

Kris Hemensley, Notes and Comments 3

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Paragraph 1:

Enquiries addressed to Jack Shoemaker at the Serendipity Bookshop, 1790 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, Cal. 94709, will be diverted but not disappointed. He has set up his own mailorder service in addition to his press. Sand Dollar, at 650, Colusa, Berkeley, Cal. 94707. 'A primary joy in bookselling is responding to specific needs of readers, & we intend to focus our energies toward that service.' New lists will appear every 6 weeks or so. The most interesting titles on Shoemaker's July list include

2:

- *The Poetics of the New American Poetry* (Grove, 1974, p/b, \$3.95), essays from Whitman to Dorn, the companion to the New American Poetry anthology.
- Samuel Beckett, *First Love & Other Shorts* (Grove, 1974, p/b, \$1.95).
- Bill Berkson & Frank O'Hara, *Hymns of St Bridget* (Adventures in Poetry, NY, 1974, \$2), collaborations & reactions.
- Ted Berrigan, *The Drunken Boat* (Adventures in Poetry, NY, 1974, \$1.50).
- David Bromige, *Tight Corners & What's Around Them* (Black Sparrow, LA, 1974, p/b, \$4).

- Eugenio Montale, *The Butterfly of Dinard* (U of Kentucky Press, 1971, \$5.95), translations by G. Singh of Montale's prose-pieces.
- Jack Spicer, *Admonitions* (Adventures in Poetry, 1974, \$2).
- George Stanley, *You*, poems 1957-67 (New Star Books, 1974, \$3.95).
- Edwin Denby, *Looking at the Dance* (Curtis, 1974, \$1.65), & *Dancers, Buildings and People in the Streets* (Curtis, \$1.50).

3:

Of the international magazines offered (*Jo, Is, Paideuma*, etc) Paul Auster's *Living Hand*, containing translations of Celan & Jabes, looks likeliest, \$2.50.

4:

Jack Shoemaker is sure that there is enough business for both shops, & undoubtedly Peter Howard will still offer a prodigious & efficient service at Serendipity.

5:

The latest issue of *Big Sky*, edited by Bill Berkson (Box 272, Bolinas, California, 94924) is a double issue, #6, & includes the whole of New York, that is Greenwald, Brownstein, Tony Towle, Gallup, Schuyler, Padgett, Edwin Denby, Kenward Elmslie, Waldman, Fielding Dawson, Warsh, Obenzinger, Fagin, Clark Coolidge, Veitch, Saroyan, Berkson, & others. In addition there is a superb series of photographs by Rudy Burckhardt, including one of Denby on the roof of the world, introduced by Ron Padgett. Elmslie's

sequence gives the lie of the land, 'from crazy brat reading Crazy Kat / to Kafaesque this, Kafkaesque that' and 'never saw 'action' ransacked my dance act / came up with a nance act' but is by no means its definition. Anne Waldman's lovely incantation 'She' is again notable but not typical of the mag — 'She / not to be confused with she, a dog / she, not to be confused with she, liberty / she a waif / she a wastrel / she, a little birdie / she, not to be confused with pliable / she in plethora / she in blue' etc. Send \$3 incl. p&p.

6:

Bill Berkson's own *Recent Visitors* (Adventures in Poetry, NY, 1973, \$2) extends generously the procedures of his own familiarities, a luxurious itinerary of ease which prescription for poetry is fraught with deceptive simplicity. Try writing 'I'd go now too but I've been already but I'll go again / too / & walking along on straight, starlit roads: Brighton, Terrace, Ocean Parkway, Grove & Juniper, Kale, Laurel, Maple, & on down Cherry, a little ways up Nymph / here to there/ (from Twilight Time), — its just as hard to read it without being lulled into service of there's magic!

7:

Edwin Denby's first book of poems for ages is *Snoring in New York* (Angel Hair, Box 257, Peter Stuyvesant Station, NY, NY 10009 / *Adventures in Poetry*, 437 East 12th Street, NY, NY 10009, 1974, \$2.50), & comprises 36 sonnets, & the title-poem, an elegy — 'Summer, New York, friends tonight at cottages / I lie motionless, a single retired man / White-haired, ferrity, religious / I look like a priest, a detective, a con / Nervously I step among the city crowd / My private life

of no interest' — which reminds just a little of Frank Prince's *Memoirs* in Oxford (Fulcrum Press, London), more than a hint of sad retrospection. Denby's private life embraces art as we embrace the thought of heat. He is immensely civilised, as dance is, as his observations on dance indicate. Writing in *Evergreen Review* (Winter, 1959), on Stravinsky's *Agon*, he wrote thus: 'The action has had no end in view — it did not look for security, nor did it make any pitiful appeal for that. At the end, the imaginary contestants froze, toughly confident. The company seems to have figured jointly as the off-beat hero, and the risk as the menacing antagonist. The subject of *Agon*, as the poet Frank O'Hara said, is pride. The graceful image it offers is a buoyance that mystifies and attracts.' An epithet for his own work.

8:

James Schuyler's *Hymn to Life* (Random House, NY, 1973, \$1.95) contains the expected diary (Japanese is the affectionate adjective for most of it) & some memorable sections, 'Evenings in Vermont', 'The Fauré Ballade' ('an anthology of quotes, misquotes, and no doubt / misremembered remarks'), and the long title-poem. The way in is via the *Ballade*. It is such an intelligence as embraces Thomas Browne, Delacroix, numerous O'Hara, Adrien Stokes, Matthew Arnold, Wallace Stevens, & the regular company of physical & spiritual New Yorkers, that meditates on flowers, love, the daily routine, walks' eye-spy's — 'That bluet breaks / me up, tiny spring flower / late, late in dour October.' The view is filmic, which is to say not what Lewis

Warsh records, but is selected & edited, that's how it is you swear you know the man, the place, the view.

9:

Crystal Lithium (Random House, 1972, \$1.95) is a better book, in the sense that there are fewer explanations for liking it than the other! The poems are mostly hung on snow, wind & rain. Poems gleam above the shroud of the literal descriptiveness, the shrouds that usually encase usual reportage. 'Look,' the ocean said (it was tumbled, like our sheets), 'look in my eyes.'

10:

Alice Notley succeeds in separating herself from her famous spouse (though Philip Guston's cover details a few of Ted's things) with every set she publishes. *Incidentals in the Day World* (Angel Hair, NY, 1973, \$1.50), is her first, & a large, collection. There are probably more extraordinary images in the poems than there are extraordinary poems — 'one steps / on a rusty nail, disbelieves / in lockjaw'; 'inchoate, I'm still always choked with bells'; & from one of the best poems in the book — 'What one wants of course is the clothes to contain one which / are one, / flexibly enough for the breasts' ease, / somehow / aesthetically accommodating to the elbow's awkwardness, / if one stoops as a heron might it smacks — of truly amazing grace, / grace that's a tender smack in the face: / one wants one's own form of clothes.'

11:

Antlers in the Treetops, a novel by Ron Padgett & Tom Veitch (Coach House Press, Toronto, 1973, \$2.45), is another hilarious addition to the contemporary mountain of New

York humour. Its easy to understand how the British stopped patronizing the Monty Python Show, & buying reproduction Magritte's, after reading this book. Their blurb asks the reader to 'imagine an almost complete trace of meaning,' which fully prepares one for the hee-haw & hoo-ha within.

12:

Much later we were riding down the mesa, reminiscing over pipes of fresh tobacco. The image of my Uncle Dudley suddenly flashed to mind, and of a time much earlier, when the plains Indians were ravaging every mail train and stagecoach that passed through buffalo territory... It seems that one day in an overland train the porter, while cleaning out the smoking compartment, stopped over and dropped a derringer from his hind pocket. My uncle, darting upon it, had traded a ten dollar bill for the privilege of throwing the filthy thing out the window. Suddenly the painted face of terror appeared outside... a noble savage riding his war pony, brandishing a bloody spear. Without hesitating Uncle Dud flung the derringer with all his might. The gun struck the Indian full in the face and went off, wounding my uncle mortally in the left eye... He died there, clutching the hand of the Russian lady who had been sitting next to him.

13:

Jack Shoemaker's latest offering from Sand Dollar is a beautifully made booklet of poems by Michael Davidson, *Two Views of Pears* (\$2.25). It follows a collection of prose-pieces *Exchanges* (published by Prose & Verses, LA) which are as magical, or let's call it writerly, as his poems. They are so moving that they stave off reasonable tribute. There is the clear lyric of Williams & Creeley — 'He looks back / over his shoulder / to where she looks // beyond him, / beyond us, it seems, / as though the room held // memories their in-between / had overruled, / and now this place // had framed them once again.' — which proceed to something else — 'the house / is not my eye, you are / not the bone, / there are strange bodies / between us, incurred in sleep, / the earth wants to wake us / in shakings / from deep need a music / most our own.' — something that matters no matter how hard it is to describe — 'The lack of something needed, / heeded where three roads cross / when you're already blind before you know it.' & 'This is the one / call the bright sea / and you are in the teeth a breath / a good looking emptiness circled by shells.' — tender buttons if there were, some place you'd very much like to be in too — 'Given a world the various flowers / inhabit strange areas, rooms, aromas / or without one one invents vases / and places to hold them, the ghosts / and their brilliant center of our lives.'

14:

Davidson has other work in David Bromige's *Open Reading*, #2 (C/o Division of Humanities, California State College of Sonoma, Rohnert Park, Cal. 9492), & in Duncan

MacNaughton's *Fathar* # 5 (Box 355, Bolinas, Cal. 94924). A fruitful context for Michael Davidson is provided by the work of Michael Palmer (whose books include *Blake's Newton*, 1972, \$4, & *The Circular Gates*, 1974, \$4, both from Black Sparrow, L.A.; David Chaloner (*Year of Meteors*, Arc Press, 11 Byron Rd., Gillingham, Kent, UK, 1972, & *Chocolate Sauce*, Ferry Press, 177 Green Lane, London, SE9, \$2.50); Paul Gogarty (*Snap Box*, Trigram Press, London, 1972, & *How Much Do Toads Eat*, *Joe DiMaggio*, 6 Knowle Avenue, Bexley Heath, Kent, UK).

15:

Brian Marley is another English poet who adds to that discussion. He edits *Breakfast*, at the Laundering Room Press, 38 Rokeby Terrace, Heaton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE6 5ST, UK. He has 2 small collections of poems, *The Second Before You Hit the Sidewalk* (from John Robinson's Joe Di Maggio Press), & *The Sons & Daughters of the Lawnmower* (from his own press, 1974). His method of composition is a clue to the world of writing he inhabits. Beginning with a key line he then provides himself with a page of prose ('writing in a semi-automatic way'), which he then edits, 'cutting out lines lacking the tone of the key line,' & 'then, given a number of lines with similar feeling and relationship to each other, i cut out unnecessary words', & then & then until he has a poem which 'usually looks to have developed from the first line to last. I'm always surprised at the elliptical content my poems have, considering their solid approach.'

16:

Breakfast #1 (1st Quarter, 1974), includes Marley, Raworth, Benveniste, Jackson, Hawkins, Crozier, MacSweeney, Gogarty, Elaine Randell, David Miller (who will be bringing back to Melbourne a pretty box of tricks before he's done with globetrotting!) & others. The poems live as fictions, achieved artificially but with the conventional tones of poetical truth. If they're not easily obtained they're no easier to read. They're engaged to a complicated world whose layers are further spliced & inlaid. 'To fly throughout the body of information' I steal from Asa Benveniste (who runs Trigram Press in London). Its much better to quote than to comment — 'enter & ride this particular poem for example / inevitably turning left around the railway junction' (Benveniste); 'LOCKED // over a turning / the key is agreed' (Hawkins); 'Frantic collision into last weeks / observation — you / th and the heath air — it's so close / it cannot be seen' (Randell); 'sorry to have missed some of your mind' (Raworth, more cynic than surrealist these days); — A dollar or two will make sure of it for you.

17:

Stuart Montgomery wryly notes that 'The Arts Council helped the author complete this book with a Writer's Award but ironically delayed its appearance by cutting away the grant from Fulcrum Press', which he publishes. To compound his misfortune the press has been bankrupted by renegade debtors. The book in question is Montgomery's second, *Shabby Sunshine* (1973, £1.50). His first, *Circe*, was also from Fulcrum. The poems are well wrought observations, songs, &

celebrations, including portraits of family, friends, & mentors Creeley, Lorine Niedecker & Ezra Pound. The stance is objective, if not objectivist. The overall impression is quiet, sombre, though not shabby.

18:

Fulcrum Press has been responsible for a magnificent programme of modern English & American poetry over the last ten or so years. Bunting, Niedecker, Fisher, Oppen, Middleton, Duncan & Dorn have all had *Collected Poems* or considerable selections published, as well as books by Snyder, Brown, Eigner, Evans, Finlay, Gardner, Ginsberg, Hamburger, Harwood, Hawkins, Jackson, Jones, MacSweeney, Nuttall, Pickard, Prince, Raworth, Rothenberg & Shayer. Lists are available from the press, at 20, Fitzroy Square, London, W1. Raworth, Prince, & maybe others, have had books forthcoming from Fulcrum for a while, prevented by the British Arts Council's reactionary & inconsistent attitude to patronage.

19:

George Oppen's *Collected Poems* (1973, £3.25) is typical of Fulcrum's production excellence. The poems are typical of what is excellent in modern poetry. Oppen is a peer of Bunting, Rakosi, Reznikoff, & Zukofsky. They survive Pound, Williams, & Niedecker. Whilst Bunting & Zukofsky relinquish the reins Oppen, at least, adds to his oeuvre. Maybe he's served his silence in advance, the years between 1934 & 1962 when he didn't write poetry. His later poems are runic, ultra-pithy & pared, & make some of his first work almost expansive in comparison, Eg, *The Song* — 'when the

words would with not but / Take on substantial meaning // It is a poem // The hand still holds the footholds / To dig in one's heels // which may be sung / May well be sung' – one of his later poems, compared to the first poem from *Discreet Spoils* (1929-33) – 'The knowledge not of sorrow, you were / saying but of boredom /Is – aside from reading speaking / smoking – /Of what, Maude Blessingbourne it was, / wished to know when, having risen, / 'approached the window as if to see / what really was going on" – which suggests in its use of 'is' & 'was', & its stern chewing-over, William Bronk.

20:

In the *Grosseteste Review* (1973) Carl Rakosi wrote that 'He's the only man I know who can get away with the curious notion that feelings don't have to be expressed in poetry; they can be assumed from the situation. He gets away with it because he's patient and his eye will not let itself be distracted from its object.'

21:

The two most recent books from *Grosseteste Review* (10, Consort Crescent, Commonside, Pensnett, Staffs., UK) are Peter Riley's *The Linear Journal* & Franco Beltrametti's *Face to Face*.

22:

The Beltrametti is a selection of poems (printed with facing English & Italian texts) from his 4 published collections. He has commuted between the continents fairly regularly, & now after a while in Switzerland (where he edited *Montagna Rossa* which collected Japanese, Chinese, American, Italian, French & German poetry, in what

Beltrametti called 'news from this other world, an inventory in 9 languages') is settling in California, neighbour to Gary Snyder with whom he is associated, as well as Corman, Whalen, Welch, the Italian Tam-Tam group & the *Grosseteste Review* mob. The collection is unified by the poet's insistence on the luminosity of the present moment: the language is never other than the active-colloquial – 'Don't lose even a / minute. Relentless facts. I greet you.' – which is practically the antithesis of Peter Riley's book.

23:

Retrieved from small-circulation magazines of up to five years' vintage, *The Linear Journal* annotates a root from Tarascon ('trees green brown'), thru terrain distinguished by 'Porphus?' & 'art' & 'pathos', Andorra to Barcelona, Madrid, The Alps, Rome, to home. Its hardly linear at all! Nothing simply speaks for itself because nothing is simple representation. It is witty, multi-dimensionally allusive. It is the journey thru the making of a poem – 'then back to the mainland and all the usual / clatter, omit? / nasty little snapshots of / each man his memories, omit?'

24:

Both books designed, set, folded & stitched by Tim Longville, published in editions of 350, & available for \$2.50 each.

25:

Franco Beltrametti is part of the international gathering in the 2nd number of Walter Billeter's & John Jenkins' *Etymspheres* (7 Palm Court, Balaclava, Victoria, 3183). It is a crossing of published & unpublished Australian writing

(Tranter, Adamson, Miller, Jenkins, Harrington, Kraussmann, Billeter, Kenny, Moorhead & others) with Beltrametti, Christopher Middleton, & translation of Ludwig Tiek by Billeter, & other material still en route. If the preview is anything to go by the final line-up will be spectacular. This issue benefits from an Australian Arts Council grant, & will be printed, & double its first run. Copies of # 1 are available (12.50), & subscription-enquiries from individuals & institutions are welcomed.

26:

Melbourne's other imminent new magazine is Rob Kenny's *Rigmarole*. Kenny co-edited & introduced the Outback Press poetry anthology, *Applestealers*, & formerly co-edited *Contempa* magazine (Melbourne). He intends for *Rigmarole* various & individual activity. Like *The Ear in a Wheatfield*, *Etymospheres*, & the new-look *New Poetry*, he's had enough of the consensus attitude to publishing. The first issue includes poetry & prose from Tranter, Billeter, Jenkins, Moorhead, Harris, Talbot & others, & a series of graphics from the editor. Subscription enquiries to 178 A, Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe, Victoria.

27:

Ted Berrigan & Alice Notley have been teaching at Essex University, England, for the past year or so. Completing a doctorate there is Douglas Oliver, *Oppo Heptic*, poems, Ferry Press, 1969, & *The Harmless Building*, prose, Ferry/Grosseteste, 1973). Gordon Brotherston, who co-edited an anthology of Latin-American guerrilla poetry with Ed Dorn

(who used to teach there) a few years ago, is also there. It is a lively university as far as living poetry & live poets goes.

28:

Chicago is the European series of Alice Notley's magazine (c/o 29 Belle Vue, Wivenhoe, Essex, UK), patronized by the University's English Department. Its second number includes work by Tom Clark, Joe Ceravolo, Notley, Berrigan, Ron Padgett's translation of Oppolinaire's *Zone*, Waldman, Saroyan, Clark Coolidge, & others.

29:

The Human Handkerchief is also aided by the English Department, co-edited by Doug Oliver, & publishes the work of Essex student poets set amongst the liveliest English & American poets, including (in its 2nd number) Peter Baker, Brotherston, Ceravolo, Chaloner, Coolidge, Michael Edwards, & Lewis Warsh.

30:

Two avant-garde publications issuing from an English Department! O when will they ever learn (Australia), when will they ever learn.

31:

When Eric Mottram took on the job as editor of *Poetry Review*, the magazine of the Poetry Society, London, in 1971, he planned to publish a programme of about fifty English & American poets to show the Establishment what it was all about. It was never a secure or an easy job. There was all of the conservative tradition against him. The amateurs, social-realists, the regionalists, the beggars & blind babies, & company, against him. Today he is still there after ten issues.

What is more the governing council, presided over by Basil Bunting, contains more allies today than enemies.

32:

Amongst Americans pitted against the tide were, Duncan, McClure, Rukeyser, Sorrentino, Snyder, Ashbery, Jn Williams, Bromige, Rothenberg, Enslin, Ginsberg, Corman, Levertov, Wieners, de Loach, Hirschman, Saroyan, Antin, Butler, Eshleman, MacAdams, Koch, Roller, Padgett, Berrigan, Notley, Schjeldahl, di Palma, Waldman; amongst more established British moderns, Harwood, Montgomery, Nuttall, Evans, Turnbull, Feinstein, Guest, FT Prince, Macdiarmid, Garioch, Pickard, Tarn, Horowitz, Roy Fisher, Finlay, Tipton, Middleton, Hollo, Burns, Torrence; with the addition of the emerging newer & younger local scene, Miller, Allen Fisher, Hilton, Chaloner, Hemensley, Gogarty, Buck, McCarthy, & others.

33:

The magazine maintained, if not established, links between the emerging & established moderns on either side of the Atlantic. It isn't central or even crucial to writing in either place, but it is the most important of the commercially viable literary magazines, & represents its national poetry society to much better effect than any other in the world (*Poetry Chicago* included) . As a source for new publications it is indispensable, cataloguing (with the assistance of London's most conscientious poetry bookseller, editor of *Big Venus* magazine & publications, c/o Britain's best poetry shop, Compendium, 240 Camden High Street, London W1, Nick Kimberley) recent British, American, & Other Poetry

(which in *Poetry Review*, #4, 1973-4, included some U of Queensland paperback/poets), Concrete/ Sound Texts, Records, Translations, Anthologies, Prose/ & Criticism, & English & American magazines. *Poetry Review* costs \$1, & is quarterly, from the Poetry Society, 21 Earls Court Square, London, SW5.

34:

The final item in this list is a prospective journal reviewing small-presses, little magazines, & 'alternative' publications not normally reviewed in the press & other journals — *The Australian Small Press Review*, who request copies of such publications to be sent to Second Back Row Press, 4/8 Victoria Parade, Manly, NSW, 2095. 'The journal is directed particularly at libraries, schools, & universities' The press is already responsible for *Inside Melbourne Bookshops*, by Tom & Wendy Whitton (1.75 including p&p).

35:

An information journal of the calibre of Peter Hodgkiss' *Poetry Information* (17 Carlingford Rd., London NW3 1RY) is sorely needed in Australia. Apart from the catalogue of poetry information, the magazine researches a specific area in each issue, eg, the comprehensive South American supplement in #9/10, & forthcoming in # 11, an ethnopoetics issue (Eshleman & Guedella on Rothenberg & Co). A future issue of *Poetry Information* will feature an article on current Australian activities, by, of course, your own correspondent.



KRIS ALAN HEMENSLEY (born 26 April 1946) is a poet who has published around twenty collections of poetry. Through the late 1960s and 1970s he was involved in poetry workshops at La Mama, and edited the literary magazines *Our Glass*, *The Ear in a Wheatfield*, and others. *The Ear* played an important role in providing a place where poets writing outside what was then the mainstream (such as Jennifer Maiden) could publish their work. In 1969 and 1970 he presented the program Kris Hemensley's Melbourne on ABC Radio. In the 1970s he was poetry editor for *Meanjin* magazine. The son of an Egyptian mother and an English father who was stationed in Egypt with the Royal Air Force, Hemensley was born on The Isle of Wight, and spent his early childhood in Alexandria. He visited Australia at the age of 18, and emigrated there in 1966. He was awarded the Christopher

Brennan Award in 2005, which recognizes poetry of 'sustained quality and distinction'. He currently manages Collected Works, a specialist poetry bookshop in Melbourne, Australia.

Photo: Kris Hemensley, Collected Works Bookshop, Melbourne, 12 May 2014, photo by John Tranter.

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