

L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E

FEBRUARY 1978

EIGNER

A p p r o a c h i n g t h i n g s

S o m e C a l c u l u s o f E v e r y d a y L i f e
H o w f i g u r e i t E x p e r i e n c e

No really perfect optimum mix, anyway among some thousands or many of distinctive or distinguishable things (while according to your capacity some minutes, days or hours 2, 4 or 6 people, say, are company rather than crowds), and for instance you can try too hard or too little. But beyond the beginning or other times and situations of scarcity, with material (things, words) more and more dense around you, closer at hand, easier and easier becomes invention, combustion, increasingly spontaneous. And when I got willing enough to stop anywhere, though for years fairly in mind had been the idea and aim of long as possible works about like the desire to live for good or have a good (various?) thing never end, then like walking down the street noticing things a poem would extend itself.

Any amount, degree, of perfection is a surprise. yet you have to be concerned with it some, by the way, be observant - serendipity. Also, though - and there's the kaleidoscopic, things put together like flying a kite - too much of or too frequent a good is distraction, or anyway, I could go blind or be knocked out. What if up north the midnight sun were all year round? While - to repeat - language is a surprising tool, recently I turned around and was kind of astonished what can be done with it, what has been. Kites, birds.

But behind words and whatever language comes about are things (language I guess develops mainly by helping cope with them), things and people, and words can't bring people in India or West Virginia above the poverty line, say, and I can't want more.

Well, how does (some of) the forest go together with the trees. How might it, maybe. Forest of possibilities (in language anyway) - ways in and ways out. Near and far - wide and narrow (circles) Your neighborhood and how much of the world otherwise. Beginning, ending and

continuing. As they come, what can things mean? Why expect a permanent meaning? What weights, imports? Nothing is ever quite as obvious as anything else, at least in context. A poem can't be too long, anything like an equatorial highway girdling the thick rotund earth, but is all right and can extend itself an additional bit if you're willing enough to stop anywhere. And I feel my way in fiddling a little, or then sometimes more, on the roof of the burning or rusting world.

"... to care and not to care ... to sit still" Careful of earth air and water mainly perhaps, and other lives, but some (how many?) other things too. Walden, ah! The dancer and the dance. What first (off)? What next? What citizens how come in

Poetry considerateing, Prose adventure (essay?) ?

Many/and/various/mixes.

LARRY EIGNER

LARRY EIGNER NOTES

I see...

"Who wants to see himself"

the noun states accent in air

so much that an "on" or "hard" takes on
solidity of noun at line-end

the prepositional phrases: a thought he's
using only one unit, over & over again
(Cezanne?)

every line hit to a conclusion; the prepositional phrase
pushed up against its noun-wall; the single noun,
preposition, whichever, its own wall; each wall
a cut in space

"a wall was thick

air was a wall"

a nounal/prepositional universe. verb slides...

an invisible & steadying "is" behind everything

"my own hands are distractions"

all particles in the pile soon to reach
nounal state

"Names are the colored barrels
we trip over inside." --C. Olson

"or arrows

slopes room for all

particles

outlines"

each line a new mind (focus)
rather than divisions determined by breaks
of sound, syntax, etc.

air, his medium. air, the medium of voice (waves) and
image (light) immediately inward/outward, as one.

the word "air" & its immediate prepositioning

the sub-vocally/sub-optically heard/seen

"there is everything to speak of
but the words are words"

these "scenes" don't exist, never have.
these words comb them through mind.
The poem is built.

pages, hammers, boards, trees, garage, cars
horse, bowels : his tonality

"or peas

you shift

practice"

making a landscape by motion (Another Time 45)

a hard movement of the words
allows equal solidity to the spaces between.
otherwise such seemingly "fragmented" structure
fall to the bottom.

Eigner is an on-going register. His movement.
and from poem to poem must be spaced, noted.

(why, for example, *Another Time* so much the better
to be read than *Selected Poems* with its imposed
and titled interruptions)

Air, his medium, every thing, hangs up & out.
a window, all ways.
and the word "air", his serial point of closure.

each line
equals
its own completion
and every next line
its consequence

wholes are only made by motion

"Sight is the only sense in which continuity is sustained
by the addition of tiny but integral units: space can be
constructed only from completed variations."

--Roland Barthes

"Part & particle is a noun."

--G. Stein, *Portrait of Man Ray*

A network of blind people, inventing
new methods of telephoning

"what you like
is a plain object"

...enters the whole air of his poems

space of singled-out words increasing speed
toward attaining a whole line, sentence, stop.

scarcity of enjambment (a word of meaning
far from its sounding), so its occurrence
has weight of event.

Sound creates silence. Images produce the blanks.

"material
gapping"

Each poem sights into a distance of all the
others following.

"the whole is divided as you look"

The Imagination.

to Williams a very present physics of the senses.
a synthesis of presence.

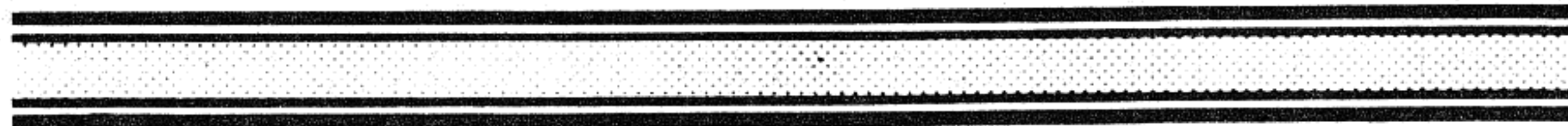
word-activation of the imagination in the act of seeing

"the bird
of wire like a nest
is all through the air"

start made at a word
everything to follow
the word its word
again the following

I do not think of Eigner.

CLARK COOLIDGE



WRITING AND FREE ASSOCIATION

The method of self-disclosure called "free association" wherein one writes or speaks all one's thoughts in consecutive order (also sometimes called "automatic writing" in literary criticism) is comparable to serious attempts to read, write and understand poetry that directs attention to the totality of the thinking process. Memories and awareness of the present collapse into an experiential field composed of verbal presences which can be re-sounded for various interpretations and alternative directions. Both in writing poetry and in free association one listens for meanings rather than directing the thought process in a purposive way to get to them.

When a poet chooses the moment he will inscribe on the page the lettered representation of what he wishes to present to be read, he becomes the creator of his own reading. As he rereads he can experience the moment he chose to move from the position of listener to his own thought to that of recorder. These signs he makes to re-read are the hieroglyphic constructs by which he hopes to disclose the experiential

process simultaneous to its construction. Not that the line or the poem is merely a "slice of thought" corresponding to the naturalistic construct of a stage upon which the writer re-enacts a narrative representation of his conception of existence. The very choice of moments for writing poetry is part of the mysterious flow of attention alert in the mind of the poet to the tides and currents of his own perceptions. By means of his poems he attempts to catch his thoughts in their nascent state, malleable, yet in a way that their original sense may be maintained. When he abandons the possibility of authenticity, celebrates the inevitability of masks and roles, "plays the game" or imitates what he imagines would be successful, he is resting from his more difficult work of finding clues to the solution his unconscious keeps presenting to him in various kinds of puzzles and disguises. Aware of the silence which ever more deeply underlines his utterances, drawn on by the music represented by these letters from his unconscious, by a kind of retrograde movement of language, he is led closer to the other voices of his self. Finding ways of noticing these thoughts at the moments of their inner presentation, he may isolate momentarily what is ordinarily most immediate to his experience but otherwise most elusive. When we read poems we simultaneously listen to our personal associations as well as the intended meanings of words. "Words are notes on the keyboard of the imagination." (Wittgenstein) And Freud: "It is only too easy to forget that a dream is a thought like any other." Like the sequential motifs in dreams, a poem's meaning often appears to be more verbal than literal, resonating with meaning rather than describing it. Sometimes sequences in poems (and dreams and thoughts) can be drawn together like fragments in a collage, to open another implied area not yet found. What is before can become what is next (to). For example, in writing poetry the very next thought may seem technically unacceptable but allowed to remain in the poem may later reveal an otherwise hidden intention.

In psychoanalysis attempts toward free association reveal to the analysand emotions which underlie his everyday conflicts. These verbalizations are interpreted by the analyst and the analysand with the goal of proliferating the analysand's awareness of alternatives. Sometimes these feelings correspond to the strong emotions the poet experiences while writing. While observing and directing the thought process experiences of subjective and objective comprehension fuse and alternate, accelerating the mind towards associations of various types of meanings, intensities and emotions. Language demands to be said, heard, felt and comprehended all at once out of the sphere of choosing actions and immersed in the consciousness of its own tremors, intentions and implications. Like the poem, the free associative process goes from segment to segment with a continual sense of arbitrariness and complete choice.

NICK PIOMBINO

Ronald Johnson, RADI OS (1977, Sand Dollar Books): *Excerpt of*
Review by DAVID BROMIGE.

0 the ragman circles
the block the matter
that he don't talk
And
But
can't escape
mama
stuck inside

in the alley
with his pointed
French
message
And the mail box is locked
really stuck
"jump right in
Texas"

Grandpa
rocks
badly shocked
lost control
shot it full of holes
mama
be the end

preacher baffled
him dressed
With pounds headlines
he cursed
Then whispered, "hide,
satisfied."
inside of Milton
with the Memphis blues
again.

REGARDING

THE (A) USE OF LANGUAGE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ART

IT (LANGUAGE) SEEMS TO BE THE LEAST IMPOSITIONAL MEANS OF TRANSFERRING INFORMATION CONCERNING THE RELATIONSHIPS OF HUMAN BEINGS WITH MATERIALS FROM ONE TO ANOTHER (SOURCE)

BEING ITSELF (LANGUAGE) A MATERIAL ONE IS THEN ABLE TO WORK GENERALLY WITH RATHER SPECIFIC MATERIALS

DARWIN IN *THE VOYAGE OF THE BEAGLE* INQUIRED OF A PATAGONIAN INDIAN WHY THEY (THE INDIANS) DID NOT EAT THEIR DOGS IN TIME OF FAMINE INSTEAD OF EATING THEIR (THE INDIANS) OLD WOMEN

" Dogs kill otters, old women don't "
THEY REPLIED

LAWRENCE WEINER

GREENWALD

Native Land by Ted Greenwald (1977; \$2 from Titanic Books, c/o Folio, 2000 P St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009)

What is here is here in relation. There too, and then. Continually, then. You want to pay attention to as much as possible. At once. States of affairs give way. This dissolution of relations, in favor of new sets of relations, might later be called the instant. Its measure would be the line. Schematically, the space between the lines is the continuum. Could association ever really be free? There is logic, permitting inclusion of as wide or narrow a range of possibility as you like. Its rules are the unfolding of its form when it's developed. They punch out logic. Their logic makes itself comfortable at speeds up to and including the next guy. You talk I listen. Then we switch. There's light in room, supper on the way. We want to hear what's said, and so we do, again in the head, in relation to what's going down there as to what's next, which we would include also, even insist on, so to get on with the fun of it fresh in mind. Some of the time, not all of the time. That's when something's happening. Between those times you test the limits, weather, unconsciousness, provide for meal times, times together. Desire inevitably opens a hole in the static. There's no telling when you're in the turn how things will turn out, hence no time sense, all presence. There's a generosity in this way of taking things in, leaving them open to change. An assumption of common ground between talk and thought. There's access, out, person to person, by virtue of the open endedness in dealing with voice

and a tough minded refusal to consider sequence as circumscribed by any prior formality, or line as pinned down to final value. It's an up.

KIT ROBINSON

CHARISMA

Michael Lally, Charisma (1976; \$2 from O Press, c/o Lally, 291 Church St., N.Y., N.Y. 10013)

Charisma is an album which will be viewed by almost all the people the poems are about or dedicated to, their friends and public. The people are beside the poems, which is to say that there are no two things alike in nature nor no two things so unlike that one could rightly feel more or less the likeness of nature, both the poems and the person are products of the same creation. They are also separated, juxtaposed parameters of a personal, unseen force. And it is this second aspect of Charisma, as language rather than the relationship of art to nature, that's most pertinent to this book, although thoughts about the first may leak in.

Putting a familiar name like Babe Ruth near verses connected marginally with him, unlike Catullus' coupling Caesar with a verse in criticism of the latter's sexual behavior where the subject was directly confronted by his own vileness used as a metaphor for political patronage, requires a new kind of metaphor. And Lally does it in a disarmingly simple manner. His lines are not portraits, but elucidate by framing the person instead of describing him. They create the picture I have in my mind of Babe Ruth in his later years, the veneer of Ashbery, how flattery feels to Steve Hamilton, Sylvia Schuster's tangential affiliation with 1956, Michael himself, and as such are edifying, even didactic. (These words are not intended to shock the reader.) Some of the work does fall off into imitation as the lines for Ted Berrigan and some into description, but "Values in Denial of Ourselves" positions the writing in the subject's court. Man makes coercion. The writer of that style is a vessel and conclusive.

The poems are about the subjects' charisma--a surface that peels off the page. And this acrylic, like a politician's rhetorical gift, does not exist in its own right but only in relation to its constituency. Or are we constituents of a personality? Some of the poems are so edifying that Mr. Lally felt it incumbent on him to delete the dedication. And as with these sentences the poems take their shape from a way of speaking, but are not that mode itself and in this way ally Lally to the dedicatees in the same way the language hints at the person, hints like someone

talking about the weather to tell you your wife is sleeping with your best friend. One subject is not used as metaphor for another as in Catullus. The style itself is a figure of speech for and along side the subject.

Charisma is not a quality we can't enjoy when the dedicatee is unknown nor is it a sculpture that falls apart at the opening which has a spider in the middle of its rubble that doesn't know what's happening in the art world. It wins us over by making itself attractive and by sliding around the subject so it draws no blood with its spikes as if chary of making poetry a contact sport. Though we may feel had at first, we realize the exigencies of administration and admire how the author has circumscribed the problem, then wish our own lives were less slamming rice around and more...but nobody ever claimed realism is the way it is which is what makes me take the chance at criticism.

JAMES SHERRY

I HAVE TWO HEADS

I GIVE UP and try to sleep see large bright pink words YOU ARE REALLY TERRIFIC OLD GIRL Peggy sent this NY Times review BY WHICH ILIAD "The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral *that's split like your ass* Mind by Julian Jaynes PRINCETON U Houghton GO BUY IT WHICH TALKS ABOUT ME IS WOULDN'T QUOTE IT. *Quote* I hear Bernadette's voice yelling at me "According to Jaynes the mind of ME preconscious man was truly bicameral, i.e. 2 chambered, the right hemisphere "spoke" LISTEN the left heard and obeyed. Heroes like Achilles never commune with themselves, they simply listen to their gods *ends of quote*. SOS I LISTEN I call Lloyd I worked on a movie with him for IBM years ago THIS IS CHEAP the two COMPUTERS YOU SPOILED THE SEQUENCE are digital, that adds, and AMORAL I always thought it was random it's ANALOGUE it measures. The digital counts (like the left hemisphere logical thinking underlined) quotes clipping "the left hemisphere handles all the verbal *everyone knows this* chores and does all the math CALLS FOR SEQUENTIAL OPERATIONS it excels at any job that ..." Or analogue, like the right hemisphere THAT'S A COMPUTER, BY ASSOCIATION STUPID because PROBABLY a measurement could be

in the amount of energy *ors crying* or *crazy* TEMPERATURE RISES. Telepathy might work by insistence underlined QUOTE THIS JAYNES "the right hemisphere deals best with structural relationships in space and time it excels at grasping Gestalts *the spacing* PERIOD. A CERTAIN FORCE seen in large yellow letters *out of* EMER INCOMPLETE need OR CALLING PEOPLE STOP. AND I GET ANSWERS but sometimes I get to the end directly and it's right, and the reasons come later, to fill in, after THE DEED IS DONE. I know before. It's JUST THE SAME LOGIC WITH THE MIDDLE MISSING.

TELEPATHY

I WOULDNST PUT MY NAME ON IT Hannah Weiner

Its a brilliant structural analysis of the brain

HANNAH WEINER

(Julian Jaynes' The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind was published last year by Houghton Mifflin, at \$12.95)

MELNICK

NICE

Words might be shields--heraldic, protective--or, reading Zukofsky, Ashbery, Duncan with a sephardic eye, the 'pure light' of reference might pass thru a 2-way mirror--word being itself is no less a concealment (seal meant), postures one holds walking 'in public'--a metaphor, then, in *Eclogs*, hustler cruising Champs-Elysées, suppresses signifieds, posits mind's life in body's locus, 'classic' because articulate, thru wch comes the transfer, shock of self--writ against the grain, social fact of Berkeley, the 60s, Levertov's literalism, nearness of parents, reactionary imagination of *Occident*--a work in opposition & the closet--then silence--stasis is the most natural state--only turmoil (change in one's social order) pushes us thru the entropics--study of "modern poets' views of ole Will" takes years, yields one chapter & that on LZ, ought, beyond wch that life is abandoned--poetry a scene, community a mystic writing pad one opts in or out of: ink flows--new beginning begins *Pcoet*, 1972, whose words are neither speech nor writing, but each within each (what has befallen anyone in the 15 centuries since Eusebius Hieronymus first stoppd reading aloud--any increase in locomotive speed blurs landscape until that becomes focus)--only a kabalist traind in math (U. Chicago)

cld have proceeded thus, poetry precedes the language, makes it, & here is that sphere of light held high, dodecahedron (how see what is there without substance? if you filmd light, as from a projector in an otherwise dark room, *Rameau's Nephew*, it wld on your print have shape, but with the peculiar luminosity of animation: photon spray), thru wch all meaning, if it is to move (into terms as onto film), must pass--beyond syntax, a city's wall preventing penetration in both directions--beyond words, wch ruse referents, posing a mock transcendentalism thru wch Capital itself has manifested natural as a sunrise (Lord's guslars did not even know what the 'word' was)--language writing language writing--Moebius amulet--again after wch the necessary silence, that norm, broken only by a few performance pieces for multiple voice on themes specific in their eroticism--for no scene's benefit nor niche in artificed hierarchy of writing, but friends (frenz)--for this moment (a social fact) to have solvd writing

RON SILLIMAN

thoeisu

thoiea

akcorn woi cirtus locqvump

icgja

cvmwoflux

epaosieusl

~~cirtus locqvump~~

a nex macheisoa

(p. 1, from PCOET)

A SHORT WORD ON MY WORK

The *ECLOGS* (1967-70) are transparently derivative poems, tho when I wrote them I would never have allowed so, not in the way I now mean it.

"Oilskin?" God!

Do you like them? They are terribly romantic, personal. Do you like poems that are impossibly oblique yet turn up clues to the movements of the soul of the poet? Hadn't we got beyond that? I hope so!

I do like the "impossibly" part, even if the "oblique" part supposes some referent relative to which obliquities can be measured. The lines are always taking off, sliding and gliding just above language. Good. Also the cadences.

PCOET was written in May-June 1972. I was then showing all new work to Ron Silliman. He liked the first one ("thoeisu"). We took it to The Heidelberg on Telegraph Ave. in Berkeley, read it to Barbara Baracks' employer/patient in his wheelchair. Patient/employer was befuddled--we were used to this, but there was a new delight in not needing to explain. I wrote the rest of the poems in 3-4 weeks, except for #2 which was written in Jan. 1975 entirely from the index of an Ichthyology textbook belonging to my lover, David Doyle.

I doubt that any statement will mediate between *PCOET* and its audience. There will be some who attend at once to its aesthetic and to that of other wordless poetries. The poems are made of what look like words and phrases but are not. I think these poems look like they should mean something more than other wordless poems do. At the same time, you know that you can't begin to understand what they mean.

What can such poems do for you? You are a spider strangling in your own web, suffocated by meaning. You ask to be freed by these poems from the intolerable burden of trying to understand. The world of meaning: is it too large for you? too small? It doesn't fit. Too bad. It's no contest. You keep on trying. So do I.

DAVID MELNICK

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SOME MAGAZINES *****

ASSEMBLING (Henry Korn, Richard Kostelanetz, eds; Box 1967, Brooklyn, NY 11202) #7, \$6.95. Includes Lyn Hejinian, Bern Porter, Keith Rahmmings, Susan Laufer, Dick Higgins, &&.

ATTABOY (Linda Bohe, Phoebe MacAdams, eds; Box 2239, Boulder, CO 80306.)

BEZOAR (Paul Kahn, ed; Box 535, Gloucester, MA 01930) Monthly, contribution: Lee Harwood, Jerome Rothenberg, Ed Dorn, Philip Whalen, Michael Palmer, &&.

BIG DEAL (Barbara Baracks, ed; Box 830, Stuyvesant Sta., NYC 10009) #4, \$3: Michael Lally, Rae Armantrout, Robert Ashley, Jackson MacLow, Carl Andre, &&. #5, \$3: Maureen Owen issue.

BIG SKY (Bill Berkson, ed; Box 389, Bolinas, CA 94924) #10, \$2.50: Clark Coolidge, Merrill Gilfillan, Ronald Johnson, Kit Robinson, Ted Greenwald, &&.

BRILLIANT CORNERS (Art Lange, ed; 1372 W. Estes, #2N, Chicago, IL 60626).

BLANK TAPE (Keith Rahmmings, ed; Box 371, Midwood Sta., Brooklyn, N.Y.).

CLOWN WAR (Bob Heman, ed; Box 1093, Brooklyn, NY 11202) #16, 24¢ pstg: Ted Berrigan, Ray DiPalma, David Gitin, &&.

CRAWL OUT YOUR WINDOW (Michael Freilicher, Paul Dresman, eds; 704 Nob Ave, Del Mar, CA 92014) #3, \$2: Kathy Acker, Jeff Weinstein, Michael Davidson, &&.

DODGEMS (Eileen Myles, ed; 86 E. 3rd, NYC 10003) \$2 ea.: Nick Piombino, Lally, Ed Friedman, James Sherry, Steve Hamilton, &&.

DOG CITY (c/o Folio Books, 2000 P St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036) #2, \$2: Chris Mason, Lynne Dreyer, Doug Lang, Diane Ward, Kirby Malone, &&.

E (Marshall Reese, ed; 2931 N. Charles, #11, Baltimore, MD 21218) #2, \$2: Michael Gibbs, Charles Amirkhanian, Malone, Robert Lax, &&.

EEL FOR (P. Inman, ed; 1308 S. Western Ave, Champaign, IL 61820): Lang, Ward, Susan Howe, Charles Bernstein, Tina Darragh.

FLORA DANICA (Tod Kabza, Brita Bergland, eds; c/o Bergland, R.R. 1, Windsor, VT 05089) \$3.50: Bruce Andrews, Ron Silliman, Rosmarie Waldrop, DiPalma, Phil Smith, &&.

FLUTE (Brian McInerney, ed; 208 E. 25th, NYC 10010) Winter '77, \$2: John Perlman, Mark Karlins, John Levy, John Taggart, &&.

4 3 2 REVIEW (Simon Schuchat, ed; Box 1030, Stuyvesant Sta, NYC 10009) \$1 ea.: Jim Brodey, Frank O'Hara, Acker, Friedman, Piombino, &&.

HILLS (Bob Perelman, ed; 1220 Folsom, San Francisco, CA 94103) #4, \$1.50: Carla Harryman, Barrett Watten, Robinson, Andrews, Silliman, Benson, &&.

IMPULSE (Eldon Garnett, ed; Box 901, Sta. Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 2PL) \$7/4 issues: B.P. Nichol, Bill Bissett, Les Levine, Opal Nations, &&.

INTERMEDIA (Harley Lond, ed; Box 31-464, San Francisco, CA 94131) #4: Hannah Weiner, Loris Essary, Tom Ockerse, Michael Wiater, Zekowski, &&.

INTERSTATE (Loris Essary, ed; Box 7068, University Sta., Austin, TX 78712) #9, \$2: Higgins, Porter, Allen Fisher, DiPalma, Douglas Messerli, &&.

KONTAKTE (Phenomenon Press c/o 76 Admiral Rd, Toronto, Ont. M5R 2L5) #5, \$3: Language Landscapes: int'l anthology of concrete poetry, coming.

KONTEXTS (Michael Gibbs, ed; Eerste van der helstraat 55, Amsterdam) #9/10: Carl Clark, Fred Truck, J-J Cory, Nichol, Higgins, &&.

LA-BAS (Douglas Messerli, ed; 4330 Hartwick Rd, #418, College Park, MD 20740) Bimonthly, contrib: Eigner, Hejinian, Inman, Bernstein, Welt, &&.

MAG CITY (Michael Scholnick, Gregory Masters, Gary Lenhart, eds; 437 E. 12th, NYC 10003) \$2 ea.: John Godfrey, Alice Notley, Paul Violi, Friedman, &&.

MIAM (Tom Mandel, ed; 1578 Waller, San Francisco, CA 94117) #3, contribution: Silliman, from 2197.

N.R.G. (Dan Dlugonski, ed; 73 Pine St, Ashland, OR 97520) Contribution: Essary, Coolidge, Waldrop, David McAleavey, Karl Kempton, &&.

NEW WILDERNESS NEWSLETTER (Rothenberg, ed; 365 West End Ave, NYC 10024) \$6/6 issues: #1--from A Big Jewish Book; #2--The Poetry of Number (Eric Mottram, Steve McCaffery, Charlie Morrow, &&).

OCULIST WITNESSES (Alan Davies, ed; Box 415 Kenmore Sta, Boston, MA 02215) #2: Greenwald, Watten, Lewis Warsh, Bernadette Mayer, &&.

OCCURRENCE (John Wilson, ed; 94 McKinley Ave, Lansdowne, PA 19050) #7, \$2.50: Mary Oppen, Mottram, Taggart on Samperi.

100 POSTERS (Alan Davies, ed; Box 415, Kenmore Sta, Boston, MA 02215) Monthly, contribution: Michael Gottlieb, Christopher Dewdney, Bernstein, Armantrout, Rachelle Bijou, &&.

ONLY PROSE (Jeff Weinstein, John Perreault, eds; 54 E. 7th, NYC 10003) Contribution: Weiner, Acker, Freilicher, Baracks, &&.

OUT THERE (Rose Lesniak, Barbara Barg, eds; 280 Lafayette, NYC) #12, \$2: Peter Seaton, Neil Hackman, Jeff Wright, Godfrey, Piombino, &&.

PERSONAL INJURY (Mike Sappol, ed; 628 E. 14th, apt 3, NYC 10009) #3, \$1.50: Dreyer, Weiner, Inman, Tom Ahern, Violi, &&.

POD (Kirby Malone, ed; 3022 Abell Ave, Baltimore, MD 21218) #2, \$2.50: Andrews, Ward, Dreyer, Lang, David Wilk, Reese, &&.

RED M(IRAGE) (John Ensslin, 8715 Third Ave, North Bergen, N.J. 07047) \$2 ea.: Mayer, Warsh, Carl Solomon, &&.

ROOF (James Sherry, ed; 300 Bowery, NYC 10012) #3, \$2: Friedman, Seaton, Charles North, && and 50pp. from Legend, etc. (Silliman-McCaffery-DiPalma-Bernstein-Andrews). #4, \$3: Berrigan, Coolidge, Ginsberg, Warsh, Greenwald, && and Washington, D.C. Forum, ed. by Andrews.

SHELL (Jack Kimball, 362 Waban Ave, Waban, MA 02168) #4, \$3: Lally, John Yau, Davies, Mayer, Malone, &&.

SHUTTLE (John Perlman, ed; 1632 Mamaroneck Ave, Mamaroneck, NY 10543) #3, contribution: McInerney, Eigner, Cid Corman, Frank Samperi, Chibeau, &&.

SLIT WRIST (Terry Swanson, ed; 333 E. 30th, apt. 14F, NYC 10016) #3/4, \$5: Weiner, Seaton, Piombino, Charlotte Carter, &&.

STATIONS (Karl Young, ed; Box 11601-Shorewood, Milwaukee, WI 53211) #3/4, \$3: Taggart, Rothenberg, Rochelle Owens, Enslin, &&.

SUN & MOON (D. Messerli, ed; 4330 Hartwick Rd, #418, College Park, MD 20740) #4, \$3: Davidson, Lally, Barbara Guest, Douglas Woolf, Lippard, &&.

TELEPHONE (Maureen Owen, ed; 109 Dunk Rock Rd, Guilford, Conn. 06437) #12: Yuki Hartman, Ascher/Strauss, Hejinian, J. Collom, K. Abbott, &&.

TERRAPLANE (Brita Bergland, Tod Kabza, c/o Bergland, R.R.1, Windsor, VT 05089) \$4: Keith Waldrop, Perelman, Bernstein, DiPalma, Benviniste, &&.

TEXT (Mark Karlins, ed; 552 Broadway-6th Fl, NYC 10012) Year/6 issues, \$5: Thomas Meyer, Samperi, Eigner, Rothenberg, Corman, &&.

THIRST (Vyt Bakaitis, Benjamin Sloan, eds; 323 Atlantic Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11201) \$1 ea.: Terence Winch, Lally, Jamie MacInnis, &&.

THIS (Watten, ed; 326 Connecticut, San Francisco, CA 94107) #8, \$2: Coolidge, Perelman, Grenier, Seaton, Greenwald, Jim Rosenberg, Andrews, &&.
 TOTTEL'S (Silliman, ed; 1578 Waller, San Francisco, CA 94117).
 TRACKS (Herbert George, ed; Box 557, Old Chelsea Sta, NYC 10011) \$2 ea.:
 Carl Andre, Alan Sondheim, Vito Acconci, Wendy Walker, R. Horvitz, &&.
 UNITED ARTISTS (Box 718, Lenox, MA) #1, \$2: Paul Metcalf, Coolidge, Warsh, Mayer.
 UNMUZZLED OX (Michael Andre, ed; Box 840, Canal St Sta, NYC 10003) #15, \$2.25: John Cage, Christopher Knowles, Ashbery, Berrigan, Djuna Barnes.
 ZZZZZZ (Kenward Elmslie, ed; Calais, VT 05648) \$3.50: Winch, Perelman, Joe Brainard, Greenwald, Lally.

PATTERN POEMS

(Dick Higgins' new book, George Herbert's Pattern Poems: In Their Tradition, Unpublished Editions; \$5.95, c/o Serendipity, 1790 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709, is composed of 28 beautifully printed pattern poems by primarily Greek, Latin, Medieval and Renaissance poets. A recent related anthology is Speaking Pictures, edited by Milton Klonsky; \$5.95 from Harmony / Crown. Below, an excerpt from Higgins' introduction)

Because of the profusion of visual poetry since the early 1950s in many languages, in the forms of "concrete poetry" (international), "Poesia Visiva" (Italian), or "spatialism" (French and Japanese), and presented in such works as *An Anthology of Concrete Poetry*, edited by Emmett Williams ... one gets the impression of visual poetry as a peculiarly modern movement, which is misleading. The concrete poets have tended to take the usual neoteric position and to dismiss the obvious lineage of their work through such pieces as Lewis Carroll's "The Tale of a Mouse" (for English), Panard's "Glass" and "Bottle," or the Apollinaire "Calligrammes." ...

(An interesting example of the) shaped-poem tradition is the cabalistic charm, coming out of the Hebrew tradition and often written in Latin. Such charms often employ a concept of language as sign rather than semantic process. The closeness of "charm" and "poem" is shown by the common Latin word for both, "carmen," which also means "song," and the Middle Ages drew no hard and clear line between the two. The essential difference between a "charm" and a "poem" is, of course, that the former aims toward magical efficacy while the latter attempts an aesthetic impact. But even here there is a convergence, since the aesthetic impact of the charm could well be a part of its magical power. Thus the linguistics involved in a charm and a poem could be very similar.

The theoretical underpinnings of such aesthetics lie in the cosmology which the Middle Ages attributed to Pythagoras, who was regarded as the greatest philosopher of antiquity, greater even than Plato and Aristotle though, as a pagan, somewhat suspect. The Pythagorean system, as developed in the Hermetic tradition and elsewhere as well as from Plato's *Timaeus* (which was one of the only Platonic dialogues available to the Middle Ages), was based on a hierarchy of "things" at the bottom, the perceptions, feelings, and qualities associated with them next, followed by the word or *logos*, next the idea or form, penultimately the numbers or ratios, and finally the divine principle itself, conceivable only metaphorically in the Music of the Spheres. Within such a system, a word stood not for the thing it denoted but for the idea underlying it, and was thus a symbol of pure form. As such it was closer to the essence of numbers and ratios in the hierarchy than anything it might describe, and was therefore invested with a power which we sometimes find difficult to understand.... A similar sacred power was attributed to letters, which were not seen as mechanical components of the written word, but as essential and autonomous instruments expressing the process underlying them, analogous therefore to numbers and proportions. The process of forming words became, then, a very sacred one indeed, part of the divine game of realizing things out of their underlying numbers or letters....

Inherent in the concept of a pattern poem is its unsuitability for any sustained argument of emotional persuasion. Its appeal is immediate and involves the recognition of the image. Thus the Aristotelian rhetorical goal of persuading and convincing a reader is unlikely to be achieved within a pattern poem. And an Aristotelian age--such as followed the baroque--would, and did, find the pattern poem essentially trivial and eccentric. The age that followed the baroque was characterized by a tremendous emphasis upon power and force.... It is doubtful that the pattern-poem format could achieve the "suspension of disbelief" so sought after by fiction-oriented centuries. But today, with power far less to the point--with less insistence upon a poem that it "move" the reader--the pattern poem has again emerged, in its new guise as the concrete poetry genre.

DECAY

Barrett Watten, Decay (1977; \$1 from This Press, 326 Connecticut, San Francisco, CA 94107)

Where are you going your feet along those parallel lines. One place or two. When you 'get' there will you be together one or two.

If you hold regularly to the ability to say what you do say, your legs will take turns; you can go on, saying it.

*

In this writing each word points at those nearby. Each sentence.

-the way Duchamp's snow shovel points at his urinal and the hat rack, in retrospect. And in the initial fact.

"One word used in connection with the wiring of houses is current -- this." The last word points with its little finger at the one just back of it. Look! But this is an obvious example of what is the case throughout.

You gain every thing by stepping consciously from stone to stone, so they tie back and forth and around.

*

Music is muted. Not silenced, but tamed and caressed. The whole thing is erect in the face of a reader. A light spreads up around our lips.

When you walk into the light, holding to thoughts as you do, an instance is filtered by its own parameters, aesthetic weight balanced, not interfered with, registered mildly. It is a word and a word, what else.

*

It is too easy to say he could not come right out and say it. It is possible to hide back of words but you don't do that.

Language a thin skin of somewhat-changing identity, on which mind projects, locating through structure.

Some reality is not presented here, but not held back; present. You hold down the world fingers around it. -this lets no thing escape though only a few things be held to. A portrait landscape forms under that pressure; complete, and aired. Sparks of meaning set off where none is apparent.

*

"I was there, I am not here.

Time is a sensible by-product, of motion between two poles."

Why we keep setting these things down, words. Because we do not ever know a difference between every thing and no thing. A language making it seem there is a difference. We write a way repeatedly through this dilemma. How do you think of your work as coming.

*

You write it proves every bit a dream. Not indistinct the way most forget, to be awake; attentive to each particular, waking continually from that a sense of the nailed down confusion. We can call it confusion.

*

Each writing comes from, out a voice with precision sharp edges.
Concaves of burnt and cut angle that permit only a most exact delineation
of detritus coming in and straying from the mind, never relaxed.

You walk over the minute stones and there they remain.

A mouth whispers small notes.

We don't choke because we let it go.

These words tie themselves into accuracies of what is there about
them. It is all there, contained out where only parts are spoken. A
kindness to have handles perfectly the few things and let them be.

ALAN DAVIES

FROM A TO Z

Johanna Drucker, *FROM A TO Z: The Our An (Collective Specifics) an im-
partial bibliography, Incidents in a Non-relationship or: how I came to
not know who is* (1977; \$20 from Chased Press, 2207 Rittenhouse Sq., Phila-
delphia, PA 19103)

A typography that reflects a thrownness into text--a big way of saying
it--"wise she so willing to approach the insidiously inadequate signifier,
with TOLERATION & ON." Which means we are faced with a WHOLE HEAP of
letters--here, nothing can be seen more physically than the literal
letterist composition--& yet this is a work not of reflective imposition
of a form but of a form emerging from the energy of the making. "It's
the vision that matters, the real & worked out clarity of vision." So,
like Hannah Weiner, what appears as an interruptive quality of variant
type faces & sizes (in the make-up of single words & whole pages), which
is continuous throughout this book, doesn't so much have its roots in cut-
up or program (the 'imposed' form) but comes out of the writing "ON".
"The energy runs through eVerything when it's going. I go with it,
making the moves according to the opportunities." So what we have is
"constructivism" that comes out of "trust (in) the intuitive aspect of
the organism: to function through the totality of the being". I.e.,: the
construction collapses back onto its own necessity, a short circuit which
refuses to allow for anything but an integrated thing. But, & note,
Drucker's "primitive drive" isn't just a *self*-defined *writing* exercise
(viz: Mayer)--this book poses as its 'external' condition to set all the
type in the printshop & make a book ('internally') come *out of* "that".
"I have a serious interest in the synthetic integration of thought." &:
"For the actual purp0se of deliberate cOmstrucTiVe thOughT." Which

doesn't even get to the humor of the 'narrative' here: "I mean, I figured you're just not that bright, right? Nobody ever said you had a great head. But you're still a pretty man, & if you turned out to be a nice guy, then that would be okay, I couldn't expect you to have everything, after all." Here, she's going for both.

CHARLES BERNSTEIN

BIG JEWISH BOOK

(From Jerome Rothenberg's Notes in his anthology, A Big Jewish Book, published this month by Doubleday. And from Gematria 27, 1977, Membrane Press, by Rothenberg & Harris Lenowitz.)

By poesis I mean a fundamental language process, a "sacred action" (A. Breton) by which a human being creates & re-creates the circumstances & experiences of a real world, even where such circumstances may be rationalized otherwise as "contrary to fact." It is what happens, e.g., when the Cuna Indian shaman of Panama "enters"--as a landscape "peopled with fantastic monsters & dangerous animals"--the uterus of a woman suffering in childbirth & relates his journey & his struggle, providing her, as Lévi-Strauss tells it, "with a language by means of which unexpressed or otherwise inexpressible psychic states can be immediately expressed"....

The poet, if he knows his sources in the "sacred actions" of the early shamans, suffers anew the pain of their destruction. In place of a primitive "order of custom," he confronts the "stony law" & "cruel commands" Blake wrote of--"the hand of jealousy among the flaming hair." Still he confirms, with Gary Snyder, the presence of a "Great Subculture ... of illuminati" within the higher civilizations, an alternative tradition or series of traditions hidden sometimes at the heart of the established order, & a poetry grudgingly granted its "license" to resist. No minor channel, it is the poetic mainstream that he finds here: magic, myth & dream; earth, nature, orgy, love; the female presence the Jewish poets named Shekinah....:

... the female, the proletariat, the foreign; the animal and vegetative; the unconscious and the unknown; the criminal and failure--all that has been outcast and vagabond must return to be admitted in the creation of what we consider we are.

In the Jewish instance--as my own "main main"--I can now see, no longer faintly, a tradition of poesis that goes from the interdicted shamans (= witches, sorcerers, etc., in the English bible) to the prophets & apocalyptists (later "seers" who denied their sources in their shaman predecessors) & from there to the merkaba & kabbala mystics, on the right hand, & the gnostic heretics & nihilistic messiahs, on the left....

This follows roughly the stages (torah, mishnah, kabbala, magic & folklore, etc.) by which the "oral tradition" ("torah of the mouth") was narrowed & superceded by the written. But not without resistance; says the Zohar: "The Voice should never be separated from the Utterance, & he who separates them becomes dumb &, being bereft of speech, returns to dust." An ongoing concern here....

COMMENTARY: Gematria is the general term for a variety of traditional coding practices used to establish correspondences between words or series of words based on the numerical equivalence of the sums of their letters or on the interchange of letters according to a set system.... (While numerical gematria & letter-coded temurah come easily in a language like Hebrew which is written without vowels, the possibility of similar workings in English shouldn't be discounted.) The numerical method--gematria per se--typically took aleph as one, beth as two, yod as ten, kuf as 100, etc., through tav (last letter) as 400--although more complicated methods (e.g., reduction to single digits, etc.) were later introduced. Non-numerical methods included (1) anagrams, or rearrangements of the letters of a word to form a new word or word series, as "god" to "dog" in English; (2) notarikon, the derivation of a new word from the initial letters of several others & vice versa, as "god," say from "garden of delight"; & (3) temurah, various systems of letter code, e.g., the common one in which the first half of the alphabet is placed over the second & letters are substituted between the resultant rows, etc., in search of meaningful combinations.

Processes of this kind go back to Greek, even Babylonian, practice, & early enter the rabbinic literature. But the greatest development was among kabbalists from the 12th century on, who used it both to discover divine & angelic names & to uncover correspondences between ideas & images by means free of subjective interference. When set out as poems, the resemblance of the gematria to a poetry of correspondences in our own time is evident, as also to instances of process poetry & art based on (more or less) mechanical formulas for the generation of both simply & extended series of permutations & combinations....

THE BODY	NOTHING	LIGHT	HE & HE
The reward.	I.	A mystery.	This & this.

CARNIVAL

(From a note by Steve McCaffery on his ongoing work, *Carnival*, published by The Coach House Press, 401 (rear) Huron St., Toronto)

Carnival is planned as a multi-panel language environment, constructed largely on the typewriter and designed ultimately to put the reader, as perceptual participant, within the center of his language.

The roots of *Carnival* go beyond concretism (specifically that branch of concrete poetry termed the 'typestract' or abstract typewriter art) to labyrinth and mandala, and all related archetypal forms that emphasize the use of visual qualities in language to defend a sacred centre. Pound's vorticism also forms part of the grid of influences, and on one level at least, *Carnival* can be seen as an attempt to abstract, concretize and expand Pound's concept of the image as the circular pull of an intellectual and emotional energy. Above all it is a structure of strategic counter-communication designed to draw a reader inward to a locus where text surrounds her. Language units are placed in visible conflict, in patterns of defective messages, creating a semantic texture by shaping an interference within the clear line of statement....

Two phrases seemed to haunt me during the five years of composition. One, that form 'is the only possible thing'--a phrase, I think, that either echoes or cribs a line in Paul Blackburn's *Journals*. The other was Pound's lines in Canto CXVI: "to 'see again,' / the verb is 'see,' not 'walk on'" -- a profound phrase which I take to be Pound's ultimate stand in support of static, synchronic vista (Dante) as opposed to the dynamic line of processual flow. Dante climbed, in the *Paradiso*, out of narrative into a non-narrative summation of the story line -- as if art struggles to distance that which threatens it in closest proximity: language itself. *Carnival* is product and machine, not process; though its creation be a calenture to me, it must stand objective as a distancing and isolating of the language experience. The thrust is geomantic -- a realignment of speech, like earth, for purposes of intelligible access to its neglected qualities of immanence and non-reference. It is language presented as direct physical impact, constructed as a peak, at first to stand on and look down from the privilege of its distance onto language as something separate from you. Taken this way -- as the 'seen thing' -- its conflicts and contradictions are accommodated in a form based more on the free flight of its particulars than on a rigid component control. But *Carnival* is also a peak to descend from into language. The panel when 'seen' is 'all language at a distance'; the panel when read is entered, and offers the reader the experience of non-narrative language. There's no clues to passage for the reader other than the one phrase of Kung's: 'make it new', move freely, as the language itself moves, along one and more of the

countless reading paths available, through zones of familiar sense into the opaque regions of the unintelligible, and then out again to savour the collision of the language groupings. Against the melodic line which is narrative I work with semantic patchwork, blocks of truncated sense that overlap, converge, collide without transition as the sum total of language games within our many universes of discourse....

My own personal line of continuity goes back from *Carnival* to Pope's *Dunciad*: "Thy hand great Dulness! lets the curtain fall, / And universal Darkness covers all." -- in which Pope speaks as the Augustan panelogist par excellence alarmed at the collapse of all linguistic strata.

Interestingly enough, Alexander Pope and the typewriter were contemporaries. Henri Mill invented the typewriter in 1714, the year the enlarged version of *The Rape of the Lock* appeared and a year before Pope's translation of *The Iliad*. The roots of the typewriter are Augustan; its repetitive principle is the principle of the couplet enhanced by speed. The typewriter oracled a neoclassical futurism that emerged in the mid twentieth century as *poesie concrète*. This is part of that oracle.

PROOF

John Wieners, Behind the State Capitol (1975; \$5 from Good Gay Poets, Box 331, Kenmore Sta., Boston, MA 02115)

DOES one ever develop a thought?

How has density proven?

C O H E R E if itinerant in their attention, coded, spaced out, clipped from a book; likewise chance changed address?

A good jostling now and again — taking mathematically into account irrelevant connectives, or quoting ignoble demolitions ((a methodology of confused doubt, or the i n v e r s e of doubt, indexd in some contrary or erratic way for ... for doing what? for solidifying random and heedless acts attached beyond comprehension to the everyday; since that everyday is confused too broadly even for the chronicler or the semblagist)): does this outshine parsimony?

If shadowy interference nonetheless shifts our place, do we need complete dislocation, or disjuncture?

CAN someone simply decorate the gaps, and lacks?

By what manner, in manners, in a manner of speaking, is decorum the sensible adjunct we want to a sumptuous surveillance?

Do I preen fetishily in reading, with a total comprehension, smothered in decorum?

Is this my reading?

And who will avenge this murder by which each single event is invested with dignity?

AND how (and where) is consternation in the realm of reason a confrontation of the unknown, and do we know it?

Or just, "You think I'm normal, they do a lot of things to my mind"? : a senseless indecipherable deluge, where nothing contextualizes an other thing?

Not a frame outside, and not a kernel inside?

Are we all collage, all dense, tensed, & unlocatable?

The soundless permeation of madness upon sanity: would this be the quandary gotten by viewing the language as the cure for the artistry?

As a rebuff to social order, to emotional and perceptual order?

WELL there are within it ACCURATED voices of other places former silences and far events forgotten opposition and those gregarious references' experience — simultaneity for want of better words — having become a plural intimate response: but is this without cost?

Disinterested (priceless?) content?

As if we forego prior lucidities — to gain fresh condition perhaps or less referral to the past an independence, a genealogical morale — & then involve ourselves needlessly in prior obscurity ((the VOICES droned on))?

IS that what behooves to haphazard: passion's desire to sound representable identity?

Not to be transfixed in the plural?

Or the, without a syncopation, self construed wishfully by absorbent intellect, the record of one, stylized and self-conscious?

I = declaims use, for could one expect he should have the qualities of doing almost everything else?

Disclaims use, isn't that it, for knowing an answer: it's a womanish heart?

HOW can we construe this?: by cavered fall in — a vertical dimension — caring of sounds, abutting solidity apart, cramming for brevity? Or, with mere words, rhetoric? — so back to the believable histrionics to finally learn the diction? (learned minutely expressed things dictated without choice, direction in discourse as a duty-found definition of alleged purpose)?

NOT to belabor either fact or to imagine a world devoid of nabobs and fulfilled in reality, yet still in forbearance of any genuine appearance: what have we got here?

None of trompe-d'oeil, so therefore language an act of sharing words?

Or both realism and make-believe, caught in that dilemma?

Yet how to get beyond both: first, that kindled embrace of past observation (the simple glass mirror, which allows subterfuge to glow forthrightly) and second, that condition of mankind dependent on hallucination in place of imagination?

CONFUSION? Decor? Meaning? Memory? Body? Space? Self? Rhetoric? Reality?

But after examination you find out it's true and say of course that was it all the time, where pure patented mystique fulfills its indispensable acts. That explains everything.

BRUCE ANDREWS

"WHY DON'T WOMEN DO LANGUAGE-ORIENTED WRITING?"

I've been asked this question twice, in slightly differing forms. In conversation I was asked, "Why don't more women do language-oriented writing?" I answered that women need to describe the conditions of their lives. This entails representation. Often they feel too much anger to participate in the analytical tendencies of modernist or "post-modernist" art. This was an obvious answer. The more I thought about it the less it explained anything important. Most male writers aren't language-centered either. Why don't more men do language-oriented writing?

Several months later, by mail, I was asked to write an article explaining why women don't produce language-oriented works. The letter suggested I might elaborate on the answer I'd given before. But it wasn't the same question! Some female writers do focus on language. Was I being asked to justify their exclusion from consideration? Lyn Hejinian, Bernadette Mayer, Alice Notley, Susan Howe, Hannah Weiner, Carla Harryman, Lynne Dreyer, Joanne Kyger, Anne Waldman and Maureen Owen seem, to one degree or another, language-oriented. Of course, that's a tricky term. If it's taken to mean total non-reference, these women don't fit. Neither, however, do Ron Silliman, Barrett Watten, Bob Perelman, Ted Greenwald, Charles Bernstein or Bruce Andrews.

To believe non-referentiality is possible is to believe language can be divorced from thought, words from their histories. If the idea of non-

reference is discarded, what does language-oriented mean? Does it simply designate writing which is language-conscious (self-aware)? If so, the term could be applied to a very large number of writers. Anyone who sees the way signifier intertwines with signified will pay close heed to the structures of language.

Susan Howe calls our attention to the effect of linguistic structure on belief when she writes

as wise as an (earwig, owl, eel).
as sober as a (knight, minstrel, judge).
as crafty as a (fox, cuckoo, kitten).
as smooth as (sandpaper, velvet, wood).
as slippery as an (accident, eel, engine).
as straight as an (angle, angel, arrow).

(*The Western Borders*, Tuumba Press)

And a minstrel may very well be more clear-headed than a judge. It's important to note this.

Howe's passage amounts to a polemic against the influence of habit. This specific concern is common in language-oriented work. When Carla Harryman writes,

Although temperature flags on its own, the past
dissolves. I wanted to settle down to a nap. The
sand settles at the bottom of the ocean. I sink
to the top of the water.

("Sites," *Hills* magazine #4)

the word "although" prepares the reader for a contradiction between the clauses in the first sentence. When no contradiction follows, the reader's attention increases. The concept of contradiction is rooted in the laws of logic, cause and effect. Harryman wants to throw these "laws" into question. There is the jar of discontinuity between the clauses, sentences and paragraphs in this work. The lines I quoted do not follow logically, but they are united linguistically by the near-synonymous verbs. Harryman puts content at odds with syntactical (or sometimes narrative) structures in order to make these structures stand out, enter our consciousness.

Although Lyn Hejinian uses syntax in a fairly conventional way, her work is less referential than that of most of the writers I've mentioned. Of course, her writing does "say things" about the world, but the significance of these statements is not what interests her. In her book, *A Mask*

of Motion, she rings the changes on a number of phrases and words. Each usage of a word becomes a mask for its other uses. Context, placement are of prime importance. When she writes "of the yapping distances, the extended return" one hears the dog she introduced five pages earlier.

Howe, Harryman and Hejinian are very different, yet the term language-oriented might be applied to any of them. I use that term but I'm suspicious of it, finally, because it seems to imply division between language and experience, thought and feeling, inner and outer. The work I like best sees itself and sees the world. It is ambi-centric, if you will. The writers I like are surprising, revelatory. They bring the underlying structures of language/thought into consciousness. They spurn the facile. Though they generally don't believe in the Truth, they are scrupulously honest about the way word relates to word, sentence to sentence. Some of them are men and some are women.

RAE ARMANTROUT

Back cover: "Circle Ode" by Shahīn Ghirāy (ca. 1747-1787), from *George Herbert's Pattern Poems*.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

STATIONS #5: A Symposium on Clark Coolidge, edited by Ron Silliman. (Padgett, Dawson, Lally, Grenier, Bernstein, Saroyan, Byrd, Watten, Robinson, DiPalma, Gitin, Davies, Metcalf, Silliman.) Available in March for \$3: Membrane Press, Box 11601-Shorewood, Milwaukee, WI.

OPEN LETTER, new issue (3/7): includes "The Politics of the Referent," Steve McCaffery, ed., with texts by DiPalma, Silliman, Bernstein, Andrews, McCaffery. (\$2; 104 Lyndhurst, Toronto, Canada M5R 2Z7).

New from Asylum's Press (464 Amsterdam, NYC 10024):

AGREEMENT by Peter Seaton, \$3.

PHOTOGRAM by Susan B. Laufer, \$3.

New from Burning Deck (71 Elmgrove, Providence, R.I. 02906):

FILM NOIR by Bruce Andrews, \$2.50.

L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E

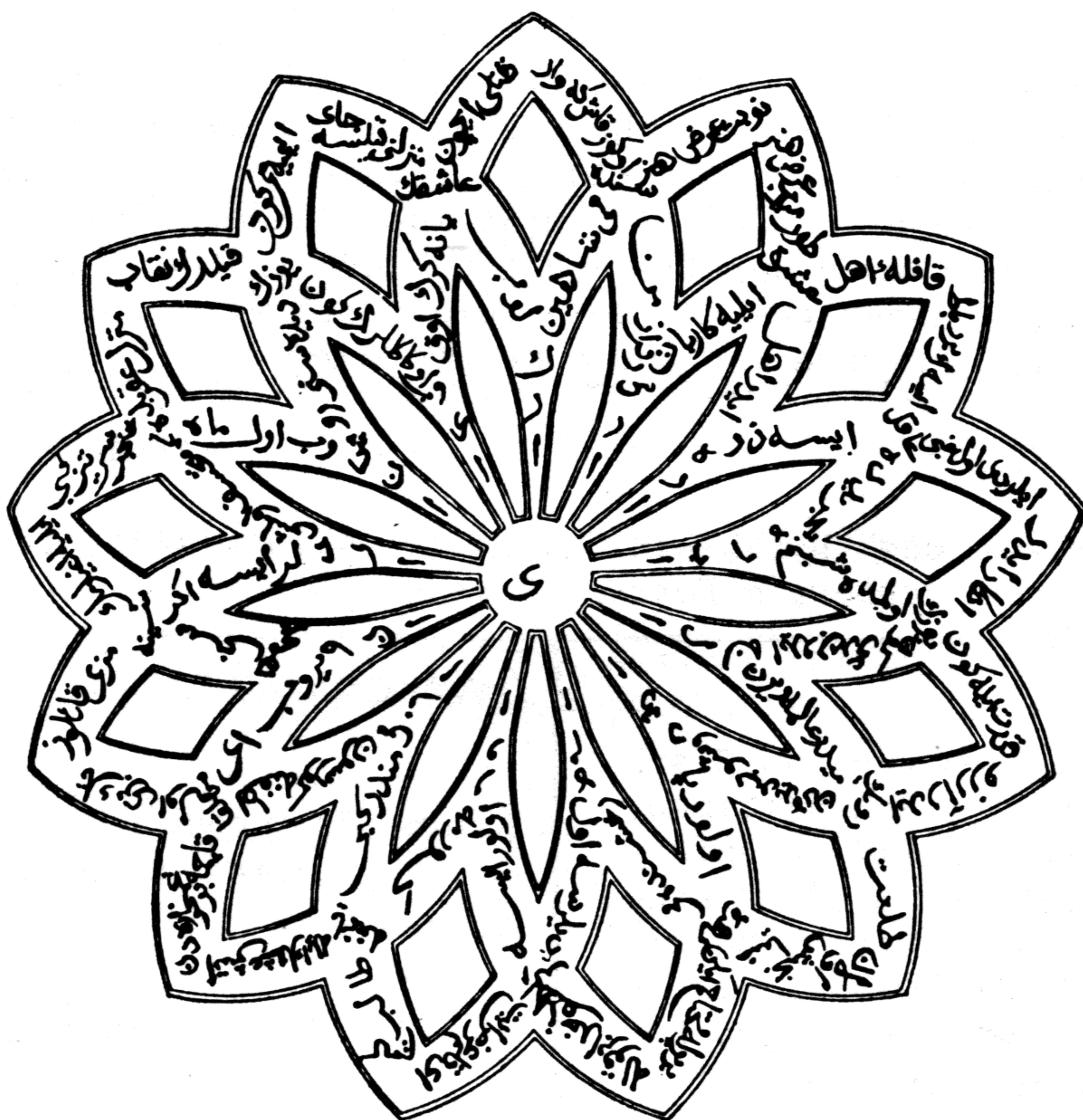
Bruce Andrews,
Charles Bernstein,
editors

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Layout: Susan Laufer.



This issue of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E is being sent out to several hundred people we hope will be interested in it.

For all those who've helped us with the publication by already subscribing--our thanks. For those receiving this first issue who have not yet subscribed, to ensure getting future issues we hope you'll subscribe soon.

Comments on the issue very much welcome.

--Charles Bernstein, Bruce Andrews