

@poetics

The UB Poetics Discussion Group

Archive of Electronic Correspondence

May 1994

40 messages · Sun 1 May 1994 – Fri 27 May 1994

An electronic mailing-list archive

University at Buffalo, State University of New York

A reading edition. For each post the author's name, the subject, and the message are foregrounded, and the date is kept but subdued. Machine headers, encoded attachments, and the repeated listserv routing that once framed every message have been cleared away; email addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and similar personal contact details have been redacted.

Editor's Introduction

Kristen M. Fabians

May 1994 is the month the UB Poetics list lost its collective mind, and did so on purpose, and produced thereby one of the loveliest things in its early archive. What had begun in April as a modest thread called Beatnik Bliss ferments over the month into a full collaborative romp — CBGEEBIES, chicken wings, CP Geebies, a running doggerel poem passed hand to hand under a rotating carousel of ever-sillier subject-lines. Some forty letters, and the great majority of them in rhyme.

Joe Amato strikes the first note, cheerfully absurd, angling for *“for some talky bleu cheese dipped fare”*, and the thing is off. The surprise, and the delight, is who picks it up: Robert Creeley, of all people, seizes the baton and will not let go, filing seven separate contributions in a month, rhyming his way through menus and farewells and small hours. *“I can't keep up the rhyme no more”*, he protests around two in the morning, and then, of course, keeps it up.

It becomes properly choral. Mark Wallace answers the call with the month's best throwaway line — *“I can't fly, though sure can sit”* — and Marc Nasdor and Robert Kelly crowd in, Kelly lifting the register for a moment to note that *“The life of that city rouses over and over”* before the nonsense reclaims him. The pleasure of reading it now is watching serious poets discover that they can be silly together without ceasing, for an instant, to be poets.

There is a small poetics buried in the fun, as there always is. A collaborative rhyme passed around a mailing list is the social poem of February's arguments made suddenly, unpretentiously actual — authorship dissolved into the group, the medium's back-and-forth turned from a limitation into the very form of the thing. What the theorists could not settle in prose, the chicken thread quietly demonstrates in verse.

It cannot last, and it knows it cannot, which is part of why it is moving as well as funny — a spring fling, a bout of collective high spirits that the summer will let subside. I have kept the letters in the order the days delivered them, each rhymer forward under his own name, the private numbers swept to black, so that the poem can be read the way it was written: as a room of people, briefly, refusing to be sensible. These were letters before ever they were literature — and never more happily so than here.

— *K. M. F.*

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1. **Joe Amato**

Re: Beatnik Bliss & CP Geebies

Sun 1 May 1994

Take more than chicken
wings
get me hear from
there

But a tin can with
strings
can
man

O! for some talky
bleu cheese
dipped
fare...

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2. **Robert Creeley**

CBGEEBIES/CHICKEN CHUNKS FOR BEATNIK BLISSTERS

Sun 1 May 1994

FIRST LINE FLIGHTS (Chicken Wing Expressed)

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain...
He's back at the CPG again!

Blasted with sighs, and surrounded with tears...
All he needs is a few more beers.

Careful Observers may fortell the Hour...
Nobody watches the clock around here.

Do not go gentle into that good night...
If you got to go, do it right.

Flat on the bank I parted...
Flat on my back I started.

Give me my scallop-shell of quiet...
Then we can start a riot.

Glory be to God for dappled things...
Hey, that's my coat!

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill...
you old goat...

Anyhow you all come, eat those chicken wings and have some fun, when
TED JOANS gets it on

at the CPG, Wednesday, May 4th at 7:30.

Ok.

BONUS POEM FIRST VERSE ONLY

"Women he liked, did shovel-bearded Bob,
Old Farmer Hayward of the Heath, but he
Loved horses. He himself was like a cob,
And leather coloured. Also he loved a tree..."

--Writ 1916 and published in 1920. Not so long ago, folks. "And gloom, the
name alone survives, Bob's Lane..." Sic transit. Better get there (the
CPG!) while you can...

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3. **Patrick Phillips**

kaffee

Mon 2 May 1994

For those of us who'll miss the beat of chicken wings @CPG I provide a scent of
coffee sent to me by Ferdinand Schmatz - an Austrian poet. The poem is from
his collection *speise gedichte*

I must say he's provided this and other poetry for an anthology of international
poetry I am editing, and that though my anthology will be published in book
form and interactively on the World Wide Web, he ain't given his permission for
this coffee house publication. So, this should be considered a venue-specific
flyer of sorts...!

sud an
(kaffee)

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a e

a

f e e

a e e a e

e e

e

--I take all responsibility for any typographical misalignment in the poem -
depending upon your text editor, you may have an entirely different cup.

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4. **MARK WALLACE**

Re: (Forwarded) : Obj

Mon 2 May 1994

May I start controversy?
I'm bored because I work for a living.
Yes, in medieval Christian Europe
painters were more in touch with their bodies
and with the physical nature of the universe
than we are in this fallen
fly-by-night mechanical reality.
They were able to achieve this state
at least partly because of their
secure position within feudal society,
which admired care
more than we do now.
Perhaps a return
to a rural paradise of the sort
posited by Johnathan Swift, A. Pope,
and more recently Allan Tate
and Robert Penn Warren
is called for.
We could slow down, we could really take care
with our materials again.
We could even have the plague again!--
talk about pure physicality.
Sometimes I wonder, though
whether our own current social state
emerges from the contradictions
of European history, even pre-machines,
rather than being a fall from it.

Maybe physicality was always a problem
and not a given.
Maybe objects don't completely last
anymore than they utterly disappear.
Maybe the middle ages was hell
for almost everybody.
But here I am, being interrupted again--
time to go back to work.
I wanted to make my satire jovial,
hope it will be taken in that spirit
however the machinery failed me.

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5. **Marc Nasdor**
Re: Beatnik Bliss & CP Geebies

Mon 2 May 1994

Yeah, Bob, but it'd be even better in Maryland with a bushel of hot steamed crabs ready for the dissectin'. Anyway, good time to start a flame war about overrated gloppy buffalo wings. DIS! DIS! DIS!

-Marc Nasdor, a/k/a csigaposta (hungarian snail mail)

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6. **Robert Kelly**
Re: Beatnik Bliss & CP Geebies

Tue 3 May 1994

As Homer tells it
when I was a kid up there
you got a beef and
wick at Bai-Lo's
one man could not
eat two of,

 what
is this business
of scrawny leathery
limbs of fowl
I ask you?
Did Arkhilikos get his
in such a way or mute
his lyric thumb with

blue cheese anything
at all (I ask you)

the skin
slips off the string.

Wan suei, friend.

Robert

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7. **Robert Kelly**
Re: (Forwarded) : Obj
Tue 3 May 1994

The least thing
(best thing)
we could do
to get that
worky worthy way
is write in Thinglish.
Try to do.

rk

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8. **Robert Creeley**
That Old Blurred Chicken's Got Me In Its Spell...
Tue 3 May 1994

Must be the heavens
so invite,
in xtian parlance stated--

If chickens could
get off the ground,
they never would be eaten.

Meantime I fly
though god knows why
on wings of chicken only.

Though clams be great
what we can get
in Buffalo is homely.

By which I mean
of course all scenes
are local and particular.

But now the patient
chicken waits*
its wings to part forever.

Here's to bleu cheese,
and Joe and me--
and poetry's murmurous meters!

I can't keep up the rhyme
no more... It's time...
Goodbye, dear fri

*Cf. earlier reference: "TED JOANS READING
CPG, May 4, 1994 -- 7:30 PM." World events, etc.

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9. **Jorge Guitart** *see what they made me do*

Tue 3 May 1994

1 WAY

for D.L & M.S.

by Jorge Guitart

we are our (protein) interactions

i am colloidal said (ms) particle
and you? i am mr hydro(phobicity) (by adsorption)

recall the great elucidation
at the bar
the interfacial behavior

observed solution none
information unobtainable
by structural studies alone

thin films (of our `lives')
fringes of equal chromatic order
& "different" wavelengths separated
don't interfere constructively with my exiting

& i approached the foul bioreactor
your surface energies give rather

indirect information
i follow your time evolution in situ
what extraordinary specificity
by the crossed cylinders
the depth of my minimum
was much greater
why didn't you indicate directly
the timescale of your reorientation
lips lipid bylayer
& interdigitated monolayer
why was blockage of binding used
to mask attractiveness?

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10. **Robert Creeley**
Frid CPGbees

Tue 3 May 1994

Jorge really gets to me with those questions!
Why was "blockage of binding used
to mask attractiveness..."
Blurred blue sentience?
Buffalo is perhaps the center
of the universe
in reverse of all others
going from left to right
in that order?
But "fri" was not fried Friday,
friend.
It was:
"Goodbye, dear friends and neighbors..."
Why "Press RETURN for more"?
Why didn't you
"indicate directly"?
You always used to.

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11. **Tom Mandel**
"pure" "physicality"

Tue 3 May 1994

What is Williams' (Raymond's) tome?
"Town & Country In English Prose"
whose intro tariffs MW's refrain
with what just has happened, has just been destroyed.
We need a creole history to know
how the messianic jews of smyrna
affected revolution in
america and france, once their
clothes'd been removed and fragrant
from the barrels they sat on
awaitin' the tribes march north
and a cloud to carry
Amsterdam to Jerusalem, t'ain't enuff
to see it being mixed now
as if we used to paint in primary colors
of social position, the exception
and the rule, ala Henri deRegnier
or Francois Coppee (admired for
his "range" by the then-unknown
friend of dR: XXXXXXXXXX)
) his papers not worth the ink
of think they print upon.
You see a pattern? I don't.
"The past is all that can be changed."
Sorry, the present's out
of bounds; even what returns your gaze
not even memory can be formed
"let me hear your theory again Mr. Chain
if you imagine me prepared I am"
for complexity to be all of the object
allowed, and poet (mind?)
straightforwardinthegroove
of thanks again, no second helping of solutions
I'm having problems swallowing the problems
tom

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12. **Joe Amato**

Re: That Old Blurred Chicken's Got Me In Its Spell...

Wed 4 May 1994

The sky is bleu
in Chi-town, folks
my porkchop on the grill

Though Buffalo & poetry
& chicken wings
bode still:

To shuffle off
in such a state
my porkchop goes un-et

& yet the point would seem to be
such wings beget
poets:

Hence sweet refrain
may only bring
my porkchop from the grill

But if a chicken wing can sing
for me, dear folks
it will...

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13. **MARK WALLACE**

Re: That Old Blurred Chicken's Got Me In Its Spell...

Wed 4 May 1994

I can't fly,
though sure can sit.
But shit?
Well, maybe after chicken wings.

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14. **Robert Creeley**

The Old (Wingless) Chicken's Song

Wed 4 May 1994

"What is Williams' (Raymond's) tome..."
Where have all the flowers gone?

I put them right here on the table...
No one's been here but for Mabel.
God, my mind is slipping cogs,
gaps of pattern, mucho fog...
Yet I know whatever I
can ever think of 'ere I die,
'twill be in my head alone
that the symbiotic blur has formed--
to make no "we" unless "they" tell "us"
"you" is "me" and "I" is nameless.
"Tom" is wrong? "I" is right?
Is this the point at which "we" fight?
Us was never happy we,
all that's ever left is me.
Past is what I can't forget,
where the flowers got to yet--
Mabel's face, my mother's hands,
clouds o'er head last year at Cannes,
Kenneth Koch's reaction when
we told him once at 3 AM
he should marry Barbara Epstein,
loosen up and have some fun.
"I remember, I remember--"
Memory, the great pretender,
says it happened, thinks it was,
this way, that way, just because
it was in my head today...
Present (present) passed away.

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15. **Mn Ctr for Book Arts**
Re: The Old (Wingless) Chicken's Song
Wed 4 May 1994

on the wings of a chicken
an old song in triplets

wider than an aging mile
higher than the sweet ting
of barbecue, iced tea
remains the age of the day
on the swing, the children
singing an old song on the wing

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16. **Robert Creeley** ***Chicken Chat***

Thu 5 May 1994

Ted Joans has now come and gone, to fact of modest audience, a quiet midweek night in Buffalo at the end of the school year, etc. He's such an old time kind of poet, with a few books of his own to sell, satchel of personal belongings, arriving by bus from NYC at 7:25 AM, looking around very particularly. He proves a bridge over many troubled waters indeed, with stories of being recently in South Africa and countries there adjacent--moving as one can when there is no high exposure to deal with, sticking to the local and being handed on. He's moved as a poet reading and talking in Africa more than any other, of any circumstance--can tell you the particulars of language in various places, the lore of their locating habits, imaginations. And so on.

After his reading we were still sitting there, comfortably, talking, with the chicken wings etc etc--I was saying to Ken Sherwood how persuasively attractive this curious place (right here/the so-called net (well named)) had been these past few days. As if I'd been waiting like kid at edge of water to jump, and finally had--and found it terrific! An exfoliating "self" of weird kind that literally "echoed" back and back and back in apparent "object-ivity" that nonetheless was just plain Bob/or words to that effect.

In the early 40s when still in college I had job as copy boy on the Boston Globe, and recall hysteria of trying to keep up with the sheets of paper rolling off the bank of teletype machines: "late breaking" bulletins with endless revisions, cancellations, etc etc. Now I got chance to play "sender".

But, as Ken said, it's a funny "place" and activity, as if one could really get lost "out there," be so "distributed" the focus, or locating response, were only endless reverberations of one's own initiating act. That is, it's instantly hard to hear anyone but one's self--and the moves, as in a poker game or checkers, become too simply (for me at least) redeterminations of my "position" (hardly "intellectual") as I want to keep "playing"--and why not.

Seamus Cooney was saying some time back, think of what it would have been like had you and Olson had email. Help... Yet it would have saved all those drab hours waiting for the mail--as I did at times, crouched back of brush some thirty feet from where the mail truck would pull up. In some obvious ways, writing letters back then was even more of a singular act, a proposal of self simply, than what I am doing here right now-- but on reflection it seems the same.

Carla Billitteri in last discussion of Olson seminar etc used sense of the "solipsistic fury" of his late work: "Wholly absorbed..."; "I live underneath the light of day..." Etc. I think of Wittgenstein's essay/ lecture on ethics, wherein he speaks of will to make just one word that can be autonomous--self creating. It seems the same "fury"--familiar to all who read, write, or think no doubt. "Was that a real poem or did you just make it up yourself..." Quien sabe, amigos.

P.S. Irony indeed that the one "food" Ted is deeply allergic to--like even a spoon dipped in soup would do it--is chicken.

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17. **Jed**

Re: Chicken Chat

Thu 5 May 1994

Re: Olson's "fury" & Bob Creeley's humanizing of it as a generic condition of readers & writers grasping for an autonomous word.

I think of other senses, archaic, mythopoeic, in which Olson would have *worked* the material, pressed out its ulterior sense. "Fury" is not merely an emotional state, but the name for the Erinyes, spirits avenging family violence. Their inception is curious, as they arise from the ground in the drops of blood spattered by the castration of Uranus in that primal scene of patricide. Colloquially the furies were appealed to in cursing, and are thought of as even the personifications of curse. And Jean-Pierre Vernant has something interesting to add: "The Erinyes can claim the two extremes: What is 'pure' and 'natural' is also what is raw. They do not drink wine but they do eat men." (Myth & Tragedy in Ancient Greece, 158)

--Jed Rasula

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18. **Michael Boughn**

more chatter

Thu 5 May 1994

But what, Bob, would you have done without precisely those shrubs and that ritual. What about the poems and (as here) stories that moment still proposes. Probably you'll just find (as I have in recent moments of messages "purloined" somehow in the net (a sleeping gatekeeper?)) some new kind of bush.

The big difference for me is who's on the other end, or who I think there. The "self" proposed in the O letters, who's working there, includes its companion and goad. In other words the conversation, the very one Emerson proposes to replace religion. Who, here, am I writing to? I'm thinking of you but even in the process know this is different in its diffusion to others I'll never know. Not that one is less composed. Or less uneasy. Still, an overheard conversation.

In Hyampom CA, (drive to Mt Shasta, turn left and take the logging road a hundred miles west) the whole town was (20 years ago, and may still be) on a single party line--perhaps the morphic antecedent to this moment. They say people, knowing someone was sick, say, would wait for the signal--two longs and a short, or whatever the code for the particular house--then everyone would pick up the phone to find out how the sick person was. That way disturbance was minimized, but everybody knew what was happening. Talk about community. Still, no sweet nothings under those conditions. Thus your exfoliating self moves towards what attractor?

--Mike

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19. **Robert Creeley**

Chicken Feathers

Sat 7 May 1994

Carla's note of Olson's "solipsistic fury" gets misplaced here necessarily, just that I took it out of context, didn't mark its company in her thinking ("stone," "double"), nor in any respect suggest what the preoccupations in her discussion were. At some point I hope one can read what she's done for onself--as I'm sure she hopes likewise. One's trying to get to the place (what I'd call the context) where Olson finds himself--as in the early note to Elaine Feinstein: "Orientate me." ("The light is in the east," etc etc.)

Anyhow, thinking of Jed Rasula's useful addition of the Furies (the English of the Latin of the Greek)--I like the fact that "fury" locates in "rage," and that certainly echoes: "rages, tears..." "And the thought of its thought is the rage/ of Ocean : _apophanesthai_..."

--Egocentrically it recalls my own (humanistic) "possession": "I rage./ I rage, I rage." The downside, like they say, of a state that is not simply (only) an emotion (as Jed usefully emphasizes)-- but is a place one's come into, as "Come into the world."

This one,
that one,
the other one--

I keep thinking of "seizure," a sense I get insistently in Olson --that one acts in/from such state. Paradoxically it's the Greco/Roman that seems to have the problem with such "place," it's so "irrational"--thinking, in contrast, of the dervishes still very active in Turkey (if often reduced to a kind of "entertainment" (or so attached) akin to pueblo ritual dances in the southwestern U.S.).

But here it all goes again--that endless digression! "Get on board, etc etc." I wish there were some damn way to get out/get in "here" so as to find the literal company one knows is "there". Somehow the note in the bottle--charming though that be--is, for me, still the parallel. Which means at best I'm in there too. Show me the way to go home! I'm TIRED and I WANT TO GO TO BED... (P.S. Just in Baltimore and they sure eat well --and no chicken wings in sight... Maryland Institute of Art (Joe Cardar- elli) seems where it's at. Anyhow "my Baltimore" is same plus memories of Andrei Codrescu, David Franks, and impeccable Anselm Hollo. "Scrapple" on the menu. All the trees had leaves! Barry Alpert in good spirits. Julie Kalendak's going to Alaska. Onward!)

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20. **Bruce**
More chicken musings
Sat 7 May 1994

Yes, Mike, that was very much my thinking about this space. It's great to have some sense of potential community, but it seems to remain forever potential. Perhaps, Bob, if I'd been at the CPG Wednesday night to talk in person about it I'd have a sense of more active possibility here, but, Charles, though I perched 'fore the screen all Wednesday night, nary a whiff did I catch o' them virtual victuals--though we're perhaps better off not to have that particular odiferous technology. (But FREE wings? When did they become FREE?) So who are my interlocutor? Jed Rasula re the furies? which called to mind Francis Bacon's use of the Erinyes in a few of his paintings, so clearly connected to the fury of his paint in all those figures--very much the solipsistic fury that you mentioned, Bob, though I think there's not only the fury of striving for that word, but a fury at striving for it, at finding oneself in that situation--all that's

involved in "odi et amo." But I'm getting off topic. Thanks, Peter, for the summer reading suggestions, it's rare to hear anything of CanLit here. Lately I've been relaxin' (and cookin') with oldies like Henry Green and Robert Walser, whom I'm sure you already know. By the way, Bob, what do you think of Francis Bacon? I've been experimenting, putting poets and painters together in my classes, and you and he seemed to hit it off pretty well.... My point is, all of these lines seem at once to move out of group and into individual conversations. What is a group discussion in espace? Do we stick to general queries: i.e., does anyone recall just where Pound talks about the air in Italy making one (I think he says a man) more vibrant, more alive, etc.? Or could we have some collective impact as a poetics "consortium"--for instance, organizing protests and recommendations about mainstream anthology exclusions (the case of W.W. Norton and the Objectivists comes to mind). These seem useful functions, though hardly what one dreams of. I don't think, in any case, that "we" are going to create the contemporary equivalent of the Olson-Creeley letters here--the "we" feels too uncertain (who else is listening? the IRS? your colleagues? tenure committees? how pervasive can paranoia become in electronic space? (how many people are on this list, Charles?)). But perhaps it can become a starting point for individual conversations, which could then proceed without the self-regulation this mode necessarily involves. And of course it can also help to alleviate some of that solipsistic fury--when you want to alleviate it. But who knows? Maybe someone'll actually bring back that word--this time.

P.S. The query, above, is real. (Everything else, of course, is virtual, just like those wings Charles promised.)

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21. **Robert Kelly** ***Re: Chicken Feathers***

Sat 7 May 1994

Since you say seizure, I'm boldened to mark our Bruno's (Jordan Brown's) sense of the furore poetico, the spasm of saying, the sheer out/burst from which the art so 'furiously' arises -- not fury (anger) but furioso,

taking fury as furore from my memory of Olson's anabolic clarity out loud. I had mentioned this to Rasula, to spread wider those Erinyes/Eumenides (not just the well-intentioned, let alone the Nice Minded ones of Victorian euphemism, but the ones who hold their meanings clear) of his,

that furore is of mind, and anything else is rage. Which is always going one way or another back to raga, long as the first one is, emotion, mood, music's way.

Gosh. I remember the Maryland Institute when it was a train station. I got off there many a time. The life of that city rouses over and over.

Robert

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22. **Robert Drake**

Re: More chicken musings

Sat 7 May 1994

| (who else is listening? the IRS? your colleagues? tenure committees?

to find out, send the message "REVIEW POETICS" to the listserv address-- you'll receive a message w/ the names and addresses of all current subscribers (except chris funk...). makes for a handy address list of the current "in crowd".

last time i checked, the list was about 25% women (plus/minus a few gender-ambiguous names)... haven't kept track, but gender ratio of those actively contributing messages doesn't seem anywhere close to that. how interesting.

lbd

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23. **Jed Rasula**

Re: More chicken musings

Mon 9 May 1994

In response to Bruce's "real" query about this e-consortium and the uses to which it might be put, I have a practical request. I've been asked to review the new *Columbia History [which it's not!] of American Poetry* edited by Jay Parini, and wonder if anybody has anything to say about it here. I'll reserve comment pending yours...

As for the omission of the Objectivists in the Norton, the spanking new 4th edition glossily proclaims its inclusion of Oppen as groundbreaking. It's not hard to figure out how Oppen finally made it: check the MLA bibliography on CD-rom and you'll find that if you key in name searches Oppen (this was last June, actually) gives 108, Zukofsky 85, Reznikoff 50 -- contrasting which, to show where the interest really lies, Hollander nets 9, Hecht 12, Snodgrass 9. Or garnering a bit more attention--but still decidedly less than the Objectivists--Merwin 47, J.Wright 59, Ammons 60, Kinnell 35, and even Merrill 46. The myth of Objectivist exclusion may be about to change. (But one thing this kind of search doesn't indicate, of course, is who makes it into the anthologies--and Oppen, Rez, & Zuk remain largely *persona non grata*).

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24. **hlazer**

Re: More chicken musings

Mon 9 May 1994

Jed & others--

Regarding the anthology business. The 4th edition of the Norton also include Niedecker. I've just been reviewing Am Lit anthologies (for a textbook committee here at U of Alabama). Norton is honestly the most adventurous (re. Objectivists & others) of the major anthologies. The much touted Heath anthology--leader in matters multicultural--exhibits little aesthetic tolerance or range. I've been interested for some time in the relationship between multicultural inclusions vs. aesthetic/formal range. As Charles B. & others have pointed out, often multicultural "adventurousness" occurs as part of a formally rather homogeneous manner of (personal, clear) expression, and thus more innovative multicultural poetries do not get included. Or, as in the new 2nd edition of the Heath, the version of postmodernism that gets advanced really has very little postmodern poetry in it. When the "contemporary" gets represented, the innovative is hardly ever included (even in token fashion) in the "major" AM LIT anthologies.

Now, of course, via Hoover's editorship, Norton has a new anthology of POSTMODERN AMERICAN POETRY, which I'm just reading through now. It has a fine introduction & quite a few very good selections, giving readers a good sense of the variety of poetries of the last 45 years.

As for Creeley's chicken wing musings, down here we got ribs. Best place is Dreamland in Jerusalem Heights. They serve nothing but ribs, and white bread (the spongy, airy variety). A few years ago, the IRS raided the place & asked the owner to show them his books. John Jr., the owner, said what books? He'd done a cash only business for years. Got fined \$150,000, and was ordered to serve a community meal once a year to the occupants of our local state hospital for the retarded. Football alums, who also love Dreamland, went to the courthouse and paid the fine. The once a year meal has been a disaster. Dreamland's ribs/sauce are hot. The patients, many of whom are elderly & don't have their own teeth, had been eating bland foods & couldn't handle the ribs & sauce. John Jr. apparently now pays taxes and has books?

Any thoughts on anthologies & the representation (or non-) of experimental poetries would be appreciated. Or thoughts on ribs.

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25. **Kristen Prevallet**

Re: More chicken musings

Mon 9 May 1994

Another side to the "multicultural adventurousness", of course, is corporate competition. I happened to be working as an editorial assistant at Norton at the time when the Hoover anthology was still being considered. I remember that the anthology editors were actually going to conferences and having closed-door meetings about the possibilities of new directions in canonizing. Essentially it was a matter of them either getting on the multi-cultural / innovative etc. bandwagon or falling off-the Norton anthologies, that is, essentially run the business.

And to illustrate what the "formally rather homogenous manner of personal/ clear expression" means when it comes to judging whether a poet is publishable or not, here is a letter I received from one of the editors when I tried to get him to consider a Mackey manuscript: "Mr Mackey works in a poetic vein that I am vaguely aware of, but which I can't quite grasp. Many beautiful lines, but overall terribly ... elusive. And I don't have to tell you that the very long line forms at the right for Norton poets. We will have to decline this serious poet's work in the politest way possible."

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26. **MARK WALLACE**

Situation Magazine

Mon 9 May 1994

Situation #6 features poetry by Joan Retallack, Susan Schultz, Cole Swensen, Peter Ganick, John M. Bennett, others.

Situation #7, due out this summer, will feature work from Kevin Killian, Ron Silliman, A.L. Nielsen, Sterling Plumpp, others.

Earlier issues have featured poets such as Charles Bernstein, Hannah Weiner, Bruce Andrews, Ray Federman, Ben Friedlander, Sheila Murphy, Juliana Spahr, Elizabeth Burns, Jeff Hansen, and many others.

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Write me at Mark Wallace, Situation,
10 Orton Place #2,
Buffalo, NY 14201
or contact me through e-mail
for further information.

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27. **Patrick Phillips**
Re: Ribs in Dreamland
Mon 9 May 1994

To Hank and others

Just now I received a post from Yunte Huang (thanks), whom you (Hank) know as, among other things, a poet, translator of Chinese and soon to be reveller in chicken wings, who is now finished with his work at Alabama. The note regarded work of Chinese poets he is helping me compile for an anthology I am editing - "still waiting for a reply from China." With the appearance of the Norton and the appeared to be a moment where I could, for various reasons, announce the project to the list. I have been querying international poets and editors for five months now and the process now turns in earnest to the North American "front."

The anthology is a sound, text and image compilation of contemporary international experimental poetry. I will publish this gratis on the internet via something called Mosaic - Mosaic allows the viewing/reading/listening of images, movies, sound and text. One book publishers has expressed some "interest" in the project as an electronic (CD) effort. Publication late '95?...

After my recent posting of Ferdinand Schmatz's "Sud an (kaffee)" (I must thank Charles for directing me to Schmatz and others) I was asked by Nick Lawrence to say a little more about the "focus, etc..." of the anthology. The premise is that the form of this more-than-one-medium anthology, either in static disk form, or dynamic "internet form," whatever that is, may disrupt the kind of notions which often motivate discussions around anthologies - notions like "the canonical," occidental/oriental splits, schematic organization of literary development, the sheer inanity of anthologies to begin with, etc.. Of course editorial sympathies remain. But I am sympathetic to the disruption of established historical and categorical paradigms to the point that *I* go in and out of focus. I can say that my focal plane is located somewhere near the idea,

to borrow a phrase from Karatani Kojin, a Japanese literary critic, that "literature is not natural;" not to rehash the anti-naturalist, anti-positivist debate, but to establish a picture of a "landscape" of international textual discourse which unveils its economic manufacture. Or, in our more culinary scape, how much Buffalo Wings are in Dreamland.

Thus far, as mentioned in my reference to Yunte, queries have been made to Chinese as well as Japanese, Italian, Austrian, Finnish, French, Spanish, Indian, British, Russian, Tanzanian and Canadian poets for their texts (recorded in language of origin). Startling similarities arise; subtle yet variances in use and expression abound.

Cards and letters to North Americans should go out within the next month or so. I invite you all to diner - and welcome any suggestions, comments or questions.

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28. **Marc Nasdor**
Re: More chicken musings
Mon 9 May 1994

Go for it, Jed!
-Marc Nasdor

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29. **Marc Nasdor**
Re: More chicken musings
Mon 9 May 1994

Regarding Kristen's posting:
gag me with a spoon
rather,
gag *them* with a three-week-old chicken wing!
-Marc

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30. **Marc Nasdor**
Re: More chicken musings
Mon 9 May 1994

wings to the north of me
ribs to the south

but still can't get the taste of hot steamed crabs & National Boh
out my mouth

-Nasdor

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31. **Robert Creeley**

Re: More Chicken Musings

Tue 10 May 1994

I've not seen the Columbia History etc though it's become a "topic" etc. There was a curious note by David Perkins, the previous purveyor of orthodoxy with respect to the "Modern canon," in the HARVARD REVIEW, pp. 225-227. He laments what he calls "a lack of personality," coherence, a point of view, etc., etc. (He's reviewing both volumes, i.e., American and British). More personally, friends begin to be irritated--I think legitimately--by the snideness with which they are noted, if they are. That is, that factor of "personality" is certainly present. Anyhow, whatever Perkins' own criteria or understanding, one might well ask--like they say--what's the premise of these judgements? For example, the 2nd edition of the Norton dropped Zukofsky, and then, as I recall, another involved with American "literature" included Niedecker that same year. Ted Berrigan was also dropped. I have seen none of the recent anthologies to date--with the sole exception of VOICES FROM THE NUYORICAN CAFE, which seems of a "place and time" at least sans question. Anyhow talking to Allen G/ in NYC recently (after the celebration for Paul Hoover's antho/ at St Marks), he seemed much impressed--and he is an inveterate anthology-maker (for use in his own teaching). Jed, Charles tells me of your active rehearsal of the canon of my own immediate elders, i.e., the group as Lowell, Jarrell, Roethke, and of how they were kept "in place." So all the above must be quite familiar. "Nobody here but us chickens..."

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32. **Joseph Conte**

Re: More chicken musings

Tue 10 May 1994

Furthering the discussion of anthologies and canonization, has anyone perused the new _Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry_? Ed. Ian Hamilton, which ought to tell us something. It has the virtue of multinational inclusion, "from America and Britain to Trinidad and Zimbabwe." All the principal Objectivists are included, plus an entry on the movement itself. But whereas C. Coolidge is mentioned in passing in the entry on New York School, The, and C.

Bernstein in overview of Language Poetry, Emily Grosholz and Dana Gioia and Andrew Hudgins (friendly acquaintances all) merit (?) their own entries.

Personally I'm harboring a nostalgic longing for the brick-oven pizza parlors of Belleville, NJ.

Joseph Conte

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33. **sondheim**

The Year 1800-2200

Wed 11 May 1994

=====

I LOOK THROUGH YOUR EYES

Begin, I say, begin.

I have disappeared from my life. At one point, I had fashioned an artwork or sculpture, a wire envelope indicating the farthest reaches of my arms and legs, the inner space of the body. Wire formed the surface between flesh and the outer world, and wire was the metaphor for transverse or transgressive logics carrying the weight of gesture across the body itself.

It is this beyond, thrust against gesture, to which gesture cannot penetrate, that I dedicate this short essay in the elegiac mode. Romanticism, always illusory, bases itself upon such, and I find myself within its portals, about to make an entrance accompanied by numerous shades and indeterminate genders.

I speak of the envelope of wires, of telephones and computer networks, of communications focused upon the parabolic mirror of the heart. For here, I have received one ghost only to discard another; I have been discarded by a third, and enveloped by a fourth who murmurs, everything has limitations and your body has written me.

And years ago, I believed in just this: that I have written myself simultaneously in and out of existence, that writing was the hinge turned against the sheer inertia of the world. But now I reach out and find the current of the wires dangerous and sparking; ozone fills the air which I remember to breath, and haunted pools of liquid threaten annihilation if I overstep the keyboard and its memories. Here I have learned from Weber: The Call is always a translation, mercurial at best, and the Call is literate.

I bend deeper into the keys themselves, jetsam on an indeterminate sea. My back strains with the weight of moderated thought. Beyond the window is

another window. Beyond another window is a window, darkness outside illuminated by the circular resonance of yellowed lamps disappearing in a forced perspective, Dean Street drowned by so many others. London would not have suffered in the comparison; London is a word of magic, illuminated by the street of the kindly Dean, Swift to the occasion:

"Suppose me dead; and then suppose
A club assembled at the Rose;
Where, from Discourse of this or that,
I grow the Subject of their Chat."

The petals stem themselves from a breast or fountain animate, close to the invention of steam for rail or water transportation. Steam breathes the extension of language in the future Railway Panic or speculation arranged from capital and fear of the compression of flesh itself. No longer etiquette holds against the centrifugal thrust repeatedly towards empire returning gold to Portugal and Spain. Violence occurs whenever discourse is downed, the table replaced by emptied telephony, packets and nodes choked with useless information rewriting, on a continuous basis, the history of the electrical world itself. So my eyes are closed; dead, I continue.

To continue to conjure or reproduce those which I love and those whom I have loved, or merely, in relation to an indifference: I would find you beyond the hindrance of address. To do so is to remember, the password leads only to a null file; every word passes and every word returns writing/culture degree zero. Suppose it dead, you dead, myself: This uncanny harboring continues, nightly, tall ships with masts catching electron wind between one and another star, sailing mournfully down Dean Street itself, passing in calmed or still waters and nowhere moving or returning.

It is the stillness which shapes the thing. The thing occurs only in the shaping of silence. Letters project their third dimension; it is necessary as well that I am here, producing the occurrence of their text, that is to say, their dominion. More than the dominion of letters I am not, and more I would be.

I have been discarded, effaced; no longer existing, existence disappears after one more address, one more presence. You do not make it real; emission pools beyond you, a doubled annular eclipse shadowing in the form of stuttered outline. Beyond the street is another street.

"The fools, my juniors by a year,
Are tortur'd with suspense and fear;
Who wisely thought my age a screen,
When death approach'd, to stand between:
The screen remov'd, their hearts are trembling;
They mourn for me without dissembling."

Dean Swift, Alan Sondheim, 432 Dean Street, and Brooklyn, NY, and 11217.

=====

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34. **Charles Bernstein**

Alberta on My Mind

Thu 12 May 1994

I've been travelling
to Vancouver, where I read at the Kootenay
School of Writing & tried to get the
collective authorities there to sell me a
Ph.D. for less than the \$50 (Canadian)
they have been asking, only that I
enjoy discounts and special pricing,
I mean I don't question the value,
so we're in a Vietnamese restaurant
& Colin Smith pulls out a letter
he happens to have in his bag
from some official government agency
telling KSW that they must cease and
desist from offering unlicensed
postsecondary instruction to which Colin
suggests that the best solution may
be to send the person who wrote
the admonition an honorary degree from
KSW -- hm, Canadians really are
different than us Statesiders, they
seem to know how to get along

so, Bruce, speaking of Canadian poets --
Idaho, Canada that is --
got word of a celebration in Vancouver
next spring of Robin Blaser's
70th birthday, now in the planning;
and just missed Peter Quartermain's
60th birthday; & realized I had failed
(old story) to mention, in my hyperbolic
notices for (KSWers) Kevin Davies's
& Deanna Ferguson's new books in
the new Sulfur, Catrinna Strang's

Low Fancy, which I got only after I
turned that notice in

& on to Edmonton, where I got lost in
the Fantasyland Mall on the way to
one of the demikeynotes at the
International Association for Philosophy
and Literature "Thinking Between Poetry
& Philosophy" convention & so missed
most of the lecture on the "The Ineluctable
Split of Poetry's Unsayable Name: Reading
Derrida through Nietzsche's Unknowable
Answer to Celan's Joyce (A Response to
Benjamin)." Many of the conventioners
noted that the "Bourbon Street" food
mall was a perfect example of "simulation" --
a view I have trouble understanding
(again not unusual for me)
since the patrons of food court
seem to enjoy the fact that
"Bourbon Street" is ineluctably in
the West Edmonton Mall & the designers
of the street seemed to go
out of their way to emphasize this fact,
making it look like a plastercaste
sketch of a picture of a New Orleans street
& not like the "real thing" at
all; the only ones fooled were
we conventioners having our
dinner as we chatted about the
breakdown of reality and simulacra
(or simusoy for the lactose
intolerant). & talk about authentically
local as you might, the Buffalo
wings on Bourbon Street
in the West Edomonton Mall
never tasted so real
(or would have; I had the trout)
so somewhat late to
respond to the various & sundry
recent posts

but, speaking of simulacra,
Jed Rasula's book, which I recently
read in manuscript, is called
_The American Poetry Wax Museum:
Reality Effects 1940-1990_. I hope it
comes out soon: it's not-to-be-missed.
Jed has a way of making the story of
what he calls New Criticism, Inc.,
absolutely rivetting, so much so that
I could understand, as if for the first time,
what made the American poetry canon of the
1950s possible. Jed's work is essential
in its elucidating the cultural logic
of the countermodernist turn.
I also just got word that Alan Golding's
_From Outlaw to Classic: Canon in
American Poetry_ will be out this fall
from the University of Wisconsin.

Meanwhile, Douglas Messerli's 1135-page
epic _From the Other Side of the
Century: A New American Poetry 1960-1990_
(Sun & Moon Press) is now out and
beginning to make its way into the world.
I just got an advance copy today.

+++++++

A Note on this List

As new people join Poetics@UBVM I ask them not to mention the list on any
public internet space (BBS, listserve, etc) in order to keep this particular group
to a relatively small scale. This is not to discourage people from recommending
the list to others but to keep the list to people who have a direct involvement
with its current constituency (however undefined that may be).

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35. **Carla Billitteri**

I Am A Child

Thu 12 May 1994

Now Available

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edited by William Howe & Benjamin Friedlander

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Kim Rosenfield, Lee Ann Brown, Lisa Jarnot, Mark Wallace, Maya Grace
Strauss, Miekal And, Nick Lawrence, Nils Ya, Norma Cole, Pat Reed, Patrick
Phillips, Robert Creeley, Robert Duncan, Robert Fitterman, Robert Grenier,
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Thad Ziolkowski, Vanessa Renwick, and William Howe.

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or



from I AM A CHILD

"If childhood doesn't exist for Andrews, claims
precedence as neither word nor concept, it's because
the child is an ideological construct, a role that society
foists, not only upon the young, but on _all_ subjects;
childhood for Andrews, if anything, is a meaningless
word, a concept without rigor, a social practice
determined by adult orders whose rejection, never-
theless, childhood alone is reserved for."

****Nils Ya**

"Satan _himself_ taught all arts of deception: your looks
mistaken

in glass afraid wants
muffler upright the hour-eye
girls who hate women
personalize your past dumb face rhetoric preening query
fluid inattention --"

****Bruce Andrews**

"since they all have cotton wads in their ears, I _must_ be
the syrene who is singing on their rock."

**Robert Duncan

". . . and might not this poetics of the outburst--cruelly, unintentionally--have
given Duncan over to a power of poetry terrible to behold, violent even in its
erudition, a territorial pissing, a childish statecraft, a poetics closer to that of
Bruce Andrews . . ." **Nils Ya

"Let's press our breasts together and french kiss;
any more I can't speak about.
Too much description ruins everything."

**Lee Ann Brown

"And then the Angels come.
And then the Pig Angels come when
the Angels come."

**Emma Bernstein

"motherhood

uninteresting fetish
and a
sick habit"

**Vanessa Renwick

"sweet pomegranite sickness, world that would be drunk
with joy of itself but instead launches
its rockets of vomit to pollute upper worlds"

**Jeff Gburek

"Why did they kill them

Why was my body
flooded
with tension
my small cock stiff"

**Robert Creeley

"Transcendence, then, is not a climbing over, but a
recognition of the pallor on the face of the impossible.
This pallor is the visible secret."

**Patrick Phillips

"All of the above questions are worthy of a search for answers, if that is what we are seeking. . . . At this juncture of the process I am able to empathize with skeptics, and occasionally offer my own views of the underbelly."

**Chris Funkhouser

"The childhood of a prospective idea remains in its room, undecided. We are left standing between one window that opens on to a scene of instruction, desire, communal activity, and another that surveys a landscape littered with logos, chap-books, new and improved junk."

**Nick Lawrence

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36. **Robert Kelly**
Re: Alberta on My Mind

Thu 12 May 1994

in the heart of all the riches of Charles' report on the Road to the Deep North, stands out the need for us all, all, to inscribe/orate/declare/silently pray something in honor of that upcoming 70th of Blaser. Let us gather the posy of huzzahs and fling it NW.

Robert

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37. **Kenneth Sherwood**
archiving

Fri 13 May 1994

INFORMATION (at Charles Bernstein's request)

For anyone interested in recapturing the 'immediacy' of past postings, dredging up the traces of ALL POETICS traffic since March 1994, there is an archive.

To receive a file containing all posts since that date with nasty header material excised, send the following command, as the one and only line in a mail message to [REDACTED]

GET POETICS NOTEBOOK

For those whose accounts do not typically 'interact' well with the poetics list, you might try amending this command to:

GET POETICS NOTEBOOK F=mail

(This should result in the VERY LONG file being sent as a normal mail message.
NO promises!)

Ken Sherwood

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38. **Yunte Huang**
wings, ribs, and books

Mon 16 May 1994

After reading Hank's wonderful story of the Dreamland BBQ ribs, I, as a restaurant owner in the same town, would like to share with ya'll my imaginative experience with IRS. I have so far very carefully kept my books in Chinese. Anything that is even faintly comprehensible to the English readers will be eliminated from the books. Therefore, you can't find any Arabian numbers in them, nor Roman numerals (as a swain sang: business is a secret, and risky path off the cultures). The only things you can find are hieroglyphic characters and some I-chingish, yin-yang stuff. So if IRS raids us, I will give them a seemingly cunning oriental, or Wenzhouish (Hank and James) smile, and gladly present them the books. In addition, I will also show them the book I have translated, *_Selected Language poems_* (by Charles, Hank, and James), suggesting that since I can translate that kind of difficult poetry stuff, I can sure do a "faithful" translation of these books, if they really need my service.

P.S. If there are any secret agents here on this list, mind you, this is poetics discussion, and my piece above shows, hopefully, the complexity of cultural communication as the functional languages are concerned. "Nothing here but wings, ribs, and leftovers..."

Yunte Huang

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39. **Jennifer Moxley**
Impercipient 5

Wed 25 May 1994

EXTRA! EXTRA! FRUITS FALL FROM AMERICAN TREE! APEX OF URBANITY FINALLY REACHED! COOLIDGE CALLED IN FOR QUESTIONING: IS HE A ROMAN AGENT?! CHARLES BERNSTEIN SAYS HE'LL GIVE UP E-MAIL NOW THAT...

A new issue of the **The Impercipient** is out, featuring stunning new poems by Joe Ross, Lisa Jarnot, Lee Ann Brown, Jessica Lowenthal, Peter Gizzi, Kevin Davies, Thad Ziolkowski, Rob Fitterman, Jennifer Moxley, Jeff Hull, and Magdalena Zurawksi.

If you haven't yet touched your head to this "silent pillow of a generation" (to dream or to drool), now is certainly the time to do so.

Subscription information is as follows:

3 issues \$12
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back issues \$5

(Of course, issues remain free for the asking to anyone who cannot afford the cover price).

If you haven't received the magazine previously, you can add yourself to the mailing list by sending e-mail to [REDACTED] or regular mail to

The Impercipient
61 E. Manning
Providence RI 02906-4008

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40. **Charles Bernstein**
I remember Joe Brainard

Fri 27 May 1994

Joe Brainard died of AIDS on Wednesday. He was 52 years old.

PEOPLE OF THE WORLD: RELAX!

Beware of boys in tight pants
They are perverts
Beware of tight pants
They chap the fanny and irritate the leg muscles
Your friends will laugh
And your mother will know
Do not feel guilty if showers turn you on
There is nothing wrong with masturbating in the shower
I masturbate in the shower
And there is nothing wrong with that
Everyone does it
If you do not do it, try it
Everyone does it

People of the world: RELAX!

If you want to be a movie star go to Hollywood
If you want to be a dancer dance right now

Or it will be too late
And you will be unhappy
Be a dancer if you want to be a dancer
Do not be afraid
Some of the best people I know are dancers

People of the world: RELAX!

Take it easy and smoke a lot
Make all the noise you want to on the toilet
Other people will hear you but it does not matter

People of the world: RELAX!

Put on a clean white shirt and RELAX
Do not be afraid
Some of the best people I know are afraid
Do not be afraid of death
It will not hurt you

People of the World: RELAX!

This is a good life
Go of-of-doors a lot
Smell flowers
Sit down in the grass
It will not hurt you
Look at the tree
The sky is blue
Climb every mountain
Air is the only hope
Do not kill any ants
They are your best friends

PEOPLE OF THE WORLD: RELAX!

The world is yours
Here, take it

I remember when polio was the worst thing in the world.
I remember that little jerk you give just before you fall asleep. Like falling.
I remember a dream of meeting a man made out of very soft yellow cheese and
when I went to shake his hand I just pulled his whole arm off.

--Joe Brainard, from Selected Writings
(New York: The Kulcher Foundation, 1971)

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