

"The question becomes, **what is real** — and what is of that nature? The most severe argument we can offer against the 'value' of some thing or act, is that it is **not** real, it has no given place in what our world has either chosen or been forced to admit."

(p. 46)

"...In poems we realize, not in discursive or secondary manner, but with this implicit and absolutely consequential fact of firstness, terms of our own life, manifestations of that life which, otherwise, are most awkwardly acknowledged."

(p. 68)

"...I think I first felt a poem to be what might exist in words as primarily the fact of its own activity. Later, of course, I did see that poems might comment on many things, and reveal many attitudes and qualifications. Still, it was never what they said **about** things that interested me. I wanted the poem itself to exist and that could never be possible as long as some subject significantly elsewhere was involved. There has to be an independence derived from the very fact that words are **things** too."

(p. 54)

"In other words, poems are not referential, or at least not importantly so. They have 'meaning' in that they do 'exist through themselves' (Olson)."

(p. 54)

"...The only possible reason for its (the story's) existence is that it has, in itself, the fact of reality and the pressure."

(p. 3)

I

What is brought together in this book may well be the last word, of its kind, the final significant instance of what Eliot, introducing Pound's **Literary Essays**, called 'the most important contemporary criticism,' (that which 'we can least afford to do without') precisely because Creeley has come to/drawn in from statements by poets he values (Pound, Williams, Olson, Zukofsky, Duncan, Ginsberg) insights like those above. Either poets/writers will no longer give themselves with such energy and devotion to the serious articulation of what writing is for their time, or a kind of critical writing which does not now much exist will have to be made dominant: one in which the intention to say something is accomplished in a form possessed, first, of all the self-sufficient factness of the actual poem/prose being discussed, and here as in relation to writing generally Gertrude Stein of all our 'fathers' still points the way (viz. her **Lectures in America**, Beacon Press, first pub. 1935). Criticism as literary indulgence will no doubt go on and be respected, but in the work that matters, comment is finished, there will have to be no essential difference between criticism and poems, if for no other reason than that poems are going to be so real that nobody will want to read 'about' something.

The words in **A Quick Graph** are referential, have, primarily, sign-function, they say look, see: and what they point to, often literally since Creeley often quotes writing which was/is important to him, is I think what there is to see (though were the approach less 'personal,' or were another person speaking, Stevens and Stein, mentioned, might well deserve more space). The book is, simply, the introduction to twentieth century American poetry to date (or, say, to 1965/Zukofsky's **All**). 'Shows what to read and why' as what C. learned from.

Or ('why' theoretically) when the nature of writing is being discussed, the words in the book refer back into C.'s head, or out to statements by other men (directly, as these are quoted, and/or as C. gives his sense of same), to a set of concepts centering on an idea of crucial importance for anyone writing today, which I have attempted to restate by so arranging C's statements above and to which my words in this piece are constantly referring. Should I try once again to indicate what already exists. As C. says in his 'Notes For A New Prose,' writing 'could be, has been, the collection of ideas (p. 15).'

But **beyond** that, and here C's very responsible intention to draw attention to what's interesting — and it's been necessary for me to read this book to know this finally — -with few exceptions, the language here is not that clearly real itself — -betrays him. Despite the intelligence and care with which each sentence is written, each word chosen, typically it means something apart from the fact of its own existence and cannot really be understood in its own terms/without reference to some other X which, in/as fact, often follows. In other words, the exemplary instance of language here is an adjective (_specific,' 'loveliest,' 'difficult,' 'real,' 'consequential') intending and so drawing being from some superior reality, as its shadow.

Be it objected that this is what language is, does, has always done — -that to say such is merely to evidence more particularly, in form, Creeley's essential disinterestedness/intention to be of use to other writers and to the reading public, to acknowledge the service, the vital function herein proffered as nowhere else or one since Pound... Ok, yes, and **gratefully** acknowledged.

But the restiveness (as 'There are many ways indeed to say any of this, and I can't feel any one to be sufficient' — -p. 54) recurring throughout is at least in part the mark of C's own dissatisfaction/confusion: that content ('any of this') is presumed distinct from/prior to this present writing ('many ways') which hopes somehow to...approximate... What. Olson: '...right form, in any given poem (& I am extending this to cover writing generally), is the only and exclusively possible extension of content under hand' ('Projective Verse').

At best, like any text or form designed to wake an awareness:

Olson: 'That which exists through itself is what is called meaning.'

this book is to be burned/consumes itself. **Cherish** and go beyond it, as C's poems (viz. **Pieces**) particularly do go into the reality of language.

Exception, one of such indicated above (relative unconcern for art talk/freedom from literary convention re art material helped spring venture in **Black Mountain Review**, Spring 1956?):

Philip Guston: A Note

For a sense of it, say — -I tried to be careful, but the form would not have it. My care was the form I had given to it. How to care, that one does care? **Care**, it seems, comes from several words, among them the Anglo-Saxon **caru**, **cearu** (anxiety) and the Old Saxon **kara** (sorrow). Is it moving with care through care, that it comes to? I care, certainly.

I think — - in that denseness of anxieties, and sorrows, like a nightmare world, of forms which are all exact and there, yet not the forms? What **are** the forms, one says. It is not possible that one should not arrive at them. Somehow not to be accidental, not even enough or too much 'accidental.' No one understands, but some know. It is a very articulation which can, at last, "...take care/by the throat & throttle it..." with such care.

(P.343)

If I knew anything of Guston's work I might well be able to make sense of this also in terms of it, however the example is I feel this now, in many senses, coming back to it again in terms of itself, and as itself, it speaks also of Creeley's world.

All writing should so evidence itself/what words **can do**.

II

"Criticism so far as I have discovered has two functions:

1. Theoretically it tries to forerun composition, to serve as gunsight, though there is, I believe, no recorded instance of the foresight having EVER been of the slightest use save to actual composers. I mean the man who formulates any forward reach of co-ordinating principle is the man who produces the demonstrations.

.....

2. Exemption. The general ordering and weeding out of what has actually been performed. The elimination of repetitions. The work analogous to that which a good hanging committee or a curator would perform in a National Gallery or in a biological museum;

The ordering of knowledge so that the next man (or generation) can most readily find the live part of it, and waste the least possible time among obsolete issues."

(**The Literary Essays of Ezra Pound**, New Directions, p.75)

In the material brought together in **A Quick Graph**, Creeley has made himself of use in the ways set forth here by Pound. He has gathered together/reformulated a 'forward reach of co-ordinating principle' of which his own creative work **is** the finest demonstrations to date. He has pointed to the work of Williams, Pound, Zukofsky, etc., which **is** 'the live part' of poetry written in the first sixty years of this century so that we now can see it/go from there.

Taking criticisms to be writing too, I would simply add that it seems to me to follow from the principles C. has stressed, of the five kinds or 'categories' available to criticism as means of performing its double function outlined by Pound (**Literary Essays**, pp. 74-5), 'Criticism by discussion' (and this covers the mass of critical endeavor from Aristotle through Pound to Creeley) is no longer of much interest, and that if one is not (as Pound also was) particularly given to 'Criticism by translation' or 'Criticism by exercise in the style of a given period, 'there remains but the one way to do the work (assuming one is not competent in 'Criticism via music,' what P. calls 'the most intense form...save'):

“5. Criticism in new composition.”

Of such, the 'criticism' of Charles Olson (person/circumstance/theory/writing) **actualized** in the poem beginning 'Like a man committed to searching...' in **Pieces** (Scribners, 1970, pp. 60-2) is (to resort again to the goddamn adjectival phrases/'judgment': I don't know anything 'better,' as tribute) the most deeply felt/densely informative reality of this order I know.

ON SPEECH

"My poems exist in my head. They need not be spoken or written."
——Randolph Dud

It isn't the spoken any more than the written, now, that's the progression from Williams, what now I want, at least, is the word way back in the head that is the thought or feeling forming out of the 'vast' silence/ noise of consciousness experiencing world **all the time**, as waking/dreaming, words occurring and **these are the words of the poems**, whether they, written or spoken or light the head in **vision of the reality language wakes** in dreams or anywhere, on the street in armor/clothes. These words of the poem have something to do with the forms of written spoken usage (e.g. Norwegian /American dialect) in which they may be heard/seen, but there is no value in the linguistic vehicle per se, i.e. spoken noises and written letters are signs of the reality of words in the head (of which some few are 'interesting'/get written down, of those few are printed/become widely known/are read aloud to crowds).

In the process of writing what does not then occur in the head is a distraction.

Why imitate 'speech'? Various vehicle that American speech is in the different mouths of any of us, possessed of particular powers of colloquial usage, rhythmic pressure, etc., it is **only** such. **To me, all speeches say the same thing**, or: why not exaggerate, as Williams did, for our time proclaim an abhorrence of 'speech' designed as was his castigation of 'the sonnet' to rid us, as creators of the world, from reiteration of the past dragged on in formal habit. I HATE SPEECH.

There are 'worlds conceived in language/men not dreamed of.' We don't know the restrictions imposed by speech pattern /conventions, though those involving e.g. normal sentence structure thought required to 'make sense' start to show, won't until a writing clears the air.

What can be done. Evidently not more sonnets, and not force 'experiment.'

First question: where are the words most themselves? **Then** (& here Dud's position above seems incomplete): how may they best be spread abroad without distortion, so that the known world can be shared?

I want writing what is thought/where **feeling** is/**words are born**.

E.g.:

"AZURE

**azure
as ever
adz aver"**

—Louis Zukofsky
(from **All: the collected short poems, 1956-1964** - Norton, 1966)

"ROAST POTATOES

Roast potatoes for."

—Gertrude Stein
(from **Tender Buttons** in **Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein**, ed. Van
Vechten, Modern Library, 1962)

ROBERT CREELEY: **PIECES**, Scribners, 1969

If not that 'verse print bred,' discrete space finished)

"PROJECTIVE VERSE" IS **PIECES** ON

to locate poem in, 'real as,' physiology/experience, make sense of 'organic form' vagueness...

words in head occur as energy as real as heart beating, ears hearing, breathing, etc., not 'breath,' that's happening too, or to identify poems w/ speaking voice machinery, but words as real a part of 'clearing'/consciousness taking place as simultaneity processing/**time**...

Zukofsky (his 'eye,' yes, better than 'I/ego to see what's present, but not identify w/eye's distanced subjection to the 'already done' **over** there object either, rather):

"nouns: acts as much as verbs"
(**Prepositions**, Horizon, NY, 1967, p. 142)

all parts of speech are energy actual in 'stream of consciousness,' senseless to discriminate/assign parts of speech separate function...

what Creeley plugged into clearly across whole book **PIECES** (first time since oral saga?) /recognition of such removes (space) material obstacles from realization of energy poem as words in head...

all words are acts as it happens in the head, not signs/'about' something primarily but energy in time, along with all the other simultaneous goings on/in/of the organism, Ginsberg:

"thought before 'the world is many things at once and not just one thing at a time after another' "
(**Indian Journals**, City Lights, 1970, p. ?)

but '**one to/one to one**' is way language realizes itself (while everything else also happening)

. . . . this this this this this

words just like sex — both energy of organism — even better, can keep on coming, 'auto-erotic' yes/no just giving energy to universe (as sperm to woman/words to books) but that's afterward, valuation, the man in the mind in the words just go on:

"In

side the
thinking."
(**Words**, Scribners, 1967, p.105)

'lonely,' **what** — -when to 'identify' with this energy as the organism into word is complete, not 'missing' anything not 'ego' cut off from 'objects' but:

"Here here
here. Here."
(**PIECES**, p.14)

what are the periods for, more precisely cutting form in time, indicating 'where' as **how much** silence 'between' words occurring in mind/time — -space makes sense re writing only **as numbers**, measure (quantity), tell how the words are coming (not as whatever residue of which **is** left over in Olson of any kind of attention to reality 'out there' as 'some woman/with some man' etc., as looking at them, **so what**, which would make writing forever about something, which it is but it is first itself energy)....

awareness of which is given each man as physical data as real as any other recognition of consciousness, I am hearing the plane taking off as these words are also in the mind...

'objective' attitude/science calling thinking 'unreal' ('fantasy' etc.) all these years just because nobody else can testify to presence of my mental processes as words in his head but how could they, he, each is, 'has,' does, his own and as **real**, for him, as he is:

"...in in"
(**PIECES**, p.13)

as man in poems is time as energy/in 'what' is **going on...**

so the **volume & range** of the whole thing (indicate by the bold type face & by the pressure in C's voice as he reads) as the poem is the energy of the universe as he knows it...

problem now for the person, how to come **down** from that, 'relax' (**PIECES** 'more than a little' frightening this way), not use self/circumstance/family merely as material/fuel for conversion of **all** space into energy — **-take it easy**, all I can say, dumbfounded, **and go ahead**, I'm 'moved' (as 'and from one man, the world')....

image of a man-in-his-life (do not cheapen by the comparison which seems exact, enough) like nuclear reactor...

so writing time is experience, 'space' metaphor ('fantasy') or the chart of the poem as it appears, the 'field' it looks like on the page as I continue to talk, 'about' it...

he even will not 'identify' with the 'writing words which come into his head' he is so, in **his writing** (obvious to us), **given...**

listen: nobody else has done this...

I'd like to write a book about it, **sometime**, as:

"Cup.
Bowl.
Saucer.
Full."

(**PIECES**, p.7)

all the time being being positing, as, there is more given, as presence, as words, it, stands forth, it is, present at all points...

as:

"Is a door
four — - but
who enters."

(**PIECES**, p.26)

this, is something else, is not bound by register of S/R experience, into the concept of four, into the four-sided frame of the door, **enters** not only who has entered but whoever **may** — spectre, ghost, imagined presence — possibility ('there are forms of things beyond us') with the prehistoric locus, on all fours or with, the frame of the shoulders, the Colossus of, who/what can walk in the door the next instant:

". . .
Live
on the edge,"

(**Words**, Scribners, 1967, p.128)

or the actual hallucination of: whoever, in the door ('Isidore?'), given the possibility, the words enact ('who enters')...

or the loneliness of the readiness without us, unfulfilled, as question/answer: 'nobody there'...

or, **no**, a door also for or in itself, foreign to all our (doer) presumption /use, but **not** experience solely of/ from the past...

as: a greater density of word-to-word meaning than ever evidenced before as 'syntax' in that 'verse print bred' now 'One **to**/one **to** one' (my Italics/emphasis on the flow) projective, disclosing as each new word now what is is (so none of the singular realization in **For Love** lost) ...

make the flatness, make sense...

he has made something, & by example, over against:

"Cruel, cruel to describe
what there is no reason to describe."

(**For Love**, Scribners, 1962, p.34)

words which continue to present themselves....

& if example followed, end of the poem finishing for C. in 'not' (typical 'argument' in C's early work — -e.g. 'Like They Say,' 'Goodbye' in **For Love** — -to say something even apparently to deny it with all the energy of his being, the self is not, nothing is posited, possible relationships severed, **as 'not' is said**, whereas now the realization is if there is no negation, 'not' not said, the result will be a positive assertion:

"A PIECE

One and
one, two,
three."

(**Words**, p.115)

it's as simple as, this, linguistically, not that 'not' cannot be said, in truth, of course it can, it's a word like any other:

"You are not
me, nor I you."

(**PIECES**, p.22)

but there is **now no resting** in one or the other but a going on, **in**:

"Not from not
but in in."

(p. 13)

"All ways."

(p. 22)

), end of the tradition of the finished English lyric poem as discrete instance of static definition, there will be the one poem of the life of the man in language moving as long as he is/moves...

as: so you cannot 'wrench' things/word them out of their order of finished being/substance/occupy space as very heavy **reality** over there done, for/and you had what words you will know/want:

"...
the fact

of things

in words,

of words."

(p. 61)

only writing/real all the time...

.....

"I said in the beginning of saying this thing that if it were possible that a movement were lively enough it would exist so completely that it would not be necessary to see it moving against anything to know that it is moving. This is what we mean by life and in my way I have tried to make portraits of this thing always have tried always may try to make portraits of this thing."

(p. 170)

.....

"So we have now, a movement lively enough to be a thing in itself moving..."

(p. 171)

.....

"As I say I had the habit of conceiving myself as completely talking and listening, listening was talking and talking was listening and in so doing, I conceived what I at the time called the rhythm of anybody's personality."

(p. 174)

.....

"Listening and talking did not presuppose resemblance and as they do not presuppose resemblance, they do not necessitate remembering."

(p. 175)

.....

"...the making of a portrait of any one is as they are existing and as they are existing has nothing to do with remembering any one or anything."

(p. 175)

.....

"...As I say what one repeats is the scene in which one is acting, the days in which one is living, the coming and going which one is doing, anything one is remembering is repetition, but existing as a human being, that is being listening and hearing is never repetition. It is not repetition if it is that which you are actually doing because naturally each time the emphasis is different just

as the cinema has each time a slightly different thing to make it all moving. And each one of us has to do that, otherwise there is no existing. As Galileo remarked, it does move."

(p. 179)

.....

"Then slowly once more I got bothered,after all I listened and talked but that was not all I did in knowing at any present time when I was stating anything what anything was. I was also looking, and that could not be entirely left out. The trouble with including looking, as I have already told you, was that in regard to human beings looking inevitably carried in its train realizing movements and expression and as such forced me into recognizing resemblances, and so forced remembering and in forcing remembering caused confusion of present with past and future time."

(p. 188)

.....

"In writing the thing that is the difficulty is the question of confusing time, and this is the thing that bothered and still bothers any one in this generation."

(p. 189)

.....

"I began to feel movement to be a different thing than I had felt it to be.

It was to me beginning to be a less detailed thing and at the same time a thing that existed so completely inside in it and it was it was so completely inside that really looking and listening and talking were not a way any longer needed for me to know about this thing about movement being existing."

(p. 202)

.....

"...all that was necessary was that there was something completely contained within itself was moving, not moving in relation to anything not moving in relation to itself but just moving, I think I almost at that time did this thing."

(p. 202)

.....

"Anyway this was to me a tremendously important thing... because it made me realize what poetry really is."

(p. 203)

.....

"But now to make you understand, that although I was as usual looking listening and talking perhaps more than ever at that time and leading a very complicated and perhaps too exciting every day living, never the less it really did not matter what I saw or said or heard, or if you like felt, because now there was at last something that was more vibrant than any of all that and somehow some way I had isolated it and in a way had gotten it written."

(p. 204)

• • • • •

"...I created something out of something without adding anything..."

(p. 204)

• • • • •

"Language as a real thing is not imitation either of sounds or colors or emotions it is an intellectual recreation..."

(p. 238)

• • • • •

"Never write
to say more
than saying
something.

Words
are
pleasure.
All
words."

(**PIECES**, pp. 36-7)

(Note that such selection of passages completely destroys the validity of the writing as 'criticism' **being what it is saying**, the form or words of which only as they are written actualizing e.g. that it is moving, that there is insistence varying the emphasis, that there is no repetition, that this poetry, etc., the 'critical opinions of G.S. about writing' being in no wise'excerptable'/existing apart from **what she says here**; on the other hand, it is so solid, at all points, saying something anything can be lifted out/will have perfect lucid being as a piece.)

EDWARD LEAR: **The Complete Nonsense Book**, Duffield & Co., NY, 1912

Now hear this is the beginning of an uninformed methodology of psychio-physic correspondences Swedenborgian indeed at your age **look that up**.

The words **several** and **sever** are one. Go on. Likewise the more distantly germane **Columbia** and **some beer** that sound alike so draw together so that as one is sounded the other one **comes through the air**.

This is the end of clear demarcation and the reinstatement of incredible religio-erotica. Miscegenation, intercourse amongst the various beastie.

Thus as the glad related noises gather together so do the so-called non-verbal senses recognize signs.

Revelation in Eros, speech sound things in the world in time.

This is the secret meaning of Rhyme, as it is your punster-father's long-awaited loving confirmation.

I know what I know.

Try it yourself. Where Rhyme is, though nought else cheereth, shall isolation thrive? Shall penury, wherein Desire leadeth to Landscape, and Drink inspire unnatural Sketching?

"Out of sighty
Little kite!"
(p. 255 of **430** big ones)

Was he funny, fat and mean? Sought table scraps of the nobility? **Here he is**.

Rejoice! There is no end to the bawling of a nose so grossired.

Original dedication by the author (London, 1862) to the kids of:

"THIS BOOK OF DRAWINGS AND VERSES

(The greater part of which were originally made and composed for their parents,)"

The book is a delight.