it harks a better  
tomorrow ovoid and rest-  
wearied, and in the narrative  
I've got eyes  
Where we wander.

### Local Symmetry

Tried to type admit  
--got:  
damit.

Evolution in  
summer, reinventing  
the squeal, er  
the squall.

POETRY@POETRY@POETRY@POETRY@POETRY@POETRY@POE



JOURNALWATCH--

new & recent little magazines of value.

Mass Ave. (P.O. Box 230; Boston MA 02117)

editor, Daniel Bouchard

subscription: \$12.00

Mass. Ave. (so pronounced) is the defining nerve-column of greater Boston. This new magazine is not yet that central in import; but it is excellent. The work is mostly verse, printed with high (almost classy) production values. The tone is the tone at the center of our best poetry: exploratory, tho not as jagged as the farthest edges of the contemporary.

To make a short story collapse  
I may not have to flatter my intentions  
So acidic that I would face  
This ghastly pressure draped upon my neck  
That I could not imagine growing up without  
A bloated discussion of fractures

--"They Beat Me Over the Head with a Sack"  
Anselm Berrigan

Mass Ave. has a quieter voice than its raucous namesake, which is part of that little-mentioned grittier city that Boston really is. The magazine's cover sports an archaism, and a wink ("printed at Boston"); which nicely suggests its even and self-confident tone. The writing presented is as consistent as in any new publication of the last eight years. An important new presence.

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"And remember, no matter where you go on Earth, \$lavery is there!"

--Harris Schiff's webpage \$lavery

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Tangled Web They Weave-- surfing for poetry

{1.}. Re: Webspace (crawling thru it all).

Poetry in (and as) community will continue to interweave with digital and postdigital realities. That cyberspatial waves threaten poetry, is nonsense. Certain poets are composing collaboratively, using e-mail and the technical manipulations possible with fluid copy. (See for instance the fine poem by such a collaborative group, the Range Poets, in TinFish 2.) EPC (see the review below) represents a model for community in dispersed, late capitalist mode. Hypertext makes the forms of community and of culture-building compress into an intimate space, making movement possible. The historical character limiting its brilliance, is easily described: most poets and readers cannot access the Web. Under a late capitalist system, this will change to a significant degree at the same time as marketing comes to penetrate and control cybercomm. Cyberspace will become marketing's locus of choice, at precisely the moment that cyberubiquity is reached. The dynamics will be much the same as with teleubiquity, in the fifties: the point at which most homes had televisions, and were expected to have them. Naturally, that moment will see massive front-end privatization of cybermodes, and sites like EPC will probably be pressured out of existence as their space is needed to reproduce profits.

{2.}. Electronic Poetry Center (EPC). <http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/>

When starting this column we could not have anticipated how creative a job this site at SUNY Buffalo would do, organizing useful links for poets. Maybe they haven't eliminated all need for further comment on web resources--webspace contains too much, which is inherently nonlinear in organization, for that to be achieved right now. But they've come much closer than we anticipated seeing for years. (....on the purely theoretical premise that the Web will exist in about the same form several years from now--in fact, without question it won't) The basic premise here is that the universe of endeavors founded on poetic modernism, and independent of U.S. academic conservatism, is itself a web of linked interests, and has an inherent architecture of sympathies. Hypertext becomes an operational metaphor for shared concerns. This site contains clearly organized groupings of little magazines, small presses, individual poets' websites, electronic resources including webmagazines, events, tools. It is a very rare site, in that graphics are minimal enough to keep access and use rapid, but they draw the eye in; most thought about graphic design has gone into making the site clear and usable, rather

than reproducing the stupid garishness of advertising. Almost uniquely among large omnibus sites, EPC's overall shape deserves to be compared to a good library: it is a usable configuration of reference tools, directories and materials. (Also, not many URL's contain a stupid joke....points for style.) --m.p.

0/0 * ^0/0 * ^0/0 * ^0/0 * ^0/c * ^0/0 * ^0/0 * ^0/0 * ^0/g * ^0/0 * ^0/0 * ^0/0 * ^0/0 * ^0/0 * ^0/0 * ^0/0 * ^0/0 * ^0/0 * ^

"It's as though you were hearing for the first time--who knows what a poem ought to sound like? until it's thar?"

--Charles Olson

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Books Received and Recommended

- Will Alexander. Asia & Haiti. LA : Sun & Moon, 1995.
Mei-mei Berssenbrugge. Sphericity. Berkeley : Kelsey St. Press, 1993.
Olivier Cadiot. Red, green & black. Elmwood : Potes & Poets, 1990. Adapted
from the French by Charles Bernstein and Olivier Cadiot.
Paul Celan. Breathturn. LA : Sun & Moon, 1995. Trans. Pierre Joris.
Ray DiPalma. Motion of the cypher. NY : Roof Books, 1995.
Andre Du Bouchet. Where heat looms. LA : Sun & Moon, 1996. Trans. David
Mus.
Robert Duncan. A selected prose. NY : New Directions, 1995.
Elke Erb. Mountains in Berlin. Providence : Burning Deck, 1995. Trans.
Rosemarie Waldrop.
Lyn Hejninian. Writing is an aid to memory. LA : Sun & Moon, 1996.
Damon Krukowski. 5000 musical terms. Providence : Burning Deck, 1995.
Gerrit Lansing. Heavenly tree, soluble forest. Jersey City : Talisman House,
1995.
Tony Lopez. False memory. Great Barrington : The Figures, 1996.
Jessica Lowenthal. As if in turning. Providence : Burning Deck, 1996.
Bill Luomo. swoon rocket. Great Barrington : The Figures, 1996.
Friederike Mayrocker. Heiligenanstalt. Providence : Burning Deck, 1994.
Trans. Rosemarie Waldrop.
Gillian McCain. Tilt. West Stockbridge : Hard Press/The Figures, 1996.
Gale Nelson. Stare decisis. Providence : Burning Deck, 1991.
Jacqueline Risset. The translation begins. Providence : Burning Deck, 1995.
Brian Schorn. Strabismus. Providence : Burning Deck, 1995.

John Taggart. Songs of degrees : essays on contemporary poetry and poetics.
Tuscaloosa : University of Alabama Press, 1994.

Anne Waldman and Andrew Schelling. Disembodied poetics : annals of the
Jack Kerouac School. Albuquerque : University of New Mexico Press,
1994.

Keith Waldrop. Potential random. Providence : Paradigm Press, 1992.

Geoffrey Young. Pockets of wheat. Great Barrington : The Figures, 1996.

