

Poetry & Poetics at Buffalo

a timeline

1960-1990

Editors' Note

I. In *Being Busted* (New York: Stein and Day, 1969), Leslie Fiedler summed up the lively, diverse, and vociferous Buffalo poetry scene of the sixties:

We could not ... have one official journal to speak for all of us, or even a quite nonexistent consensus; yet we are all agreed that it is good there be ten or twelve or fifteen (no one knows for sure, being too busy at the mimeograph machine and the typewriter to count) little magazines ... in which students and younger faculty as have no access to more "established" publications can achieve print and, hopefully, a public. And between issues, the same writers ... chant their latest efforts at each other, in Readings organized in honor of some large cause, or in support of someone just busted for that cause, or just for the hell of it. (104)

We have found the evidence of those debates, those various causes and occasions, in the little magazines, noisy, passionate, insistent still in their boxes on the university's Poetry Collection shelves. And we recognize ourselves here as well, as thirty years later the printing and chanting and arguing continues, though the heat seems to have changed with the changing temperatures of the culture in general.

Our effort has been to suggest the myriad activities that have made Buffalo, in the words of Ann Lauterbach, "Poetry City": hundreds of poets and poet-apprentices, hundreds of readings and workshops and festivals, hundreds of small publications and presses. And all of these activities producing material for the archives—papers, tapes, books, mimeographed 'zines, broadsides, posters.... The weight of history here can be measured literally.

To suggest, not to give the final word. Not to wrap it up. To provide a handful of snarled threads for readers to take up and follow on their own, into the material past.

II. The explosion of poetry that took place in Buffalo centered around the Poetry Collection that Abbott had started on a shoestring. It's an explosion still reverberating in this community. The Collection became a central focus for the English

**Cynthia
Kimball
&
Taylor
Brady**

department, with Al Cook's notion that all the dissertations generated here could come out of the materials stored there.—MH

In 1935, Charles Abbott, the first librarian of Lockwood Memorial Library, laid the foundations for Buffalo's present status as poetic center by deciding to focus resources on creating the broadest possible collection of twentieth-century poetry in English. In 1939, Mary Barnard was hired as the first curator of the collection, working closely with Abbott. Together they set about collecting documents from every aspect of poets' literary production, from notebooks and worksheets to first published versions of poems, variant editions, limited fine-press publications, and a range of other forms of printing and reproduction. They wrote to thousands of poets requesting the contents of their waste baskets, before other libraries had begun to consider such documents valuable. Poets ranging from Auden to Zukofsky responded, with letters and manuscripts, notebooks and diaries. Today the Collection houses some 8 million individual pieces of paper, by authors ranging from T. S. Eliot to Ted Enslin, Helen Adam to Ed Dorn, and is known among scholars for its extensive collection of works by James Joyce, Dylan Thomas, Robert Graves, and William Carlos Williams.

In her book *Assault on Mt. Helicon* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1984), Mary Barnard writes:

The idea that it was part of a university's business to collect materials for research into the work of modern poets was ... strange (not to say scandalous) to most American professors, including those on the UB campus.... No self-respecting scholar would think of wasting his time on living writers. Charles Abbott himself believed that the Collection would come into its own "perhaps in a hundred years." The scholars would begin to come when we were long gone, he said, but the time to collect materials was the present. He was collecting for posterity. Living poets would one day be dead, the present would have become the past, the scholars would eventually become interested, and by that time the materials they needed would be much more difficult and expensive to obtain. This was surely true. The fifty dollars we paid for Williams's little pamphlet called simply *Poems* (Rutherford, 1909) seemed

fantastic even to me, but thirty-five years later, the same book sold at auction for sixteen thousand. Undoubtedly we were collecting a lot of junk, too. The terms of the Carnegie grant would have made that inevitable, even if we ourselves had been sure that we knew what the scholars of the twenty-first century would consider junk. (176)

We cannot help but hear Barnard's account as an endorsement of our own approach to this labor of collection. In the spirit of ongoing collaboration, we invite members of the community to add their corrections, anecdotes, and interventions to this section for inclusion in future issues.

III.

We would like to acknowledge the generous assistance and advice of Robert Bertholf, Curator of the Poetry and Rare Books Collection; Chris Densmore, Acting Director of University Archives, and Shonnie Finnegan, Archivist Emeritus, in locating and securing access to the many fugitive documents from which this section has been assembled; Michael Basinski, for his knowledge of names, dates, and events which otherwise would have eluded us; Robert Creeley, William Sylvester, Sally Anderson Fiedler, Carl Dennis, Raymond Federman, Joseph Conte, Albert Glover, Fred Wah, Mac Hammond, Katka Hammond, and Ansie Silverman Baird, for agreeing to participate in the interviews without which none of the anecdotal information in this section could have been obtained; Cass Clarke, for materials from the archives of the late Jack Clarke; and Mark Hammer, for generously allowing us access to his written introductions to readings given by visiting and local poets, and for providing, through his work with the Red Flannel Reading Series, an extra-academic space in which a poetry community in Buffalo might continue to take shape.

Buffalo, NY
June 1996

AG—Al Glover
ASB—Ansie Silverman Baird
MB—Michael Basinski
JC—Joseph Conte
RC—Robert Creeley
CD—Carl Dennis

SAF—Sally Anderson Fiedler
MH—Mac Hammond
KH—Katka Hammond
WS—William Sylvester
FW—Fred Wah

"I'll speak for myself, I certainly feel that the program has an excellent relation to the larger body—it's as if our group were in some ways defined by being different, not in our conduct, but in our situation from the other.... In fact we were not usual people in our department. I remember once a graduate student had been talking to his advisor about possible courses that he might take for, you know, his doctoral qualification, and he had thought of a course that I somehow was going to teach and his advisor said, 'That doesn't count.' And he said, 'Why?'—'Because, you know, he's not really a teacher.' ... And that hurt, of course.... [I]t was irritating to be here from '66 to now '95, knowing that one was in some ways never quite real. Well, now I had a terrific company of people who weren't, seemingly, quite real either."—RC

1960

AUDIT

EDITOR - RALPH MAUD

BOX 92 • HAYES HALL • UNIVERSITY OF BUFFALO • BUFFALO 14 • N.Y.

Volume I Number 1 CONTENTS include: Poem by Roger Shattuck. "Macropolitics: Aggression in Group Theory" by Francis D. Wormuth. Five poems by Mac Hammond. "A Personal Report on the Literary Fifties" by S. W. Dawson. Review of Pound's *Thrones* by Guy Davenport. Review of Waugh's *Monsignor Ronald Knox* by Don Bruckner. Poem by Arthur Freeman.

MARCH and APRIL issues will include: Richard Ohmann, "Letter on Oxford Philosophy"; Raymond Gastil, "Prejudice in the Defense of Values"; George Field, "Listening to Other-Life"; John Crossett on Robert Graves' *Homer*; Max Bluestone on *Pornography and the Law*; Don Bruckner on Bonamy Dobrée's *O.H.E.L.* volume.

The MAY issue will be entirely fiction and will be edited by David Galloway and Richard Koffler at the above address.

AUDIT is obtainable by subscription only (\$3 for 12 issues). For details, please see BACK PAGE.

* * *

The word "audit" means (n.) an audience or hearing, (v.t.) to examine or adjust. The title is meant to indicate the aim: a significant reckoning of the pros and cons of the twentieth century. There will be a direct approach to fundamental questions in an attempt to put an end to what has become, for some, a most unwilling suspension of belief. We ought to be able to unsuspend some beliefs. The rational basis for personal morality, the concept of prosperity, the permissibility of inexpediency in world affairs—these are some of the questions that can be beneficially reargued by contemporaries who have applied their education and curiosity to them. Poetry has its own way of arguing; and fiction also can be thought of as information one wouldn't have wanted to miss.

AUDIT will draw regularly on a nationwide group of Staff Writers, some of whom have published extensively while other will become known through these pages. Unsolicited MSS cannot be handled unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. All accepted material will be paid for. . . Thanks to Staff Writers and others, AUDIT has 350 pre-publication subscribers. Contents copyright Feb. 1960.

February 22—First issue of Ralph Maud's magazine *Audit*, published from the English Department at SUNY Buffalo. The editorship of the magazine will pass through a multitude of hands and reflect various (and occasionally conflicting) poetic influences throughout its long career. Editors include Al Glover and George Butterick, Mac Hammond, Betty Cohen and Ansie Baird.

The University of Buffalo joins New York's public university system as the State University of New York at Buffalo. The state funding thus made available to the English Department is a major factor in the wave of hirings and appointments that eventually leads to the establishment of poetics as a distinctive field of scholarship in Buffalo.

"Pop [Oscar Silverman, Chair of the English Department and Director of Libraries] was out of the gentlemanly old school where you wear a coat and tie, call people by their last names.... He was decorous. He was Chair of the English Department from 1956 to 1963, when there were only four full professors. But in 1962, UB went state [merged with SUNY], and here was a big influx of money, and then Al Cook who was a tornado of energy came, and the whole place was suddenly much faster. And the people who came in then were out of a completely different world and ethic."—ASB

e.e. cummings reads in Buffalo. "He stayed at the Lenox Hotel and wanted to see Niagara Falls before his reading at 4 p.m. I thought *The Enormous Room* was about the best book in the world, so when Pop called to ask if I wanted to go with them to the Falls, of course I did. He was a modest, softspoken man, totally warm, approachable, and unjaded, even though he'd already been famous for so many years. When we went over the border, he was relieved that they didn't ask what he did for a living. 'Whenever anybody asks me what I do,' he said, 'I say I'm a carpenter. First, no one should call himself a poet—that's what other people should call you. Second, when you sit on a plane, no one can ever have a conversation about what you do if you say you're a poet.' As we drove along the escarpment, I was struck by his painter's eye—he would say, 'Look at that red jacket hanging on that line over there,' but he wasn't showing off, and you would look around you with his enthusiasm."—ASB

Albert Cook, professor of comparative literature and a poet, becomes chair of the UB English Department. Fifteen years later, Cook recalled 1963 as a time when faculty and students came to Buffalo in the expectation that Buffalo was on its way to becoming a "Berkeley of the East" (*Buffalo Courier Express*).

"Al acted on his strong feeling that poets should be considered, and respected, as scholars. For all his scholarly publications, he'd rather be known as a poet than anything else."—KH

"Cook wanted to attract poets not to teach writing, but to teach literature. His interest in a faculty made up of literary artists put this place on the map and the ripple effect still goes on—in the Capen and Gray Chairs, in the current faculty who are practicing poets. And it became possible for professors to become poets here in Buffalo because of Al Cook."—MH

Arthur Efron, a professor in the UB English department, begins publishing *Paunch*, a journal devoted to Romantic criticism and poetry. "Radical Romanticism was long ago bodied forth by our namesake, Sancho Panza, who easily anticipated [Norman O.] Brown's conclusion that 'The repudiation of the body does not and cannot alter the fact that life in the body is all we have ...'" (from a 1965 editorial statement).

Charles Olson is hired at UB as Visiting Professor of English, teaching courses in Modern Poetry and Myth and Literature. In his tribute to Olson, first printed in *Athanos* 2 (1971), Albert Cook remembers the poet and his family arriving in Buffalo: "[e]merging ... in the small hours of the morning, up from his train ... enormously tall, *literally maximus* of Gloucester." And later, "extemporizing full-voiced all the way up Main Street about the primacy of the Second Millenium: Ugaritic as a Bible-armature" and "[h]olding forth to the warm ring of disciples he had invited all to dinner standing around at nightfall outside Crosby Hall some hours after the official ending of his seminar, impulsively and regularly over to Onetto's where he would pay the bill for all and expound till closing time and often through the streets past the small hours, about the cosmic vision."

Olson's major publications prior to this date include Volume I of *The Maximus Poems*, the influential statement/manifesto "Projective Verse," and the book-length study of Melville, *Call Me Ishmael*. Olson takes up residence in Wyoming, NY.

"I was in [Olson's] classes for two years. A few of us took them a second time because it was slightly difficult to figure out what was up the first time around.... He'd spend two hours talking about parataxis or the pre-Socratics or the Sumerians, Whitehead or Levi-Strauss or Merleau-Ponty. Or he'd talk about Dorn or Wieners or Snyder, people you had never heard of then. You must remember it was 1963. I had gone to Amherst, where Robert Frost was the visiting canon, and modern poetry courses ended with Auden and Stevens—William Carlos Williams was hardly mentioned."

(Stephen Rodefer, interview in *Poetry Flash* 159 [June 1986])

October 4—Olson reads in Baird Hall.

October 10—Robert Bly reads in Baird Hall.

November—Olson gives his "Under the Mushroom" talk at Gratwick Highlands. The talk is reprinted in *Muthologos*.

November 8—Adrienne Rich reads in Baird Hall.

The State University of New York
at Buffalo

The Friends of the Lockwood Memorial Library

cordially invite you hear

ROBERT BLY

American poet, author of *Silence in the Snowy Fields*, editor and publisher of *The Sixties*.

The State University of New York
at Buffalo

The Friends of the Lockwood Memorial Library

cordially invite you hear

ADRIENNE RICH

Author of
The Diamond Cutters
A Change of World
Snapshots of a Daughter-in-law

who will read from his poetry

Friday, November 8, 1963

4:00 P.M.

Recital Room, Baird Hall

P.M.

According to Ralph Maud in *Charles Olson's Reading: A Biography* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), January 1964 is the overdue date of a book Olson borrowed from UB's Lockwood Library and never returned (*The Mycenaean Age: The Trojan War, the Dorian Invasion, and Other Problems*, by Carl W. Blegen).

Raymond Federman, Beckett scholar, novelist and poet, hired at UB.

Irving Feldman, poet, hired at UB.

March 28—Olson's wife, Elizabeth Kaiser, killed in a car accident in Batavia.

April 3—Robert Duncan reads in Norton.

April 24—Robert Creeley reads in Norton.

First Buffalo Summer Program in Modern Literature—Teachers include Ed Dorn, Robert Kelly, LeRoi Jones, Leslie Fiedler, Robert Creeley, and others. Dorn teaches a course on Melville and James; Jones teaches modern poetry, with an emphasis on Yeats; Kelly offers a course on the seventeenth century.

College of Arts and Sciences
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO

Formerly The University of Buffalo, Founded 1846

Department of English

Crosby Hall
Library Circle
Buffalo 14, New York
Telephone 831-2317
Area Code 716

June 6, 1964

Robert S. Fisk
Director
The Summer Session
State University of New York at Buffalo
Foster Hall
19 Liberator Circle
Buffalo, New York

Dear Mr. Fisk,

At the suggestion of Albert Cook, Chairman of the English Department, I write to inquire if you might have funds available for special events connected with the program in modern literature we are having for the second session. As you know we have invited three poets, Jones, Dorn and Kelley, to teach this session, and we thought it might be a good thing to have them read while they are here. In addition, I have word that the poet Denise Levertov, a leading member of the school to which all of these poets belong, may be here in town visiting during the second session. What I propose is a reading by both Dorn and Levertov at one event and a reading by Jones and Kelley at another. Because no arrangement was made with Dorn, Jones, or Kelley that such readings would be part of their obligation, we should pay them a stipend of a least \$50.00 each. Miss Levertov would necessarily get more, at least \$100.00.

Would it be within your reach to appropriate \$250 for these poetry readings?

I would have come to see you about this matter but I am out of town for the next two weeks. Could you write me at The English Department your determination?

Sincerely,

Mac Hammond
Mac Hammond

Assistant Professor of English

The first issue of Edward Budowski's *Fubbalo*, published out of the Student Book Shop on Main Street, contains the following "editorial manifesto" inside the front cover:

F.	Flourish
U,	Upon
B:	Beastliness;
B	Be
A	American,
Longed for	Lunkish,
Opening:	Outspread.
Fork	Fuddled
Up	Unless
Bed	Browbeaten,
Beard	Bigassed
And	Although
Legitimate	Littlediddled,
Organ	O
For	F
Us	U,
Big	Buffalo:
Bad	Big
And	Anything:
Legitimate	Loudmouth:
Organizers:	Ourselves.

Contributors to the volume include Olson, Dorn, Kelly (with "Buffalo Problem 1: How grasp this city ..."), LeRoi Jones, Levertov, Touster, Wakoski, Hammond, Dawson, Starbuck, Rodefer, Saroyan, and Fiedler.

Summer—First issue of *Niagara Frontier Review* appears, published by Harvey Brown, poet and student of Olson.

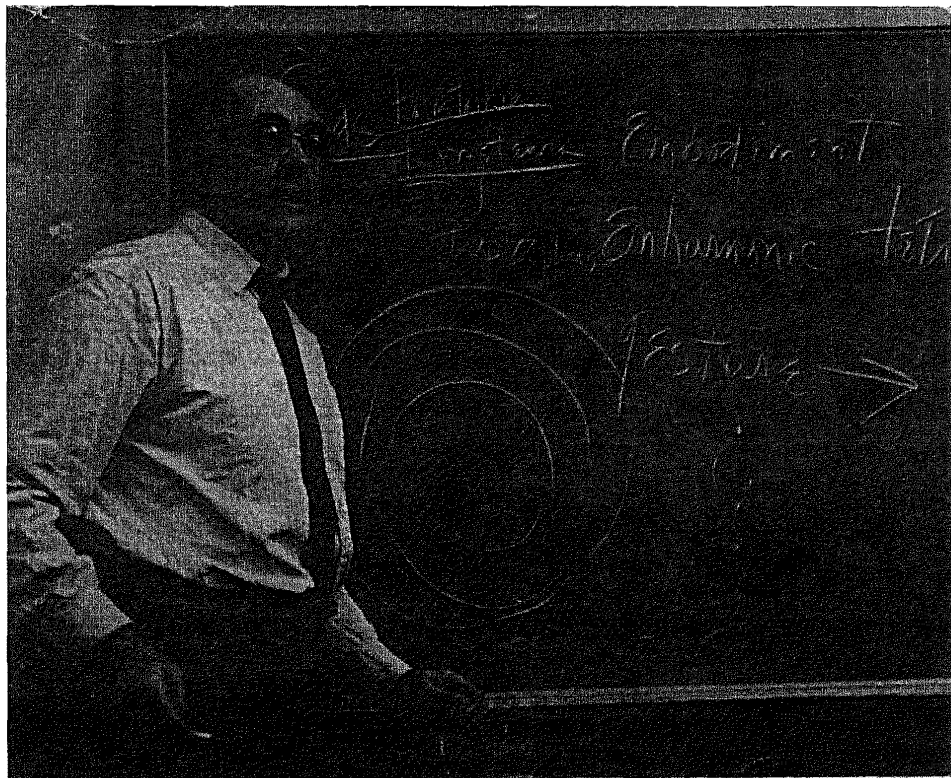
Albert Glover, Fred Wah, and Robert Hogg arrive in Buffalo to study with Charles Olson.

"I arrived SUNY in Sept. 1964—enrolled in one of O's seminars. Second semester I took both. Classmates: Butterick, Wah, Crozier, Brown, Clarke, Boer.... In second semester I began work on Olson bibliography and collected poems, later to be *Archaeologist of Morning*. I found Charles difficult to follow, so decided to learn as much about him as I could."—AG

"I studied with Creeley at UBC [the University of British Columbia] in '62-'63; Bob got me a fellowship at [the University of New Mexico at] Albuquerque in '63, and in December Al Cook put an ad in *Poetry* magazine inviting young poets to study at Buffalo. At UB there were Henry Lee Smith and George Traeger in the Linguistics Department; I studied prosody—Gleason tradition, prosodic description—and also found Olson. Later Creeley came. Glover, Butterick, Clarke, and I became the Institute for Further Studies—all poets."—FW

Olson teaches a course on mythology for which the sole required text is Richard Payne Knight's *A Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* (1786).

"Olson spent half the semester saying we couldn't do anything because we didn't have ... *The Worship of Priapus*.... It was an obscure nineteenth-century tome, but Olson talked about it as if it contained everything we needed to know about the origin of the universe. But, since we couldn't get it, we couldn't have the class, and he went on for weeks like this.



Niagara Frontier Review Summer 1964 \$1.00

"One day a few of us—Fred Wah, Andrew Crozier, Mike Glover, and I—made a trip to Cleveland to go to Jim Lowell's Asphodel book shop and to a then legendary bookstore that had a square mile of used books underground. It was totally dark, and you'd go from one room to another pulling on the light with a chain. Everything was completely dusty; no one had looked at the books for years, obviously. We spent all day there, and finally we found *The Worship of Priapus*, along with some early H.D. and Mina Loy, I remember. Needless to say, we jumped for joy and rushed back to class, as it were, triumphant. But it was too late, Olson said, too late, and Payne Knight was wrong anyway." (Stephen Rodefer, *Poetry Flash* interview)

"I found the Payne Knight in a store in Buffalo—it was on Main Street, I think—and brought it into class. Olson immediately borrowed the book. A week went by. Then he announced in class that the passage he remembered wasn't the way he thought it was, and he threw the book against a wall: 'This is bullshit.' Silence. Class continued."—FW

September 25—Frank O'Hara reads in Diefendorf Hall.

October 22—A revision of "Statement on Poets and their Function in the Department of English" reads as follows:

In building a consistent program, the English Department proposes to consider three kinds of poets:

A) Master poets with international reputations.

B) Professional poets who are also academic professionals, having a Ph.D. and/or standard academic specialties (linguistics, bibliography, period scholarship, etc.).

C) Professional poets who may be regarded as academic professionals when they have done considerable college and university teaching at levels above those of our "200" courses, though they do not have a standard specialty other than periodical criticism.

(We are not considering here category D, professional poets with little or not [sic] academic experience; such poets are best utilized, transitionally or permanently, only as visitors.)

As for their use in the curricular functions of the Department, poets in category B, by virtue of their specialty other than poetry, present no need for definition at all; their poetry, in fact, constitutes a "bonus" professionally for the Department.

All other poets are useful for a Department concentrating on modern literature and criticism in the following ways:

1) Creative writing.

Poets are uniquely qualified to teach courses in creative writing. In the light of our emphasis, we should expand the undergraduate offerings in creative writing beyond the single course taught at present. We subscribe to the principle honored in departments of music and art that to practice the techniques of the art provides for all students a valuable supplement to studying its history and criticism.

In the graduate program, we do not at present plan to follow the Iowa and Johns Hopkins plans of

formal graduate degrees in Creative Writing. As at Harvard and Berkeley, we will henceforth accept some course work in creative writing (perhaps a maximum of six hours) as a part of training for an advanced degree and propose to add a single advanced course in creative writing open only to graduate students.

2) Courses in modern literature and literary criticism.

Poets, (so long as they are already professional academics) are to be regarded as capable of teaching courses about modern literature, on undergraduate and graduate levels. The following are courses now listed by the Department that a poet might teach: Modern Poetry, Critical Approaches to Literature, Intellectual Backgrounds of Modern Poetry, American Poetry-Music-Visual Arts, English Literature of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.

News Service

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John F. Conte
Assistant Director -
Public Information

BUFFALO, N. Y. - Mr. Frank O'Hara, director of exhibits for the Museum of Modern Art in New York, will read selections of his poetry at the State University at Buffalo Friday, (September 25th), at 4 p.m. in room 146, Diefendorf Hall.

Mr. O'Hara, a winner of the Hopwood Award for poetry in 1951, is the author of "Meditations in an Emergency," "Second Avenue," and several other works including verse plays. His works comprise the current issue of "Audit," a literary magazine edited in Buffalo.

Mr. O'Hara received his M.A. from the University of Michigan and was one of the founders of the Poets Theatre in New York City.

Mr. O'Hara is one of several poets whose readings will be sponsored during the fall semester by the Friends of the Lockwood Library, the Charles Abbott Poetry Reading Fund and the University.

3) Period courses, and other specialty courses.

Occasionally the incidental interest of the staff member, poet or other, may coincide with the needs of the Department to allow him to teach such a course on the undergraduate level. Poets in categories A and C, however, should not teach period and specialist courses on the graduate level.

4) Thesis direction.

Poets should serve well on thesis committees, especially in modern literature (the bulk of our theses). They should not normally direct Ph.D. theses in subjects where they do not have special competence aside from writing.

5) Special activities.

For colloquia, poetry readings, verse dramas, editorial advice, and such special events of all sorts for which support is found, the poets in the Department should be exceptionally useful. These activities are bound to increase as the Department implements its focus on literary criticism, the more if Foundation support for special activities materializes.

Given the Department policy that we "build on strength" in modern literature and literary theory, with special emphasis on modern poetry, we will add poets to the staff, the poetry serving as a professional qualification in the area of publication. The criteria for appointment and promotion should be the same as those used for other staff members: the quality of the man's work as judged by those qualified in the Department. Quality should outweigh duplication as a consideration, on the principle of a "good man regardless of field." That is, avoiding duplication, we prefer having a Joyce man and a Yeats man to having two Joyce men. But we would prefer adding a second (or third) excellent Joyce man to adding merely a passable Yeats man, quality outweighing duplication. We are willing to duplicate, with poets as with others, until a saturation point is reached. Especially as regards poets in Category C, the saturation point should be determined by consideration of three factors:

- 1) The number of courses in creative writing, contemporary literature, and other courses considered within the capacities of such poets as have been approved by the Department as part of curriculum;
- 2) By consideration of qualified people already present in the Department, to put in bids for such courses;
- 3) A consideration of the abilities of the particular poet under consideration to function capably in such courses as remain after points 1) and 2) have been considered.

October 23—Irish poet Richard Murphy reads in Norton.

1965

state university of new york at buffalo

*The Friends of the Lockwood Memorial Library
cordially invite you to hear*

KENNETH KOCH

THE AMERICAN POET
and PLAYWRIGHT, author of
"KO", "THANK YOU"
and "PERMANENTLY"

who will read from his poetry

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1965 4 P.M.

Room 146, Diefendorf

The Abbott Reading Fund

February 5—Kenneth Koch reads in Diefendorf.

March 4—The English Department's graduate conference, "Modern Literature and Ideas," sponsors a reading by John Crowe Ransom and a symposium, "The Idea of the Modern," conducted by Irving Howe.

March 5—The Buffalo Festival of the Fine Arts Today sponsors a panel discussion on poetry by Robert Graves, Robert Creeley, and W. D. Snodgrass at the Albright-Knox Gallery. David Posner, curator of the Poetry Collection, serves as moderator. "Whatever provokes in me this response to the innate rhythm of a poem, whatever it is, one singly follows one's own answer" (Creeley). "I am not at all interested in posterity. All I'm interested in is Now. Now is a duration outside time. A Now that lives and goes on, as in a poem" (Graves).

EXTRA

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO

SPECTRUM

EXTRA

No. 23

YORK, MONDAY, APRIL 5, 1965

On the same day, the English graduate conference hosts symposia by Geoffrey Hartman ("Literature and Ideas") and Marshall McLuhan ("New Media and the Arts").

March 7—Festival of the Fine Arts Today sponsors an afternoon concert. On the program are works by John Cage (*Concert for Piano and Orchestra*) and future UB music professor Morton Feldman (*The Swallows of Salangan*). Lukas Foss, known for his occasional collaborations with poets, conducts. Also on the festival schedule is a dance performance by Merce Cunningham.

"Gregory Corso loved to provoke people into striking him."—SAF

March 8—Gregory Corso dismissed from the Millard Fillmore College faculty of SUNY Buffalo for refusing to sign a "Feinberg Law" loyalty certificate. Corso's action was part of a student-supported faculty protest against the firing of UB Professor of English John Sporn for falsely denying any past Communist Party membership on his Feinberg Certificate. Olson's response to the controversy appears in a letter to Ralph Maud: "It comes to that: how political are you? and how are you political? Or are you economic, and personal—like your enemies are? I'm not sure the first act of the new Niagara Frontier isn't exactly to declare a difference from the prior slavery, to shed instantly any behaviour in terms of the using of the State of New York.... what have you people who have lived here been doing while the Feinberg Law slept on your books????? [...] as of the matter I find it entirely critical that politics today be entirely thought out; and that I don't believe economics is a parallel or complementary term. In fact,

Corso Dismissed, Academic Freedom Committee to Picket

The Faculty-Student Committee for Academic Freedom will picket in front of Crosby Hall, on the Diefendorf side, at 8:30 tonight to protest the firing of Gregory Corso for his refusal to sign the Feinberg Certificate.

Mr. Corso was teaching an English literature course in Shelley in Millard Fillmore College. Albert S. Cook, Chairman of the English Department, secured the position for Mr. Corso at the beginning of the semester upon the request of Leonard D. Minsky, who was originally assigned to the course and is presently teaching it.

It is an administrative requirement that all new teachers sign the Feinberg Certificate which states that the signee is not a member of the Communist Party and that he has reported any past membership to the President of the University, and that he recognizes the Regent Rules on Subversive Activities as "terms of his employment." The constitutionality of the Feinberg Law is presently being tested in the court



GREGORY CORSO

ver, members of the university faculty who refused to sign the certificate last year. Furthermore, the existence of a disclaimer certificate is not required by that law.

that the social is economic and that the political is ethical; and that education, so far as I can see, is as Plato was clear it was, the crucial preparation of the citizen for political life. With one now [crucial] reversal of him and of all educators of the present including the State of New York in the instance, and the administrators, as well thus as the teachers like yourself: that solely poetry—and I mean a poetry not to be confused with the poetic—is the means of [education] same." (*Minutes of the Charles Olson Society* 13)

"I remember, getting back to Olson, at one point someone said, 'Well, what about the institution?' Charles said, 'You're always in an institution in this country: in a line or something—your mail, your hospital situation, your streets—it's all an institution.' It's absurd to argue against the condition of the institution: it's what you do in an institution that's interesting, not whether it exists. It's not me and it, it's how you use this common place."—RC

March 26—Ruth Stone reads in Diefendorf Hall.

April 6—Spring Arts Festival: Olson, John Wieners, and Ed Sanders read poetry in Haas Lounge.

April 9—Gary Snyder reads in Diefendorf Hall.

Second Summer Program in Modern Literature—English poet, critic, and translator Eric Mottram teaches "Studies in American Literature." Mottram returns to UB in 1993 as a poetics program visiting fellow.

Berkeley Poetry Conference—Attended by several notable Buffalo students and faculty, including Olson and Creeley. "A good document for Olson's teaching would be the tape of his last night's 'reading' at the Berkeley conference. He just goes on for two hours, *talking*, never finishing a single poem, hardly even starting one. People were getting nervous, while others loved it. Lew Welch was going nuts on the side, trying to get him to stop talking and start reading. Even Creeley was trying to get him to pause and read a poem. But Olson would just reply something to the effect that poetry was politics, and this was the smoking caucus of poetry. For him it was a convention, and he was giving the closing address" (Stephen Rodefer, *Poetry Flash* interview).

"We have the dilemma that so far as a person working actively in the English Department is a professional, presume that he or she has a committed intellectual interest in some range of research or qualification of that sort, and therefore reads a lot and checks it out and keeps up with the bulletins and materials which have to do with it, and so on and so forth—that that is the nexus that gives the authority to teaching. Possibly. On the other hand, as anyone who's been to school knows, teaching really has remarkably little to do with the subject, and a good teacher is maybe virtually inept with respect to the subject. I know I've been taught brilliantly by teachers who really didn't know anything about their subjects specifically, but yet invited—not only invited but prompted me to learn a great deal."—RC

"It was all Charles. It was all Charles talking, and nagging, and prodding.... He would always have a start, a beginning to each class. In retrospect, I realized he was a master teacher, he had this ability to get students started.... I remember in the Modern American Poetry class, 'Drummond Hadley' was what he wrote on the board at the end of the year; 'Drummond Hadley'—to be continued ..."—FW

September—Charles Olson teaches at Buffalo for only two weeks of the fall semester, then returns to Gloucester, Massachusetts.

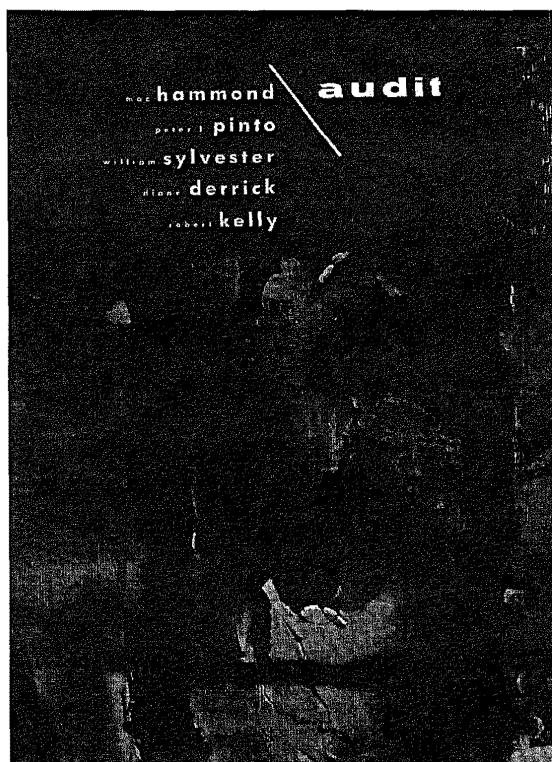
"When O left in fall '65, I gathered Clarke, Butterick, and Wah ... to form the Institute of Further Studies to continue the work we had begun in the previous year. Because Jack was a member of the faculty, we named him 'director.' ... I began the *Magazine of Further Studies*, which went through six issues."—AG

"When Charles fled Buffalo, someone had to cover his course in Myth; the mantle fell on Jack Clarke's shoulders. I don't know how I happened to be there or involved but when the moment came to enter the classroom, Jack balked. I virtually shoved him through the door."—MH

Clarke requests Olson's guidance in planning the remainder of the course. Olson responds in a series of letters later published as *Pleistocene Man*, a preface to the documents published as the Curriculum of the Soul (cf. p. 255 of this issue —eds.)

Dr. William Sylvester, classicist and poet, hired at UB. "My teaching began to change within the first month of being here. My surefire lecture on Eliot's *The Waste Land* flopped. I was used to all the students being prim and proper. When I was teaching John Donne, I said something about how sometimes experience is disappointing compared to what you expected and a young woman with long hair said, 'I know, like getting balled.' I thought I

wanted to just hide in a crack in the floor and then I looked up and saw all these long-haired women nodding. That's when I began to get sloppy, let my hair grow, wore sloppy clothes. Started offering courses taught in reverse chronological order, from Dada to Spenser, from Brecht to *The Spanish Tragedy*.... In general everyone was teaching what they were excited about; you'd be writing one thing, teaching something else. Like Fiedler, an Americanist teaching Dante. And Olson's interest in poetry and archaeology. There was a whole generation of students who were released and inspired by this, by professors talking about what they were interested in. Graduate students who became very productive—Michael Davidson, Stephen Rodefer. But it got overwhelming, too. Too many eclectic ideas, too many conflicting extremes. Graduate students struggling to resolve them or find their own places in all these ideas."—WS



"This is the issue of *Audit* that my graduate students brought to me. I had a poem in it and so did Robert Kelly. And they came up to me and said, 'If you want to know what poetry is doing these days, read Robert Kelly.' I did, and that's when I realized that everything had changed."—WS

October 29—Anne Sexton reads in Atcheson Hall.

"The '60s from an academic point of view were 1966 to 1969. The big turn was when Jefferson Airplane became Jefferson Starship. That was the beginning of rigid classicism."—WS

John Logan, poet and editor of *Chicago Choice*, hired at UB. Logan publishes poetry by many students and colleagues at Buffalo, among other nationally known writers.

"John Logan was lovely, vulnerable, totally accessible, and partied with everyone. He could read the phone book and make it sound wonderful. There was almost a tremor in his voice, but it wasn't artificial. You felt like everything he read was dragged out of his guts. And his pauses—they were different from the breath pauses of Olson or Creeley—but you felt them, you were totally engaged with it."—ASB

"Logan had a network throughout the country of former students and readings, and he wanted to have a creative writing program here. So finally it was established, largely as a Master's program requiring students to take courses in literature as well."—MH

Of the creative writing program in general: "I thought always it put students into a cul-de-sac—that it took them out of the resources that they would expect to have as graduate students in an English department and ghettoized them in some way."—RC

Summer Session—Basil Bunting reads in Atcheson.

September—Carl Dennis, poet and scholar of medieval literature, poet, hired at UB. "Al Cook came to Berkeley and interviewed me there. Back then, Cook was hiring eight or nine people a year for three or four years; as a new hire, you would find yourself in an instant community of twenty to twenty-five people your own age. I'm an example of how flexible the department was—no one raised an eyebrow when I moved from academic teaching to teaching writing. It was the only department in the country where you could do that without feeling like you were betraying the people who'd hired you."—CD

Poet Robert Creeley begins teaching part-time in the English Department at SUNY Buffalo.

November 18—John Ashbery reads in Diefendorf.

March 4–12—Theme of the Spring Arts Festival at UB: "Social Criticism in the Arts." Participants include UB professor John Barth, student poets George Starbuck and Allen De Loach, and singer Tom Paxton. The Fugs play in Clark Gymnasium.

"The Fugs were started (or just sprung up) in Greenwich Village due to the inspiration and guidance of poet-editor Ed Sanders. Sanders says that they want to make a 'total assault in the culture.' And the Fugs do just that. The topics of their songs are boundless and their lyrics are unrestricted by the normal confines of modern American music and mores ... They are political satirists and social critics of perhaps the highest degree. Above all, they are true artists. Mr. Sanders is the editor of [*Fuck You*,] a magazine of the arts and is a poet, as is Mr. Kupferberg." (Spring Arts Festival program notes)

"Clark Gym was filled and the Fugs were playing a sweet sentimental tune called 'River of Shit,' about U.S. foreign policy, and you heard all these voices singing along to this lovely tune ... 'River of Shit.'"—WS

March 16—W. S. Merwin reads in Diefendorf. "He was invited to read, like everyone else, and he paid a certain amount of money, but in order for the University to pay him, he had to sign a loyalty oath [presumably the same Feinberg Certificate that had cost Gregory Corso his job in 1965—eds.]. He refused, so he read anyway, knowing he was not going to be paid."—CD. ("Merwin returns to Buffalo November 8, 1996 for the Silverman Reading, and UB has agreed to pay him the fee withheld 28 years ago"—ASB).

April 7—David Wagoner reads in Diefendorf.

Fred Wah receives his M.A. in English at SUNY Buffalo, "for two long papers, 'Linguistics and the New American Prosody' and something on Chaucer"—FW

Summer Session—Anselm Hollo, poet and translator of European fiction and poetry, teaches "Major Literary Figures." Poets reading under the auspices of the Summer Session include Creeley, Sylvester, Feldman, Clarke, Dorn, Hammond, Hollo, Touster, Coxé, Rumaker, Logan, Carroll.

Karl Gay, once private secretary to the poet Robert Graves, becomes curator of the Poetry Collection.

Poet Robert Hass is hired at UB and teaches for four years.

Lemar, a group calling for the legalization of marijuana led by UB student Mike Aldrich, organizes a benefit reading that draws Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, and Timothy Leary. "One guy said he'd do anything. Challenged to take off his clothes, he did. In the Dorothy Haas Lounge at the UB campus. There was a party at Leslie [Fiedler]'s house after. I wrote 'Honky in the Woodpile' about that era."—WS

Leslie Fiedler, professor of English at UB, arrested for possession of marijuana.

"When acid hit, that changed the whole scene.... David Tirrell got fried on acid. It changed the attention—got more mystical."—FW

The first and only issue of *Conditions* is published. Contributors include Fred Wah, George Butterick, Albert Glover, Lewis MacAdams, and Allen De Loach.

December 13—UUAB Literature and Drama Committee sponsors "Symposium of Possibilities for the Future" at 4 p.m. in the Conference Theater. The Symposium featured "Electronic Poetry" by Ron Hauser, Ray Federman, Lewis MacAdams, William Sylvester, Joe Romanowski, Mac Hammond, and "The Audience." Hauser, Sylvester and Federman perform the trilingual Dada poem, "Le General Cherche une Maison pour Louer." Hauser read the German, Sylvester the English, and Federman the French, simultaneously.

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO

The Friends of the Lockwood Memorial Library cordially invite you to hear

W.S. MERWIN

The American poet and translator, author of

Persius

The Cid

A Mask for Janus

The Dancing Bears

Green with Beasts

The Moving Target

Some Spanish Ballads

The Drunk in the Furnace

who will read from his poetry

Thursday, March 18, 1987

4:00 p.m. Room 148 Diefendorf

The Abbott Reading Fund

The English and Music Departments had by this time found common ground in experimentation. Lukas Foss, appointed conductor of the Buffalo Symphony Orchestra in 1963, brought experimental music to the community, and poets were inspired to record their work in the electronic music laboratory at UB.

"Electronic poetry as a concept proposed two channels of communication, aural/oral and chance. For example, two people on stage could improvise poetry on a topic suggested by the audience, responding to each other or conflicting with each other. But we could also record and remix such a performance. The idea was to break traditional barriers between music and poetry, or between kinds of poetry, harking back to the Dada/Surrealist practices. Dada started as an anti-war movement, and that seemed an important connection in an era of Vietnam protests. Another essential notion of the times was that new theory was instantly usable by the poet, seeking chance and possibility, not abstract control."—WS

"And Duncan McNaughton on philosophy, Lewis MacAdams reading his poems in old Norton—he literally opened up the Doors to me, and their arrangement of a song by Bertolt Brecht ... in one way or another they gave me something that Henry James said you can't get—a second chance: Robert Hogg's tonal illuminations, Michael Casey's interest in science and his wonderfully comic style ..." (WS, *Measurements*)

WAR - N I N G.

THE BUFFALO NARCO'S AND THE
D.A.'S OFFICE ARE PLANNING TO
BUST ALL THE HEADS THEY CAN
IN THE NEXT 30 DAYS. THEY WILL
THEN TRY ALL THE "NARCOTICS"
CASES IN ONE ENORMOUS NUREMBERG-
TYPE SERIES OF TRIALS, CENTERING
AROUND THE FIEDLERS' JUNE FIFTH.
ALL AS-YET-UNTRIED POT CASES
WILL BE BROUGHT TOGETHER THEN.
THEY ARE PARTICULARLY LOOKING
FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS. BE-A-WARE.

"PERSEVERANCE FURTHERS."

January 31—Robert Creeley reads in Norton Union. "You couldn't have fit another beard, boot, cap, or pipe Wednesday into the Norton Union Conference Theater at the State University of Buffalo. There were rows of students filling the seats. There were students sprawled on the stage. There were faculty on the steps, and more students on the floor. Some spilled out into the lobby" (*Buffalo Evening News* 2/1/68).

Robert Creeley joins the UB English faculty as a full-time professor.

February 7—Isabella Gardiner reads in Norton.

March 7—Robin Blaser reads in Norton.

April—"Strike for Peace": Faculty and students cancel classes or hold them off campus to protest the war in Vietnam.

"People would read for less pay here than they would elsewhere because they knew it was a good place to read. Audience participation was amazing. Someone would finish a poem and someone would jump up and yell, 'Did you really mean that line?' People took poetry seriously. Of course, we all mythologize our youth and remember in clouds of glory. But it was true that there were poetry readings almost every night in bars all around the city. And lots of community people came."—CD

April 8—Joel Oppenheimer reads in Norton.

April 21—Diane Wakoski reads in Norton.

May 6—Ted Berrigan reads in Norton.

Albert Glover receives his Ph.D. in English at UB, editing Charles Olson's *Letters for Origin*.

June 26—William Sylvester performs electronic poetry in the Conference Theater.

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THE FRIENDS OF THE LOCKWOOD MEMORIAL LIBRARY
AND
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

cordially invite you to hear

ISABELLA GARDNER

the American poet, and author of

Birthdays from the Ocean
The Looking Glass
West of Childhood

who will read from her poetry

Wednesday, February 7th, 1968 Conference Theater, Norton
8:15 P.M.
THE ABBOTT READING FUND

This program has been made possible with partial support from the New York State Council on the Arts, in cooperation with The Poetry Center at the Third Street YH-1010, New York City.

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ENGLISH

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HEIMER

author of

ON
Desert

his poetry

Room 339, Norton Union

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from the New York State Council on the Arts, in cooperation with The Poetry Center at the Third Street YH-1010, New York City.

invite you to hear

TED BERRIGAN

the American poet, and author of

THE SONNETS
BEAN SPASMS
(with Ron Padgett)
LIVING WITH CHRIS

who will read from his poetry

Monday, May 6th, 1968 Millard Fillmore Room,
4:00 P.M. Norton Union

THE ABBOTT READING FUND

June 27—Robert Duncan, in Buffalo for part of the summer, reads in the Conference Theater.

July 17—Electronic Poetry Presentation in Norton Conference Theater.

July 30—Nathaniel Tarn reads.

November 20—Robert Bly reads in Haas Lounge.

December 18—Jerome Rothenberg reads in the Conference Theater at 2 p.m., and John Berryman reads in the Millard Fillmore Room at 8 p.m.

1969

Mac Hammond's book, *Cold Turkey*, with its accompanying record of multi-track poetry, is one product of the interest—manifested by the number of Electronic Poetry Conferences—in exploring the possibilities new technologies held for poetry. "I discovered that I could get them to record my voice on three different tracks and play them all at once. On the one track I read, for example, a poem on Thanksgiving from a suite of poems called *The Holidays*, on another track I repeat the phrase 'Thank you,' and on the third I speak random clichés appropriate for the holiday, like 'Don't talk with your mouth full,' and 'More cranberries, anyone?' So here's the poem made up of language that is both orderly and disorderly at the same time, elements of the banal and elements that are aleatoric. At first I left the three tracks running parallel however they occurred, but later found it more interesting to orchestrate them."—MH. "The result is an expansion of the poetry's printed form into a new, auditory medium."—Dust jacket of *Cold Turkey*

Spring semester—Michael Hamburger, poet, translator, critic, at UB as Visiting Professor in the Department of German and Slavic. Offers courses on Hölderlin and Problems of Modern German Poetry.

February 20—Louise Gluck reads in Norton.

March 19—Brother Antoninus (William Everson) reads in Acheson Hall. "Brother Antoninus gave a very histrionic reading, wearing his cowl, beginning with very heavy breathing to let the audience know the depths of his feeling. We were on pins and needles. At one point, someone left, slamming the door, and he stopped and said, 'Buffalo, Buffalo, how do you treat your poets?'"—CD

April 21—Diane Wakoski reads in Conference Theater.

July 2—James Wright reads in Conference Theater.

July 16—Anselm Hollo reads in Conference Theater.

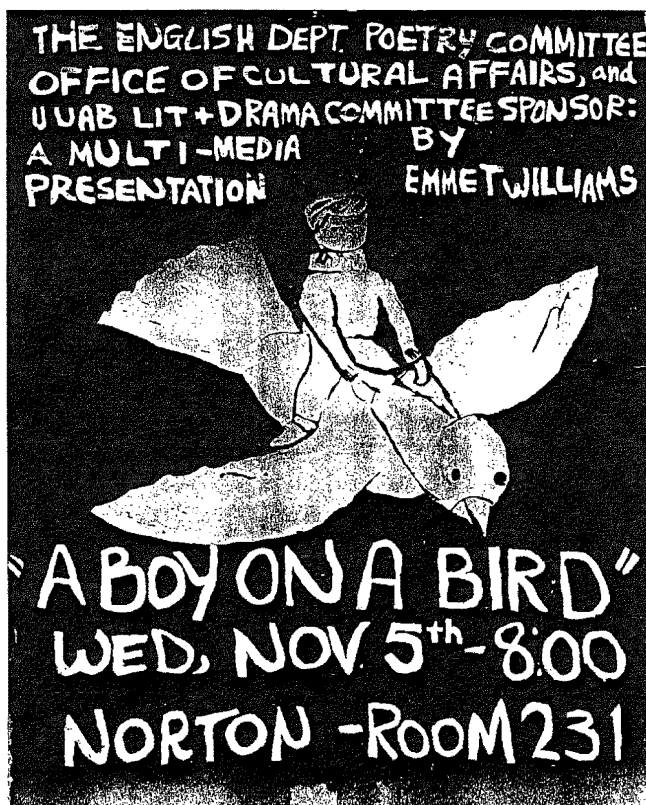
July 30—Nathaniel Tarn reads in Conference Theater.

Linda Reinfeld and Lewis MacAdams receive M.A.s in English at UB.

October 17—Lawrence Ferlinghetti reads in Norton. "... [T]he trim, nearly white-bearded Mr. Ferlinghetti drew his legendary self up on the stage, strummed an autoharp in opening and sung [sic] a few phrases of an Indian chant before announcing in a loud voice: 'I hereby declare the end of the war. Against youth.'" (*Buffalo Evening News* 10/18/69, A7)

November 4—Richard Brautigan reads in Acheson.

November 5—Emmet Williams, one of the founders of the Concrete Poetry movement and participant in the Fluxus art movement, reads in Norton.



November 17—William Stafford reads in Norton.

December 5—Gary Snyder reads in Norton. "Gary Snyder pulled in nearly 300 people that night. It was a grand reading; he had a huge following."—CD

1970

January 10—Charles Olson dies.

"When Charles died, I had a vision of the next issue of the *Magazine of Further Studies* being a series of 'fascicles' (like the Cambridge Ancient History we had used earlier for *Pleistocene Man* (Jack's great design which Charles didn't like)) in keeping with some thought in *Letters for Origin*. So Jack put the names on the plan. I got some money for a mimeo machine, and IBM Selectric, and a bit of other equipment from the Ford Foundation via SLU [St. Lawrence University] and began production in 1972 with Drum's *Vision*. Everything was done by hand."—AG

Clarke and Glover assign numbered portions of Olson's poem to a group of local students and poets, who are to write monograph-length responses. The resulting series of pamphlets is published by the Institute of Further Studies from Canton, New York. (The project continues to this day, with Robin Blaser's *Bach's Belief* in 1995 as the most recent contribution. While the pamphlets are numbered so as to correspond with the original poem-sections, they have not been published sequentially—some contributions are not yet complete.)

TITLES IN THE CURRICULUM OF THE SOUL

Preface—*Pleistocene Man*—Charles Olson (1968): Several of Olson's letters to Jack Clarke, written in 1965.

The book has been called "a revealing exposition of the poetics of the later Maximus Poems—and a fascinating example of history as cosmography."

No. 1—*The Mushroom*—Albert Glover (1972): "underneath a wild apple tree I tasted your golden flesh"

No. 2—*Dream*—Duncan McNaughton (1973): "Ginsberg's eyes rolled like huge buttons, while Gregory leaped as if infected and stretched his mouth. I looked back to Olson but he had not moved."

No. 3—*Woman*—John Wieners (1972): "Working without guidelines here, I abjectly suspicion retrograde aspersions as to why I do not accept this Assignment as an insult; and capitulating I initiate my circumspection without either summation or interlocution ..."

No. 4—*Mind*—Robert Creeley (projected).

No. 5—*Language*—Ed Dorn (projected).

No. 6—*Earth*—Fred Wah (1974): "Everything's out there larger elsewhere and then I add myself who's watching."

No. 7—*Blake*—John Clarke (1973): "his forehead divides into streaks of green and purple like those on a tiger's forehead ..."

No. 8—*Dante*—Robert Duncan (1974): "He picks up on the fugitive tang of mace/amidst the savory mass"

No. 9—*Homer's Art*—Alice Notley (1990): "Mother Mask has twigs in her hair/she is all eye"

No. 10—*Bach's Belief*—Robin Blaser (1995): "Bach, for me, becomes a midpoint, midmost in the elegance of musical and of religious thought, a beloved mind—"

No. 11—*Novalis' Subjects*—Robert Dalke (1973): "Each point of my book, that has been written in the most extremely diverse manner possible—in fragments—letters—poems—scientific rough drafts etc...."

No. 12—*Norse*—George Butterick (1973): "step by step the hardened images/accumulate, the hoarded sight"

No. 13—*Arabs*—Edward Kissam (1972): "Big. Sky./gets you there on time"

No. 14—*American Indians*—Edgar Billowitz (1972): "The feather of the owl has/a frightening aspect ..."

No. 15—*Jazz Playing*—Harvey Brown (1977): "I saw through the open door the man who stood up crouched over his horn"

No. 16—*Dance as Individual Body Power*—Lewis MacAdams, Jr. (1972): "Everything revolves around your belly!"

No. 17—*Egyptian Hieroglyphs*—Edward Sanders (1973): "Meanwhile the trance-moly waned./And pity raised up the child of pity, / manumission."

No. 18—*Ismaeli Muslimism*—Michael Bylebyl (1972): "To know only the apparent is death."

No. 19—*Alchemy*—David Tirrell (1972): "That in terms of other things light is a solid, like gas, without weight, and has variances to itself."

No. 20—*Perspective*—Daniel Zimmerman (1974): "they became what they beheld"

No. 21—*Vision*—Drummond Hadley (1972): "Two little boys came past/carrying a pail with Nothing inside it."

No. 22—*Messages*—James Koller (1972): "drunk, I pulled on a string of blue beads and iron bells"

No. 23—*Analytic Psychology*—Gerrit Lansing (1983): "It is mind, and no mind, inner and dinner and outer and doubter."

No. 24—*Organisms*—Michael McClure (1974): "ABSORB ALL BEAUTIFUL SYSTEMS/ TO HEIGHTEN SYSTEMLESSNESS"

No. 25—*Matter*—John Thorpe (1975): "A thirsty man must think of water, & water & its human need, become the thing of a thing."

No. 26—*Phenomenological*—Joanne Kyger (1989): "And once there, weak-legged, wind blowing terrified to walk around the temple at the top for fear I'll fall off"

No. 27—*Sensation*—Anselm Hollo (1972): "september nights / even the mastodons'/incessant farting/sounds muted/autumnal"

No. 28—*Attention*—Robert Grenier (1985): "We know his time is short, but who are 'we'?"

The spring of 1970 is remembered for intense antiwar activity on the Buffalo campus, as well as on campuses nationwide. Buffalo poets involved themselves, as poets, in antiwar protest, confronting the question of poetry's "place" beyond the literary, as a public discourse of outrage, resistance, and mourning.

"We were in Europe for six months, from January to August, and that's when all hell broke loose. In Austria, we were renting a room in a farmhouse, and at night we'd listen to a little transistor radio to get English-language news. One night they announced there was a protest in Buffalo at UB and they were throwing tear gas around. Kent State was also that spring, and after Kent State the whole student movement collapsed."—KH

April 11–14—The Buffalo Spring Mobilization Committee, the UB Socialist Club, and SDS jointly sponsor the Buffalo Angry Arts Festival. "The Festival is conceived as an alternative expression of protest against the war in Vietnam and American foreign policy in general. The participating artists will present their work so as to voice their opposition to the war" (from a flyer advertising the festival). Events include a reading by Mac Hammond, John Logan, and John Wieners, a performance by the Creative Associates, and a reading by Robert Creeley.

"What I'm not getting across here is the sense of violence. This was not all innocence and fun."—WS

"I remember asking students why they'd stopped their activities. The war wasn't over. One kid from the back of the class said, 'We don't want to get killed.'"—MH



Ronald Moscati—Buffalo Courier-Express

Buffalo professors in jail: New guidelines for campus revolution

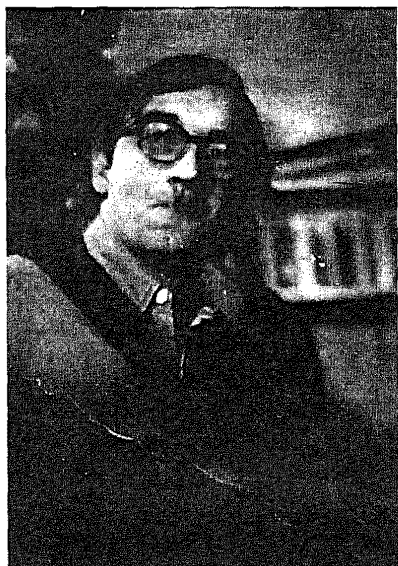
March 15—After staging a sit-in at the office of UB's acting president, 45 faculty members are arrested for trespassing and ignoring a court injunction against demonstrations. Among the 45 are Raymond Federman, James Bunn, Max Wickert, Stefan Fleischer, James Swan, and John Coetzee. The arrests cap a month-long student strike protesting university policies on military research and student participation in government, and receive nationwide attention, including a writeup in *Newsweek*.

Max Wickert founds the Outriders Poetry Program, which sponsors weekly poetry readings at the Tralfamadore Cafe on Main Street.

March 17—Paul Blackburn reads at Norton.

April 29—Kenneth Koch reads at Norton.

Allen Ginsberg reads in Clark Gym. Seated in the front row, "The Motherfuckers" (a registered trademark of a local commune) shout him down.



May—First publication of *Fathar*, edited by Duncan McNaughton. This journal, published in Buffalo and Bolinas from 1970 to 1975, is a beautiful example of what can happen when a fine-press aesthetic has to negotiate the financial limitations of the self-published poetry journal. Each of the six issues is bound in heavy stock with a single-color photoreproduction on the front cover. The papers used are slightly heavier than average, and are often selected in colors which contrast the covers. Texts are mimeographed, and are displayed recto side only.

The range of poets and prose writers published here occupies a space largely mapped out between Olson's and Duncan's work. The occasional appearance of a New York School poet adds a bit of geographic scope, however (see the poems by O'Hara and Berrigan in no. 1), while arrivals from abroad (e.g., Tom Raworth in issue "Zayin" [which appeared in place of no. 4]) and the

emergence of younger writers, some of them with Buffalo backgrounds (see Michael Davidson in no. 5), signal the early stirrings of something "new."

1971

"The art scene in Buffalo was booming in the '60s; there was this huge expansiveness from social changes like the Civil Rights movement and in the arts an experimentalism that made it seem like you couldn't even get to all the things that were going on at once. The community and university and theaters were all enmeshed. You had the feeling that all around you was the possibility of hearing or seeing something never heard before. Of course, you probably saw some mediocre things but experimentation necessitates failure. There was an audience for it back then, back before the retrenchment and vast cynicism of the 1970s. For a short time there was a benevolent enthusiasm for the new and a willingness to respond to new art forms."—ASB

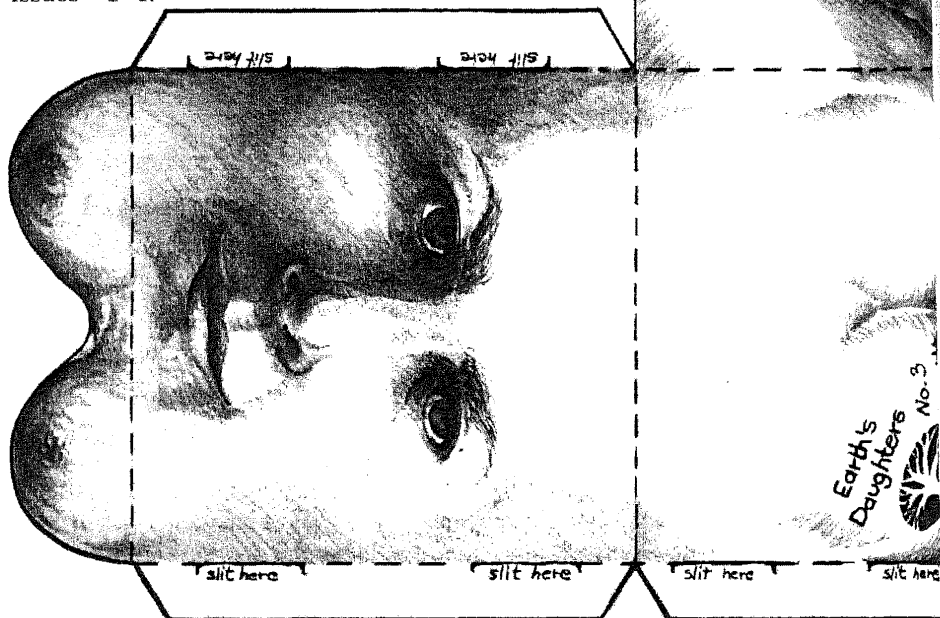
June 11–14—COSMEP holds its annual conference in Buffalo. The event includes a panel discussion (Saturday, June 13) on "Little Mags/Small Presses and the 'Cultural Revolution.'" Panel members are Robert Creeley, Leslie Fiedler, Allen Ginsberg, Susan Sherman, and John Wieners.

Fall Semester poetry readings include repeat performances by Corso, Merwin, Dorn, Bly, and Levertov.

Spring—First publication of *Athamor*, edited by Douglas Calhoun. Most interesting in this inexpensively produced journal is the sense of range—or “reach,” perhaps—it locates in the post-Olson poetry and poetics scene in Buffalo (as seen from Clarkson, NY). Contributors affiliated with the San Francisco/New York Beats, “deep image” poets, practitioners of ethnopoetics, and even the occasional pre-*L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* “language poet” all show up over the course of *Athamor*’s six issues. Obviously, geography and chronology conspire to assure “first billing” to the Black Mountain and Buffalo groups that formed around Olson—he had died only a year or so before the publication of the magazine’s first number. A glance at the magazine’s 685-item archive (housed at the Poetry Collection) reveals, however, an expanding circle of correspondence and manuscript submissions among younger and (at that time, at least) lesser-known poets. Sadly, this sense of inclusiveness does not extend to gender: of the average issue’s twenty or so contributors, only one or two are women. Similar observations might be made about a host of other poetry publications from Buffalo, and probably about poetry publication and distribution as a more general field of literary production. (For information on an organized feminist response to this paucity of poetic space available to women poets, see *Earth’s Daughters*, below.)

March 1—Carolyn Kizer reads in Norton Union.

Judith Kerman founds *Earth’s Daughters*, a feminist poetry magazine named after Emma Goldman’s *Mother Earth*, and edits issues 1–4.



Earth's
Daughters
No. 3

After issue 5/6 (1974), "Kerman called a meeting of the female minds: past contributors, women involved in other publications, faculty women, women artists. She proposed that they take over *ED*, and run it as a collective" ("Preface" no. 39/40).

Subsequent issues were edited by an ever-changing collective of local women, including Kerman,

Mindy Aloff, Bonnie

Johnson, Katie Brill, ryki zuckerman, Robin Willoughby, Joan Ford, Patricia

Donovan, Camille Cox, Elaine Rollwagon, and many others. The magazine,

especially in its early years, is remarkable for its experimental presentation.

The format, in the first issue a set of small broadsides, becomes with the

second issue a set of larger broadsides including a mobile, while the third

appears as a flat sheet of paper that converts into a box. The box, printed on

one side with poems and on the other with an illustration of a woman's body,

includes a paper bra "for when company comes." The forty-plus issues which

have been published in the past twenty-five years vary in size and shape,

from calendars to rolled-up scrolls to microbooks to tabloids. Among the

names on the huge list of contributors are a few known today as avant-garde

poets: Norma Cole, Rachel DuPlessis, Rosmarie Waldrop, Michael Basinski.

For the most part, however, *ED's* poetry is often more daring in "content" than

in "form"—at least as these categories are defined today; networks of production

and distribution have yet to be given their due as "intrinsic" formal elements

rather than simply "accidental" qualities of poetic writing—and the experimental

layout in recent years has given way to a more conventional perfect-bound format

as the number of contributors has burgeoned. However, the writing clearly arises out of a

sense that women have uniquely motivated perspectives on topics ranging from "Mothers,

Daughters, and Grandmothers" (no. 8)

to "Women Drivers" (no. 22).

In a

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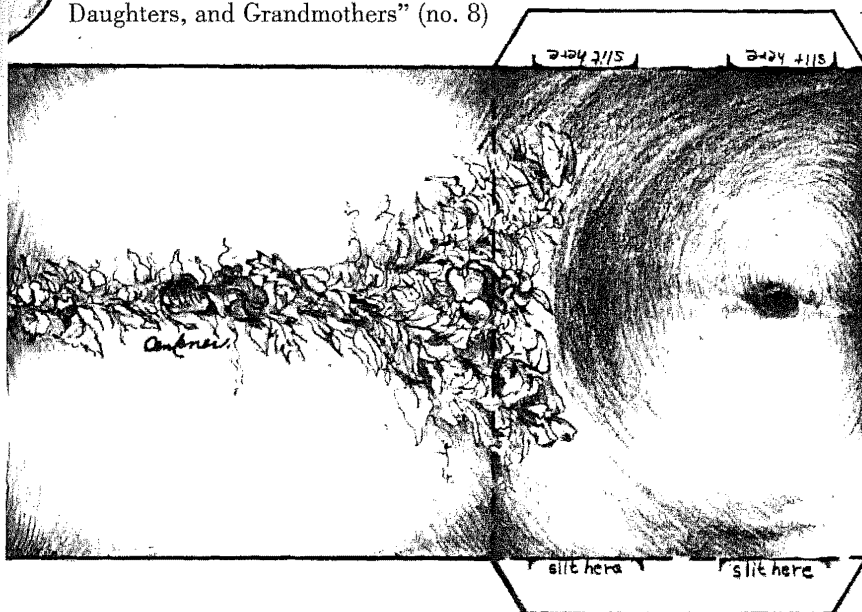
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the *ED* collective served as a vital catalyst for women's literary activity. In keeping with the

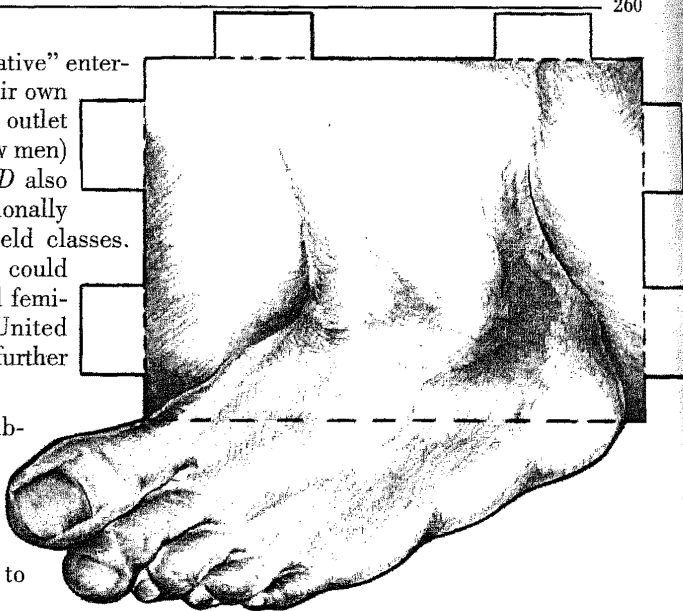
How your box
should look →



No. 3
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idea of a collective, "co-operative" enterprise, the editors publish their own work as well as providing an outlet for work by women (and a few men) from all over the country. *ED* also sponsored readings by nationally known women poets, and held classes. By 1993, *Earth's Daughters* could claim to be the longest-lived feminist publication in the United States. (See bibliography for further information.)

Modern Poetry Studies, published out of the UB Modern Languages Department by Professor Jerome Mazzaro, publishes a special issue (vol. 2, no. 2) devoted to Charles Olson.



"In Jack Clarke's Modern Poetry class, he had us bring our own poems to class because we were modern poets. People brought candles to class, too, because we thought that's what poets did."—MB

1972

February 19—James Wright, William Matthews, Bob Hass, Al Poulin, and John Logan read in Norton Union as a benefit for the Independent School of Buffalo.

Morton Feldman hired as Slee Professor of Composition in the UB Music Department. Feldman, an associate of John Cage and a friend to many of the artists and writers of the New York School, serves as a further link between the experimental arts community in Buffalo and the interdisciplinary ethos of Black Mountain in the 1950s.

"A Memorial Exhibit" in the Poetry Collection pays tribute to Natalie Barney, John Berryman, Padraic Colum, Paul Goodman, Cecil Day Lewis, Marianne Moore, Kenneth Patchen, Ezra Pound, Mark Van Doren, and Edmund Wilson, among others.

May—Stephen Rodefer receives his M.A. in English at UB.

1973

February—Michael Davidson receives a Ph.D. in English at UB. His dissertation is titled *Disorders of the Net: The Poetry of Robert Duncan*.

John Wieners is awarded the degree of Master of Arts in Humanities at UB.

The UB Poetry Festival includes readings by Allen Ginsberg, John Logan, Diane di Prima, and Jerome Rothenberg, as well as an open reading.

"I gave a couple of readings at Onetto's. It was a big dark barnlike bar/restaurant with a stage, an unlikely spot for a reading. On one of their really off nights, probably Tuesdays, they allowed us to come in and have a poetry hour. I read with Howard Wolf there once. The audience was good—large and enthusiastic. We took over the whole bar. Whoever wandered in looking for a drink had to sort of tough it out."—CD

Settling Down

None of my friends here were born in Buffalo.
Many have preserved their pictures and books
In boxes, ready to go when called.
They make lists of amusing hardships
To tell at parties in other towns.

...
Munching my toast at breakfast on a cold morning.
I wonder if Buffalo offers suitable materials
For a man of my enterprise.

—Carl Dennis, from *A House of My Own* (1974)

"The CEPA storefront on Main Street had Sunday afternoon readings. Bob Creeley was the first poet I saw there. He walked in twenty minutes late with a knapsack and blue jeans jacket. I didn't know you were supposed to take a book to a reading because everyone was going to be late. Until then I'd only seen older formalist poets—'laid-back' was a new term. Creeley would chat with the audience during his reading. Someone would say, 'Man, I like that,' and Creeley would say, 'Dig it.'"—ASB

April 27—William S. Burroughs and the Chicago Company perform a stage version of *Naked Lunch* in Buffalo.

Ishmael Reed comes to UB as a visiting professor.

Just Buffalo, Inc., a non-profit organization devoted to sponsoring writing in the Buffalo area, publishes an anthology of broadsides, featuring "calligraphic," illustrated versions of poems by, among others, Ed Dorn, Bobbie Louise Hawkins, and Robert Creeley.

First publication of *Moody Street Irregulars*, edited by Joy Walsh and Michael Basinski, out of Clarence, NY. "*Moody Street Irregulars* will include announcements, queries, articles, controversy, and notes of special interest to Kerouac scholars and those, for love of Jack, who are involved in the mind-bending experience of Kerouac" (vol.1, no. 1: 2). The second issue features a letter from Allen Ginsberg on "Kerouac's Merit." The final issue, published in 1995, features a report from the New York Beat Conference.

"I gave a presentation on Jack Kerouac in Marcus Klein's seminar and Joy came to the class to see it. She called me up and said, 'You like Jack Kerouac?' and I said, 'Yes,' and she said, 'Want to start a magazine?' and I said, 'OK.' The name is like Sherlock Holmes's Baker Street Irregulars, and based on John Montgomery as Henry Morley in *The Dharma Bums*, the character who got left in the valley because he couldn't keep up."—MB

July 5–30—Max Wickert coordinates the First Annual Artpark Poetry Festival, which promises “A month of readings, workshops, lectures, poetry in performance, book fair, print shop, discussions, poets’ and artists’ picnic, etc.” Participants include Anselm Hollo, David Ignatow, Louis Simpson, and The Four Horsemen, among others. “It managed, despite its hurried inception, its anomalous mixture of pedagogical purpose, public relations, art management, and haphazard good times, to provide for the observant eye and ear a fine sense of how contemporary poetry functions, a representative sampling of what postures and achievements contemporary poets are capable of.” (*N-E-Wsletter* vol.1: no. 2: 3)

Just Buffalo publishes another anthology of broadsides, featuring work by Maureen Owen and Ed Sanders, among others.

October 11—Outriders Poetry Series reading at the Tralfamadore Cafe (2610 Main Street): Nancy Barnes, Ahn Behrens, and Jimmie Canfield.

Al Cook leaves Buffalo for Brown University.

1979

Robert Bertholf hired as curator of UB’s Poetry Collection.

July 3–13—The Summer Poetry Festival, “Trailblazers and Masters: Cross-Generational Exchanges in Contemporary Poetry.”

1980

November 20–23—Anima/Animal/Animation, “A Conference on the Poetic and Bestial Faces of the Soul,” sponsored by the Jung-inspired Analytical Society of New York, with lectures by James Hillman and Patricia Cox. Robert Creeley and Robert Duncan read poetry together at the Buffalo Hilton as one of the featured events. “Duncan read ‘My Mother Would Be a Falconess.’ It was very strange hearing him read in this high-pitched voice. He talked in these huge digressions that would eventually circle around and gather in his original points.”—MB

The “Great Nichols Reading”—Sally Fiedler invites Allen Ginsberg to read at the Nichols Academy (a Buffalo private high school). “He brought Peter Orlovsky and both read, once in the afternoon for the students and once at night. It was the first time Ginsberg ever read the poems about the death of his father. The reading during the day was fine, but the sound system was smoking during the evening reading! Trustees and parents were there, some walked out. By the time the fuss was over, twenty faculty had left.”—SAF

September—UB’s “College B,” a residential college with a focus on “cultural and philosophical studies,” officially changes its name to “Black Mountain College II.” A memo to the vice president for academic affairs explains, “After all, Black Mountain College did, in a sense, move to Buffalo, with Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, and the continuing visits of many of its most distinguished participants.” Visitors and faculty for the spring include Aki Takahashi, Morton Feldman, Joel Oppenheimer, Robert Duncan, Ed Dorn, Tom Pickard, John Ashbery, Jonathan Williams, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Theodore Enslin, David Posner, and Robert Grenier. The college sponsors poetry readings on campus throughout the 1980s.

May 7—The first issue of the resuscitated *Black Mountain Review* is celebrated with a “gala” at the Ellicott Complex, which includes readings and art exhibits by contributors, among them Creeley, Basinski, Dennis, and Oppenheimer.

First issue of *Credences: A Journal of Twentieth Century Poetry and Poetics* out of the Poetry/Rare Books Collection. The magazine “seeks poets writing in English and translations ... [writers] who testify to and determine experiments in form and statements of historicity.”

October 25—The Burchfield Center sponsors a morning of “Brunch, Jazz, and Poetry: Robert Creeley and 5 New Voices (Gary Eddy, Jorge Guitart, Anne Elizabeth Pluto, R. D. Pohl, and Peter Siedlecki),” which includes readings and music by the Buffalo Jazz Combo directed by James Mabry, III.

November 8—Ntozake Shange reads at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

WALKING THE DOG

THE POETRY SERIES

CID CORMAN

NOVEMBER 14, 1982
ALBRIGHT-KNOX ART GALLERY
2:00 P.M.

FREE TO THE PUBLIC

SPONSORED BY THE GRAY CHAIR OF POETRY AND LETTERS,
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, SUNY/BUFFALO
& THE ALBRIGHT-KNOX ART GALLERY

February 4-7—Robert Duncan lectures and reads in Buffalo under the auspices of the Westminster Presbyterian Church. His Thursday evening lecture is “The Continuity of Christian Myth in Poetry,” and his sermon on Sunday is entitled “Crisis of Spirit in the Word.”

April 3—John Cage reads from “Themes and Variations” as a guest of Black Mountain II. At 8:30 p.m., the S.E.M. Ensemble performs selected Cage works at Hallwalls, an alternative arts space, in honor of the composer’s 70th birthday.

John Logan leaves Buffalo for San Francisco.

November 14—Walking the Dog poetry series presents Cid Corman at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery.

April 17—Walking the Dog sponsors Anne Waldman at the Albright-Knox.

September 18—Anselm Hollo reads at the Albright-Knox.

April 25—Charles Bernstein reads at the Darwin Martin House as part of the Walking the Dog series.

Hollis Frampton, avant-garde film-maker, friend of and collaborator with poets and other artists, and professor of media studies at UB, dies.

Morton Feldman dies.

1988

Spring semester—Poet Susan Howe teaches in the English Department as a Butler Fellow. “Susan gave a lecture on Emily Dickinson which had a great effect on the department, and people were very impressed with her capabilities and her intense, passionate address to the materials and brilliance in use ... she made an extremely good impression.”—RC

“I think of the young people who are here now, some of whom I have just met, and wish I could know better. I think of the people who have been drawn to Buffalo, of the unexpectedly rich opportunities of the Poetry Room, thanks in large part to Robert Bertholf, of Susan Howe’s poetry/scholarship which gives the unheard-of possibility of a third chance, and the possibility that in some sense I will not leave, because there really is an ongoing Buffalo tradition of poetry.”—WS (*Measurements*)

Linda Reinfeld receives a Ph.D. in English at UB. A version of her dissertation, *Language Poetry: Writing as Rescue*, is later published by the University of Louisiana Press.

Joseph Conte hired in the field of modern and contemporary poetry in the English Department at UB.

1989

Spring semester—Susan Howe teaches in the English Department as a Visiting Professor.

“Following my return here—looking back on the fall of ’89—there was a newly constituted appointment, which was very generous, and there was also hope to do some hiring for the first time in a very long time in the department, previously put on hold because of budget restrictions and other factors at the time. But in any case, we’d not been able to hire anyone in this area of the department for many, many years, which seemed to me a long time. And also, I personally had a long-fostered hope that we might hire people particular to contemporary poetics. I found, for example, that in the undergraduate offerings, American poetry had shrunk to one semester course a year ... and I was often teaching it.”—RC

1990

Poet Charles Bernstein appointed Gray Chair of Poetry and Letters in UB’s English Department. “The first time I heard Charles read was at the Radical Poetries/Critical Address conference, in the fall of ’88—a kicking-off party for a new constellation of faculty within modern poetry.”—JC

Susan Howe hired as a full-time professor in the English Department.

“There had been this tradition of working within both critical and creative discourse at the same time, which went back at least to [Albert] Cook’s chairs.... The history in the program was to put the fiction and poetry writers not just in proximity with the critical faculty, but to make no distinction between the courses they taught.”—JC

"This then gave us a nexus of people who certainly had, you know, unequivocally academic capabilities, but were outside the usual professional setting, I think, particularly in their senses of dissertation—the range of dissertation and the character of dissertation. And also who were not simply wanting to develop another creative writing program."—RC

As UB's newly constituted Poetics Program begins to assume its current form, "Wednesdays at 4" is established as a semi-annual series of lectures, readings, and seminars in contemporary poetry, sponsored by the David Gray (Bernstein) and Samuel P. Capen (Creeley) Chairs of Poetry, and the Poetry/Rare Books Collection. The inaugural fall program includes seminars by Robert Creeley, a special residency by Susan Howe, and readings by Robert Kelly, Jackson Mac Low, Johanna Drucker, John Ashbery, Michael Palmer, Clark Coolidge, and Nick Piombino.

"I suppose that any program as ours—the thing that I felt as its vulnerability was its need to have an accommodation for commonality, for community, or for company. During the early parts of the program I was really arguing on that point—of separating entirely from the English department, getting our own place, our clubhouse, for lack of a better term, but some place where we could hang out as a cluster and expect to find others of our own disposition. That was never forthcoming—we could never do it.... But, I mean, as a faculty member who is not teaching in a regular manner, it's frustrating to me not to have some common turf that I can selfishly come and go from—just to talk and know people and hang out."—RC

"The Poetics Program should have been created as a more integral part of the department. In order to give the program coherence at the outset, it had to be somewhat exclusive. But the decisions about who was included and who was excluded didn't make much sense."—JC

Asked to consider his sense of the "founding principles" of the Poetics Program, Creeley responds: "[I]t seems to be in part the American dilemma: that it needed a theory, it needed some way to constitute its activity, therefore to validate it, at least in its own way if in no one else's. It needed to—not so much to fabricate, but to locate a context and a defining concept that it could link with and make a useful situation of these various intellectual and practical, cultural matters—that could read, essentially, across the boundaries of literary premise and procedure."