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*"The twentieth century in all its confused and troubled eloquence"*



## Visions & Affiliations

A CALIFORNIA LITERARY TIME LINE:  
POETS & POETRY 1940-2005

Jack Foley

Jack Foley is doing great things in articulating the poetic consciousness of San Francisco.

— LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI

"From about 1930 on, a conspiracy of bad poetry has been as carefully organized as the Communist Party, and today controls most channels of publication except the littlest of the little magazines. . . We disaffiliate."

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What a towering inferno of a project. Your timeline brings home the fact that the creative ferment in this period, in this place, rivals any world-changing cultural conjuncture (such as occurred in Paris, Berlin, London, New York...) in modern times.

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## 1969♦

Dark Eros of the soul, Christ of the startled flesh,  
Drill through my veins and strengthen me to feed  
On the red rapture of thy tongueless need.  
Evince in me the tendril in the mesh,  
The faultless nerve that quickens paradise afresh.

Call to me Christ, sound in my twittering blood,  
Nor suffer me to scamp what I should know  
Of the being's unsubduable will to grow.  
Do thou invest the passion in the flood  
And keep inviolate what thou created good!

- Jack Kerouac dies.
- 

In 2008, *Big Bridge* (<http://www.bigbridge.org/index2.htm>) will publish Rychard Denner's compendium of recollections of Berkeley in the 1960s, *BERKELEY DAZE*. In his "Foreword & Beyond," J. Poet (John Thomson) writes,

What can I say about Berkeley, San Francisco and the Bay Area in the 1960s? How to convey the giddy sense of infinite possibility that hung in the air? You didn't need pot, hash, or acid to get high. There was a feeling of weightlessness permeating the air. Every day was sunny, everybody smiled, students at UC Berkeley almost danced down the street on the way to class. The air was cleaner, purer, sweeter. The streets were litter free—this is actually true. People didn't lock their doors, strangers began talking on a street corner and became life long friends, poets and musicians were everywhere, soon to reinvent the way America produced art and made music. Hair was getting longer, morals were getting looser, women were getting stronger, men were getting gentler, non-violence was the word, even as the police beat down anti-war and Civil Rights protesters. In 1964, I had just come out from New York City and couldn't believe how friendly, laid back and open my peers were. Everything was possible, love was all around us, the world was changing fast and my new student and political and street friends (soon to be called hippies) were making those changes happen.

In "The Invisible Circle," her introduction to Denner's book, Gail Chiarello writes,

This group, this circle, presented here by Richard Denner, is a collection of poets who occupy a specific place in time and in geography. We knew one another as students UC Berkeley or San Francisco State or the San Francisco Zen Center; or we met for the first time at the 1965 Berkeley Poetry Conference; or we met on "the Av," Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, or on Fell Street in San Francisco. We were changed by the Free Speech Movement. We walked in antiwar marches and read in antiwar poetry readings often one and the same event. Some of us are hyper-educated, others have rambled and roamed; their learning has been on the fly, on the sly, in the hoosegow. And this highly uneven group. Of all of us, this "motley crew" of storytellers, is part of

a literary tradition, going all the way back to the Canterbury Tales. We are an uneven lot, a motley crew, and each with a tale to tell...

I tease Richard by referring to this collection as "Minor Berkeley Poets of the Mid-Sixties." None of us has achieved the worldwide renown of a Ferlinghetti or a Ginsberg, although we have our Poet Laureates of Sonoma County, our Directors of California Poets-in-the-Schools, our Idaho State Distinguished Alumnae; even our James Joyce, since Charlie Potts' *Valga Krusa* is known as the "Ulysses" of the Walla Walla School of North American Writers. We are not without recognition. But none of us are truly "major"...

There is nothing new under the sun—and yet each generation has to re-invent its art. A unique awareness looks out from behind our eyes. We experience ourselves as immediate in a way we cannot experience anyone else. Each ego, psyche, soul, self—each kernel of immediacy—needs to explain "what is" to itself, make some sense of this one-time-only experience of being "me," answer its own dark questions; sing out its song, put forth its design, its view of things. And yet the "me" is an illusion. And so, like a group of springtime peeper frogs, we are all singing at once, putting out *our* song, *our* design, *our* view of things.

The older art, the better art, the other art, the more accomplished art—which came before—can never speak in *this* voice which is *my* voice, and *ours*.

In the most immediate sense, this book is written by us, for one another.

So we do it for ourselves. To make sense of ourselves.

Contributors to *BERKELEY DAZE* include Luis Garcia, Belle Randall, Helen Breger, Ron Loewinsohn, David Bromige, Gail Dusenberry (Gail Chiarello), Gene Fowler, Jim Thurber, David Meltzer, Doug Palmer, John Thomson (J. Poet), Julia Vinograd, Jack Foley, Rychard Denner, Charles Potts, Joel Walderman, Harold Adler, and Richard Kretch. Kretch provides the following reminiscence of Berkeley in the 1960s:

Berkeley has had a vibrant poetry scene since the 1940's with the "Berkeley Renaissance" a circle of poets that came to include Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer, Robin Blaser and Landis Everson, among others. These poets had connections to the University but much of their poetry enterprise was conducted in private homes. One of the best known publications of this period was *Circle* edited by George Leite and Bern Porter. This Berkeley based poetry magazine began in 1944 and had ten issues. Contributors included Henry Miller, Kenneth Patchen, e.e. cummings, Kenneth Rexroth, Philip Lamantia (then 16 years old), Duncan, and others. Another early poetry magazine was the short-lived (1947-48) *Contour*, edited by Christopher McClaine, which published work by James Scheville [*sic*], Denise Levertov, Porter, Spicer, Duncan, Rexroth and Lamantia. There were subsequent publications ranging from *The Berkeley Miscellany* edited by Duncan which had two issues in 1948-49 and included work by Duncan, Spicer, Mary Fabilli and Gerald Ackerman to *The Berkeley Bussei* published by the Berkeley Young Buddhists Association which included poetry by Gary Snyder and Jack Kerouac in their 1958 issue. The Free Speech Movement of 1964 led to the non-student outside-agitator magazine *SPIDER* [Sex Politics International-communism, Drugs, Extremism, and Rock & roll] whose six issue run was complicated by numerous arrests for selling the magazine on campus.

In sincere flattery of my then-favorite publication, *Liberation*, edited by Dave Dellinger (to whom I would become related by marriage some 35 years later), in May of 1965, I put out the first (and only) issue of a mimeographed magazine, *The Community Libertarian*, which was dedicated to politics and poetry. In it I published poems by the only three poets I knew at the time: Jim Shipounoff, Ron Silliman and myself. Ron was from the adjacent town of Albany and Jim had grown up on the same street I did in Berkeley.

At the much celebrated Berkeley Poetry Conference held at the University of California in July of 1965, I met more poets. On the first day of the Conference I met

Richard Denner (then spelled Rychard) also from Berkeley and a day or so later met John Sinclair, guiding light of the Detroit Artists' Workshop Press. I took a 25-cent brown spiral-bound notebook with me to the readings and lectures by such luminaries as Robert Creeley [*sic*], Ed Dorn, Allen Ginsberg, Denise Levertov, Charles Olson, John Weiners, Duncan, Snyder, and Spicer. In my note book I made notes to the effect that: "Poetry is like it is today because of LSD, the Beatles, racial integration and Red China is a world power—Gary Snyder"; and Charles Olson's projected verse is "belly verse." Quoting him as saying "The poem is in the style of the poet's body" and "the muse is very jealous"—Charles Olson. I also drew a picture of Robert Creeley and wrote poems starting in the back of the notebook. In addition to the daily lectures and nightly readings there were other unofficial gatherings and infamous parties. One of which has been immortalized in Richard Denner's *Xito*.

In the winter of 1965 I went to New York briefly where I met Will Inman, read at the Bowery Poet's Co-op, and was impressed with the copies of *Yugen* magazine, published by Amiri Baraka, then known as Leroi Jones, which I found in bookstores in the Village.

I decided to move back to Berkeley and start a poetry magazine. I formed the *Undermine Press* which published *the Avalanche* magazine from 1966 to 1969, as well as seven chapbooks. We also held unstructured sign-up-sheet based free open Sunday afternoon poetry readings at Shakespeare & Company Bookstore from 1966 into 1969.

Other contemporaneous poetry magazines were published including *Aldebaran Review* started by John Oliver Simon in 1967 and *Litmus*, edited by Charles Potts, who moved from Seattle and started publishing in Berkeley in 1968. John and I became partners in a small commercial printing shop, *Noh Directions Press*, where we did outside work to support ourselves as well as our poetry. Ultimately all *Undermine Press* publications were printed at *Noh Directions Press* on an old A.B. Dick 360 offset press.

In May of 1968 the Conference Of Small Magazines, Editors and Pressmen [COSMEP] was held at U.C. There were open poetry readings associated with the conference and John and I solicited poems from each participant in the readings and we produced an "open" anthology of the COSMEP readings.

We produced anonymous poetry free sheets, the most notorious being the *Grass Profit Review* which lasted ten issues...

Many of the poets I published were residents of Berkeley. Although Luis Garcia was born in Berkeley, most came from somewhere else: Martin P. Abramson came from Venice, California, and squatted in a house on Regent Street with his small family for several years in Beat non-pecuniary splendor; Norm Moser, originally from the South, was the publisher of *Illuminations*, a beautiful large-format publication he put out with his wife Hadassah in Marin County before moving to Berkeley where he lived until the 90's when he died in his eighth decade; John Thomson grew up in Brooklyn and gained some notoriety by getting arrested for sitting on the steps of the Student Union Building on U.C. Campus with a sign saying "fuck" and in smaller letters the word "verb." He now lives in San Francisco and is known as johnthepoet and writes music reviews in the alternative press; Michael Upton, an artist (oils and pen & ink) as well as a poet, came to Berkeley from Oregon with his brother David, and lived here for many years before moving to a cabin in White Thorn in Humboldt County, in the far woods of Northern California. The pages of *the Avalanche* also contained material by non-local writers including Charles Bukowski (five poems and a small drawing); Malay Roy Choudhury, a Bengali and English Language poet prosecuted for "obscenity" and a leading proponent of the "Hungry Generation" in India; d.a. levy, also prosecuted for "obscenity" and one of the leading proponents of the "mimeo revolution" from Cleveland; John Sinclair; Tuli Kupferberg of The Fugs contributed a song and an article to the special "Rock and Roll" issue; an interview with Andy Warhol and Gerard Malanga conducted while they were in bed with "Bruce" in the Chelsea Hotel in San Francisco touring with the Velvet Underground; and others

Of course, many other poetry enterprises were underway during the mid-late sixties in Berkeley including the poets associated with the *R.C. Lion*, which was University based, the *Hepatitis Indians* (a decidedly non-University group of individuals) and many others... These Berkeley poets were not found at the University; they read in bookstores or private homes, their publications were mimeo or short run photo-offset. Their electronification and wider circulation is long overdue.

This is Richard Denner's Robert-Creeley-like "Flower Star":

it begins  
like this  
and ends  
like this  
and continues

in the  
beginning  
it was

done on  
a blank  
page—

white  
on  
white

on the  
day of  
creation

hear  
here

is a bird  
in the  
window

is a bee  
a flower

a garden  
in the  
mind

dilute the  
potion

pour in  
water

with the  
hemlock

open the  
windows

look for  
patterns  
in this  
dream

.

a new  
dimension?  
shaped  
words,  
canvases  
of space

.

song  
bird

word  
word

heard  
third

.

we are  
running  
we are  
mad

stars  
point out  
the way

we are  
naked

we are  
free

there are  
flowers on  
the path

.

I was  
told

I was  
shown

it was  
pointed out—

the narrow path  
the word's wisdom

so  
intricate

so  
complex

so amazing

dead  
leaves

on the  
sidewalk

a dog  
barking

a man  
scratching

what's out  
side is  
within

is there  
emptiness  
without  
awareness?

word

wise  
will

word

weed  
worm

word

were  
wood



word

weld  
wink

word

wild  
wing

word

wall  
war

.

construct  
something  
out of  
clay  
dirt

obscene  
words  
in the  
wash  
room  
stall

VietnamVietnamVietnamVietnam  
ietnamVietnamVietnamVietnamV  
etnamVietnamVietnamVietnamVi  
tnamVietnamVietnamVietnamVie  
namVietnamVietnamVietnamViet  
amVietnamVietnamVietnamVietn  
mVietnamVietnamVietnamVietna

no time  
no place  
no mind  
for it—

a dark  
sentence,  
a joke on  
the wall

.

island  
city

one can  
loose

oneself  
in any

pattern  
any tree

star  
cloud

mountain  
field

.  
a problem today  
is to put down  
the black-white  
marble of mind

draw a circle  
take your shot  
feed daffodils  
to crocodiles

.  
there  
is a  
cemetery

in the  
heart  
tombstoned

we look  
for it  
the door

that  
opens  
onto

gardens  
and  
graveyards

.  
there  
are stars  
in the  
branches  
of the  
trees

all the  
windows  
of the

moon  
open and  
close

the count  
and how  
to count  
the count

how is it  
sir?

how  
is it?

it is  
how  
it is

is  
how  
it  
is

down  
that  
road

soften  
it up

how  
it  
sir

Spring  
do not

mistake  
me for

a flower  
or a tree

Death  
knows

there's  
music

in the  
air



*Walden,*  
*eye on the woods*

# THE GREENWOOD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN POETS AND POETRY

Jeffrey Gray, Editor

James McCorkle and Mary McAleer Balkun, Associate Editors

1

*Addressed to my Townsman,*  
**VOLUME 1: A-C**



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**VOLUME 1: A-C**

The most comprehensive reference on American poetry ever assembled, this enormous encyclopedia includes more than 900 alphabetically arranged entries by roughly 350 scholars. Other references on poetry typically cover a particular period, survey a limited range of authors, or do not cover poets, works, and techniques. This encyclopedia surpasses existing works by considering the entire range of American poetry, overviewing major and minor authors, and combining biographical and critical entries with entries on a wide range of topics.

Written for students and general readers at a time when poetry is central to the curriculum, this set covers material from the colonial era to the present and gives special attention to contemporary poets and their works. In addition, it relates American poetry to its social, historical, political, and cultural contexts. Over five volumes, the *Encyclopedia*:

- Presents entries on major canonical poets
- Highlights the work of poets who are just beginning to establish their reputations
- Gives full attention to poets from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Notes the achievements of women poets
- Relates American poetry to its historical, social, political, and cultural contexts
  - Includes entries on poetic genres, schools, movements, terms, periods, theories, practices, and other topics, in addition to biographical entries
  - Cites works for further reading
  - Provides a selected, general bibliography of broad studies of American poetry
  - Includes a detailed index.

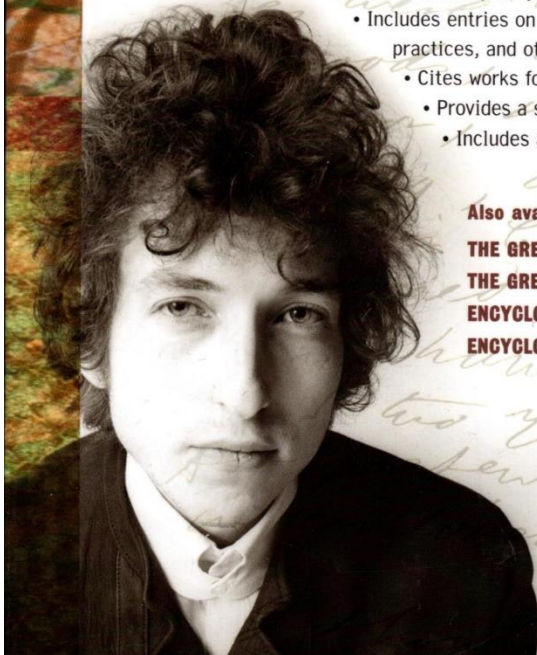
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averse), *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Poets and Poetry* is nevertheless not “complete.” If our inclusions are greater than any reference work on the subject thus far, our exclusions are equally, and inevitably, legion.

The problem is not so much the past, which, precisely because it recedes, appears mappable, but the present, which is vast, vibrant, and uncontainable, perhaps particularly so in America where few constraints remain to limit voices that demand hearing. Even if the editors attempted to represent all of the several thousand living, English-writing poets listed in the current *Directory of American Poets*, the *Encyclopedia* would still not be complete, since many more thousands of poets—hardly mute or inglorious—are writing in little magazines and on the Internet, some of whom will eventually assume prominent places in the landscape of poetry.

As examples of this uncontainability, consider the two categories in our title—“American” and “poetry”—and their tempting but slippery slopes. First, we live in the “Americas,” and while even the Anglophone world increasingly understands “America” to mean what José Martí called “Nuestra America”—that is, an entity much larger than the United States—our purpose has been to represent predominantly Anglophone poetry, poetry of the Northern Hemisphere and parts of the Caribbean. While we have also attempted to account for important inter- and intra-American influences in all directions, the *Encyclopedia* is designed for English-speaking readers, who would not expect to find full treatments of Brazilian and Peruvian poets, for example, in an encyclopedia of American poetry.

Constructions of the Americas aren’t the only geographical/cultural problem. Most Americans are by definition immigrants, and to understand their writing is to examine their histories and ethnicities. Thus, we have included entries that attempt to account for influences from abroad—for example, **Irish poetry**, **French poetry**, **Chinese poetry**, **Japanese poetry**, and so forth. This too is a nearly limitless slope; our choice was to do some of it as well as we could and leave much undone, or not to do it at all. We chose the former path.

The second category of the title—poetry—is not geographical but literary and generic. What constitutes “poetry”? For an encyclopedia that, initially at least, will appear in print, we should begin by acknowledging a bias toward that medium. The problem is, again, not the past but the present: poets now emerging who present their work principally on sound recordings or who are principally performers, and whose audiences know their work largely through performance, are underrepresented here. Song and performance are not neglected, however, in such entries as **performance**

**poetry**, **jazz**, **minstrelsy**, **slam poetry**, **sound poetry**, **African American slave songs**, and so on. While we may not agree with Whitman that “the singers do not beget, only the Poet begets,” with some musical exceptions, our leaning has been toward the enormous tradition of *printed* poetry from America’s beginnings to the present time.

The other area that a print bias may only obliquely acknowledge is not sonic but visual: the Internet. If there are tens of thousands writing poetry in print, there may be several times that number writing online. Among poets with a very large Internet presence, one would have to list, among many others, Richard Denner, Luis Garcia, John Oliver Simon, Belle Randall, Paul Hunter, Charles Potts, John Bennett, Mark Halperin, and Joe Powell. These poets, while not represented here, may be Googled readily. (And we do include an entry on **Digital Poetry**.)

A last comment is necessary on the most interesting problem of all: the synchronic leaning of the twenty-first-century world. Our sympathies as writers and editors may tend toward the diachronic, but the culture at large and literature studies in particular, as college class enrollments reveal, show a much greater interest in the present than in the past. The *Encyclopedia*’s imbalance in the number of twentieth-century and contemporary poets represented here vis-à-vis those of earlier periods reflects this interest—existing as much among established scholars as among students—along with several other factors:

The enormous growth in both population and in print technology and distribution over the past century

The pronounced flourishing of poetry following the upheavals of literary modernism early in the twentieth century, and the successive waves of poetry since then, particularly from the 1960s, often extending but sometimes challenging the precepts and practices of modernism

The burgeoning of poetic practice in the United States over the past forty years as a result of poetry workshops at universities across the nation, a situation earlier poets, for good or ill, could not avail themselves of

Because of this “excess” (as William Carlos Williams called poetry), our criteria for inclusion of twentieth-century poets have had to be different from those of earlier periods. Where now tens of thousands of writers publish books, formerly only a handful did. Some of our entries are on early poets who published only a few poems and never a book, a circumstance that seems quaint from today’s perspective, suggesting either humility, a different set of priorities, or simply a level of economic and technological constraint difficult to comprehend in our own time.





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Visions & Affiliations: A  
California Literary Time Line  
Part Two

## 2001♦

I am the sin you have never confessed,  
The forbidden hand caressing your breast.

You've heard me inside you speak in your dreams,  
Sigh in the ocean, whisper in streams.  
I am the future you crave and you fear.  
You know what I bring. Now I am here.

- Oakland-based Scarlet Tanager Books publishes *The "Fallen Western Star" Wars: A Debate About Literary California*, edited by Jack Foley. The book is a casebook of responses, positive and negative, to Dana Gioia's essay, "Fallen Western Star: The Decline of San Francisco as a Literary Region," which originally appeared in the Winter 1999-2000 issue of *The Hungry Mind Review*. Contributors include Dana Gioia, whose essay appears in its entirety, Howard Junker, Jonah Raskin, Richard Silberg, David Mason, Jaqueline Marcus, Michael Lind, and Scott Timberg. The title of Gioia's essay is a reference to Jack Foley's title, *O Powerful Western Star*. Foley is referring to Walt Whitman's line, "O powerful western fallen star!" from "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd." In fashioning his title, Foley removed the word "fallen"; Gioia put it back in.
- Lucille Lang Day's *Greatest Hits* is published by Pudding House Publications.
- Beat Books publishes Mary Fabilli's *Pious Poems*, edited by Stephen Ronan. The book includes a sequence dealing with the lives of the Saints.
- Gerald Nicosia's book of poems, *Love California Style* is published by 12 Gauge Press.
- Comrades Press in England publishes Richard Denner's *Collected Poems: 1961-2000*. Denner, California born, writes of himself,

Richard Denner was uneducated in Berkeley, California, during the 60s, self-exiled into the Alaskan woods, printing on a 1927 *Kesey* hand press small, smudgy chapbooks, graduating from University of Alaska, Fairbanks, 1972, continued printing while working at Queen Anne News in Seattle, moved with family to 800 acre cattle ranch east of Ellensburg, Washington, to punch cows and write hayseed verses, finally finding a career as the proprietor of Four Winds Bookstore & Café, settling down to civic responsibilities, Masonic Order, alcoholism and a total freak-out after separating from the most beautiful woman in the world, finding happiness in the teachings of Buddha, 1989, moving to Tara Mandala Retreat Center in Colorado to manage another bookstore and do a long retreat until called back to California in 1998 to care for his elderly parents, staying on after his father's death to write and publish D Press chapbooks. Richard has completed training to be a California Poet in the Schools, and he has been ordained as a Tibetan Buddhist monk.

Denner's magazine, *Kickass Review*, circulates only among its contributors. About it he comments, "It's history...eight issues of volume six were produced in 2006, there never was a volume five, although there may be one in 2007, which will collect my contributions to the

eight issues of the review, and there will be only one copy, which will appear as volume 12 of *The Collected Books of Richard Denner*.” *The Collected Books of Richard Denner* appears in various volumes (currently eight volumes and 2,026 pages online, volumes 9-11 published in print in 2005 but not yet available online) from dPress, Sebastopol. On the dPress website (<http://www.dpress.net/>), “Jampa Dorje” (Denner’s Tibetan name) writes,

Volume 8 includes the collection he created after discovering the portuguese poet, fernando pessoa, who intrigued him because he had created many personas with entire biographies and literary works, and richard realized he too had been doing something along these lines with artaud and the bouvard pécuchet character which he had created for the plagiarist movement, so he took this a step further by creating a series of books under each of the different names and collecting types of poems as well as writing new poems to meet their specific personality needs, and as pessoa had allowed the writer who used his own name to be a persona, richard decided to resurrect “rychard” who [*sic*] for most of his life was a name he had used to sign artwork, a name that had originated in berkeley in the 60s, but now had become the spirit of his artistic process.

In 2006, dPress will bring out the first thirty-three of one hundred Cantos of *Spade*, a collaboration between Denner and David Bromige; the book has an introduction by Robert Grenier. Grenier describes *Spade* as “A lively/funny, sorrowful-hopeful, utterly serious/skeptical endaring-ongoing dialogue between a monk (Rychard) & an eminence gris (David, apparently)....” *Spade* begins,

Spade. *Spade* was the first  
word. The first  
word in the poem, and as far  
as one can see, it could be the first  
word in the world

cat who licks herself  
on a towel on a chair  
cat who licks her  
spay  
cats are silent, usually, unless they  
want  
to go out  
then, they have their noisy time

cats whose licks are splayed

His mother didn’t have a job,  
so she played with cats, and she was  
good at it, not much of a life, really  
she didn’t have much motivation  
to go out in society  
so she stayed at home  
and listened to Indian music  
on the BBC 3<sup>rd</sup> program, and out of these

## 2001♦

bits and pieces  
she made her life  
    until she died at the age of 61.  
Smoked. Smoked herself into eternity.

Seeing Bromige and Denner together at a poetry reading in August 2007, Katherine Hastings writes, "What was most disturbing was the notable decline in David Bromige's vision. When I greeted him, he couldn't make out who I was. When he read, he read from very large sheets of paper with enormous print and still struggled. 'I did better in my prime,' said he. By his side was Richard Denner who exuded kindness, patience, humor—something like love. It was moving watching these two men together, though I've seen them many times. Richard walked up to David as soon as he noticed he was struggling. David moved his head just slightly in his direction. 'Oh. Good,' he said, seeing the blur of a monk's robe."

- Goldfish Press in Seattle publishes *Some Songs by Georges Brassens*, translations and commentaries on the French singer/songwriter's work by Jack Foley.
- Salt Publications publishes Maxine Chernoff's *World: Poems 1991-2001*. *Evolution of the Bridge: Selected Prose Poems* will follow in 2005.
- Station Hill/Barrytown, L.T.D. publishes *The Rhyme of the Ag-ed Mariness : The Last Poems of Lynn Lonidier (1937-1993)*. The title poem of the book carries the subtitle, *A Lesbian-Ecological Opera*. The book is edited by Janine Canan, with a preface by Jerome Rothenberg. Rothenberg's preface, dated 1998, begins,

Five years after her death, Lynn Lonidier remains—for me, for us—one of that company of poets who has shaped an image-of-the-world we now can recognize as true & true in ways we hadn't known before she showed them to us. The proof of that world for her—as for so many of her mentors & her fellows—lies in the poem, the writing, where she works as maker (poet) of the myth (the story told, retold, created). As with those others too, a liberated word or series of such liberated words dominates & leads the mind toward meaning, seeing. In her work, as I read it, that word lies in the "lesbian estate" of an earlier title...It functions for her much as the word "jew" once did for me...Lonidier might have spoken of "lesbian" or those words akin to "lesbian" that she freed up & that freed her up in turn...For hers is no sentimental accounting—as legitimate as that may be—of a life lived, but the recognition of a truly psychic, therefore mythic, space that guides her exploration of the full (repeat: the full) range of our experience as sentient beings...

All these qualities come back in the present work—assembled as her "last poems" in the aftermath of suicide & loss.

Other books by Lynn Lonidier include *Po Tree* (The Berkeley Free Press, 1967), *A Lesbian Estate: Poems 1970-1973* (ManRoot Press, 1977), and *Clitoris Lost* (ManRoot Press, 1989). The following poem, posthumously published, is from *The Rhyme of the Ag-ed Mariness*:



*Walden,*  
*eye on the woods*

# THE GREENWOOD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN POETS AND POETRY

Jeffrey Gray, Editor

James McCorkle and Mary McAleer Balkun, Associate Editors

**VOLUME 1: A-C**



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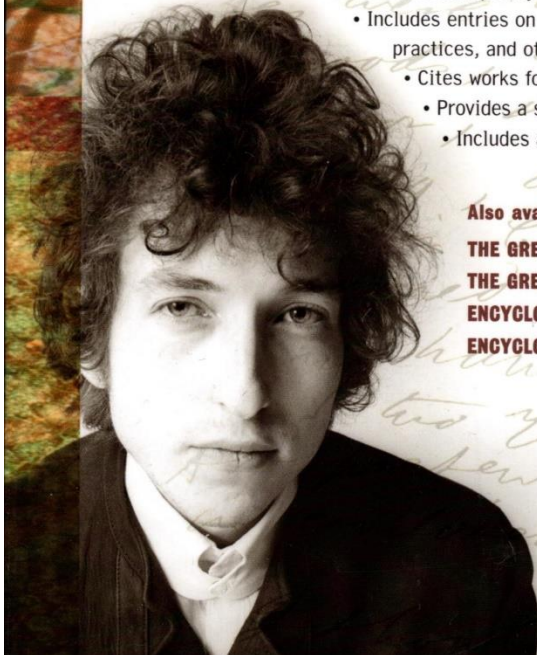
The most comprehensive reference on American poetry ever assembled, this enormous encyclopedia includes more than 900 alphabetically arranged entries by roughly 350 scholars. Other references on poetry typically cover a particular period, survey a limited range of authors, or do not cover poets, works, and techniques. This encyclopedia surpasses existing works by considering the entire range of American poetry, overviewing major and minor authors, and combining biographical and critical entries with entries on a wide range of topics.

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- Presents entries on major canonical poets
- Highlights the work of poets who are just beginning to establish their reputations
- Gives full attention to poets from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Notes the achievements of women poets
- Relates American poetry to its historical, social, political, and cultural contexts
  - Includes entries on poetic genres, schools, movements, terms, periods, theories, practices, and other topics, in addition to biographical entries
  - Cites works for further reading
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averse), *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Poets and Poetry* is nevertheless not “complete.” If our inclusions are greater than any reference work on the subject thus far, our exclusions are equally, and inevitably, legion.

The problem is not so much the past, which, precisely because it recedes, appears mappable, but the present, which is vast, vibrant, and uncontainable, perhaps particularly so in America where few constraints remain to limit voices that demand hearing. Even if the editors attempted to represent all of the several thousand living, English-writing poets listed in the current *Directory of American Poets*, the *Encyclopedia* would still not be complete, since many more thousands of poets—hardly mute or inglorious—are writing in little magazines and on the Internet, some of whom will eventually assume prominent places in the landscape of poetry.

As examples of this uncontainability, consider the two categories in our title—“American” and “poetry”—and their tempting but slippery slopes. First, we live in the “Americas,” and while even the Anglophone world increasingly understands “America” to mean what José Martí called “Nuestra America”—that is, an entity much larger than the United States—our purpose has been to represent predominantly Anglophone poetry, poetry of the Northern Hemisphere and parts of the Caribbean. While we have also attempted to account for important inter- and intra-American influences in all directions, the *Encyclopedia* is designed for English-speaking readers, who would not expect to find full treatments of Brazilian and Peruvian poets, for example, in an encyclopedia of American poetry.

Constructions of the Americas aren’t the only geographical/cultural problem. Most Americans are by definition immigrants, and to understand their writing is to examine their histories and ethnicities. Thus, we have included entries that attempt to account for influences from abroad—for example, **Irish poetry**, **French poetry**, **Chinese poetry**, **Japanese poetry**, and so forth. This too is a nearly limitless slope; our choice was to do some of it as well as we could and leave much undone, or not to do it at all. We chose the former path.

The second category of the title—poetry—is not geographical but literary and generic. What constitutes “poetry”? For an encyclopedia that, initially at least, will appear in print, we should begin by acknowledging a bias toward that medium. The problem is, again, not the past but the present: poets now emerging who present their work principally on sound recordings or who are principally performers, and whose audiences know their work largely through performance, are underrepresented here. Song and performance are not neglected, however, in such entries as **performance**

**poetry**, **jazz**, **minstrelsy**, **slam poetry**, **sound poetry**, **African American slave songs**, and so on. While we may not agree with Whitman that “the singers do not beget, only the Poet begets,” with some musical exceptions, our leaning has been toward the enormous tradition of *printed* poetry from America’s beginnings to the present time.

The other area that a print bias may only obliquely acknowledge is not sonic but visual: the Internet. If there are tens of thousands writing poetry in print, there may be several times that number writing online. Among poets with a very large Internet presence, one would have to list, among many others, Richard Denner, Luis Garcia, John Oliver Simon, Belle Randall, Paul Hunter, Charles Potts, John Bennett, Mark Halperin, and Joe Powell. These poets, while not represented here, may be Googled readily. (And we do include an entry on **Digital Poetry**.)

A last comment is necessary on the most interesting problem of all: the synchronic leaning of the twenty-first-century world. Our sympathies as writers and editors may tend toward the diachronic, but the culture at large and literature studies in particular, as college class enrollments reveal, show a much greater interest in the present than in the past. The *Encyclopedia*’s imbalance in the number of twentieth-century and contemporary poets represented here vis-à-vis those of earlier periods reflects this interest—existing as much among established scholars as among students—along with several other factors:

The enormous growth in both population and in print technology and distribution over the past century

The pronounced flourishing of poetry following the upheavals of literary modernism early in the twentieth century, and the successive waves of poetry since then, particularly from the 1960s, often extending but sometimes challenging the precepts and practices of modernism

The burgeoning of poetic practice in the United States over the past forty years as a result of poetry workshops at universities across the nation, a situation earlier poets, for good or ill, could not avail themselves of

Because of this “excess” (as William Carlos Williams called poetry), our criteria for inclusion of twentieth-century poets have had to be different from those of earlier periods. Where now tens of thousands of writers publish books, formerly only a handful did. Some of our entries are on early poets who published only a few poems and never a book, a circumstance that seems quaint from today’s perspective, suggesting either humility, a different set of priorities, or simply a level of economic and technological constraint difficult to comprehend in our own time.

Brodsky's classroom was like; it also includes his Nobel acceptance speech and lecture, "Uncommon Visage." The book takes its title from the essay on Frost, where Brodsky does a line-by-line reading of "Come In" and "Home Burial." In addition to these works, also available in English are Brodsky's verse play, *Marbles* (1986); a book-length essay on Venice, *Watermark* (1992); and a children's book, *Discovery* (1999). In 1996 Farrar, Straus and Giroux released *Homage to Robert Frost*, a volume containing essays on Frost by Brodsky, Seamus Heaney, and Derek Walcott.

No discussion of Joseph Brodsky would be complete without mention of him as a reader, or singer, of poems. He believed that poetry was still a melic art, that poems were to be sung. Anyone in attendance at one of his readings would immediately recognize that the atmosphere differed from that of a typical poetry reading, resembling nothing so much as a religious service, with poems taking the place of prayers. Fortunately there are recordings and videos that capture this experience for posterity.

Since Brodsky's death in 1996 there has been no dimming of his reputation. Worldwide there have been memorial services; the list of those who have elegized Brodsky is long and the names on it are esteemed. The Joseph Brodsky Memorial Fellowship provides fellowships for Russians to study in Italy, a country he loved and thought essential to the development of the intellect and aesthetic sensibility. There has been talk of releasing a volume of his sketches. Eventually, more of his Russian poems will be translated, and America will know more of this poet.

**Further Reading. Selected Primary Sources:** Brodsky, Joseph, *Collected Poems in English*, ed. Ann Kjellberg (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000); ———, *Discovery* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999); ———, *Less Than One: Selected Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986); ———, *Marbles* (New York: Noonday, 1989); ———, *Nativity Poems* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001); *On Grief and Reason: Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1995); ———, *A Part of Speech* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980); ———, *Selected Poems* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); ———, *So Forth* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996); ———, *To Urania* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988); ———, *Watermark* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1992); Brodsky, Joseph, Seamus Heaney, and Derek Walcott, *Homage to Robert Frost* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996). **Selected Secondary Sources:** Bethea, David, *Joseph Brodsky and the Creation of Exile* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Loseff, Lev, and Valentina Polukhina, *Brodsky's Poetics and Aesthetics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990); MacFadyen, David, *Joseph Brodsky and the Soviet Muse* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press,

2000); Polukhina, Valentina, *Joseph Brodsky: A Poet for Our Time* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Anna Priddy

#### BROMIGE, DAVID (1933–)

As a poet, David Bromige has a genius for variety. He has published thirty books, each one so different from the others as to seem to be the work of a different author. Bromige is often associated with the **Language poets**, but this connection is based mainly on his close friendships with some of those poets. It is difficult to fit Bromige into a slot. He departs from Language poetry in the thematic unity of many of his poems, in the uses to which he puts found materials, in the romantic aspect of his lyricism, and in the sheer variety of his approaches to the poem.

Bromige was born in London, England in 1933. At an early age, he showed signs of being tubercular and was sent to an isolation hospital, but after four months his condition improved and he was discharged. "However," he writes in an unpublished memoir, "I would not speak to my parents, or my sister, for weeks." That hospital was the first of several crucial interludes that molded his adult life. The second of these interludes came during the London blitz. A stick of bombs falling in their customary sequence appeared likely to destroy the Bromiges' house, with them inside: "I swore on my soul that, if we were spared, I would be someone else." The next interlude involves his schooling and work experience. When the war ended, Bromige won a scholarship to Haberdashers' Aske's Hamstead and a chance to study at a socially superior school. After completing his school certificate, Bromige accepted an offer to be a dairyman on a farm in southern Sweden. Each of these interludes changed him. The first made him suspicious of his family; the bombing made him vow to be someone else; work and study gave him the worldly experience to be a poet.

He met other poets at the University of British Columbia—George Bowering, Frank Davey, David Dawson, Jamie Reid—and they encouraged him to write and publish his work. At the 1963 Vancouver Poetry Festival, Bromige met **Robert Creeley**, **Charles Olson**, **Denise Levertov**, **Allen Ginsberg**, and **Robert Duncan**. The festival made Bromige rethink his poetic philosophy: "I had to think of a new way to write; I had to think until I came out the other side of thinking."

The result of this endeavor was the publication of many poems. **Robert Hass**, the chairman of the Western States Book Award Committee, wrote glowingly of his work and chose his 1988 book, *Desire: Selected Poems, 1963–1987* to win the first prize for poetry. He has twice been honored by the Poet's Foundation, once with a \$3,000 prize and again with a \$10,000 prize. And he has twice been honored by the National Endowment for the

Arts. He won the college prize for the first poem he ever published. "This not only won me \$50, which was about \$300 at today's rates," he writes, "but it secured me the editorship of the campus literary journal."

Three years later, Bromige won a Woodrow Wilson scholarship. The rules stated that he had to do his graduate work at a different university. He chose Berkeley after graduating from the University of British Columbia. It was 1962. "I do remember *some* of the 60's," he says. For instance, after reading from his first book, *The Gathering*, at the Berkeley Poetry Conference in 1965, he remembers that Robert Duncan told him, "Don't stop at the end of each line like Creeley. It's bad enough that he does it. Find your own way to read. Read freely."

In 1968 his third book, *The Ends of the Earth*, was published by Black Sparrow Press. It was the beginning of a twenty-three-year partnership that produced eleven of his books. The poems in this book have a ghostly tone, as though Cocteau were doing a very detailed description of Bromige's life. The change, apparent in his fifth book, *Threads*, is startling. It reads as though the ghostly presences from *The Ends of the Earth* had fleshed out and learned to speak a language from the various lives whose talk fills the book.

Then came seven books in two years. This is Bromige at an early peak. *Ten Years in the Making* begins it. This book consists of some of his early poems, going back to 1960, work engagingly open to the average reader. Then came selections from *The Gathering*, followed by poems from *Threads*. Next was *Birds of the West*, from Victor Coleman of Coachhouse Press in Toronto. This book consists of three sections: a journal of gardening and visitors; a section of more finished poems, filled with a landscape of Western Sonoma County; and a single **long poem** written in sparse triplets to reflect a white-tail kite's hovering flight.

Soon afterward *Tight Corners and What's Around Them* was issued by Black Sparrow. Bromige has stated that it was the most interesting to him of this clutch of books: "I was using a fairly familiar sort of sentence, in prose, with a last line that either boosted sales or fell flat as a flapjack. I didn't care. Banal or brilliant, it made no difference in the world I was living in. Besides, sometimes the banal turned brilliant as I listened."

He also did three pint-sized books about this time for the Sparrow series. As he explains, "I like twelve-page books. Most books should be about that size." In 1974 he also published a book of "occasional" poems, *Spells and Blessings*.

Bromige continued to publish prodigiously in magazines, and in 1980 published a book called *My Poetry*. "Ron Silliman said to me it was perfect, so I found some faults with it, but not many. I thought it was good enough to be my last book, but then Lynn Hejninian asked me to write a Tuumba book for her series. I

thought I had a good idea, but someplace I lost it. I was far fonder of a trio of tales I wrote about Hung Chow, who was somewhat older than I, in exile in London and teaching a class in Buddhism. I meant to write more of those," he said, "and just this summer of '04, I did."

The 1980s started with a Pushcart Prize for *My Poetry* and ended with the Western States Poetry Award for his selected poems, *Desire*. In between, Bromige devoted himself to his wife and young daughter while carrying a full-time professor's responsibilities in the English Department at Sonoma State University (SSU). He coordinated poetry conferences at SSU, published a collaboration with Opal Nations, wrote an analysis of Allen Fisher's four-day residency at Langton Street in San Francisco, and was himself the subject of an issue of Tom Beckett's *The Difficulties*. In 1990 John Martin, who had moved Black Sparrow Press to Santa Rosa, published *Men, Women & Vehicles*, a book of selected prose.

Bromige retired early from SSU, in 1993, and he continued to publish and give readings. *Tiny Courts in a World Without Scales* is a book of fifty short poems, showing Bromige at his droll and sarcastic best. He had fun with *They Ate*, a cut-up from a turn-of-the-century detective novel, before producing *A Cast of Tens*. The poems in *Cast* are made up of ten-line stanzas, but in each poem the lines are distributed variously. *The Harbormaster of Hong Kong* came next, with many kinds of writing in it, including a perfect sonnet. Bromige's final book from the 1990s was *Vulnerable Bundles*, which appeared in a limited edition of thirty.

Bromige returned to teaching part-time at the University of San Francisco, and he also began writing what would later be *As in T as in Tether*, which was awarded Best Book of the Year (2003) recognition from Small Press Traffic. He published *Indictable Suborners* and *Behave or Be Bounced* in 2003. Finally, Bromige has been collaborating with poet and dPress editor Richard Denner on *100 Cantos*. Even at this stage of his career, he continues to experiment with poetic forms in new and interesting ways.

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Richard Denner

#### BRONK, WILLIAM (1918–1999)

In its profound skepticism, embodied in acutely refined statements, William Bronk's poetry holds a