

A CHRONICLE OF LIVING LITERATURE

Replies to Prognosis: Crews, Eigner, Jumper

Towards Print: the ethics of editors

Editors Write: Lorraine, Stefanile, Williams

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JAMES BOYER MAY

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EDITOR

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A READING EDITION

ABOUT THIS EDITION

This reading edition preserves the issue's poetry, fiction, essays, correspondence, reviews, and other literary writing in their printed order. Advertising, subscription matter, mastheads, the magazine's own contents pages, annual indexes, address lists, and the running trade directory are omitted as reference apparatus.

The text was checked against newly rendered source pages. Poetry lineation, stanza spacing, shaped indents, and hanging continuations for long lines are retained; prose continuations are joined without false paragraph indents. Conjectural readings are enclosed in square brackets, while original spelling and punctuation are otherwise kept.

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REPLIES TO PROGNOSIS

Answers confirmatory at least in part made up most of the forty-odd reactions to the Ellen Edelman article in Trace No. 7; however, few defined approval beyond a sentence or two. The tenor of agreement with Miss Edelman that much little-magazine poetry is unintelligible remains therefore but vaguely applicable, lacking specific knowledge both of the persons commenting and which poetry each had failed to appreciate—and underlining that neither did the article cite examples.

For instance, Judson Crews, himself perhaps the most prominent little-magazine poet over the longest period, wrote: 'The Edelman article seems unusually nebulous. Who is she talking about? A lot of bad poetry is written and published—but is that really the work she has in mind? I get the feeling that she is talking about the good poetry—that she dislikes it.'

On the other hand, one of the majority actually voiced disbelief in the use of language as an art. This letter clearly enough pictures the writer that his answer fixes adequate premise for evaluation: 'I never believed in art for the pure sake of art and writing as an art. One should only write when he or she has something to say. In other words an essay or poem should convey a message. A good poem should first of all have an idea, besides rhythm, which is also important, but not as much as the idea itself. If there is no idea, no matter how well it is written, it would be as Edelman says, meaningless.' This, from M. E. Ben-Ami, requires no interpretation; for he plainly maintains that no poetry he endorses ever requires study for interpretation, and he seems to believe all ideas almost-automatically transferable one mind to another.

Larry Eigner wrote more consideredly: 'Ellen Edelman's statement is valid and CAN be kept as one reminder; even

though, as always, there's a terrific amount of loopholes when you get to specific cases. One thing, anyway, it's easy to spot the bathetic, and other worthless things when more immediately accessible, whereas the difficult is conundrum, and just what is supra-experimental can't be objectively told. Though certainly there seems to have been a lot of verse with Gordian knots in recent years, which seems just to tie various things together rather than being insights; among which some verse of a nervy type, so to speak, dense with stretched metaphor or something, might fall (sic).' And of his own: 'But also a revision takes luck, energy and collectedness, and there's an amount of care, variable over the years, that kills.'

At which juncture, becomes increasingly obvious that—in arguing over intelligibility in poetry—nowhere near enough notice has been taken of the gulf between two types of minds. One type rigidly applies to every experience (including the reading of a poem) the ordered (more or less) calculations possible from syntheses of all that mind has experienced to date, at the most consciously-controlled level. The other type loosely assimilates at several levels simultaneously, and allows the accumulation of effects from conjured images and ideas to produce more mood than thought, the precise implications of which may not be clear until long afterthought, if not some sudden later integration of effects (in essence, the way in which true poetry is produced).

This is why nothing unequivocal can be stated on this subject, except involving analysis of a specific piece and a specific mind's reactions; and after everything is said, and carefully sorting apart the criticisms having to do with technical standards applicable to whichever form, significances of poems at fixed times and places must be in large measure affected by the numbers of intelligent and perceptive practised readers there to receive same. And equally obvious that every single reaction, taken alone, but

illuminates the comprehensions and attitudes of a reactor—that this only can be helpful if the poem is quoted, and often not then without other reactions (or others quoted) in context.

For further investigation of this complex subject, having to do really with the mysteries of intelligence and the complexities of psychology, as much as with art (a secondary manifestation in this sense), readers are advised to look up selections from a still-unpublished novel by Marguerite Young, *Miss Macintosh, My Darling*. Parenthetically—why no house yet has brought this delightful novel between hard covers can be no darkling secret to any who have seen a few of the scores of fine book mss which have failed to find publishers since War II, and a few editors' letters about them. If a file of the old *Chimera*, where the first appeared, proves too hard to locate, the last good excerpt was in the Summer 1954 *Western Review*.

Also received were several replies at length, one of which comes nearer stating a comprehensive position than any—not just vaguely approving, but picking at the nut of the question, if not to provide answers which only citations would provide. This, from Will C. Jumper: 'Hourra, bravo, olé, hoch lebe, three cheers and a tiger for Ellen Edelman . . . and Prognosis for Little Magazines. She has said, in exactly the right words, what has needed saying for a long, long time. As a member of the editorial board of *Poetry Public*, I am exposed to a large volume of work by 'the sham poet who is content to spew words on paper, letting them fall where they may with no regard for comprehensibility.' And it gets damned tiresome. Many of us who have felt the same way as Miss Edelman have been afraid to speak out for fear we shall be bracketed with Robert Hillyer and the sanity in poetry maniacs. Their insistence that poetry say nothing—but say it prettily—is just as damaging to the real development of poetry as is the

insistence of the explosive boys that poetry be written from the glands rather than the mind.

‘By way of . . . expanding upon Miss Edelman’s ideas, I should like to quote myself in a March 17 letter to Lawrence Holmes of Poetry Public: Experimentation is one thing; destruction of the basic function of language is another. There is considerable loose thinking on this subject, stemming largely from analogies with music and the visual arts. There are many interrelationships between the verbal and non-verbal arts which are valid and worthy of exploration, especially where, as in opera or pictorial interpretation of texts, they impinge upon one another; but any such exploration must not lose sight of one prime factor: language is the only instrument we have for communication—however faulty—of logical, complex, and developing thought. This communication can be supplemented by the visual arts, enhanced by the aural, gustatory, olfactory, and tactile arts, but not supplanted by any of them. In other words, when language ceases to communicate concepts logically and in logical sequence, it ceases to be language; when it abrogates its basic responsibility, it ceases to be a humanising influence. Poetic experimentation which results in greater precision of language, in more understanding of common human experience and relationships, or in exploration of further possibilities of subduing the illogical to logic—all legitimate functions of poetry—is constructive experimentation. Poetic experimentation which exploits merely the bizarre and meaningless in the name of saving poetry—which destroys the communicative power of language—is like McCarthy’s campaign to save the Constitution by destroying its basic fabric in the first and fifth amendments. Such experimentation is retrogression . . . I will defend to the death the right of Poet X to write what he chooses to call poetry, but I will burst a blood vessel shouting that the

critic—either amateur or professional—has a bounden duty to evaluate that ‘poetry’ in terms of the human function of language.

I have only one word of caution for Miss Edelman. I agree completely with her in her discussion of ‘poetry that has been deliberately abstracted for effect,’ but I think she should have made it even clearer that she is using the term ‘abstract’ in the way it is used by painters, sculptors, and musicians. In the more general sense of ‘abstract,’ words themselves are abstract, i.e., they are signs that stand for qualities abstracted from the concrete object or event. A poem, then, is an ‘abstraction’ of a real or imaginary experience. Despite the pronouncements of Pound, Yates, Ransom, and Tate, this ‘abstract’ quality is not damaging to a poem—so long as the poet implements his abstractions with the maximum denotation and the proper connotation.’

Among longer letters of disagreement, one from D. Vincent Smith, Olivant editor, contains penetrative and provocative observations: ‘It is self-evident that there is good writing today in the experimental field, that the little magazines are being read and that many appreciate this progress, understand it, believe in it, and are searching the media for their own needs. . . . It is nonsense to say that most of the poetry today is so abstracted understanding is impossible. I have yet to find a poem in which I cannot participate understandingly re content—or one written without a purpose. Though we must allow of course for good expression and foul expression—for poets and non-poets. Those who dislike our present culture (at its peak no doubt) cannot appreciate realism, a word so over-used lately that its true meaning escapes. With reference to Miss Edelman’s statement that to place things on a sound basis the artist must sometimes explode reality to realise it fully—and what caused the silo to overflow (sic). ‘All the arts reflect chaos and hostility.’ I quite agree, have

even rebuked certain periodicals for allowing too much of this; to observe these things is to realise that our own eternities are now founded out of chaos and hostility. Frankly, I now search for a more purified language. . . . 'Calm and symmetry are condemned'—shows misunderstanding by Miss Edelman, for calmness and symmetry are afforded proper place. All things are not calm, all things are not perfect pictures of symmetry. This also with respect to factualism and naturalism—realism must share its own truths.

'Can any public be 'justly indifferent?'' We must either be in agreement with a thing or abolish it? No public can be stagnant! In additional disagreement with Miss Edelman: a poet must be inclined to eliminate limitations. This has been proven by the progression through Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, E. E. Cummings, Dylan Thomas. . . . But Miss Edelman says: 'If a poet feels disinclined to abide by the limitations of language, he must not pretend to be a poet!' Were we all of such mind, progress would drift into time backward; and respecting her personal dislike of abstract writing (these things she cannot understand!), it is known and accepted that Shakespeare wrote quite often with so much self-indulgence (personal affairs, loves, longings, hatreds—little things important to him, but less important to us) that even Shakespeare remains difficult to us after study and explanation by scholars. Who is to proclaim what is and is not 'abstract?' One should consider his knowledge and understanding before announcing to the world just how little he knows.

It is bad to accept a belief that language is a cut-and-dried possession, that we must not alter it, that language has limitations and we must abide by them. Language has no limitations. As any art, it must be properly used. . . . What Miss Edelman meant, exactly, is that poetry is rhymed et al from 'away back,' and we must not alter this;

she refuses to believe modern poetry is poetry, only because she cannot master it. Or has she not tried? . . . There is some truth in her article, I will allow; but in the main she is enforcing her own personal inclinations and rebelling against the force she cannot master, rebelling against ‘the force that through the green fuse drives the flower, drives my green age,’ rebelling because she does not understand. ‘We either become master of our house or move into smaller . . . smaller . . . smaller . . . quarters: governments now provide no shelter when shacks tumble. Where do we live?’ (The last quotations are from Mr. Smith’s own work.)

ISSUE PP. 9-14 · SCAN PP. 9-14

TOWARDS PRINT

by the Editor of Trace

Everyone has fairly adequate ideas what writers do, and more or less comprehension of the scale of their differences; for writers of all degrees are accessible through their works. But of editors, there is less knowledge, and what is said about them is mainly controversial. This is because they are intermediaries (between writers and printers and the public); and like all persons engaged in liaison work, they are in positions of grave trust and singularly subject to corruption. So, to be sure, are writers; and yet, with them, their very products sooner or later are bound to expose them, while editors may avoid blame, pleading they published the best available, or that expense of printing limited them, or that they had production difficulties—and thus obtain some modicum of remission.

And even those editors censured, for exercising flagrantly bad judgments or unduly interfering with an author later glorified, retain full credit for their approved accomplishments, and the large part of their sins (those of omission) are buried like the quack physician's unrecovered patients. Theirs is a mighty power, wielded from the very start; and rare the writer who achieves a reputation impressive enough to equal this, unless beyond death.

Which means that the job of being an editor requires an unusual integrity and a lively strong conscience; and the best editors also must be fired with purpose, if not sense of mission. Otherwise, editorial errors are not offset by what then are mere choices from personal aspiration. And such high matters are not the subject here—only that it behoves all editors, as well as contributors, to guard against misconduct in what may be regarded therefore minor ethical considerations in their day-to-day functionings.

Each week's mail contains complaints about what is felt to be unfair treatment at the hands of some editor; and editors frequently have justifiable complaints about writers. Nor is this of limited interest to involved parties alone. The resulting bad feelings and prejudiced attitudes affect (and limit) offerings both of contributors to magazines which need widest imaginable ranges for selections, and of magazines to readers, both because of this and (often) because of editors' perhaps-justified indignations at writers who have broken the rules—but who nevertheless have material which really should be published. This unwholesome and unnecessary smog (in contrast with the biting clear atmosphere of healthy disputations over literary principles—quite another thing and helpful where personal vituperation isn't indulged) affects the level of quality in the entire field. Exercise of a maximum of restraint and observation of the amenities comparable to those observed in good social relations, plus meticulous obedience to seeming-small ethical rules, really becomes vital.

Psychologically, of course, practically every one of the boorish, unthinking, and unfair acts involved may be laid to what's euphemistically called the artistic temperament or obsessed singleness of aesthetic purpose—but which in fact is nothing other than lack of perspective, the pivot of overweening self-esteem. Of course, these individuals must be more self-centered than average, and they certainly need self-confidence; but conceding that the development of a just sense of proportion in them would deflate their egos to where they'd never write another word or never venture to pass another editorial judgment, they should then at least pretend a minimum of tolerance and abide by a few rules, though still maybe secretly believing that their genius is such that all their words are holy and recognisable as such when scrawled in longhand on squares of that thin paper sold in

rolls, or that their tastes are of such sublime order that their decisions should be waited with bated breaths for periods of a year and more.

Since writers usually get the worst beratings in articles of this sort, the sins of editors will be emphasised. And the interminable withholding of manuscripts is by far the most damaging of all the unethical acts of editors or writers, either. Not only cruel to the sensitive author and unfair to him personally in keeping his mss out of circulation—but this deliberate sequestration (multiplied by how many mss and editors?) is injurious to publishing as a whole. And just behind it lies another grave editorial sin, that of retaining mss to weigh one against another.

This 'shopping' procedure actually (for these magazines) is a failure of primary editorial function, a refusal to assume responsibility and to exercise the independent judgment of which every literary editor at least boasts—to read and assess each manuscript on its own merits and for best serving whichever magazine's requirements. And this also indicates confusion in the minds of editors here applying a practice of commercial publications in competition for contents with popular reader-appeal. This is the oldtime newspaper-scoop spirit, and it really can have nothing whatever to do with publishers of literary magazines distributed without profit and contributors printed chiefly with token pay; for these are strictly labours of love, and all the honours which may be won are without comparative labels, let alone engraved trophies of precious metals. These writers are individualists, and each (of those having something to offer) unique; and all editors in this field also should be essentially individualists, and so regarding competition as irrelevant.

Having mss held overlong, writers increasingly are making identical submissions to more than one editor. This is understandable; but they should inform each editor. Many

editors of quarterlies and magazines of longer interval generously do not object, provided they are informed. Others may return material unread, unless the author's reputation leads them to wish to compete (in the time sense) for a latest opus. It's up to the writers, whether to risk the procedure. One much-published poet makes exclusive mailings to each editor on first submission only, thereafter (if interest develops) mailing also carbon copies of work sent elsewhere, suggesting that he will submit regularly anything especially liked, when and if it becomes available. Thus—two types of submissions, direct and conditional. He reports this has saved much time in getting to print.

A closely-related editorial sin about which comparatively little has been remarked is that of formally accepting material and then not using same for a long time, up to two or three years! Sometimes adversities intervene and the material never is used at all; and plainly this risk (of virtual loss of publication) should be assumed only by the writer himself. Besides which, periodical publication is in the nature of a record; and every writer knows the value of having in print what's not old and distant and perhaps conceived in a vein long since superseded. Obviously, editors should notify authors of delays in prospect, affording them opportunities to withdraw material. Particularly where the pay is low, or not until that distant doubtful date of publication, or perhaps no pay whatever.

Anyone who had not examined the actual evidence would find it difficult to believe the frequency with which editors accept poems, stories, articles, only to return them with feeble excuses (or none) at distant times. A notice of acceptance always has been and must continue to be in the nature of a covenant and guarantee that work will appear, short of bankruptcy of an entire endeavour; and any editor who returns once-accepted material exhibits such evidence of bad faith that he somehow should be barred from future

practice.

And to the matter of editorial communications generally—and to observe many of these are better describable as communiques or pronouncements, if not enigmatic scripture-like ‘revelations’ from that minority of editors suffering from a God-complex. While, above everything, editors of no- and low-pay periodicals should be gracious enough to extend personal acknowledgments of not-impossible submissions. Definitely other than the worn curt: ‘Sorry’—‘Not this time’—‘Not for us’—‘Try again’ etc. ad nauseam. This, with reference of course to rejections of works of those the editor suspects may some day have something for him. A printed rejection should mean decisive ‘no’ for the time. But a personal note should contain some hint or indication, if not perhaps any actual comment on the specific ms. The numbers of borderline mss indicating talent are not too large at any of these magazines.

And there is no excuse for an editor’s failure to make some response at some time (though lateness is censurable too) to queries accompanied by stamped and addressed returns. Yet, the ignoring of requests for information about mss is far from unknown—even a few cases of editors never having reported on what would have been hundreds of mss., virtually all with stamped returns. And wherewith they should have been able to defray personal postal expenses for a year or two? And though such conduct is rare, it never should be at all, and it hardly seems that the decisions governing grounds for libel suits should prevent the exposures of these characters.

The only possibility of control may be in establishment of an editorial association, admitting to membership only those who would guarantee to observe essential ethical rules, and requiring of each individual starting a new literary magazine, business and perhaps other references. Without, however, undertaking to outline academic limitations, establishment

of which would destroy little-magazine independence and individuality. The organisation would not look into nor censure policies (no matter they be even regarded 'subversive'); nor any qualifications except those guaranteeing ethical performance. Impartially set up, such an association could by exclusion protect writers, who then would be submitting mss to non-members at their own risks.

A less uncommon editorial sin is that of printing work without ever having notified the author. And since editors guilty of this are careless in other matters also, copies often aren't supplied, and years may pass before the author discovers an item was published! Closely related—it's less rare than may be supposed for an editor specifically to reject material, returning the ms., and thereafter to publish the same, regardless. Since few writers are so suspicious as to keep a file of postmarked envelopes with rejections attached, along with original typescripts, and going to the labour of typing new ms. each time, the law does not protect, except in the general provisions governing unauthorised publications. And even here, the editor need but put his word against the contributor's, to plead that the submission was made without restrictions and to deny the rejection. In practice, valid recourse exists only for unauthorised printings of letters—that is, where letters or excerpts are printed without permissions, and not having been addressed 'to the editor' for a letter page, or to a department regularly publishing letters, or in response to an editorial query for reactions.

And finally, extensive unauthorised revisions by editors are by no means unheard of. Yet, an unqualified acceptance should be assumed to comprise approval, except for minor punctuation or perhaps spelling revisions from Webster to Oxford (or vice versa) etc., or occasionally perhaps some judicious compression necessitated by unforeseen contingencies of space. But when an editor revamps phrases, eliminates entire clauses, substitutes words, the author's

consent is demanded. Unless proofs are supplied (seldom nowadays), the author not only should be queried, but copy with changes should be sent him. And little less deserving reproach is the editor who excerpts from accepted mss., using only portions of what the writer assumed would be used in toto. Again, the writer should be queried.

And one afterthought—that even worse than writers who conceive they may sway editors by suggesting they'll subscribe or buy extra copies of magazines or induce friends to subscribe, are those editors who (however subtly) suggest the need of financial support (subscription or other) to those on tenterhooks over possible acceptances. If an editor publishes, as a magazine policy, that mss of subscribers only will be considered, that's quite another horse. Or he may ask for donations generally. But no casual connection between matters financial and those of literary selection possibly ever should be ever-so-remotedly hinted. And this offence is, in fact, extremely uncommon.

EDITORS WRITE

Lilith Lorraine (Different and Flame): 'To congratulate you on asking for opinions about editors who hold poems forever and a day, without reporting, and hence holding up the poets' work, particularly that of the better poets who are rarely overly prolific as they devote much time to the perfection of their material.

From viewpoint of both poet and editor, with twelve years of poetry editing back of me and handling more than 700 poems per month on an average, I feel qualified to speak on the subject. Right off the reel, with that frankness which will undoubtedly bring me to what my sainted grandmother would call 'no good end,' I shall state that the negligence displayed by a large number of editors (many, my best and most loyal friends) is disgraceful, inexcusable, and reflects discredit on those editors who with far greater handicaps are handling a great load of mss and oftentimes trying to hold down a job with a salary sufficient to meet deficits incurred by the fact that the ungrateful poets whose work they publish in these worst days of the cultured blackout do not see fit to subscribe to their own . . . what may be . . . final organs of expression.

I would not make such a comment, were I myself guilty of such negligence. But I also, while engaged in making a living, keeping up a home, entertaining poets from all over the uncivilised world who may drop in for weekends at any moment, making at least four lecture tours per year, publishing two globally-circulated magazines, sending out at least fifty of my own poems per week, keeping all records on the large Avalon membership, conducting by correspondence at least 200 verse courses per year and helping the students find markets for their best work, never return one single poem or group of poems without general and often detailed

reasons for rejection and frequent market advice . . . have never failed to return or accept every manuscript submitted ON THE DAY IT IS RECEIVED by me. . . . The magazines also have never failed to make their deadlines, or to be out before it.

Therefore, unless I am a super-human being, which I must emphatically deny (because who would want to be?), I ask—if I can do it, why can't others somewhat approach the same standard? At least, they could return poems within two weeks, since most send printed rejection slips—and some, I am sorry to say, none at all. Literally hundreds of our contributors write us in despair (many, fine and widely-published poets) complaining of editors, many publishing very fine magazines, as to their utter lack of consideration in this matter. Some (and my own experience also bears this out) hold mss for as long as a year, reply to few if any requests for reports. Others publish them without notifying the author of an acceptance. Others, believe it or not, reject a poem, return it, and THEN publish it some years later.

No one should take on this service to poetry unless he can render it efficiently, courageously, promptly, and uncomplainingly—and he should give up the job when he ends up by discouraging rather than encouraging a poet and by holding up his work to the extent that he misses many markets he badly needs.

'Every poet should make it a point to howl unceasingly about such total inefficiency and carelessness, so long as he does his part of sending the proper stamped envelopes, the legible mss, subscribing to the magazine when possible . . . and showing the proper courtesy in all his editorial associations. And eventually, he should no longer send his work to such editors, who will end up finally with only inferior productions, because the better poets do not have to put up with such treatment.'

Felix N. Stefanile (The Sparrow): 'Poets, as you know, don't buy books, and our other friends, the literary critics and students, are, I suspect more often than not accustomed to receiving review copies, and long ago got out of the habit of buying such books as a standard thing. The individual and partisan buyer remains our only hope and he, I am convinced, is not too numerous. My concept of limited editions, which I intend to follow through on the chap-books, is based on accepting this rather desperate theory.'

'I am quite familiar with the better bookstores in New York City, and without exception, as far as poetry is concerned, they remain elegant graveyards. I have no intention of so consigning poets who are sufficiently loyal to myself and leave the fate of their endeavours in my hands. And from the point of view of public relations, I don't think it does anybody any good to see, for example, Glen Coffield's chap-book (I forget the title, but the date of publication was 1942!) still gathering dust in a forgotten shelf in an arty bookstore. It is infinitely better to decide, beforehand, that out of 200 books possibly fifty will be sold in the first few months, sixty or so will be discriminately given away to libraries, critics et al, and the rest will stay neatly put away in my attic to await the random sales to the individual and partisan buyer.'

Grover Jacoby: ' . . . I would like to call your attention to one error. Recurrence and Variegation are both interested in long poems and have published a number that cover two pages or more.'

Russell Roemmele (The Struggle): 'I don't like 'social propaganda' itself as it may be found in the socialist journals. But I ask you isn't Eliot a propagandist of a kind, or Tate or Warren or Pound? Or what about Donne or Dante or Aristotle? There are more 'social ends' in the Inferno than perhaps any poem ever written. And yet we have this Lovelady (ref. to Bill Lovelady, editor of Blue Guitar) talking

about aesthetics, as over and against the ethico-religious writing. I may be wrong; but he represents to me the decadence in America, the getting away from the problems of existence, of the hard world we live—the attempt to impress us with supposedly objective standards of beauty. Some day I am going to write a satire . . . which I pray will demolish these parasites once and for all.’

Jonathan Williams (Jargon publications): ‘My concern with the series is to create a place where major experimental writers may get a printing, and in a style complementary to the advances in their own work, and adequate before the advances in the graphic fields—the latter of which indicate a break-up of the old static conception of what a book and book page are to effect, just as the former points to the fracturing of old verse linings. It’s pretty obvious the ‘big, respectable, etc.’ publishing houses won’t be able to face to these necessities of form. Just take a look at the proud Fifty Books of the Year. The archaic and academic dominate completely, while the commercialists operate, at best, like the makers of that prime container, the Kleenex box, our be-all and end-all, etc. Men of Kenneth Patchen’s order have been investigating the book as a plastic medium for quite a while. There is a lot more to do, which will not simply return us to the conservative dadaism that advertising now uses so cheaply.

‘So, on the one hand there is my bias for graphics, as the equal to the demand of the writing and style of the period. The other prime, of course, is the writing today of a stature important enough seemingly to make the gaining of a Market audience impossible. . . . People in Europe were very much interested in the first book, which I designed and printed during the off-duty hours I had from working as a corpsman in an army psychiatric ward in Stuttgart, Germany. As a piece of book-making it was exhibited at galleries in Stuttgart and Paris. But, in the great American tradition, almost no

notice over here. Two critics: (1) ‘Absolutely the end, I think it’s the wildest job of printing I’ve ever seen. The control is fantastic . . .’; and (2) ‘Why don’t you print books that you don’t have to hide behind the piano? Dreadful! Oh, well . . .’

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ADDENDA

by the Editor

Recently, one of those ideas one at once then wonders why it had not been conceived and put into effect before, resulted in *Poems in Circulation* (E. V. Griffith, 2969 California St., Eureka, Calif., U.S.A.), a gratis monthly duplicator circulation of poems selected from current or recent magazines, an endeavour to enlarge the poetry audience. . . . By coincidence, the retirement of Arthur S. Bourinot from editorship of *The Canadian Poetry Magazine* has followed immediately upon a survey of his years of service, in August *Trace*. At the same time, the writer did not know of this. . . . Still another California poetry project, localised however in the San Francisco Bay area, is that of the new Poetry Center at San Francisco State College, where a workshop has been established and readings both by internationally-prominent and younger poets sponsored. W. H. Auden is among those reading this month. . . . From Erewhon Press (E. E. Walters, 1600 W. Broadway, Louisville 3, Ky., U.S.A.) an ambitious series of book publications is announced: *The Cry Babies* (\$1.50—a short novel by Paul Alelyunas, to appear as special issue of *Embryo* #4); *Dido and Aeneas* (\$1—modern prose translation by Madelaine Cundiff, November); *Bayou Gayoso* (\$1—long poem by Kenneth Lawrence Beaudoin, December). . . . Now definitely continuing (Jonathan Williams, Box 518, Highlands, N.C., U.S.A.), the *Jargon* series begun in Germany. Scheduled are: *Poemscapes* by Kenneth Patchen, continuation of the Charles Olson publications, and those of Robert Creeley. . . . And *The Heron Press* (40 Florentine Rd., Stoneycroft, Liverpool, Engl.) proceeds with a series priced at 1/6 each, following the *Travellers Alone* by Alan Brownjohn with an autumn issue of *New Canadian Poets*. . . . Currently available as *Vagrom Chap-Book No. 2* (from Felix N.

Stefanile, 111-13 38th Ave., Corona 68, N.Y., U.S.A.) is a new translation from Theocritus by Cid Corman, *A Thanksgiving Eclogue*. . . . The *Anthology from Epos* (Lake Como, Florida, U.S.A.—\$2) has appeared, the first of several such projects to materialise. . . . Of singular note among periodical publications, the past summer, was a new translation (Alex Miller) of Alexander Blok's *The Twelve* (in *Stand*, 40 Lee Park, Blackheath, London, S.E.3—1/-, or 25c through Trace).

Although further replies to the questions in June Trace have trickled in since preparation of No. 8, they've been remarkably few and remarkably unanimous. No one wishes to register formal complaints against editors or to have them blacklisted (for holding mss), but all agree that a uniform practice of sending follow-up notices to effect material will be sent elsewhere (after suggested periods of six weeks to two months) should be adopted. . . . With just one exception, agreement with the idea that editors of expiring magazines should arrange with a surviving publication of similar type, to fill unmet subscriptions. The exception, an editor, declared cash refunds should be made forthwith; but more than a dozen others asserted money should be repaid only on demand, that most subscribers to little magazines understand most such are produced at a loss, and give their support in realisation they never may receive the full number of issues—and that these would prefer receiving substitute magazines to accepting refunds. . . . And no positive support was offered the suggestion of using names of typical magazine contributors to indicate kinds of contents, rather than critical remarks. To this, but one approval, one semi-approval. Nor did any further correspondents suggest printing names of editors (as reported in Trace No. 8). Replies instead affirmed the present method. Hugh O'Neill put it with lively succinctness: 'Let the editor of Trace edit Trace. Editors' choices of representative contributors are meaningless to creative writers. Granted that there are those

that want to dress all their work alike—jump up and down and howl—there are publications to show the way.’ And from William H. Newberry: ‘I see no reason why Trace should aggravate the delusions of grandeur from which too many editors suffer already. . . . I ask how could anyone not almost completely insensitive to the implications of his words for others say: ‘If you want to know what my magazine is likely to publish in the future, study what it has published in the past.’ Which is to declare: ‘Copy the authors who have already found favour with me if you hope to do likewise.’ From E. H. Ratcliffe: ‘NO, please, no representative contributors. In any case, any new mag seems to collect the same old gang, with the odd twenty per cent of new names. And they revel in it. How much . . . poetry is stifled by the constant repetition of the few.’ The intervening approval was from Bernard Raymund, who gave, however, a different reason for desiring editors’ names: ‘When a little magazine folds, writers may want to know to whom to write to get their mss back. The P.O. is generally ignorant of where to send mail, once they suspend. . . . I certainly think poets should duplicate their verse, in that way saving return postage (an addressed postcard may or may not be enclosed for reply). . . . The mimeo sheets are a warning to the editor that others may take the work if he does not. If it is a good scheme for beginning columnists (see Od McIntyre’s life) why not for others?’

And speaking of newspaper-writing, a note has just arrived from a young little-magazine poet, Bob Nystedt, to the effect he’s starting a department for poetry and criticism at the Lewistown (Mont., U.S.A.) Daily News. . . . And speculating what type of publication this convergence may birth?