

1. Robert Grenier to Ron Silliman (12/1/70)

Dear Ron,

Here in some confusion with winter coming on friends and dogs living with us until today I'm home alone doing something again though large blank spots in my head. Was getting to be just like tv with my waiting around to see what was supposed to be done given context of people sitting around pretty much the same, so that writing letter has to be gone at even with nobody now here in fits and starts. Starting a magazine with Barry Watten, send something maybe "Annie Mack" & that crosscountry sequence or whatever, something with a lot of nouns & pronouns, or whatever, soon, for Jan. 1 deadline; not big deal but maybe might be as I get to all this lying round in my head past ten years; called THIS for center of experience not description not confession; don't pay but should be good to read; B. has access to offset in Iowa and grandmother's money, we'll see what we can do; that I feel no magazines with vision around at this point makes room and possibly use; not Olson not NY not Creeley then what; I'll have 30 pages as going thing so send it along.

You and Shelley did seem to be living separately, though I thought, I'm backward, in my old homebody family which is often enough trap and false coziness dependency, thought maybe that's the way etc. Looking for the right way to live.

I've been writing more of this long beach poem so it's about done or written out at worst sprawls, it's all right but is it all moving and how to get it around whether as I've been thinking best to put it around the walls of a room to get it seen (not sequenced, not broken up by page turnings) maybe too literally experience of words that way. Words morphemes necessary but why books, try anything, probably get back to books. There is an awful stasis which you point out, which Irby points out, which comes from a bunch of single perceptions put together wrongly or in some sort apparently necessary

sequence or conjunction, don't know how get around that, say to people take a long time to read or flash cards as you suggest maybe? I've got an order, thinking maybe to print them eventually that way but unbound, so any could be seized itself but possible to go back to order as pages numbered on back. Like to sit you down with it but bulk and just one working copy makes that hard. Like to explain the aesthetic to myself in context of THIS, like what you wrote about trying actually to "say Stuff" but not just anything because it happened, no value in accurate rendering but in something [envisioned] seen as significant in that moment of vision matter, not facts not ego but revelation in words finally, some matter some don't, to give the feeling of the density of feeling in words as things referential only as they are but interestingly themselves tactile experience words. Lots of nouns pronouns words with nominative function obvious start, Tender Buttons still most informative learning material, at this point.

Are verbs necessary to action actual experience in words or are verbs basically descriptive distanced observation calling what is seen moving "running" "hunched" "slashing" etc. Why do most verbs seem melodramatic, as forced feeling, because not ordinarily used in thought & feeling experience but sentence convention forced on us? Prose writers vie for more forceful verbs. I don't seem to much use them, try to find other parts of speech with verb function more effectively. Stein "Roast potatoes for" has for as verb/noun/preposition/conjunction. Many verbs maybe have to do with guesses as to what may be involved in energy transference amongst objects hence theoretical distance, whereas what is felt is more definite. Instead of Bill smashed John with candlestick rather By Bill heavy candlestick down into John's skull etc., with movement of sentence directly doing the action poorly indicated by vague concept [RG annotates: maybe summarizing various nouns, shorthand] verb; relation of verbs to experience unclear to me; what are verbs, what are they saying, whatever context of other words determines (e.g. ball

dropped down) i.e., just fill words required by ~~conventional sentence structure~~? Really stumbling around this, better go read linguists, remember something in Whorf(?) [RG inserts: no not Whorf it seems] about somebody, Hopi?, using no verbs, makes enough sense to go look for it, look it up.

Well to bed. We've got puppy and 1 cat, puppy Paw just now growing into good dog with brown eyes floppy ears mongrel beagle shepherd labrador something not housebroke yet but trying pissing in my arms. Bad dog, bad bad dog etc.

House down by cove in Gloucester town but 5 miles up around northwest tip of Cape Ann, Lanesville on map, boats in cove, open sea to north and east, Ipswich Bay to west, sun sets mostly over water which is odd, but enough of that. Write, send poems.

Ask Shelley to send me something for THIS or I'm clumsy, do you see her simply; or tell me where she is & I'll write there. I just assume everything is so business-like. How else. Well fuck me. Put my foot in it and kept walking. Be all right.

Bob G.

within the family
there are sweet exchanges

STEAM
inside

PAINTINGS
lamb stew

w/? say hello to ellen/ jim sd to
say when i wrote, too, so hi for
jim, that sterling lad). ciao now,

Ron

19. Ron Silliman to Bruce Andrews (12/1/73), excerpt

best new writer i've seen in ages is charles bernstein,
formerly of harvard (philosophy dept i think) now in santa
barbara, at 1923 de la vina #8, sb, ca 93101, who shld be
added to yr mailing list (if you keep one).³³ very stein
oriented, but w/ an understanding of why he is that way,
what that means in structural terms, where that might take
him. he sent some work out of what sense i don't know to
Tottel's & i said, oh heavy stein but good stuff, let me
see more, so he did, viz.:

implies

other things being equal

will not hold

specific things will be the cause

must so interpret

a certain description implies a certain description

this argument runs as follows

desire to perform a certain action

since it is self contradictory to suppose

is not a contingent relation

escape the logical connexion argument

description dont enter into entailment relations

whch is the best single work i've seen by somebody essen-
tially unknown to me since you sent yr first work (no?).
there were others, less strong, but the above is for me
that thing i need to see, a real working (thinking almost

33. Bernstein was first in touch with Silliman in 1973 at the suggestion of Jerome Rothen-
berg (see appendix 3).

of Ez' take on that slight little Joyce poem wch he used ["I Hear an Army"], finding as a result that drunk bespectacled Irishman), deposits a sense of trust in me, interest in what comes next.

20. Bruce Andrews to Ron Silliman (12/16/73), excerpt

Good to hear about Charles Bernstein -- send me some more pieces (it may be a while before I write him) if you have them (the one you quoted sounded more like Antin or conceptual art than the Stein influence you mentioned).

21. Ron Silliman to Bruce Andrews (3/11/74)

Dear Bruce,

I'll write right back (out of sinus city), Bach cantatas on, slight rain (winter here not about to quit), citywide strike a royal pain (I walkd 45 minutes this morning to get my ride over the bridge to the next county to work ((i.e., no buses!)). Am working on an article on Duncan for Maps but no energy (mentally) to go on in that area esta noche, so read Kenner, Lippard etc.³⁴ Seems to me to make sense, literally, to begin at your p. 9 list in the monstrously large letter in this day's mail, re pantheons (?) etc. I'm not so sure of pantheons as interesting writers & a few (very) great poems. E.g., little of Wordsworth beyond The Prelude interests me, but that holds my attention FIRM, at the Center. Anyhow, to recall yr list for you (Stein, Williams, Zukofsky, Oppen, Bunting, Rakosi, HD, Creeley, Ashbery, O'Hara, Rothenberg, Eigner, Schuyler? Mac Low? Blackburn? Coolidge, Grenier? Palmer? (yr "?s"). Pound, Stein, Williams, Zukofsky, Creeley, Ashbery, O'Hara,

34. As Silliman recalls, "The Pound Era was the book from Kenner" and "Lippard's Six Years: The Dematerialization of Art" was "an important book for me."

Eigner, Coolidge, Grenier -- w/ some reservations (e.g., the extent to wch Ashbery is a combine of the influences of Roche & Pleyne from the French & the likes of Chris Smart v. the extent to wch he has done his own work -- almost forgot to mention the influence of Milton!). Oppen, no: his work, tho good where it is, is too narrow, too many minor variations of themes by Zuk & WCW. Bunting too only has a few poems that totally convince me, Rakosi almost none. HD, only a fraction of her work (trilogy) wch opens up a horizon where it works, but it really like Oppen is a narrow achievement. Rothenberg, no, he hasn't got the work qualitatively at all. He is at his best doing translations & tho provocative & useful, they aren't always good poems. Schuyler? No, he's got only one or 2 gimmicks & sort of funnels all the world thru (Hymn to Life certainly demonstrates this, wch is the danger that Palmer confronts also, no?). Mac Low has worked provocatively (i.e., has opened possibilities) but has never managed to do so w/ any great technical accomplishment, often predictable in his solutions (same huge fault as in Saroyan). Much of Stanzas to Iris Lezak, for example, is dull. Blackburn never worked w/ enough precision in his definition of voice (wch was his theme for christsake!). Palmer, as above. What really surprises me w/ this list is the absence of EZRA POUND! I once spent 18 months reading only the Cantos, it is worth it. Also: David Antin (much better than Mac Low, say, or than Schwerner, who cops out on all the major decisions he makes), and Phil Whalen, who has described voice better than any man (Clifford Burke sez rightly, distrust the poet who ain't got On Bear's Head). But basically, aside from lists, categories & rankings, most of wch are beside the point, there is only the work to be got to, at. Basically, I feel that at any point there are probably only 4 to 5 writers who are writing well enough for me to feel compelled to study what they're doing, to learn from that (wch is where Clark, Berkson, Palmer etc. represent to me the work ahead). Lots of other good work about, but never w/ that sense in it that every element is intentional (often writers do not sustain that willfulness either as, say, Kelly has not). Abt the others you mention: Enslin

-- learned a way to channel all info into a system & churn it out, a pt where formalism breaks, literally, down. A good example of a deliberately minor worker from whom there is not a lot to learn. Spicer -- in spite of all the BS he himself puts around him, & the weird sense of speech he relies on, he is really there, a good example of a mind making forms: Language, Book of Mag Verse & Heads of the Town up to the Aether are minor classics all of them. He was a very central character in my own development tho is one guy whose books I own not one copy of now (due to first Shelley, then Barbara having most), Clark is I think a minor writer who cld have gone much higher, seems to fuck it up, aims at minor points, makes wrong decisions. Elmslie is, as far as I can tell, unreadable. Corman is dithering in the margins (O these quips!) Olson is still, for me, MAJOR, tho mebbe is not a good poet (the old problem of how often movements will have 3 key figures, the man who opens the territory up (Pollack, Olson), the one who does the completed, finished surfaces, usually is the most "popular" (de Kooning, Duncan) & finally the one who is most useful to learn from (Newman, Creeley)). I'm rereading Archaeologist of Morning now. Whalen is as I said major. Sorrentino is doing marginally interesting work (wch is not a rejection per se, but a sense of place), Kyger is doing fine things tho where she's headed I honestly can't say. She's much sharper, smarter than she lets on, her sense of vowels (wch is where her contribution really comes in & counts, is where, say, she has had major impact on both Creeley & Berkson) is one of the most precise. Besides, if Marilyn Monroe wrote poems, she would write Joanne's! Irby is off well into his own bag, a well-done thing of no use & only slight interest to others on this planet, a solitude I think he digs. Wieners is the person people use to think Gregory Corso was going to be. Our mad poet. He has a superb sense of certain older forms (the quatrain in particular), a perfect honesty, a good ear & well, yes, he is in a minority reality as Laing wld say. I love his work, love the idea of a madman's formalism. Jonathan Williams is doing fine minor scrollworks in small niches, is content w/ that. I like his humor, his sense of form. Wish, tho,

he f
writ
a pc
obje
of h
do s
he d
of b
get
not
one
etho
of fa
guys.
Berks
antho
what
basec
rounc
he's

You s
in va
bk is
is it
have
saril
gathe
in th
reall
of lc
books

Hopef
McInt
thou
xerox
that
no id
speak

he had any ambition. Meltzer is a dodo. Koch is a slick writer who has had no new formal ideas to contribute & is a poetry scene gangster of the worst order. Most of what I object to, occasionally, in the NY scene seems to stem out of his grinning forehead. Dorn has written beautifully & may do so again. I can't imagine how he can use as much dope as he does & not totally burn out tho. Duncan is at the edge of being one of the great writers, but is too indulgent to get there finally I think. Another example of a talent being not used to its fullest possible extent. Snyder does nothing one cld not find in Pound, & much better, & in his woodsy-ethos carries around a real & to me quite dangerous mode of fascism, a real death force. Anyhow, so much for those guys. What about David Jones, Tom Raworth? By the way, about Berkson, I disagree w/ you as to the poems in the New York anthology: I like 'em. I think that basically they are doing what he does best (cf. "October") wch is write a poetry based on the word as focus in discourse & a very quiet rounded & pastel formalism in all he does. I think also that he's improved radically since then, but it's all there.

You say that what you'd like is something more like "Edge in variability though longer" wch is where my sense of a bk is I suspect different. Think rather that each volume is itself a completed work, that each piece therein shld have some specific relation to the whole (tho not necessarily one articulated prior by the writer). Simply large gatherings are ok, but lack the sheer force available in the other manner. Wch was why for me CORONA (Juan??) really was doing it so well. This is a very Spicerian way of looking at a book, but see no reason otherwise to have books as compared to other forms of making public, no?

Hopefully now Herman will get Maintains out thru Graham McIntosh, thus avoiding the problem of the few hundred thou . . . BUT, the ms. hath disappeared, so Clark has to xerox it all over!!! (& where's Mattingly, the other ½ of that partnership gone acropper, but in SF w/ D Gray, tho no idee in my head as to whether The Maintains is, so to speak, in town also...). Fuckups, fuckups.

Interesting to have yr comments on my comments on Tooth-pick. Yes, Wiater is out to use people. He seems to have a proprietary hold on the Seattle scene (much as Michael has on DC) & really is out to milk it. Still a nice enuf character. My point abt the width was sort of back to what I'd sd previous, abt only a handful of people really deserving study, really doing good work, at any time. The folks in Alcheringa are for me mostly of that quality! I hope I so feel in 6 months! Not certainly all that is possible but some thereof & all good. My commitment is not to my peers but to the language. Most writers of this generation, like any other, are going to fuck up all over the place & end deservedly along the waysides. I do like the likes of LeWitt etc., but felt that it was, say, beside the pt. as far as an assertion of poetry, that it confused certain issues (tho I do include Sondheim as a writer, not an "other" to my mind). The assertion did to me seem a key possibility, it is the one thing we have not had yet (by wch I mean the kinds of writers I like) the wholly ideal forum. Rothenberg, who wants a heavy connexion to the past (wch exists!) concretized, w/ space limitations & other workers, Barry's too heavy leaning on older writers in certain respects, Tottel's lack of funds, etc. etc. What one wants eventually is something of the weight & clarity of the Allen anthology to know the others out of the park.

I mean this: I'm out to write poetry (& perform the tangential work that goes w/ it, editing, critically etc.) that CHANGES the way poetry & the word are seen in this place, nothing less, & a series, a lifelong series of assertions is what I'm after, boom Boom BOOOOOMMM! Mebbe that's dogmatic, selfimportant etc., but lookit, there are the words, there are the Words. Each wrapped around something unspeakable, that pt. where the word refuses to submit to meaning, how else get there???

Energy,

Ron

22. Ron Silliman to Bruce Andrews (5/2/74)

Dear Bruce,

do sympathize w/ your sense of the mails, yr "problems" getting answers written, sense that yr beginning to feel the way I do in that arena of action (or whatever) . . . bitch to want, really want to write to X, only to have neither time nor energy to do so. Some days I come home 11pm from meetings or whatever, only to find 6 or 7 letters waiting, not having on a cpl of occasions [time or energy] to even read them. Life these past few weeks has been both hell & wonderful (a very fine line there), no vacant spaces at all. I got a raise at work (after 3 years, well, almost, I now get \$304 per month after taxes, actually \$304.01, but who wld believe THAT??) Listening to Marvin Gaye's Let's Get It On album, wch is a great piece of music, probably the work that proves/justifies everything Motown's ever done. Saw the card you sent to Barry, glad you liked my work there. I was afraid, seriously, that the syntagmatic bent there wld alienate you to what I was trying to do. I've been reading lots of Quine of late, plus Sweezy (that, sir, is yr doing, well worth it, thanks), new bks by Eigner, Gitin, L 4-5, Hills 2, Big Deal 2, etc. L is wonderful, Curtis' sense there really reflects his sense of the world, its need for c l e a n n e s s as well as precision. Big Deal much more of a gamble, more guts to it in that sense, but much less of a finish. Hills more of a home industry by those standards. I was pissed w/ Gegenschein they left a whole line out of the middle of one of my pieces, can you imagine?? Notley bk was a disaptment for me, I was hoping for much more, as I'd seen better (so I thot) in such places as All Stars. Jim Gustafson & David Anderson volumes will be coming out from that source soon (soon as Barry types them & Tom Veitch prints 'em), tho Jim, who [I] like lots as a "guy," is almost a neighbor now, I cant

get up enthusiasm for either. Readings next month include one by Acker, but on a night when I have to teach a class (on the politics behind prison construction), also one by MacAdams I shld be able to get to. What free time I've had, I've spent boogieing or writing some poems (nothing too much of interest, so I feel tonight). Have gotten good feedback on "Berkeley," wch makes me happy -- that piece was a risk for me. On risk, as a rule of thumb -- risk is a safer bet than non-risk, insofar as poems go, the best feel uneasy. I liked "Index," but felt that it was directed (as to my mind the Alch. prose is largely also so) toward questions we've all moved beyond now, no? I liked yr piece in Big Deal 2 a lot, felt it was one of yr strongest individual works (as was the first one in This). I like THESE, tho some seem to bend toward easy humors (always the problem w/ short juxtapositions). I like the relational space as focus. The pieces in L also seem to be putting your best foot forward. Let's see. It's late, I'm going to get to bed soon, so I'll stick to the questions in the 2 notes & hope for an answer in the next week or so: as to who I sent Nox & Mohawk to, I just sent them to either correspondees or personal friends. I like "black beauty" & other mooche of yrs in Gegenschein, tho I think that mag does best by Ray and Bob Perelman (who, w/ Alan Sondheim, has been for me one of the people of late I've been paying close attention to whatever I see of, so as to get an idea of their work). My works in there date from early to mid 1973. Anyhow, midnight, to sleep,

Ron

23. Steve McCaffery to Bruce Andrews ("fall '75")

dear bruce:

enclosed here is the translation issue of open letter.
yes yes yes the idea of a collaboration excites me. I

38. Lyn Hejinian to Charles Bernstein (12/16/76)

Dear Charles,

I ground to a dead halt yesterday afternoon, after many good days of work, so am taking a holiday, to answer your letter, bake cookies with the children, find a tree outdoors from which the birds, raccoons, skunks, and squirrels might like to pluck popcorn and cranberries. Christmas on the farm. My daughter wants to concoct a cakelike mess for the horses -- molasses, carrots, and oats -- as a treat.

I've read your letter over several times, and thought much about the questions you raise -- all that business of ideas and their subsequent realities and whose they are. The "whose they are" interests me -- I'd never thought of it in just that way. I supposed the thought and the thinker mutually create each other; the real fabricated by the realizer.

As an aside, it makes me think of that great Idealist, Buckminster Fuller -- at some point during one of his Thinking-out-louds which are his Lectures, he posited the thought that culture is an idea pool, and anyone with any ideas should contribute them to the idea pool, and anyone in need of ideas should be able to pull out a pailful. Part of what he meant, of course, was to get away from copy-rights and the possessive anxiety that artists and thinkers are crippled by. That was during the Sixties, when we all had more faith than now. Of course, he was right.

I guess I have lost some of that faith myself, however. You speak some of "us" and "people" and I find that I avoid dealing with the issue of the collective persona, mostly because I do truly dislike "people"; I mean the concept of such, or man as a species. We've been a disaster on the planet. The pious cruelties that man justifies into daily rituals make me despair for us all. I notice, though, that I dearly love my friends and family -- individuals; that may be why I prefer to think in those terms. Maybe one can only speak accurately in terms of specifics.

Many people have suggested I read Laura Riding's work; I've yet to find a single one of her books, but I'll most certainly buy one when I do.

Wish I could see EINSTEIN ON THE BEACH.

Willits has no cultural events. Well -- singing coyotes.

Best,

Lyn

39. Charles Bernstein to Ron Silliman (2/14/77)

ron,

this is that promised letter abt our proposed magazine, a copy of wch i'll also send to bruce.⁴³ in addition to various excursions by me, this letter incorporates, as best i cld, a letter bruce sent to me summarizing two lengthy discussions we had in december in wch we formulated the idea of the three of us coediting a magazine. (all quoted material is verbatim from bruce's letter.⁴⁴) all this, however, is still just suggestions, so you shldnt feel we're coming to you with a pre-fixed structure. this proposal is a collaboration, three way, & your transformation of the text is still to come.

i wld be managing editor (i.e., resp for mail, printing, letters, distribution) for the present since i have more

43. In a letter to Silliman dated December 28, 1976, Bernstein mentions that he is "getting ready a letter to you abt starting up a magazine" and asks, "Is group editing a good idea?" This letter, not included here, is excerpted in an appendix to the expanded reprint of *LEG-
END* (see note 42).

44. Bernstein quotes so thoroughly from Andrews's lengthy letter that we decided to exclude it to avoid redundancy and conserve space for other correspondence.

45. Charles Bernstein to Ron Silliman (5/19/77)

Ron,

was genuinely thrilled to get the copy of 2197 in the mail yesterday afternoon & although i've not gotten past a fast overall look & then the first few sections it looks wonderful -- the syntax turning in on itself so that the sentences are not impossible physical entities or events as in Ketjak but syntactically swampy (not like "many head out of here" but rather "many an head out of here") but the time's not yet to talk abt it. will of course get it to ray & bruce.

guess there are a variety of misc things to relate to you. for one, james sherry called to tell me how much he liked the "Stalinoids" section & that he wanted to print it together with a number of other wrks by the Legend crew -- individual & collaborative -- in Roof #3. he will be printing a long poem of mine ("For-----") in the next issue, along with some of bruce's wrk, plus a variety of middling to bad St. Mark's people, wch shld be interesting since you'll get a chance to see what a number of Berrigan influenced people are doing (really not doing). anyway sherry (who, as you once sd to me of jim mcurry, doesnt really know what we're doing) wants to make a substantial (he says) commitment to our wrk in the next issue & i wanted you to know that & what bruce, ray & i were planning to send him. (i told him he shld contact steve, &c., but he says until he sees steve's solo wrk he doesnt want to print any collaborations involving him. the key thing here is that he wants this stuff by very early June.) ray & i are going to give him a chance to publish our dyad & bruce suggests we also give him the Ron-Bruce-Charles triad if it's done in time. i am still sitting on that, but bruce says he'll give it his immediate attention when i'm through & send a copy off to you & sherry at the same time, if you

agree -- this way you can still okay the final version. he'll be in touch with you on it. my own initial impression was that we cldnt really have the triad in time, but it cld work out & wld be gd to see in the context of other of our wrks. obviously you shld let bruce or me know yr thinking on this. -- on that triad -- as i think i sd -- i really like the way it's going -- a beautiful piece -- & yr note on it was nothing less than excellent. i think i will send you a xerox of the penned in additions i will be sending on to bruce, who will add his own & re-type it (tho, come to think of it here -- strange i feel like this letter is a kind of telephone call & think of yr idea of a teletype console in each [of] our homes & we cld immediately type a reply -- actually what a great idea for a collaboration to get access to such a machine & have a conversation with it -- as i was saying, i think bruce should also pen in his corrections & send the ms. to you & me for an okay & then go ahead & type it. incidently, i do want to say that i did think that you shld have gone ahead & worked on the triad more & was surprised that bruce wanted to stop at his round -- it was my sense that yr input had been too limited up till that time & am glad you continued to wrk on the piece & in that sense def second yr thoughts on having all pieces receive a number of go rounds --

anticipating wrtng you today i looked for yr last letter & cldnt find it so i hope i'm not forgetting anything you asked &c. i do remember carrying the letter arnd for a numer [number] of days cause i liked rdng it so much -- it was a wonderful letter -- really!

the weeks since then have been very busy [. . .]. i really enjoyed visiting with rae, a completely unexpected pleasure, who brought all you SF figures to life for us & certainly increased my desire to go out there on a visit. chuck also struck me as being very nice (people always attack for using the word nice as it its less than enthusiastic, while for me the word is very enthusiastic -- i.e., high praise). [. . . .]

another loose end is the magazine, wch seems to be moving into a kind of limbo. i think yr arguments in yr last letter on that were very persuasive -- but if we are to do a mag that's that expensive -- thinking of cost alone -- well it's just hard to realistically know if we can at this moment make the fincial [financial] & time commitment necessary. one idea i have as a stop gap thing maybe for a year or something is to form a collective publishing or distributing grp that would make available a variety of materials published either separately by one of the three of us, or by others in special circumstances, or by the distributing service itself, i.e., we cld make available Marquee, Parsing, Vowells, back issues of Tottel's (at cost +), steve's bks, plus poss even ms. versions of things at cost + (i.e., Sunset Debris for \$6 in ms. version "made available through Rhizome"). add to this pot a bi-monthly newsletter -- subscription only -- wch wld be something like the reViews section plus some longer critical sections -- sort of an extension of our correspondences in part & an informal place for the exchange of ideas, letters to the editor, &c. all this misc cld be distributed by us & by, say, the NYS distribution service. also short pamphlets & things cld be put out. this is not a substitute [substitute] for the magazine, but it may be a start. &, since you'll still be doing Tottel's, say, perhaps a bit of help with distribution of it -- autonomously produced by you but released by Rhizome (or whatever name -- we shld decide on a mag name & use it for this). what you say????

THANKS for yr Joyce paper -- by the way. i enjoyed rdng it -- it was actually a gd introductory piece & if not as complex as yr later stuff, still a solid piece. WAKE always loomed in my mind, but recently something you've sd has been a gd focus -- that it's a cul de sac because its obsession is with etymology not the structure of language. -- also this thing abt choice in 2197 is playing in my mind right now -- we are not free to choose our language, being born into it, & the romantic act of renunciation

(whether Rimbaud or Duchamp or Surrealism) is simply a refusal to acknowledge this (the) condition of our human lives, a refusal of (to use two words you have sd recently are names for it) love & revolution -- & also a refusal of the choice that is possible -- a choice always within a set of conditions. i have, by the way, decided to write a final section to our dyad, starting out with the sense that person is the first division, that the language of us all, the Legend we are writing, is the re-placement of ourselves [ourself] with ourselves -- renouncing our isolation, as a friend likes to say, w/o losing our solitude -- wch is perhaps also the figure of metonymy. -- anyway this is enuf for now. i'm enclosing "The Taste Is What Counts," wch i wrote abt a yr ago & have an extra copy of here as part of my CAPS application. write soon -- i know you will, love,

Charles

46. Charles Bernstein to Steve McCaffery, ("early June '77")

Steve,

well here goes part 2, tho i'm not quite sure how to begin. where. liked 'Ow's "waif" very much, thought the essay on Mac Low was the best i'd read on him in a general way. actually had a longish phone call with Jackson last night -- hes a mighty fine person to chat with. i let slip something abt "progressive" writing or else & he pointed out he didnt believe in progress, didnt like the term avant-garde, what impressed him abt poetry was never that it dealt with certain formal "cutting edge" concerns but the inner integrity of the wrk regardless of the mode -- that he thought what characterized "our" wrk (say wrk that owes something to Mac Low or that has the concerns of Coolidge or any of the other people in the collaboration,

I thank you for a good letter this spring, much appreciated and hopefully I'll be able at times to hold up an end out here. Busy of late, doing quite a bit of new writing, working on an essay on Tennis Court Oath for the Ashbery VORT issue and an article on civil liberties & foreign policy, research (continuing) on a book I'm endlessly writing on Vietnam (EMPIRE & Society), a play for voices, etc. Lots of movies, much time alone, walks, café con leché. Also, Charles Bernstein and I are beginning a newsletter, bi-monthly, this fall, on language/writing, to focus attention where it deserves to be focused (interesting slant this typewriter is creating)-- including reviews, essays, texts, plus bibliographic essays on about 15 writers (like Coolidge, Grenier, Mac Low, Eigner, Siliman, Mayer, Palmer, etc.), and info about magazines. A source of real energy of late, and something about which Charles is going to be getting in touch with you (to see what you might consider writing about. . .).

Addresses you asked for: Paul Auster (LIVING HAND) is Millis Road, Box 252, Stanfordville, N.Y. 12581; Tod Kabza (FLORA DANICA) is 311 Ann St., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48108. [BA annotates: Probably should just send them a few bucks, for latest issue. FLORA especially ravishing.] You know Perelman's HILLS, Alan Davies' 100 POSTERS, Phoebe MacAdams' ATTABOY, Mark Karlins' TEXT? Other possibilities.

I've been having a chance to read your work -- most recently in THIS 8, and the MASK book, which Rosmarie sent. The work in THIS I had some difficulty with, feeling that you were not pushing things in the language as far as they seemed to want to be carried, thus leaving the surface a thinner and prettier composition than the material might call for. A MASK has some lovely passages, and is certainly handsomely done. Especially liked what was happening on page one, in many of the epigrammatic constructions, in part 3 of the piece right before "Song," in "The Soft Face," in 6, 8, and 9 of "Notes Toward" (the end of #9 being almost a review of the book for me), and more. We come from different places, so this may seem only

an idiosyncratic "take," but I didn't want to just leave things at superficial back-slapping since I have great respect for what you're doing. I do, though, at times, feel that a high-toned conservatism prevents a more independent & adventurous music from being revealed. (Have same problem with Susan Howe's pieces -- in the new EEL -- although she has a different & more limited prosody.)

Be interested, in this spirit (ooh lah lah) of dialogue, to hear what you thought of what Barry put together in the THIS. Or of NONE OF THE ABOVE, which you mentioned you were ordering. [BA inserts: (Not at all just w/ my work, in either case, but w/ the whole atmosphere those 2 collections create.)]

Or have you seen the pieces of Paradis by Sollers in the last few issues of TEL QUEL, etc.

Have heard good things about more of the TUUMBA books -- could you send me a list of the ones now available, for I'd like to order a few. We're going to try to get reviews of yours, and the Higgins, possibly more, for the newsletter. Rae Armantrout expressed an interest in writing something on your work, for example, and I wonder if you would have in mind some other person to write a text on your work or books that would focus specifically on the language/textual/formal/compositional/formal, etc. concerns involved and apparent there. Would like to know. [BA inserts: Want to open things up a bit, & spread info & stimulus more widely.]

Yeah, Carla Bley.

Listening to the '59 meeting of Adderly and Coltrane, without Miles Davis. Quiet commotion.

Also, I'm finally now getting around to sending you a manuscript to consider for TUUMBA, bearing in mind your comment earlier that you were several works ahead and it

would be some time before a ms. you wanted to do would be able to appear. The enclosed is "Praxis," a piece I wrote last summer and one I'm especially happy with. I thought it might be right for what you are doing with the series, and is the size you mentioned being appropriate. See what you think of it; I read it at Greenwich Books this spring and it worked well, but I hadn't sent it to anyone for the size (a 20 page un-segmented work) made it hard to think of who would be right. Only inertia, and an inability to write letters, kept me from sending it to you months back. I've enclosed postage but can't find an envelope, in case it has to be returned. Hope not.

Well, I'm glad I got over my correspondence block. You're one person (writing warm and sprightly letters, to boot) I've wanted to keep in better touch with, and regret having not. How was Barbara's visit, SF readings, West Coast writing scene, current reading, new crazes, the series, etc.

All my best,

Bruce

52. Bruce Andrews to Ron Silliman (8/2/77)

Dear Ron,

leave tomorrow (from Aug 4-25, will be c/o Hardin, 287 River Drive, Hadley, Mass.), and Ellen's been (this is said to you in privacy, to be respected as such) tremendously upset lately, my emotional gravity therefore in turmoil, so this is just a list rather than a letter, which is owed you, and is in fact it seems always owed you.

1. I gave the letter of yours July 20 to Charles, the one concerning the distrib. service. He will write you in

3 shots of Brandy will get you drunk.

More soon,

Ron

63. Charles Bernstein to Ron Silliman (11/1/77)

Ron,

Got yr letter this morning, wch was as usual exciting & gd reading. Am off on Friday morning to Boston (visit Stanley Cavell, hope to meet Grenier, &c.) & then a few days in Vermont, back to NY on Wednesday --

The newsletter is looking good. Much copy, lots of energy getting generated. What wld you think of using the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E logo for the distributing svc too -- I mean we need a name, soon. & wld be an advantage to make our three-way collective visibly a part of the newsletter. (& remember, if as you say, weve got hard jobs cut out for us in editing the newsletter, youve got a special position in terms of that too -- yr feedback ++ being crucial to that enterprise as I see it.) I'll ask Johanna Drucker -- if I dont miss her before she goes to Greece (tho I think she'll be -- later on -- moving to NY) what she thinks abt the xeroxing -- of course yr right abt it being printed work -- the xeroxes wld at best be a sampler, an illustration, & probably shld have a word of warning attached to them). By the way, Coolidge wrote (Bruce) for some reason assuming that for the distributing service we wanted only unpublished mss., rather than what is even more obvious, o/p stuff (i.e., Mayer's Story, etc.) -- he must have misunderstood a bit, tho I think Bruce is wrtng to rectify that all. (Coolidge wrote James Sherry that he wasnt much interested in the second half of Roof #3!) (whats that you say in "three fifths

equals" abt the garbo stance????!!!)⁶¹ Barry sd he'd show you [Grenier's] "Three Possibilities --- for Larry Eigner," wch Ive been sending copies of out -- kind of an amazing piece, tho a prblm to put upfront in the first issue as part of an Eigner feature since it wld take just abt the whole issue [see appendix 1]. Ive offered to put the piece on the distr svc & he seemd to agree to that -- & I am hoping we can work something out to use with the Eigner piece in the first issue -- maybe serializing the long piece over several issues. Anyway we have his Keats piece wch will pblsh along with a piece by Barrett on Grenier. Any other wrd on the distr srvc from yr end? What abt the idea of getting cheaper xeroxes in Berkeley? Suppoze, since you dont say no, that Lyn's Tuumba bk, o/p now, is okay to distr in xerox.

what else? this letter getting constantly interrupted by phone, people wlking in & out. want to get the initial mailing -- i.e., catalgue [catalogue] with \$ & pg length, out in one month's time, so we're getting down to the wire (??). by the way, the word has it that T Towle sent a searing attack on yr piece in the SF Rev of Bks to the pblcn -- defending Violi & himself agst the charge that they make only "minor art objects" -- did you hear abt that? Also, it looks like John Ensslin of Redd Herring Press (new) is going to put out Occurrence of Tune, hopefully by Spring.

Malone's address is on the enclosed flier from Pod -- note how many bks hes plng -- plus the "E-Pod" series, wch will include a section of Legend (he wants -- did i say? the enclosed triad plus Ron-Steve), plus many other projects (incl a bk of my "prose" format wrks).

i'm sorry all the people have left town. got a note from Davies that he was going to be in the city during the

61. "3 Fifths Equals" is the Bernstein, McCaffery, Silliman triad in *LEGEND*. The passage about Garbo reads, "it is the sign (S/s) of an intellectual coward to pose as Garbo. . ."

weekend, but i guess he didnt make it here -- we'll meet soon, tho, i'm sure.

just realized i put this page in backward -- sorry.

so: much enclosed here. will get to the article you sent later today -- & also back to work on a piece i'm wrtng for the leather bound reissue of Gerald Green's The Last Angry Man -- oh the demands of \$ wrk.

seems theres continually an enormous amount of detail between us in the letters of late -- wch is a whole different tone than before. so many notes -- wch is a day-by-day thing, maybe actually the best kind of letter interchange because least abstract, generalized.

so, all for now.

love,

Charles
