



Lesbian/Woman. Glide Publications, S.F. 1972, by Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon. \$7.95

Reviewed by Karen Wells

If I can believe the response I have seen to this book, it must be the most eagerly read book in the Lesbian community. I can believe it. It is the first major book on the subject of Lesbians about themselves, although I'm aware that others are on their way.

I can hardly express the delight I experienced in reading about Del and Phyl and the hundreds of Lesbians they encountered in the 17 years of their experience in forming, nurturing and finally weaning the Daughters of Bilitis. Contrary to my own expectations of the book, most chapters are devoted not to the political growth of the Lesbian but to the personal struggles of the individual Lesbians Del and Phyl have met. The book seems to be directed to the straight community, the emphasis being to indicate the great diversity among Lesbians.

The women of whom they speak are and are not stereotypical; they are and are not happy, are and are not adjusted to and accepting of themselves. In other

words, the women Del and Phyl chose to describe are human beings, with the problems inherent in so being, but with the added difficulty of being women and Lesbians. This kind of focus, is, as I see it, of ultimate importance to the straight community who tend to see us as Sister George or Childie at best. The women described here will confirm some of the beliefs "they" (the outsiders) have of us, because there are women who fit "their" patterns. Other women will blow the image all to hell. This book is honest, real, personal straight (gay)-forward and non-compromising. Which is the way we are.

I found particular joy in reading this history because of my own commitment to alleviate, somehow, Lesbian isolation. As Del and Phyl note, and quite honestly, they had been the focal point for all Lesbians in this country (and others) to rally around. Their commitment and the commitment of others has made "Lesbian Liberation" a real thing, instead of an ideal dream in some woman's head. Their relationship of 19 years, of which they speak very openly in their book, has been and still is (even though they won't admit it now) an inspiration to those of us who have grown up with the stereo-

typical idea that "those relationships don't last." Their untiring (albeit difficult to maintain) efforts to change the structures in this country which oppress us have been and will continue to be an inspiration to me, personally.

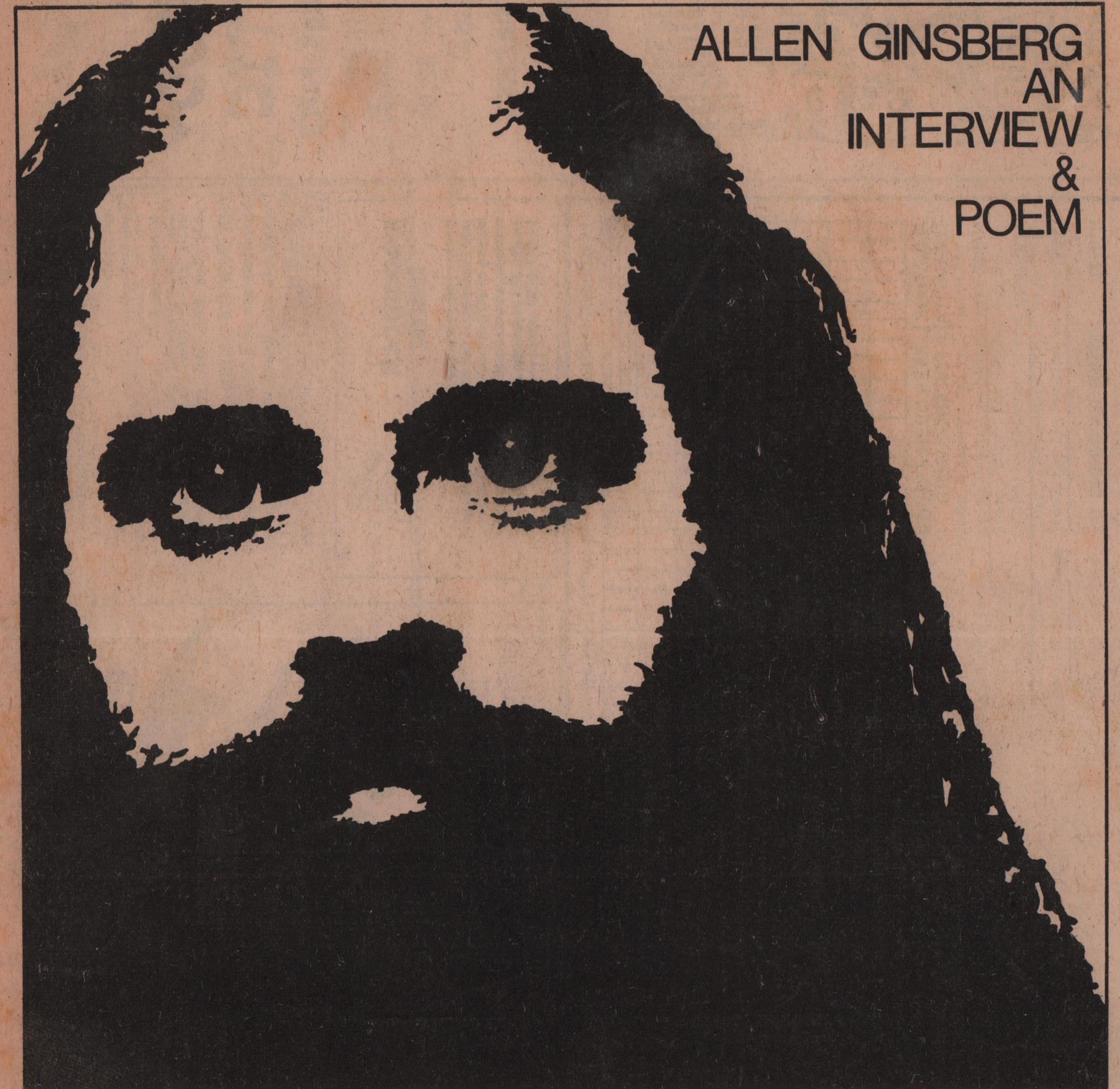
Their book, some 280 pages, is a document of the struggles many Lesbians have had to endure and win. It is a triumph to read and experience. In itself it is a release from the sense of isolation we all feel — there are and have been many, many in our shoes. If you have ever spoken to these two women, your feelings may well appear in the book under a false name, of course. I found myself described there. The feeling that what you say about your own liberation has been captured in this history is a good one. You know that somehow you have contributed, no matter in how small a way, to the whole liberation movement.

It is a high point in our liberation, probably the highest, that Lesbians are finally telling our story. Sisterhood is powerful and is a full blast of sunshine in our lives. Here is our story and we should *bask*.

(from *Sisters*, November 1972)

[Available from Gay Lib Book Service]

GAY SUNSHINE



ALLEN GINSBERG
AN
INTERVIEW
&
POEM

A Newspaper of Gay Liberation
.35 Calif. / .50 Elsewhere
January-February 1973 No. 16



Gay Sunshine No. 16:
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[for the G.S. staff]

GINSBERG

The following conversation with Allen Ginsberg took place at Ginsberg's farm in Cherry Valley, New York on September 25, 1972. Allen Young, who rapped with Ginsberg and transcribed the interview, is well known in the Movement. He has contributed articles to Gay Sunshine and to other publications over the last few years and is co-editor of a gay liberation anthology, *Out of the Closets*, which has just appeared.

The conversation was edited from the original 78 page manuscript by Winston Leyland of Gay Sunshine.

YOUNG: One of the things that provoked this whole conversation between us was my reading of the *Dharma Bums* last summer. In that book the character Alvah, who is quite obviously you, is portrayed by Kerouac as heterosexual. There are a number of sexual encounters and there isn't any indication that there was any kind of homosexuality in this group of people.

GINSBERG: That was Kerouac's particular shyness. I made it with Kerouac quite often. And Neal Cassady, his hero, and I were lovers also, for many years, from 1946 on and off. Finally, he didn't

want any more sex with me. But we were still making it in the mid 1960's after having known each other in the mid 40's. That's a pretty long, close friendship. Neal and Jack, for that matter.

YOUNG: Did Jack Kerouac identify himself as being a gay person?

GINSBERG: No, he didn't. A lot of that took place in the cottage we all held together, and then I had been living with Peter for several years. Peter, Jack, Gary [Snyder] and I and various other people were all sleeping with one or two girls that were around. Jack saw me screwing and was astounded at my virility. I guess he decided to write a novel in which I was a big, virile hero instead of a Jewish Communist fag.

YOUNG: What was your reaction to that? Did you feel that he was hiding?

GINSBERG: I didn't notice. *On the Road* has one scene in the original manuscript in a motel where Dean Moriarty screws a traveling salesman with whom they ride to Chicago in a big Cadillac; and there's a two line description of it which fills out Cassady's character and

gives it dimension. That was eliminated from the book by Malcolm Cowley in the mid 50's, and Jack consented to that. So Jack actually did talk about it a little in his writing.

In a book that's being published now, *Visions of Cody*, there's a longer description of the same scene. It was written in 1950-51 by Kerouac and was his first book after *On the Road*, a sequel to it. It is a great experimental book, including a couple of hundred pages of taped, transcribed conversation between him and Neal, over grass at midnight in Los Gatos or San Jose, talking about life to each other, the first times they got laid, jacking off, and running around Denver.

YOUNG: Why is it first coming out now?

GINSBERG: Kerouac always wanted it published. But the commercial publishing world wasn't ready for a book of such great looseness and strange genius and odd construction. It's more like a Gertrude Stein *Making of Americans* than it is speedy Kerouac.

YOUNG: Was it a fight for Kerouac to get his stuff published?

GINSBERG: Oh, yeah. *On the Road* was written in '50 and was never published till '57, even though he had previously published his great book, *Town and the City*. The commercial insensitivity was that he write something nice and simple so that everybody could understand it, to explain what the beat generation was all about. So he wrote *The Dharma Bums*, to order, for his publisher, a sort of exercise in virtuosity and bodhisattva magnanimity. He wrote in short sentences that everybody could understand, describing the spiritual revolution as he saw it, using as a hero Gary Snyder; actually, Japhy Ryder is Gary Snyder.

YOUNG: So then your portrayal as a heterosexual doesn't have anything to do with being in the closet.

GINSBERG: No. I came out of the closet at Columbia in 1946. The first person I told about it was Kerouac because I was in love with him. He was staying in my room up in the bed, and I was sleeping on a pallet on the floor. I said, "Jack, you know, I love you, and I want to sleep with you, and I really like men." And he said, "Ooooooh, no..." We'd known each other maybe a year, and I hadn't said anything.

At that time Kerouac was very handsome, very beautiful, and mellow—in the sense of infinitely tolerant, like Shakespeare or Tolstoi or Dostoevsky, infinitely understanding. He was a slightly older person and someone who I felt had more authority. His tolerance gave me Permission* to open up and talk, because I felt there was space for me to talk, where he was. He wasn't going to hit me. He wasn't going to reject me. Really, he was going to accept my soul with all its throbbings and sweetness and worries and dark woes and sorrows and heartaches and joys and glees and mad understanding of mortality, because that was the same thing he had. And actually we wound up sleeping together maybe within a year, a couple of times. I blew him, I guess. He once blew me, years later. It was sort of sweet, peaceful. [Robert Duncan's term]

YOUNG: Did you experience any kind of a split between your hipster circle and getting involved with other gay people as you were coming out?

GINSBERG: It's in a poem ["In Society"] that I read at the Chicago 7 trial. This is a dream I had in 1945 while I was at Columbia:

I walked into the cocktail party room and found three or four queers talking together in queertalk. I tried to be friendly but heard myself talking to one in hiptalk. "I'm glad to see you," he said, and looked away. "Hmn," I mused. The room was small and had a double decker bed in it, and cooking apparatus: icebox, cabinet, toasters, stove; the hosts seemed to live with room enough only for cooking and sleeping. My remark on this score was understood but not appreciated. I was offered refreshments, which I accepted. I ate a sandwich of pure meat; an enormous sandwich of human flesh, I noticed, while I was chewing on it, it also included a dirty asshole.

More company came, including a fluffy female who looked like a princess. She glared at me and said immediately: "I don't like you," turned her head away, and refused to be introduced. I said, "What!" in outrage. "Why you shit-faced fool!" This got everybody's attention. "Why you narcissistic bitch! How can you decide when you don't even know me," I continued in a violent and messianic voice, inspired at last, dominating the whole room.

Gay Law Students

A Gay Law Students group has been started at the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Law. The constitution of GLS was ratified by its members on September 28. It was approved by the Student Bar Association as a student organization on October 6.

The organization grew out of a felt need to raise the consciousness of both gay and non-gay law students. GLS chairman, Bob Brosius, stated that the organization also plans to work together with other organizations for reforms in city, state and federal laws and administrative services. Clinical services will be offered to the gay community as soon as programs can be developed. Current efforts will be focused on a civil rights amendment to the Buffalo City Charter and prisoners' rights in New York state prisons.

GLS has established liaison with the Gay Law Students Association of Glendale, California, which includes law students from U.C.L.A., U.S.C., Loyola University, Southwestern Univ., Univ. of San Diego and the University of San Francisco. The Buffalo group will also seek cooperation from students at the other ten law schools in New York State, as well as from the American Bar Association's Law student division. GLS will be a member of the New York State Coalition of Gay Organizations and will work closely with the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier.

For further information on this group write: G.L.S., P.O. Box 465, Ellicott Station, Buffalo, New York 14205 (716) 897-1667.

Fouratt Jailed

In Issue No. 15 of *Gay Sunshine* we printed a news story about gay demonstrators at the Miami Beach Republican Convention. In that article we reported that gay brother Jim Fouratt had been accused of being an agent provocateur. It now appears that such charges were completely unfounded, and indeed suspicion is cast on those at Miami who made such accusations.

Jim Fouratt is presently in the Dallas County Jail beginning a two year sentence for breaking probation on a charge for which he had already done six months: possessing drugs in a van that the police broke into. The actual reason for his original arrest was more probably that he was a revolutionary gay helping to form a gay lib group in Texas and was carrying with him copies of his radical publication, *The Iconoclast*.

Jim Fouratt is known to his friends as "Total Assault" because of his relentless campaign to confront straight authority and repression wherever it may be. He is a well known activist in the gay liberation movement nationally. We feel it is important that the gay community show solidarity with this brother who has been harassed, intimidated and now imprisoned because of his commitment and love. We urge our readers to write to him sending their love and encouragement: Jim Fouratt, Dallas County Jail, 500 Commerce St., Dallas, Texas 75202.

D.C. Switchboard

A New Gay Switchboard has been organized in Washington D.C. by a coalition of gay groups and individuals. The telephone counseling and referral service serves all the people of the D.C. metropolitan area through counseling and referral programs, housing services, medical and legal aid and a calendar of events. The Gay Switchboard office is located in the Community Building at 1724 20th St. N.W.—387-3777.

The Gay Switchboard has received support from virtually every gay organization in the metropolitan area. Spokespeople for the new service stress that it is intended to serve "all members of the gay community, men and women, young and old, closeted and liberated, bar hoppers and street freaks."

EDITORIAL

With this issue *Gay Sunshine* is well into its third year of publication. During the last two years we have tried (with some success) to make our paper a catalyst in the evolving consciousness of the gay community by printing innovative articles, graphics and poetry. *Sunshine* was originally started in Berkeley by GLF people. But for the last two years the paper has been put out in San Francisco as an independent paper of gay liberation. The paper is made up of core staff people (who have been deeply involved for three issues or more) and newer people who become core members after they have worked on three issues. *Gay Sunshine* is primarily a radical gay male paper and does not claim to speak for the gay women's community. That is done by publications such as *Sisters*, *Lesbian Tide* and *The Furies*.

This would probably be a good occasion to introduce our readers to the staff of the paper:

Winston Leyland has been a member of the *Gay Sunshine* staff for over two years and coordinator-editor for most of that time. He is continuing as editor of the paper and will also edit a gay poetry anthology scheduled for publication in 1973. He is also coordinator of the Gay Liberation Book Service. Jim Hicks has been a member of the staff for two years (since Issue No. 6). He continues to coordinate Bay Area distribution for the paper. Jim Reed is Art Director for *Gay Sunshine*. He did the front covers for Issues No. 14-16 as well as the back cover graphics for Issues No. 13 and 14. Lee Atwell has been a core member of the staff for the last year and half. He has contributed several important film reviews and other articles especially in Issues No. 8-10, 12-13, and he continues his film criticism in this issue. Lee is currently the Los Angeles staff person representative for the paper. Jim Giancarlo contributed poetry to Issues No. 10 through 14. He has been a regular staff member since No. 15. Don Jackson has been writing for *Gay Sunshine* for two years. His exposes of Atascadero and other prisons where gays are mistreated by means of aversion therapy and other methods are very important. Through his articles our paper has pioneered in exposing gay prisoner mistreatment. He continues his series of prison articles in this issue. Our special thanks also to Dennis Kruszynski, of Emmaus Gay Switchboard, San Francisco, for the help he gave on this issue.

In addition to these staff members we have a number of regular contributors such as Perry Brass and Allen Young. [See listing of contributors to Issue 16 below].

All the *Gay Sunshine* staff members listed above are firmly committed to the process by which our paper is put out as well as to the content—the innovative material we have been printing. Recently, one core staff person did leave the paper (because of a disagreement over that process) and, together with three other people (marginally involved for a short time) is planning a new project. We wish this group every success.

We would like to invite gay people throughout the country to contribute articles, graphics and poetry to the paper. Deadline for material for Issue 17 is March 1st.

At present *Gay Sunshine* is sold in selected stores in such cities as New Orleans, Boston, St. Louis, Tallahassee, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle, Milwaukee, Denver, Newark [Del.] and others, as well as in the San Francisco Bay Area. Copies also go to stores or movement groups in Canada, England, Australia, Germany, Sweden and Italy. We also send the paper free to nearly 100 gay people in prisons and mental hospitals throughout the land.

In order to continue publication we have had to accept advertising over the past year, some of which has a negative effect on the aesthetic appearance of the paper. We trust our readers will understand that reasons of survival compel us to accept such advertising.

We currently have enough income coming in to continue publication about once every two months. Because of limited financial resources, however, we are unable to pay regular salaries or come out as frequently as we would like—at least once a month. If we are to increase our frequency of publication, number of pages, circulation and improve the aesthetic quality of the paper, we desperately need financial help from gay people who believe in the type of communicating we are doing. We need gay people willing to send in a little financial assistance on a regular basis or willing to take out a supporting or sponsoring subscription to *Sunshine* (see subscription box elsewhere in this issue). Please help, even if you can only send in a little to partially cover our expenses for sending free copies to prisoners.

Our pledge is to continue *Gay Sunshine* as an open forum in the gay community with the high quality of material that has made us known and loved throughout the country. The material we print has relevance to gay people everywhere and not just in the area where we are published. We intend to continue that approach. The issue you are reading is an example of the type of communicating we intend to continue. If you dig what we are doing, please write and let us know.

CONTRIBUTORS TO ISSUE NO. 16:

Contributions by staff members: Lee Atwell, Jim Giancarlo, Winston Leyland, Jim Reed & Don Jackson [See Editorial]

Dwight Abbott is a gay prisoner at California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo.

William Barber's poetry has appeared in *Gay Sunshine* several times, as well as in *Sebastian Quill* and *Manroot*. He currently lives in San Francisco.

Perry Brass had had much poetry, prose and graphic work in *Sunshine* over the past two years. He lives in New York and was one of the coordinators of the gay lib paper *Come Out!*

David Ray Brown is a gay prisoner at Vacaville, California.

Tom Durrie lives in Burnaby, British Columbia where he is involved in social work sponsored by the Canadian government.

David Eberly lives in Massachusetts.

Allen Ginsberg's new book of poems, *The Fall of America*, has just been published by City Lights.

Celt Grant worked for the past two years as a member of a collective in Newport, Rhode Island committed to communicating with GIs and opposing the military juggernaut through the paper *All Hands Abandon Ship*. He now lives in Vancouver, Canada.

David Hirsh lives in Knoxville, Tenn. and is involved in the gay liberation movement in that area.

Jim Hood is involved in the gay movement in Eugene, Oregon.

Jane Kogan lives in Provincetown, Mass.

Michael Lally lives in Washington D.C.

Charles Moore teaches at California State College, Sacramento and is a coordinator of the gay studies program there.

Eddie Rastellini is a gay prisoner currently serving time in Walpole, Mass.

Charles Shively lives in Boston where he teaches and works on *Fag Rag*.

Aaron Shurin lives in Massachusetts and has been involved with the "Good Gay Poets" group.

Arunothai Somskul, a gay artist from Thailand now living in the Bay Area, did the back cover graphic in Issue No. 15.

Richard Wallace-Terry is currently attending university in South Africa.

John Watson lives in a Los Angeles gay collective.

Karen Wells is involved with the Gay Women's Movement in San Francisco.

John Wieners lives in Boston. He has had much poetry published over the last 15 years, from the *Hotel Wentley Poems* (1958) to *Selected Poems* (1972).

Allen Young currently lives in Westwood, Mass. He has written extensively for the Gay Movement and is co-editor of a gay liberation anthology.

Ian Young lives in Canada and is co-editor of a gay poetry anthology about to be published shortly.

Stanford Organizes

Gay People's Union at Stanford University meets every Wednesday at 7.30 in the Clubhouse Basement of the Old Union Building on the Stanford University campus. Meetings are open to all interested people from the community. Among the activities are: dances pot-luck suppers, guest speakers, rap sessions, sensitivity-awareness exercises, etc. For more information, write: Gay People's Union, P.O. Box 3145, Stanford, Calif. 94305, or call (415) 321-1165.

Every Friday from 7 to 8 p.m., KSZU, 90.1 F.M., the campus radio station, presents its weekly gay program, "Out of the Closets" with host David Goldman. Guest speakers, representing various viewpoints in the gay community are featured each week. In addition, gay news and commentary, gay listeners' personals, announcements of interest to the gay community, rock and classical music, are presented. Questions or comments from listeners are welcome throughout the show.

Emmaus Moves

The Emmaus House group which has operated a gay switchboard in San Francisco for almost two years has just opened a gay Drop-In Center at 618 Shrader Street, near Haight. The Center and Switchboard will be open from 2 p.m. till 10 p.m. The following services will be provided: crash pad referrals, apartment listings, roommates, draft counselling, free clothes, survival information, medical and legal referrals, coffee and raps. They need switchboard volunteers as well as people who can crash a gay person for one or more nights. The Switchboard number is 415-668-3580.

N.Y. Health Project

The Gay Men's Health Project, a group of males including health workers from the Gay Men's Community, have started a free health clinic on Tuesday nights at 247 West 11th St. in Greenwich Village, New York.

The goal of the project is to make gay people aware of their physical needs without the fear, self consciousness or professionalism which glorifies the doctor as all knowing. The primary function of the project at present is V.D. testing and diagnosis, using blood tests for syphilis and oral and anal cultures for gonorrhea.

Clinic hours are 8 to 10 p.m. every Tuesday. The collective is interested in hearing from other groups doing community health work, whether with Gay men or women. They are especially interested in learning about intake procedures, relating to the community, follow up care and funding. The group has published a *Gay Men's Health Report*, which is available for 25 cents from the address above.

[Ed.: A similar gay health project is in operation in Berkeley, Calif. See page 23 of this issue for details.]

Houston Center

A small group of gay men and women, a spin off from Houston Gay Liberation, have organized a gay community center in the heart of the Montrose area, Houston's gay colony. On October 28, 1972 the new Center, called the Montrose Gaze, opened its doors. The Center is located in a large, two-story house at 504 Fairview, near Whitney.

The Montrose Gaze Community Center will offer its facilities to both gay and non-gay groups for meetings of an educational and social nature. The Center plans to offer courses in legal aid, parent education and self defense. Groups will also be formed to explore personal identity and consciousness raising. The new Center has called for support from Houston's entire gay community.

Inquiries about the Center should be addressed to The Montrose Gaze, P.O. Box 66411, Houston, Texas 77006.

OPPRESSION IN JAIL

[Ed. Note: The following article was sent in to us by a gay brother who spent some time in the Los Angeles County Jail and is now imprisoned in California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo.]

Upon my arrival in jail racial tension was prevalent. There were interracial fights among drag queens, continuous arguments, and people finked to the guards on one another. A white gay brother had some nail polish which had been smuggled in by a trustee. When the black brothers found out about it they told the guard. After a search the man went to the hole for fourteen days. The hole is an isolation cell built for two people. But under "normal" conditions about seven men are placed in it. They must eat in it, sleep in it and shower once a week. At approximately 4.30 in the morning all bedding is removed from the cell and is not returned until 10 that night. No visits or letter writing is allowed during this period.

Why did one gay brother suffer so much at the hands of another? This happens often. I myself did 10 days in the hole because a jealous brother finked to a guard that I and my lover were having sex. The guard tiptoed down, caught us, put us in the hole and pressed felony charges against us. I am now in State Prison for sodomy and armed robbery. My lover was later murdered here in prison by three other gay brothers for talking to a black fem homosexual.

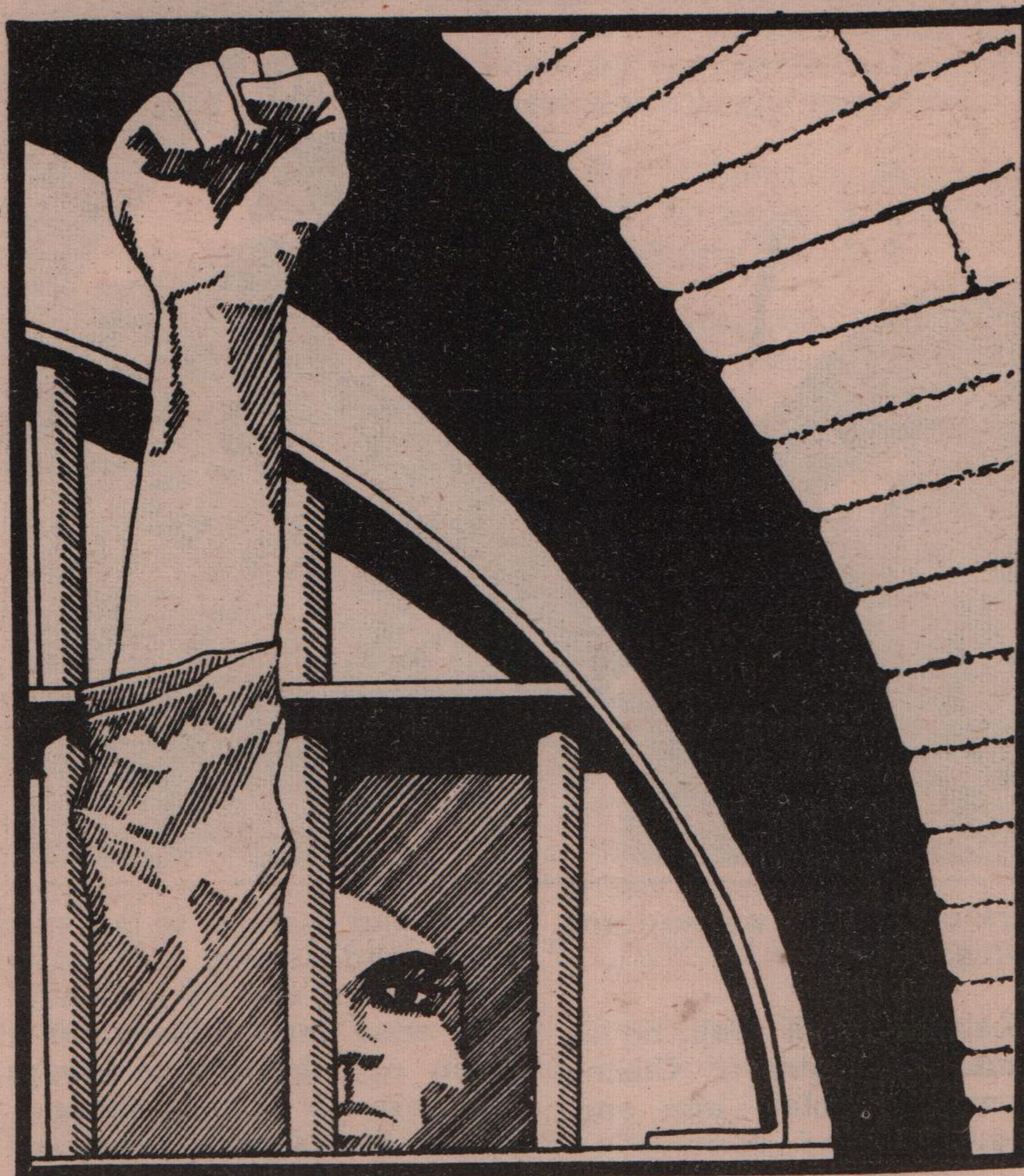
In the Los Angeles County Jail the guards soon got tired of the constant violent conflict and put the biggest straight black inmate they could find (weighing 240 pounds) in with us with the orders to whip some ass and straighten it up. He proceeded to do just that for two days. Then he beat up a seventeen year old gay and raped him. Two hours later I was accused of stabbing the straight guy for raping my brother. The other gays made statements against me. It never went to court since the District Attorney refused to press charges. After nineteen days in the hole and an ass whipping by the sheriffs, I refused to return to that tank. I was then placed in "high-power", a maximum security section for trouble makers. That's where I stayed until being convicted for previous offenses and sent to California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo.

What happened to the togetherness among gays? We are the oppressed, yet we choose to oppress each other. It was made obvious to even the most ignorant among them that they made conditions even worse than they already were. Straight people won't have anything to do with gays. Some gays get busted for a crime and then fink on others to get out from under the punishment for this crime.

Is there not some way to get gays of this kind and show them they are wrong? If we want freedom from oppression, then we must somehow get through to those whose actions assure that we shall be knocked back two steps for every three we take. I am now suffering for my brothers' ignorance and faults. Yet to place the blame on all gay brothers in prison would be an injustice on my part. I love even those brothers who put me here. I want so much for them and all others to see that we can never win if we do not join together. All the energy that gays use for fighting among themselves can be used in fighting for our own good and beautiful cause. I personally ask my gay brothers in prison to look at yourselves carefully and then lift your heads, be proud and join your brothers in fighting your oppressor.

Johnny Abbott No. A66078-A
P.O. Box A-E
San Luis Obispo, Calif. 93401

GAY PRISONERS



OPEN LETTER

[Ed. Note: The following letter was written by Eddie Rastellini, an inmate at Walpole State Prison near Boston. Rastellini is serving the fifth year of a fifteen-year sentence for what is known in Massachusetts as "the detestable crime against nature." In fact, Rastellini is in jail, because he is gay and poor. Gay brothers in Boston have been communicating with Rastellini, and Richard Rubino, a Boston lawyer who has been working with and for the gay community, has initiated efforts on his behalf. There will be future articles about Eddie Rastellini, his victimization and his fight for freedom. In the meantime, funds are needed to help this gay brother. Send donations and/or letters of solidarity in care of *Fag Rag*, 91 River St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139.]

Dear Jacque:

I cannot suppress my feelings any more, so I must relate this story to you.

Next door, in the cell to my left, is a 24 year old boy. His name is Billy, 5'7" or 5'8", about 140 pounds, brown hair (which tends to seem blondish in the light), deep but clear innocuous, blue eyes, not really handsome, but one's heart could go out to him when he smiles. He looks so innocent, so boyish, so alone, and he really needs love and affection so bad.

Yet, thanks to Amerikan justice, society, its inequitable methods and its self-destructive ideas, this confused boy would be described by *his creators* as a killer, a monster, an incorrigible animal. But these same monsters (the creators) that would gladly describe the boy as above would not tell the public which it exploits and puts in fear by such stories, why.

They won't tell you, for instance, that if Billy was treated right as a very young boy, that he just might not have killed a man over a 25 cent candy bar (in prison), or that he just might not have gone to prison (State Reformatory at Concord) at the ripe age of sixteen on a minor sentence (no sentence is in any way minor), a sentence that has dominoed into a life sentence plus 38 years to go after the life sentence.

I could not begin to tell you of the insanity of our "Great Society," a sick society that has made this confused, emotional boy an outcast, misfit, a monster, a boy who is for all purposes, dead, but hasn't been buried yet!

I can only ask, "How many more young really innocent boys will be killed mentally before the 'Great Society' wakes up, becomes aware of the hypocrisy of those in power; how many more will be literally buried alive in cement and steel cages?"

I met Billy about a year and eight months ago, and it is only within the past month or so that I am really getting to know him.

Evidently, Billy was in boys' schools at one time, but graduated to a state prison at the age of 16. Because of poor communication with his family, and poor financial status, he used his youth, and his body, to acquire status, to belong. This disturbs him beyond belief. He constantly becomes belligerent and aggressive to the point of murder whenever anyone may seem (in Billy's mind) to challenge his manhood, or even doubt it. Billy would say, "I may be a fucking faggot, but you try this faggot!" It's also obvious from his record of one killing, and three stabbings so far, not to mention the various other acts of violence against guards, inmates and himself.

Billy has befriended me because he empathizes with me, because in his mind he knows the degradation I go through. Although he publicizes his interest in "scoring" me sexually, he knows that he won't because I won't let him. Why not? Because of the perverted, impersonal, and depraved intentions of others (not Billy; he digs it) who give dignity to their sex acts by the mere use of applying the word homosexuality to their perversion. If I became involved with him (which, in a distant way, I think I would,) it would be the cause for further degradation and repression by the others here. And Billy understands that I view my sexuality as a very beautiful thing.

Because of my uncompromising honesty, and my tendency to argue when I am right (I cannot give up my individuality nor conform to a convict's way of thinking), I have gotten myself into hot water with some bad-assed dudes.

Now, Billy at 140 pounds, has put himself as a shield between the others and myself, has openly declared that he is protecting me henceforth—and over my own objections.

I cannot explain this. I *know* it's not a psyche game.

Billy is for real, he's a man of conflicting emotions as I have become towards him), conflicting ideas and beliefs, but, essentially, he's a beautiful person, one worth helping, one worth being treated and free.

Imagine if you will, Jacque, your lying in a bed in a cell, listening to such a person, who was all but literally murdered, in a drugged, emotional condition, alternately raving at his would-be killers, and kicking his own ass because of what he realizes now, as his own trapped, stupidity. The block is starkly quiet, and finally, Billy's last anguished cry: "I want to go home"; tears roll from his eyes.

CONFERENCE

A record number of gay organizations participated in a two day prison conference held at the U.C. Medical Center in San Francisco December 2-3.

Representatives of Join Hands, the Metropolitan Community Church, Gay Alliance, S.I.R., the Ministry of Concern and *Gay Sunshine* (this reporter) participated in a Gay workshop, the first such workshop ever held at a general prison conference. The gay organizations were accredited as voting members of the conference.

Although no specific plan of action came out of the workshop, it did seem to build a unity of purpose and mind among the various gay representatives and raised the consciousness of the heterosexual prison movement with regard to the existence and special problems faced by gay convicts.

The workshop was conducted by Rev. Paul Gordon of M.C.C. San Francisco and poet Paul Mariah. Both Gordon and Mariah are ex-convicts.

Rev. Gordon told the audience that he was incarcerated for seven years in four California institutions. "I was forced to undergo 21 electro-convulsive shock treatments to 'cure' me of homosexuality," he said. "Fortunately, I kept my mental faculties, except for memory difficulties, so forgive me if I have trouble remembering names."

Rev. Gordon said his involvement in the gay prison movement stems from a recent trip to Vacaville, where he interviewed a young man who had been incarcerated in Vacaville for six years on an oral copulation charge. When the man was 19 years old, he reported, he and another young man had made some polaroid photographs of themselves having sex. One of the photos fell behind the cabinet in the place where he worked. Sometime later, the photo was discovered by someone cleaning behind the cabinet. Police were called and the young man was subsequently arrested, convicted and sentenced to Vacaville for an indeterminate period. That was six years ago. He's still there!

Rev. Gordon, Rev. Joe Gilbert of Sacramento M.C.C., and other M.C.C. ministers had been conducting services at Vacaville at the invitation of the chaplain. Recently, Department of Corrections Director Raymond Procunier learned of the services and banished all M.C.C. ministers from California prisons. Rev. Gilbert announced that M.C.C. is bringing a legal action against the Department of Corrections to assert their right to enter the prisons as the spiritual advisors of men who ask for them.

Reverends Broshears, Richards, Gilbert, Gordon and other assorted reverends confirmed reports that the situation of gay prisoners in Vacaville is worsening. It was reported that gay prisoners have now been separated completely from the main line and are required to carry I.D. cards identifying them as homosexuals. All gays have been excluded from rehabilitation and job training programs — even the male nurse training program.

Paul Mariah said that his main concern is the drugs gay inmates are forced to take, and shock therapy. He said gay inmates are awakened at 7 a.m. and lined up for "treatments." Don Jackson of *Gay Sunshine* mentioned that the "Errorless Extinction of Penile Responses" therapy, in which electrical wires are attached to the penis and shocks delivered as a "cure" for homosexuality, has now been confirmed, as reported in a recent issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Reports of the bizarre and inhumane "treatment" were printed in *Gay Sunshine* over a year ago but were doubted by many until the recent confirming reports.

In addition to the gay workshop, there was heavy gay participation in the general sessions of the conference. Literature from a half dozen gay organizations was distributed to hundreds of people.

—Don Jackson

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There were a whole group of queens around Columbia at that time who were doing things like going down to hear Edith Piaf sing at the Plaza Hotel and interested in status and money. They had cultural interests that went back to Lotte Lenya and things like that, but at the same time it was an overly aristocratic, elitist thing.

YOUNG: Did you associate that with the faculty at Columbia also?

GINSBERG: There were a couple of guys on the faculty at Columbia that participated in that rather than in an open, democratic, Whitmanic gaiety. To be open and democratic and Whitmanic meant kissing the football players in public, for instance.....

YOUNG: Well, was kissing the football players in any sense a reality, or just a Whitmanesque fantasy?

GINSBERG: I was kissing Jack Kerouac who was on the Columbia varsity team in those years. It was a Whitmanesque fantasy, which, like all Whitmanesque fantasies, were practical realities.

I was silent about it [homosexuality] at Columbia the first year I was there, between the age of 16 and 17. At 17 something shook me loose from the authoritarianism of the culture and from the authority of Columbia. I think it was the jailing of a friend, who I loved, who knew Jack well. And then also I was interested in Rimbaud and Whitman, and I had met Burroughs by then. I was getting teaching from Burroughs that included Blake and Spengler (*The Decline of the West*); and semanticism was important, separating words from the objects they represent, not getting confused by labels, like gay or queer, in those days.

So it was just a whole change, growing up out of high school and puberty and closed-in-ness. It wasn't closet; it didn't have that much style about it. It was just timidity and fear of rejection. All through high school I was secretly in love with all sorts of boys—particularly one boy from East Side High, Paterson, who I actually followed to Columbia.

YOUNG: Whose name begins with "R." You mention him in one of your poems.

GINSBERG: Yeah. Very soon I was babbling at great length. The permission for that openness came from Burroughs and Kerouac who I was living with. They were wide-brained, international, hip, Jack London, Doctor Mabuses, all.

Kerouac was a very funny, strange, heroic figure, a seminal figure for many ideas and attitudes. He had a lot of trouble; he drank himself to death. And he ended, like many older writers, reactionary in a funny, interesting, characteristic way, a way that's teaching rather than negative. But the basic thing about him as Character (with a capital C) was an enormous mellow, trustful tolerance and sensitivity. And that's why he's such a great writer and observer. You know, he held everything dear, as a sensitive young fellow, even my fairy woes. In fact, we wound up in bed together.

YOUNG: You're saying that this really wasn't where he was at sexually?

GINSBERG: Well, he was very mixed sexually. He had a lot of trouble with attachment to his mother and his mother's dependence on him. He was a football player, and he liked girls. He liked to eat girls and was really hung up on them. That's what really excited him: black panties! black stockings! He also appreciated beautiful boys and had a really novelistic, personal appreciation of older queens—which was a sharing of common humanity, a sharing of emotions, even a sharing of the erotic, except that he didn't feel it was right for him to participate in the erotic.

As a novelist, he opened himself to the art of gaiety and some of its attitudes and styles in writing. In some of his poems there's a lot of stuff about himself, where there's all sorts of high teacup bullshit. In those days "high teacup" was a lifted pinky infra-language. There was a certain tendency among gay people there to plaster labels over everybody, including themselves, instead of seeing the nameless love that everybody is. Just as there was a tendency among macho heterosexuals to plaster labels, so there was a counter-balancing tendency among homosexuals to over react to that and camp too heavily. He was sensitive about being put down as a fairy, which he wasn't. [Calling over to Peter Orlovsky on the other side of the room where he was not listening to the interview]. Was Jack a fairy?

ORLOVSKY: No...in a tiny sense of the word.

GINSBERG: Perfect, in a tiny sense of the word. [To Peter]: We all made it with Jack once.

Allen Ginsberg, N.Y. 1944



ORLOVSKY: [One time] he was so drunk he couldn't even get it up.

GINSBERG: (Laughs) Yeah. Well, no he came that time. We were at Clellon Holmes's, remember? I blew him and you screwed me.

ORLOVSKY: What about on Second St.? Do you remember that? Jack was gallantly drunk, laying in one of the small, side rooms, and you tried to blow him. He couldn't get it up and he was talking about his little cock; it was so tiny, so small, shriveled up, sad.

GINSBERG: He was very apologetic. But ten years ago he was asking me to blow him all the time. In '62 or '63 he said: "I'm old, ugly, red-faced, I'm beer-bellied, and I'm a drunk and nobody loves me anymore. I can't get girls, come on and give me a blow job." There were times he'd get drunk and be really insistent on it. By that time he'd gotten beer-bellied, florid-faced, and I no longer saw him as the romantic, handsome, young glamour-beau of post-war, dark, doomed, madened Spengler hippie-dom.

GINSBERG Sexuality

I got freaked out at the whole idea of bodies and sex, in fact. That was one of my first lessons in chastity. There's a line in Yeats: "Old lovers yet may have all the time denied, grave is heaped on grave that they be satisfied." I found actually in the course of time that everybody I really

loved and wanted to go to bed with, I finally did. It may have taken twenty or thirty years, and we may have both fallen into ruins and baldness and all our teeth fallen out, but desire always found its way, even if it took decades. There's a lesson there. Once you become a little detached, once you lose neurotic, obsessive attachment, when things are floating lightly, then you find love objects that you once worshipped drifting in on the tide, back to you, more than you can deal with; in fact, horrifyingly rottened up from the sea.

An element in the gay lib struggle and metaphysics that I don't think has yet been taken up is that of disillusionment with the body. I'm not trying to be provocative in that—just the age-old realization of over-40, over-50, over-60, over-70 and over-80. Finally, the age old grinning skeleton, with the spiritual lesson behind it, of detachment from neurotic desire. I think there's a genuine eros between men that isn't dependent on neurotic detachment and obsession, that's free and light and holy and lambent—which is more or less what we all get during our first fantasies, loves and devotions. Some of us are lucky enough to be able to act out and receive back and forth. But it can only come in like the tide when you're free to float in it. If there's too much of a neurotic grasping to gaiety, to gayness, even to gay lib, then it makes everything too tense, and the lightness of the love is lost. So the gay lib movement will have to come to terms sooner or later with the limitations of sex.

If you consider sex from a Hindu, Buddhist, Hare Krishna, even Christian fundamentalist viewpoint—a warning about the body and a warning about attachment itself—it becomes interesting. Burroughs has actually written about it at length in a way which hip people and even radicals have found very interest-

ing: the sex "habit"—sex as another form of junk, a commodity, the consumption of which is encouraged by the state to keep people enslaved to their bodies. As long as they're enslaved to their bodies, they can be filled with fear and shock and pain and threat, so they can be kept in place. The road of that, he said, leads to the great palace of green goo, the garden of green goo....

I find, as I'm growing older, no less flutterings of delightful desire in my belly and abdomen. But also I'm becoming more tolerant of other resolutions between people besides sex. When I was in Australia, I had a crush on a beautiful young dobro player who traveled around with me. He sought me out and waited all day at my hotel and put himself at my service to play music with me. He wanted to play mantras and then turned out to be a great blues player, and he taught me blues. And he went to bed with me the first night, when I really got entranced by his servility, availability, generosity, stress and duty. And then he didn't want to go to bed with me after that, but he loved me. I was the first man he had ever been to bed with. How am I going to deal with somebody who really loves me but doesn't want to play with my cock and doesn't necessarily want me to blow him?

So I finally got into a scene which was like the old 19th century thing recommended by Edward Carpenter and Whitman—people sleeping together. It's called "carezza," a platonic friendship in which people sleep together naked, caressing each other, but don't come, saving their seed for yogic or other reasons. So I did that with this kid.

For the next couple of weeks we were running around Australia. I found the intensity of my devotion to him in the heart area—a warm, aching feeling in the heart, growing and growing and growing, and becoming more and more desirous and narcotic-like, and more and more satisfactory to carry around with me. And I found him responding in a very similar way to me. I realized that that same warmth was growing in his breast to me, and that what was building it was the naked chastity that we were practicing together. When we got on the stage and played together—I was singing mantras, blues and playing harmonium and he playing dobro—the erotic communication between us got ecstatic and delirious. It couldn't be withheld. We'd keep bursting out in song and eye glances which turned the audience on completely, and turned me on, and turned him on. So I was feeling another kind of very subtle, ethereal orgasm that seemed to occupy the upper portions of the body rather than the genital area.

Though I've always been prejudiced against that kind of sublimation, thinking of it as some sort of sublimation of primary, holy sex drives, the experience was so delicious that I can't really put it down for any moral reason at all. I recommend it; everyone should have that experience, too. You can get real close with people that you love who wouldn't otherwise want to sleep with you sexually. But you could have a total relation.

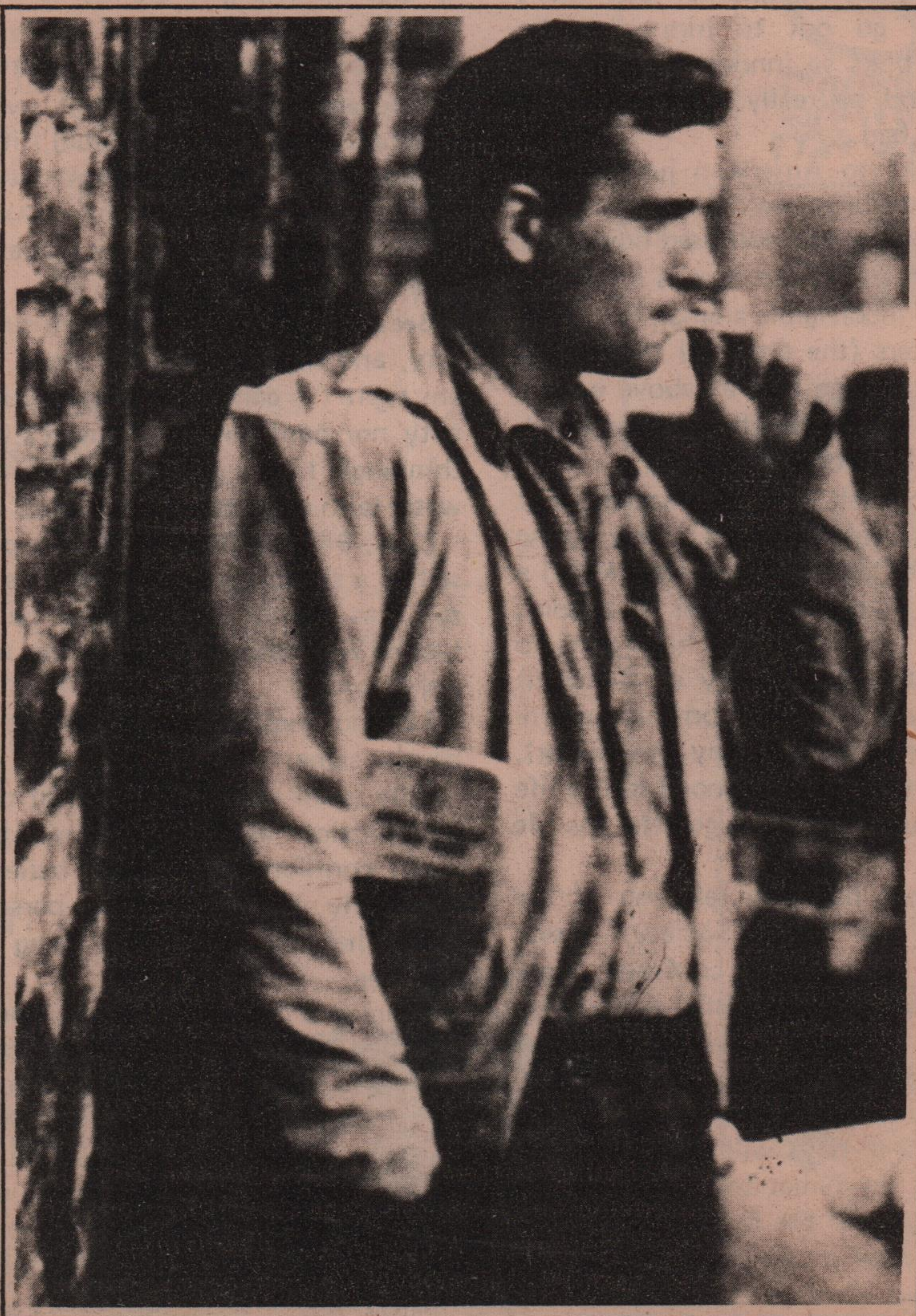
I know lots of men who are thinking along those lines. They may not want to sleep naked together, but they have a love thrill in the breast for each other and yet are completely heterosexual genitally. And I wouldn't be surprised if that is, among the mass of men, a universal experience, completely accepted, completely common, completely shared.

The idea of a buddy is just the vulgarization of it. The tradition of comradeship, of companionship, spoken of in the Bible between David and Jonathan—all the way to the body relationships as we know them—all these are probably intense love relationships which the gay lib movement, in its political phase, has not yet accepted and integrated as delightful manifestations of human communication, satisfactory to everybody. In other words, there's a lot of political and communal development open to the gay lib movement as it includes more and more varieties of love, besides genital. It may be that the bridge between gay liberation and men's liberation is in the mutual recognition of the masculine tenderness that was denied both groups for so long.

YOUNG: In "Kaddish" you say something about the weight of your homosexuality: "Matterhorns of cock, Grand Canyons of asshole." Did you use those big metaphors because homosexuality was a heavy thing for you?

GINSBERG: When I was a sensitive, little kid, not able to touch anyone or speak my feelings out, little did I realize the enormous weight of love and numbers of lovers, the enormity of the scene I'd enter into, in which I finally wound up a public spokesman for homosexuality at one point. In that sense, "Matterhorns of cock, Grand Canyons of asshole." Taking off my clothes in public and getting myself listed in *Who's Who* as being married to Peter.

Jack Kerouac on fire escape, E. 7th St., N.Y. 1953. Photo by Allen Ginsberg. Noel Brakeman's handbook in jacket pocket, given Kerouac by Neal Cassady.



YOUNG: In a number of poems your homosexuality flows very naturally. Did that really happen?

GINSBERG: About 1953 I wrote a big, long, beautiful love poem to Neal Cassady called "The Green Automobile." I made the love overt. I didn't make the genital part overt but I made every other aspect: tenderness, kneeling together, holding on, travelling together, and then ultimate separation.

The next poem that had some overt thing was a little poem in '53-54, that mentioned the "culture of my generation, cocksucking and tears."

Living in Neal Cassady's house I wrote a little poem, from a line by Whitman, about lying down between the bride and the bridegroom. This was one of Whitman's great lines. In a fantasy I wrote a description of what I would do, my love fantasy, between Neal and his wife, say, given permission by his tolerance.

The crucial moment of breakthrough in terms of statement came while writing "Howl": "Let themselves be fucked in the ass by handsome sailors, and screamed with joy." Usually the macho reaction to that image of being fucked in the ass would be just like in this new James Dickey film *Deliverance* where it's supposed to be the worst thing in the world.

YOUNG: You have a line somewhere: "Who wants to be fucked in the ass, really."

GINSBERG: That's in the book *Kaddish*, in a poem "On Mescaline." On mescaline, who wants to exist in the universe to begin with? Who wants to have a name? Who wants to have an ego? And also who wants to be queer? Who wants the pain of being fucked in the ass at times when it is painful, when it occasionally is. That's part of the scene, too. Sometimes you never know it in advance. Things seem to be all right, and all of a sudden it turns out to be painful. So, who wants to be fucked in the ass that way, really?

The outrageous presentation came with "Howl," where I suddenly realized how funny it would be in the middle of a long poem, if I said: "Who let themselves be fucked in the ass...and screamed with joy," instead of "ans screamed with pain." That's what the contradiction is in that line. An American audience would expect it to say "pain," but instead you have "and screamed with joy" — which is really true, absolutely, 100%.

And again I have a line like: "who blew and were blown by handsome sailors, caresses of Atlantic and Caribbean love," referring to Hart Crane, actually. It was an acknowledgement of the basic reality of homosexual joy. That was a breakthrough in the sense of a public statement of feelings and emotions and attitudes that I would not have wanted my father or my family to see, and I even hesitated to make public. So that much was a breakthrough: literally coming out of the closet.

YOUNG: Did critical reaction to you ever focus on the fact that you were homosexual?

GINSBERG: Yes, Norman Podhoretz, in *Partisan Review*, made a big attack on all the beatnik literature, the "know-nothing bohemians." He said that though my poetry was not too bad, it's chief force rested on this somewhat questionable insistent proclamation of being queer, homosexual all the time, which, if frank, was not that interesting socially. It was a put-down which acknowledged and at the same time dismissed, while it called Kerouac a "brute."

GINSBERG Whitman

Whitman is important on male tenderness. He's never been brought forth as a totem or as a prophet by either gay lib or by the radical left despite some very precise statements he made on the subject of men's lib.

In *Democratic Vistas* Whitman says: "Intense and loving comradeship, the personal and passionate attachment of man to man — which, hard to define, underlies the lessons and ideals of the profound savors of every land and age, and which seems to promise, when thoroughly developed, cultivated, and recognized in manners and literature, the most substantial hope and safety of the future of these states — will then be fully expressed."

Then, in a footnote, he says: "It is to the development, identification and general prevalence of that fervid comradeship (the adhesive love, at least rivaling the amative love hitherto possessing imaginative literature, if not going beyond it) that I look for the counter-balance and offset of our materialistic and vulgar American democracy and for the spiritual-

ization thereof. Many will say it is a dream and will not follow my inferences: but I confidentially expect a time when there will be seen running through it like a half-hid warp through all the myriad audible and visible worldly interests of America, threads of manly friendship, fond and loving, pure and sweet, strong and lifelong, carried to degrees hitherto unknown, not only giving tone to individual character and making it unprecedentedly emotional, muscular, heroic and refined, but having the deepest relation to general politics. I say democracy infers such loving comradeship as its most inevitable twin or counterpart, without which it will be incomplete, in vain and incapable of perpetuating itself."

Then, in the preface to the 1876 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, he adds, in a long footnote: "Something more may be added, for while I am about it, I would make a full confession. I also sent out *Leaves of Grass* to arouse and set flowing in men's and women's hearts, young and old, endless streams of living, pulsating, terrible, irrepressible yearning, surely more or less down underneath in most human souls this never-satisfied appetite for sympathy, and this boundless offering of sympathy — this universal democratic companionship, this old, eternal, yet ever-new exchange of adhesiveness, so fitly emblematic of America — I have given in that book undisguisedly, declaredly, the openest expression. Besides, important as they are in my purpose as emotional expressions for humanity, the special meaning of the 'Calamus cluster' of *Leaves of Grass*, (and more or less running through the book and cropping out in *Drum-Taps*), mainly resides in its political significance. In my opinion, it is by a fervent, accepted development of comrade-

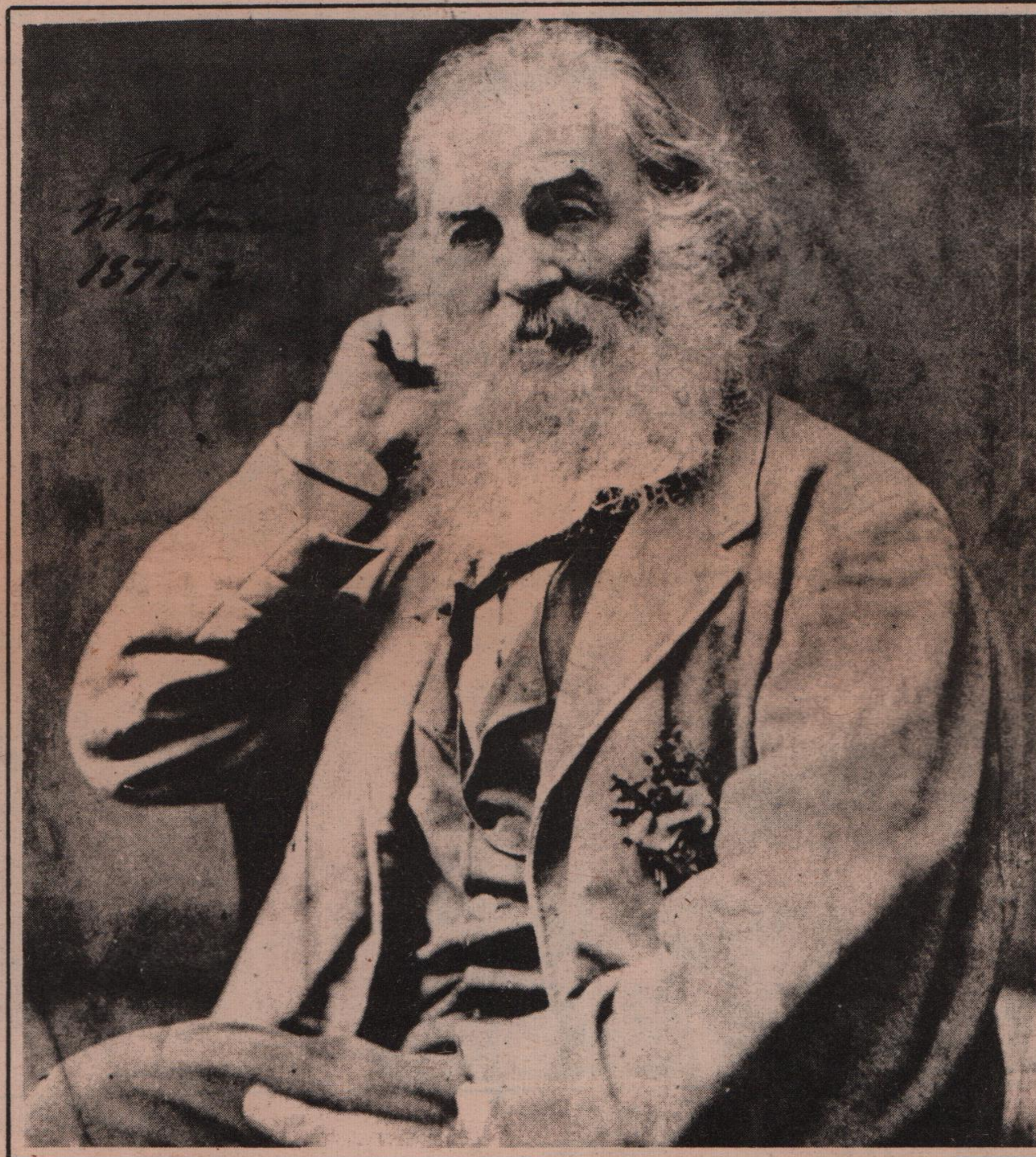
men and women. We don't yet know what the result would be of men forming closer emotional ties, or of the making conscious of those emotional ties and the acceptance of them as a political significance.

What's the alternative? You can bring up the spectre of Greek love and its anti-feminist concomitant and point out aspects of that in behavior of the beatniks — a fear of women, at least with me. But you would also have to see it as a real, heart-felt, native development, out of the fear and restrictiveness of the situation that we were brought up with: distrust, hatred, paranoia and competition between men rather than cooperation; and the same also between men and women.

Whitman was most sensitive of that because of his blocked love for men, because he couldn't make it with men openly and publicly. He had to find a way of expressing his adhesiveness, as he calls it.

I think a liberation of emotion between men would also lead to a liberation or straightening out of relations between men and women, because men would no longer have to be men in relation to women in the sense of hard and conquistador. They might have a much more relaxed relationship in which they weren't continuously obliged to be sexualized but could be just friends, or fond. Men's non sexual friendship with women is now considered unmanly. So the development of frankly emotional, non-genital friendships with men might mean also the development, the opening up of frankly emotional non-genital friendships with women.

What is the effeminate alternative position between men? In other words, what do they propose besides saying, "No, you



ship, the beautiful and sane affection of man for man, latent in all the young fellows, north and south, east and west, — it is by this I say and by what goes directly and indirectly along with it that the United States of the future, I cannot too often repeat, are to be most effectively welded together, intercalated, annealed into a living union..." [*Leaves of Grass*, Modern Library Edition, p. 526-7]

So, that's really the direction, I think, for gay lib, for men's lib, the release of emotions, finally a release of tenderness that's being suppressed.

YOUNG: Some people in the gay movement who call themselves "effeminists" would say that this sort of romanticization of masculine love is anti-woman, that it's another expression of male supremacy along the lines of Greek love; that the Greek society which tolerated and nurtured homosexuality was at its root a male supremacist society.

GINSBERG: I don't know. I don't think that's so in the long run. I think it's too genuine a feeling. With Whitman it didn't seem to interfere with his relations with women, because he had women friends who felt the same as he and who were, I think, married householder lesbians.

Whitman was saying that emotional giving between men, acceptance between men, has not been developed in America. One would say nowadays that it's been repressed by the spirit of competition and rivalry characteristic of capitalist home economics. A concomitant potential of a communal fraternity would be brotherly tenderness at least. That tenderness has been denied to the southern redneck and is responsible for his disrelation both with

shouldn't feel good with your fellow man; heterosexuals should not develop toward emotional relations with heterosexuals?" They're pointing out the danger of an exclusive club, but we've already had that exclusive club in another form with the Hemingway macho scene, or with the military muscular macho scene. I'm saying and Whitman is saying that the antidote to the Hemingway and military macho scene is the development of frank, emotional tenderness and an acknowledgment of tenderness as the basis of genital or non-genital emotion. It may resolve itself in more men friendships, a democratization of friendships, so that it's not exclusively friendships between men and women on a sexual basis. I think it would resolve a lot of the macho conflict and contradictions.

I think that's one of the definitions of gaiety, or homosexuality: there is a built-in conditioning, from very early times, in which both genital and emotional flow goes toward men more than, as is more usual, toward women. I thought the point of gay lib was to admit that variety of development as being viable, making a place for that. Otherwise, what is a homosexual? Unless you want to have a homosexual liberation front which proposes that men should develop out of homosexuality to a more equal and democratic relation with both men and women. But I think you could say: let the straight flower bespeak its purpose in straightness, which is to seek the light, and that the crooked flower bespeak its purpose in crookedness, which is to seek the light. The crooked flower has to go around the rock to seek the light. But the point was to get to the light of love, and the straight flower just grew up straight, right into the light of love. So you have either biological

or conditional man-love and a gay lib movement which purports to release and make public those emotions. One thing that gay lib could do would be to break down the fear barrier that queens have against women. Breaking down the fear barrier between men and men would probably tend toward that.

Another point I'd like to take up is the traditional, effeminate possibly, objection to the "sexist" relations between older men and younger men. I saw some effeminate manifestos [on this point] in Berkeley. I took that question to Gavin Arthur, who died this year in San Francisco. He was a great gentleman, with beautiful manners, an astrologer, a teacher, a guru, and a grandson of President Chester Arthur. Neal Cassady slept with him occasionally, taking refuge in San Francisco from his travels with Kesey, back and forth from the railroad; and Gavin Arthur had slept with Edward Carpenter, and Edward Carpenter had slept with Walt Whitman.

Gavin Arthur says that it's very old and very charming for older and younger people to make it — which you realize as you get old too — and nothing to be ashamed of, defensive about, but something to be encouraged; a healthy relationship, not a sick neurotic dependency.

The main thing is communication. Older people have ken, experience, history, memory, information, data, power, money and also worldly technology. Younger people have intelligence, enthusiasm, sexuality, energy, vitality, open mind, athletic activity — all the characteristics and sweet, dewy knowledges of youth; and both profit from the reciprocal exchange. It becomes more than a sexual relationship; it becomes an exchange of strength, an exchange of gifts, an exchange of accomplishments, an exchange of nature-bounties. Older people gain vigor, refreshment, vitality, energy, hopefulness and cheerfulness from the attentions of the young; and the younger people gain gossip, experience, advice, aid, comfort, wisdom, knowledge and teaching from their relation with the old. So as in other relationships, the combination of old and young is functionally useful. It's far from sexist, in the sense that the interest of the younger person is not totally sexual; it's more in the relationship and the wisdom to be gained.

In Edward Carpenter's and Whitman's time the older person made love to the younger person, blew the younger person, and there was the absorption of the younger person's electric, vital magnetism (according to a charming, theosophical, nineteenth century theory). And it's something that somebody older like myself does experience as a natural fact. When you sleep with somebody younger you do gain a little vitality of breadth and bounce.

YOUNG: You've referred to Whitman and Edward Carpenter, and in some of your poems you mention Garcia Lorca. For me it was a very recent discovery that these famous writers were gay like myself, that I had this bond with them. I'm curious as to how you made this discovery?

GINSBERG: Lorca's "Ode to Walt Whitman" speaks of "the sun singing on the navels of boys playing baseball under the bridges," which is an image of such erotic beauty that immediately you realize that he understood, that he was there; that was an emotion he felt. Then, later on I met somebody in Chile who knew him and said that he'd slept with boys. In fact, some sort of argument about a boy may be the cause of the shooting of Lorca. I don't think there's any written biographical history.

[Homosexuality] is all in Whitman's texts: his homo-erotic rhapsody, including a description of the time he lay down with a friend who opened or took off his shirt. Whitman lay down and kissed him all over his body. Did you know that? It's in Part 5 of *Song of Myself*.

YOUNG: You don't get it in high school.

GINSBERG: But school is irrelevant to poetry and everything else anyway. I mean school is something from the nineteenth century. Poetry has gone back to 15,000 B.C. There's Whitman's: "We two boys together clinging, one the other never leaving, up and down the roads going, north and south excursions making, power enjoying, elbows stretching, fingers clutching, armed and fearless, eating, drinking, sleeping, loving, no law less than ourselves owning, soldiering, sailing, thieving, threatening, misers, menials, priests alarming, air breathing, water breathing..."

And Whitman says, "...a glimpse through an interstice caught a crowd of workmen...in a barroom around a stove late at a winter night, and I unremarked seated in a corner a youth who loves me and whom I love, silently approaching and seating himself near, that he may hold me by the hand. A long while, and in the noises of coming and going, of drinking and oath and smutty jest, there we two, content, happy in being together, speaking little, perhaps not a word."

The adhesiveness that Whitman spoke of is latent in all of us now and ready to be opened. In the last ten years, god knows how many younger boys I've run across that I just sat and held hands with and felt love feelings toward them, and they toward me. Gay is too much of a category.

YOUNG: I think, definitely a tension exists today between gay freaks and straight gays. There are some people in gay liberation who say, "I have more in common with a heterosexual freak than with a gay person who's into very short hair and alcohol." And then there are other gay people who say, "My loyalty is to other gay people, and the freak culture is very macho."

GINSBURG: The form I felt it in was between the heart-felt, populist, humanist, quasi-heterosexual, Whitmanic, bohemian, free-love, homosexual tradition, as you find it in Sherwood Anderson, Whitman, or maybe Genet, versus the privileged, exaggeratedly effeminate, gossip, moneyed, money-style-clothing-conscious, near hysterical queen. Of course, there's nothing more ancient or honorable than the old shamanistic transvestite that we see running up and down Greenwich Avenue or, among the American Indians, a shaman who dresses himself up like a woman and even takes a husband. The screaming young queen — there's something very ancient and charming about that; great company, total individuality and expressiveness. Sometimes you fear it's the screaming, hysterical outside of somebody who's going to have a nervous breakdown and wind up in the church, or something. But then there's also the pettish, spiteful, anal retentive, disciplinarian.

But when I was younger the split was more between the grubby, beatnik, open-hearted...the nameless, gnostic lovers and the monopolistic queens who had privilege and money. The distinction was more between the cold-hearted and the warm hearted.

YOUNG: In the gay bars of New York did you find both?

GINSBURG: Oh, I found both definitely. There were lots of outspoken, funny old sailor queens from the twenties; and then there were all sorts of prissy mouthed, paranoiac, fearful, conservative-reactionary, short-hair, worried, advertising martinets. And everything in between. There is a manneristic fairydom that depends on money, chic, privilege and exclusive, monopolistic high style, and I would say that it is usually accompanied by bitchiness and bad manners and faithless love, too. I like homosexuality where the lovers are friends all their lives, and there are many lovers and many friends.

GINSBURG Orlovsky

YOUNG: Could you say something about your relationship with Peter Orlovsky?

GINSBURG: We met in San Francisco. He was living with a painter named Robert LaVigne in '54. I was having a very straight life, just trying it out, working in an advertising company, wearing suits, living up on Nob Hill in an apartment with Sheila, who was a jazz singer and worked in advertising. Things were somewhat unsatisfactory between us. We'd been taking peyote, so we were into a psychedelic scene, too.

We got into an argument, so I wandered down one night into an area of San Francisco then called Polk Gulch, now known as a notorious gay area with lots of gay bars. It was then more of a bohemian section, somewhat gay, artistic. Hotel Wentley was there, right on the corner of Sutter and Polk, and a Fosters cafeteria. I went and sat in the Fosters, late at night. I ran into Robert LaVigne and got into a big, interesting, artistic conversation about the New York painters I knew — Larry Rivers, deKooning & Kline. LaVigne was a provincial San Francisco painter, so I was bringing all sorts of fresh poetry, art news from New York.

He took me up to see his place and his paintings, about four blocks away on Gough Street in an apartment that I subsequently lived in for many seasons and still use now. I walked into the apartment and there was this enormous, beautiful, lyrical, seven-by-seven foot square painting of a naked boy with his legs spread, and some onions at his feet, with a little Greek embroider on the couch. He had a nice, clean-looking pecker, yellow hair, a youthful teeny little face, and a beautiful frank expression looking right out of the canvas at me. And I felt a heart throb immediately. So I asked who that was, and Robert said, "Oh, that's Peter; he's here, he's home." And then Peter walked in the room with the same look on his face, a little shyer.

Within a week Robert said that he was going out of town or breaking up with Peter, or Peter was breaking up with him. He asked me if I was interested in Peter, and he'd see what he could arrange. I said, "oooh, don't mock me." I'd already given up. I already had had a historic love affair with Neal Cassady a decade earlier. So I was already a tired old dog, in the sense of the defeats of love, not having made it, not having found a permanent life companion. And, in 1955, I was already 29. I wasn't a 20-year old kid with romantic notions. That night we were in Vesuvios bar. Robert had a big conversation with Peter, asking Peter if he was interested, sort of like a "shachun," a matrimonial arranger.

Then I went home one night. I went to Peter's room. We were to sleep together that night on a huge mattress he had on the floor. I took off my clothes and got into bed. I hadn't slept with too many people. Never openly, completely giving and taking. With Jack or Neal, with people who were primarily heterosexual and who didn't fully accept the sexualization of our tenderness, I felt I was forcing it on them; so I was always timid about them making love back to me, and they very rarely did very much. When they did, it was like blessings from heaven. If you get into it, there's a funny kind of pleasure/pain, absolute loss/hope. When you blow someone like that and they come, it's great! And if they touch you once, it's enough to melt the entire life structure, as well as the heart, the genitals and the earth. And it'll make you cry.

So...Peter turned around (he was in his big Japanese robe), opened up the bathrobe — he was naked — and put it around me and pulled me into him; and we got close, belly to belly, face to face. That

wanted to make a more permanent relationship with me. I had my eyes on Peter for life-long love; [I was] completely enamored and intoxicated — just the right person for me, I thought. Robert was not sure he hadn't made a mistake, seeing the flow and the vitality that was rising up in both me and Peter. And Peter began withdrawing. He was caught in this rivalry between me and Robert, and, at the same time, there was his unsurety of me and his relation to me. Basically he liked girls anyway, so what was he doing lying there being screwed by me?

So I moved across from the Hotel Wentley and got a room. I was working in a market research job. I had the brilliant inspiration that all the categorizing and market research I was doing could be fed into a machine, and I wouldn't have to add all those columns any more. So I supervised the transfer for the company, and that left me out of a job just nicely. Then I got unemployment compensation.

I was being psychoanalyzed at Langley-Porter Clinic, an elite extension of U.C. Berkeley medical school. It was a very good doctor, and I said: "You know, I'm very hesitant to get into a deep thing with Peter, because where can it ever lead. Maybe I'll grow old and then Peter probably won't love me — just a transient relationship. Besides, shouldn't I be heterosexual?" He said, "Why don't you do what you want. What would you like to do?" And I answered, "Well, I really would just love to get an apartment on Montgomery St., stop working and live with Peter and write poems!" He said, "Why don't you do that?" So I said, "What happens if I get old or something?" And he replied, "Oh, you're a nice person; there's always people who will like you" — which really amazed me. So, in a sense he gave me permission to be

months he'd go into a very dark, Russian, Dostoevskian black mood and lock himself in his room and weep for days; and then he'd come out totally cheerful and friendly. I found after a while it was best not to interrupt him, not to hang round like a vulture; let him go through his own yoga.

The key thing was when we decided on the terms of our marriage — I think it was in Fosters' Cafeteria downtown about three in the morning. We were sitting and talking about each other, with each other, trying to figure out what we were going to do, who we were to each other, and what we wanted out of each other, how much I loved him, and how much did he love me. We arrived at what we both really desired.

I'd already had visionary experience: an illumined audition of Blake's voice and a sense of epiphany about the universe. He had had an experience, weeping and lonesome, walking up the hill to his college, and having a sense of an apparition of the trees bowing to him. So we both had some kind of psychedelic, transcendental, mystical image in our brains and hearts.

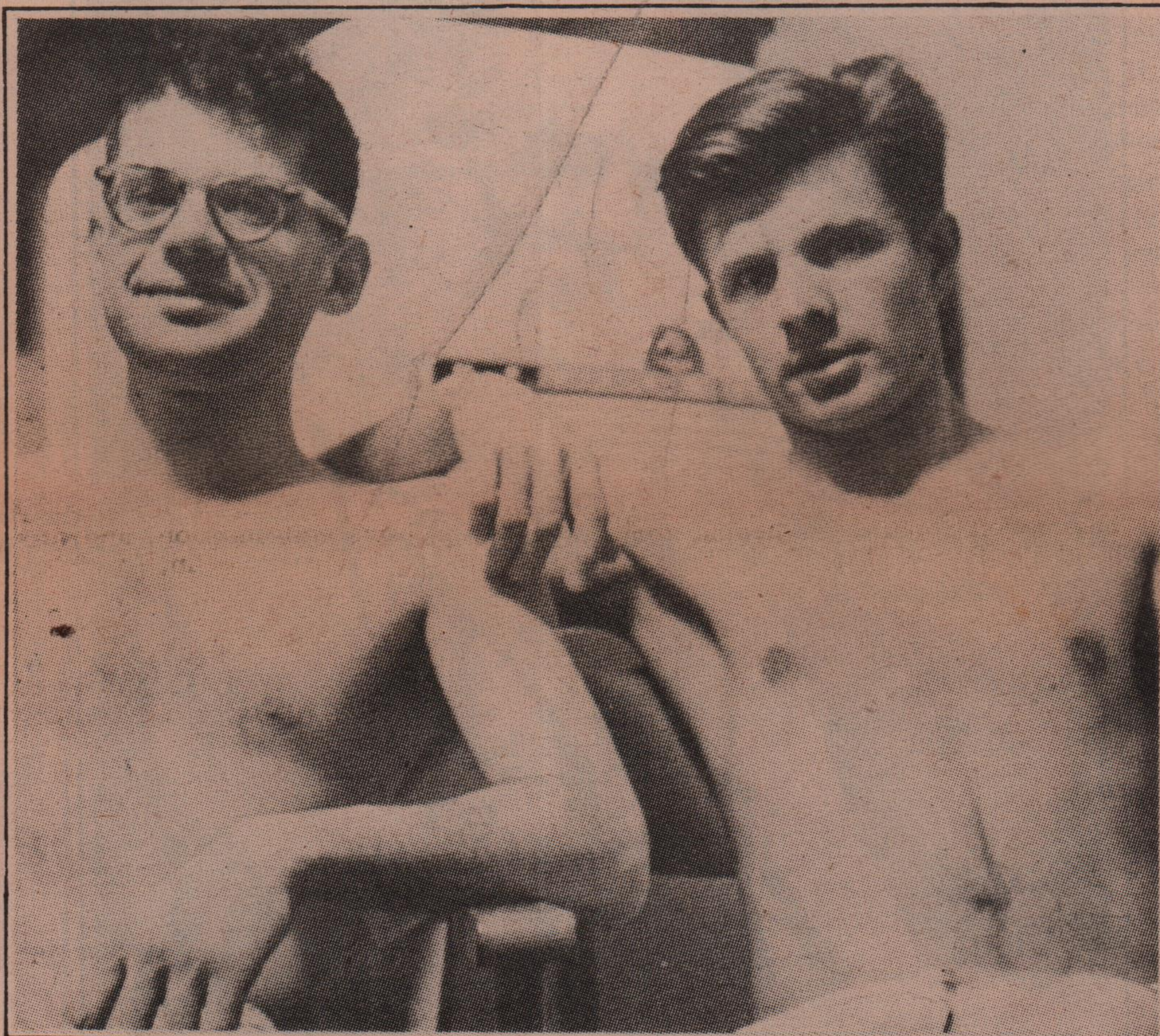
We made a vow to each other that he could own me, my mind and everything I knew, and my body, and I could own him and all he knew and all his body; and that we would give each other ourselves, so that we possessed each other as property, to do everything we wanted to, sexually or intellectually, and in a sense explore each other until we reached the mystical "X" together, emerging two merged souls. We had the understanding that when our (my particularly) erotic desire was ultimately satisfied by being satiated (rather than denied), there would be a lessening of desire, grasp, holding on, craving and attachment; and that ultimately we would both be delivered free in heaven together. And so the vow was that neither of us would go into heaven unless we could get the other one in — like a mutual bodhisattva's vow.

That's actually the bodhisattva's vow — "Sentient beings are numberless, I vow to enlighten them all. Passions are numberless, I vow to quench them all, cut them all down. The nature of the dharma, the doors of nature are endless, I vow to enter every single one of them. Buddha path very high and long and endless — vow to follow through all the way — Buddha path, infinite, limitless, vow to go all the way through." Sentient beings, numberless, unnumbered — countless, vow to count every one, enlighten every single one of them. Basically a vow to be reborn as everybody, one after another, every stone, every leaf blade, vow to be every individual part of the universe at one time or another, and accept the fate of that particle, so to speak.

Well, this is like a limited version of that, almost intuitive, the vow to stay with each other to whatever eternal consciousness: him with his trees bowing, me with Blake eternity vision. I was more intellectual, so I was offering my mind, my intellect; he was more athletic and physical and was offering his body. So we held hands, took a vow: I do, I do, you promise? yes, I do. At that instant we looked in each other's eyes and there was a kind of celestial cold fire that crept over us and blazed up and illumined the entire cafeteria and made it an eternal place.

I found somebody who'd accept my devotion, and he found somebody who'd accept his devotion and who was devoted to him. It was really a fulfillment of fantasy, to a point where fantasy and reality finally merged. Desire illumined the room, because it was a fulfillment of all my fantasies since I was nine, when I began to have erotic love fantasies. And that vow has stuck as the primary core of our relationship. That's the mutual consciousness; it's the celestial social contract, valid because it was an expression of the desire of that time, and it was workable. It's really the basic human relationship — you give yourself to each other, help each other and don't go to heaven without each other.

There's this mythology of Arjuna, from the *Baghavad-Gita*, getting to the door of heaven. He's got this little dog following him, and they say, you can come in but you can't bring your dog. And he says, well, no, if I can't go in with my dog, I won't go. And then they say, oh, come on, you can go in, just leave him behind, it's only a dog. And he says, no, I love my dog, and I trust that love, and if I can't bring that trust in, then what kind of heaven is this? And the third time, he says, no, no, no, I'll stay out and put the dog in heaven but I won't go in without the dog. I vowed to tears with my dog, I can't leave my dog alone. And so, finally, after the third time, the dog turns out to be Krishna, the supreme lord of the universe and heaven itself. He was only trying to get heaven into heaven. And his instinct was right. And our instinct was right. It was enough to bring us through very difficult times — all through the change of status, beat generation and fame, the alteration of social identity that fame entails.



Allen and Peter.

was so frank, so free and so open that I think it was one of the first times that I felt open with a boy. Then, emboldened, I screwed Peter. He wept afterwards, and I got frightened, not knowing what I'd done to make him cry, but completely moved by the fact that he was so involved as to weep. At the same time the domineering, sadism part of me was flattered and erotically aroused.

The reason he wept was that he realized how much he was giving me and how much I was demanding, asking and taking. I think he wept looking at himself in that position not knowing how he'd gotten there; not feeling it was wrong, but wondering at the strangeness of it. The most raw meat of reasons for weeping.

Then, Robert hearing, seeing the situation, came in to comfort Peter a little bit. I was very possessive and I pushed Robert away. That got me and Robert into a funny kind of distrust that lasted for a year or two before our karmas finally resolved. He then realized he was well off on his own; and I was burdened with the karma of love.

Peter was primarily heterosexual, and always was. I guess that was another reason he was shocked — the heaviness of my sadistic possessiveness in screwing him. For the first time in my life I really had an opportunity to screw somebody else! I think that wounded him and thrilled me a little bit. So we still had to work out all that in our relationship over many, many years. It's painful sometimes.

We slept together perhaps one more time. Then I had to go to New York for my brother's wedding at Christmas, '54. I came back and moved into that apartment where they were living, at their invitation. And then there was a triangle of Robert, me and Peter. Peter had not made up his mind whether or not he

free, not to worry about consequences.

So then I waited for Peter, and Peter stayed up at the Gough Street apartment and went to school. I got this room and started writing a lot and waited and waited for Peter. Neal Cassady came by a couple of times. I made it with Neal. I can remember one of the last really wild times I made it with him, because I had a room of my own and there was privacy, finally. He was lying there naked, and I was sitting on his cock, jumping up and down, trying to make him come.

And I just waited and waited [for Peter]. There was nothing I could run after or pursue, because I couldn't claim anything by force. Things got too difficult where Peter was living, so he got a room himself in the Wentley, across the street from where I was. And there was embarrassment, coldness — not knowing where each other was, what we would do. I was waiting for him to make some sort of decision. A couple of times we drank a little to see if we could get over the low. We didn't sleep together at all, though I was longing to.

Then one day he was lying in bed, and he started crying again. He said, "Come on and take me." I was too overwhelmed and frightened to even get a hard-on. I didn't know what to do. We both had our clothes on. I was afraid he was interpreting it as me screwing him again, rather than really just having each other. But that soon got resolved, and we moved in together, into an apartment in North Beach. We found an apartment, and it had a room for him, a room for me, and a hall between us; and a kitchen together. So that gave us both a little privacy, and, at the same time, we could make it when we wanted.

He was very moody, very sweet, tender, gentle and open. But every month or two

Our relationship has lasted from 1954 to 1972. The terms have changed tremendously. Peter's gone through a lot of changes, and we've separated for a year at a time. And always come back. We've gone through a lot of phases of sleeping with people together, doing orgies together, sleeping alone together. Now Peter sleeps with a girl. I very rarely sleep with him. But the origin of our relationship is a fond affection. I wouldn't want to go to heaven and leave Peter alone on earth; and he wouldn't leave me alone if I was sick in bed, dying, gray-haired, wormy, rheumatic. He'd have pity on me. We've maintained our relationship so long that at this point we could separate and it would be all right. I think the karma has resolved and worn out.

The original premise was to have each other and possess each other until the karma was worn out, until the desire, the neurotic attachment, was satisfied by satiation. And there's been satiation, disappointment and madness, because he went through a long period of speed freakery in the mid sixties which really strained things. We had times of hostile screaming at each other such as happens in the worst of homo and hetero sexual marriages, where people have murder in their hearts toward each other. That burned out a lot of the false emotion of youth, and the unrealistic grasping, cravings, attachments and dependencies. So he's now independent, and I'm independent of him. And yet there's an independent curiosity between us.

GINSBERG Cuba

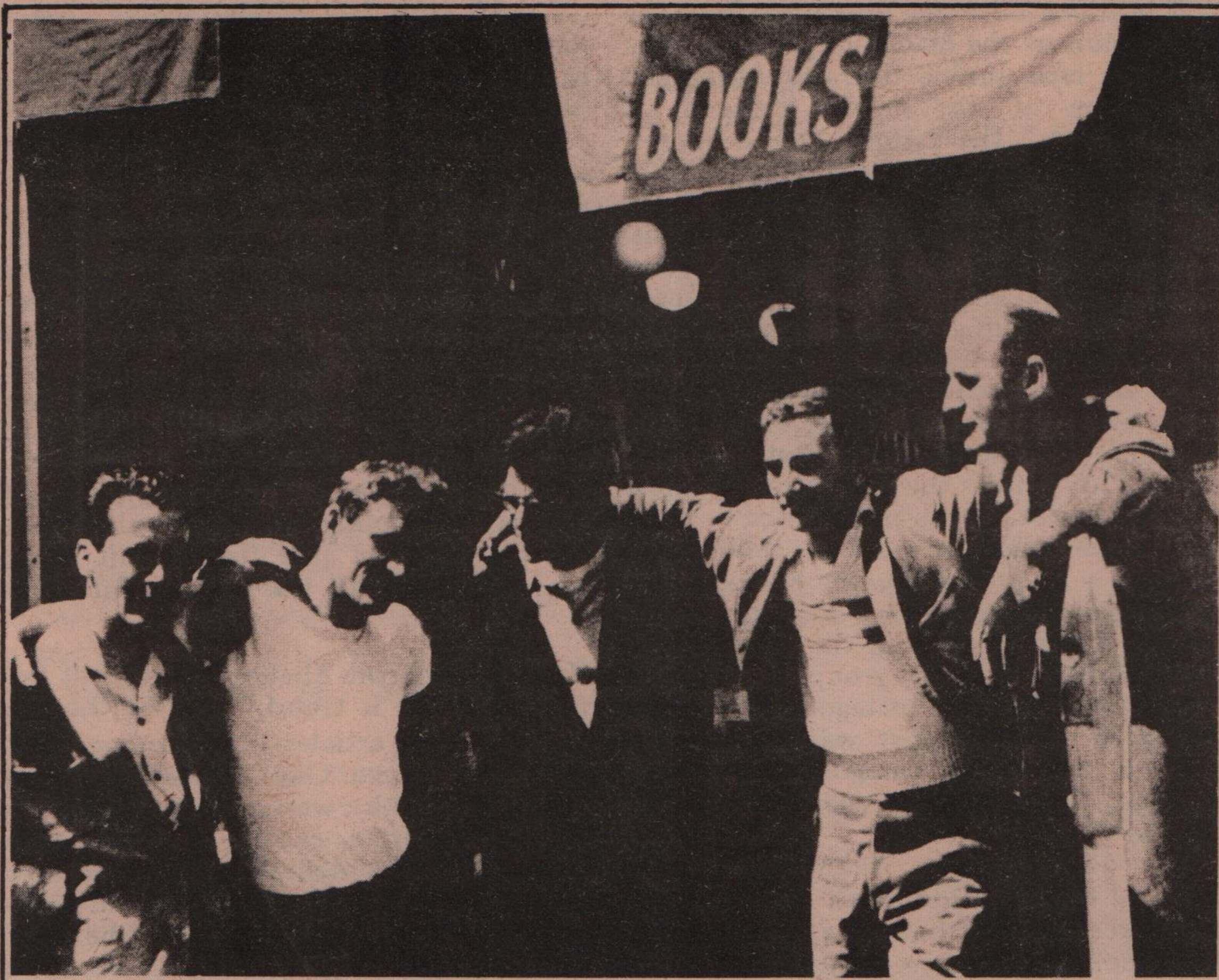
YOUNG: There were some vague stories going around about your visit to Cuba in 1965 and departure. I'd like to know more about what you did in Cuba and what you said that eventually got you deported.

GINSBERG: Well, the worst thing I said was that I'd heard, by rumor, that Raul Castro was gay. And the second worst thing I said was that Che Guevara was cute. The most substantial thing was that I went around wondering why their marijuana policy, as of 1965, was so unscientific. I didn't accept the answer I got which was that the Batista soldiers used to get high and shoot at them, because I didn't think that was true. By hindsight, it doesn't seem really relevant to their needs, but at the same time, the denial of marijuana doesn't seem relevant to their needs, either.

There was persecution of homosexuals in the primarily gay-oriented theater group at the time. Instead of finding a place for that, they tried to break it up and sent everybody out to the sugar cane fields to work. This was an attempt to humiliate them, to use sugar cane for humiliation rather than community. And it wasn't in the newspapers. It was a secret campaign, with all the young Communist League party hack, flag-waving kids, like the Nixonettes, so to speak, accusing everybody they didn't like of being faggots.

It was considered bad form to wear beards and long hair, even though that was the characteristic style of Castro and the liberators up on the main drag, La Rampa. People were being stopped by the police and busted for having long hair, accused of being existentialists and degenerates. A bunch of young kids belonging to a poetry group I knew, El Puente (The Bridge), were being bugged by the police, not allowed to publish, and were called fairies. The whole group of Escritores del Encuentro Inter-Americana, sponsored by Casa de las Americas, went to the theater. We were joined there by a whole bunch of the young poet kids. When we left the theater, they were all stopped by the police, arrested and told to stop hanging around with foreigners. Some of the young poet kids were translating my work.

There was a police bureaucracy in Cuba that was very heavy and was coming down heavy on culture, in terms of beards, sexual revolution tendencies, sociability, and homosexuality. In other words, there was no real cultural revolution; it was still basically a Catholic mentality. As in many Communist countries, the police bureaucrat Party hacks were like Mayor Daley ward-healers: flag-waving, fat assed square types. Self seeking squares, not at all spiritually communist, were getting control of the police and emigration bureaucracies and setting themselves at odds against the people who screw with their eyes open, listen to the Beatles and read interesting books like Genet, and fought at the Bay of Pigs against the Americans. Even people who had been up in the mountains with Castro were very secretive about smoking grass. The press was monolithically controlled and boring, and the newspaper reporters for the press reminded me very



Bob Donlin, Neal Cassady, Ginsberg, Bob LaVigne, Larry Ferlinghetti in front of City Lights Bookstore, 1957. Photo by Peter Orlovsky.

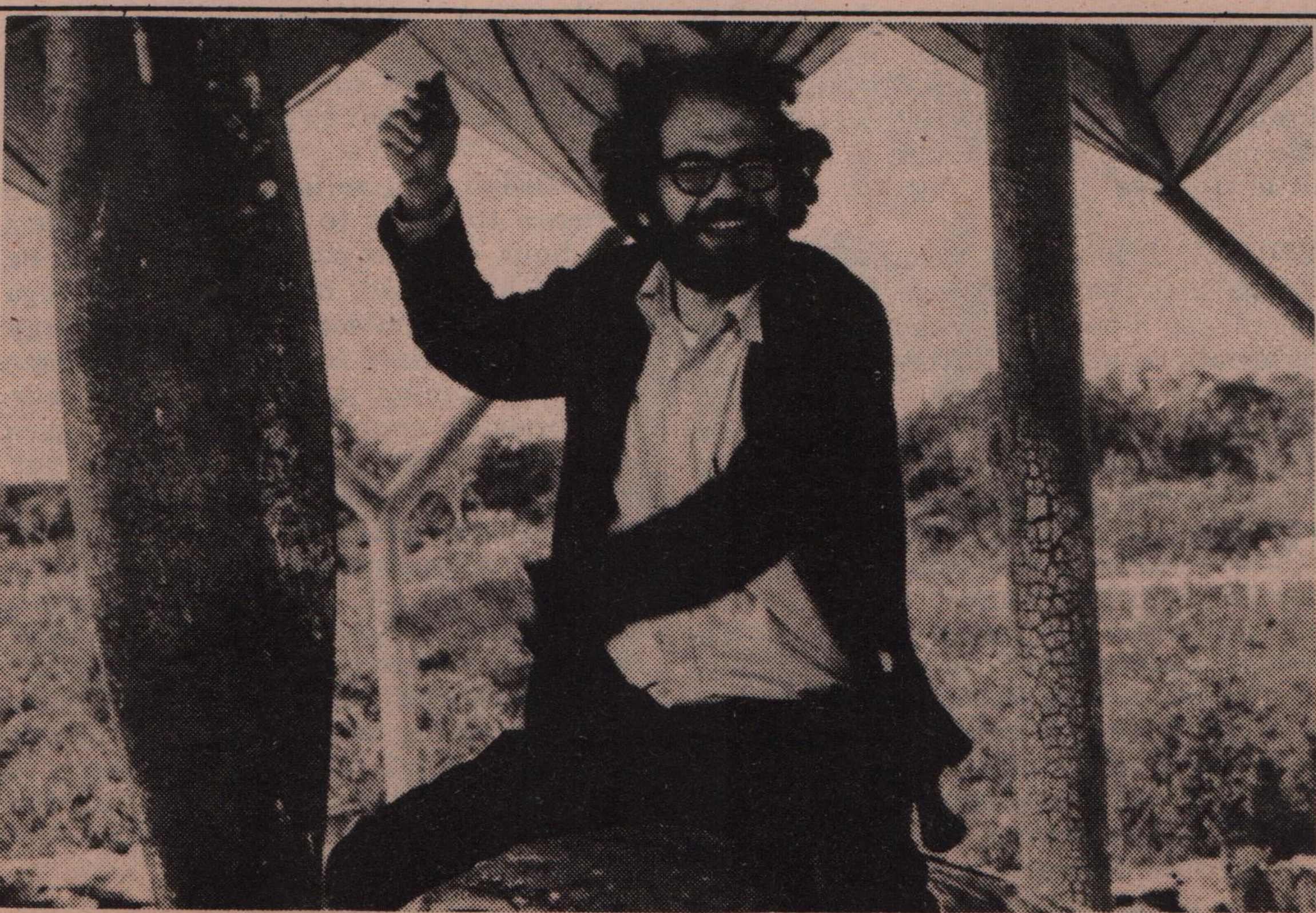
much of the self-righteous newspaper reporters from the *Daily News* as far as their opinionation and argumentativeness.

I just continued talking there as I would talk here in terms of being anti-authoritarian. But my basic feeling there was sympathetic to the revolution. I had friends living there, was invited there as a guest, and I took part as a judge in a literary contest. The worst thing was the talk about homosexuality and the challenge to the official position about it. Castro had taken an official position in a speech at the university in which he had attacked homosexuality. He called it degenerate or abnormal, saw it as a cabal, perhaps, a conspiracy. I think he praised the Young Communist League for turning in fairies.

I suggested to Haydee Santamaria that they invite the Beatles and got the answer: "They have no ideology; we are trying to build a revolution with an ideology." Well, that's true, but what was the ideology they were proposing? A police bureaucracy that persecutes fairies? I mean, they're wasting enormous energy on that. Some of those "fairies" were the best revolutionaries — people that fought at the Bay of Pigs, Playa Giron.

I slept with one young poet, secretly. I took one stick of grass one day, walking along a shady street with a bearded fellow who said he'd been up in the mountains with Castro and that they had smoked up there.

I thought one of the most brilliant and interesting results of gay liberation was the confrontation with the repressive, conservative police bureaucracy in Cuba. I think the confrontation between the Venceremos Brigade and Gay Lib showing the Cuban mental block on the subject of homosexuality was one of the most useful things that gay lib did on an international scale. At least it brought the question to front-brain consciousness. Gay lib people went there to offer themselves and, I think, less to confront the Cubans than to find out what the scene was. They were, obviously, faithful in terms of change and sympathy with the revolution. Since it was a gay lib group [that did this], the right wing, capitalist press couldn't take advantage of the confrontation to put shame on Cuba, because otherwise they'd have to defend gay lib! So, it was gay lib taking the bull by the horns, within the context of brotherhood, challenging the Cuban macho, repressive mentality in a constructive way. I don't think the Communist Party there reacted very well. What was the result?



Allen Ginsberg in Cuba, 1965, in the wreckage of an American plane shot down over the Bay of Pigs.

YOUNG: In the interim period the brigade has adopted a policy of excluding gay liberation people. There was a fifth brigade that did not have gay liberation people on it. The Cubans have since come up with a detailed, rather specific policy statement on homosexuality, declaring it to be a "social pathology." The pro-Cuban Venceremos Brigade people have related with hostility to the radical gay lib movement. Large numbers of New Left people who formerly were very sympathetic to Cuba have reduced their expression of sympathy for Cuba because the gay question. The Cubans, basically, have forced a lot of people to choose between the Cuban revolution and gay liberation, and they're quite surprised to find people choosing the gays.

GINSBERG: When Castro originally had his revolution, he said it's a marxist revolution but still a humanist revolution. If it's a humanist revolution, they cannot put down gays. Otherwise, it's double talk. I think it's important to support any separation from American imperialism and conspicuous consumption, and any sort of independence from American psychological domination. But, on the other hand, the reason for doing so is to become human and independent again.

If the definition of human and independent means sustaining an old, authoritarian viewpoint toward sexuality — the monotheistic, Catholic viewpoint — then it would be better that American radicals at least realized that they're dealing with human beings in the Cuban situation rather than with divine authorities. I am willing to accept the fact that the Cuban revolution is a genuine relief from Mafia capitalist domination, the previously corrupt society of Cuba, and a release from America.

In other words, I feel the Cuban revolution is important and should be supported. They'll learn, soon enough. They're gonna see the end of the world anyway and end up with long hair and pansexualities. They're going to have to take it as state policy before they're over, just to relieve their population problem. I think gays are dealing in the long run from a position of great strength, because their position is founded in ancient rules of mammal behavior and ecological necessity as far as the future and the recognition of common humanity. So I think gays can afford to say, "Ahhh."

I saw a lot of other things there in terms of cultural persecution. I was in-

terested in *santeria* [Ed.: Afro-Cuban cults]. With a group of writers I went to a *santero's* house in the outskirts of Havana for a Congo and Yoruba ceremony. In the middle of the ceremony the police came in, wanted everybody's name and address and harassed everybody. They said you had to have a permit for any meeting of more than ten or twelve people after a certain hour or even at any time in a private house. They knew who we were perfectly well; we had representatives there from the Casa de las Americas. So again it was the police bureaucracy hassling the cultural side.

One of the boasts in Cuba was the acceptance of black consciousness. The *santeria* religion was one of the great ancient tribal things that had resisted the white, honky, Christian church, and here they were interrupting this ceremony! There was apparently an attempt to discourage the practice of *santeria* because it was like a rival spiritual authority to the state.

In Cuba I remember that most of the honkies from a Catholic background were indifferent to black culture and to the heart of it which was the *santeria* cult. But among the appreciators were some of the old gay painters and poets.

YOUNG: A couple of friends of mine who were recently in Cuba told me that the persecution of the *santerias* continues. At the same time there is peace between the Cuban government and the Catholic Church. The Cuban Declaration of the Congress on Education and Culture specifically tattacks the *santeria* but speaks very positively about relations with the Catholic Church, especially in terms of the support of the Catholic Church in other Latin American countries for left-wing forces.

One of these black *santeros*, who was wanted by the police, escaped and hid in the house of a homosexual friend. They were both caught and arrested. The news report about the arrest emphasized the connection between *santeria* and homosexuality. They used the stronger taboo against homosexuality to reinforce the attack on the *santeria*.

Edward Carpenter says that one of the things that made him a revolutionary was going to Africa and through his gayness becoming familiar with the humanity of the African people.

In Cuba I met the three people who run the puppet theatre, the Teatro de Guinol, a brother and sister and a third person. The brother and the third person are both gay. The people in the theater are mostly gay. When I was there in 1969, I hardly even perceived that they were gay, because of my own closet situation. They told me they were producing a Yoruba play. Pepe Carril wrote it and it has been translated into English by Susan Sherman. Carucha, one of the directors of the theatre, told me that they had to fight to do this Yoruba play. They did a theatrical puppetry presentation of the Yoruba cult, and afterwards the party hacks thought that it was o.k.

GINSBERG: The original humanist, Marxist approach was that western monopoly capitalism, homogenized, turned into a commercial mass cult, a plastic, degenerate commodity. From a revolutionary point of view, the rights and cultural heritage of workers and minorities had to be preserved from the depredations of the evil banks and cultural monopolists. By revolutionary theory the Yoruba tradition among the blacks should be cultivated and subsidized, kept as folk art of the people, as their art and religion. So, it's a contradiction in basic marxist approach to have a rivalry between police bureaucracy and Yoruba priests.

YOUNG: I think it has something to do with plain old racism; white supremacy.

GINSBERG: I suppose so. It means that blacks have a culture of their own, and whites don't want that. So what do you say to Castro? Has anyone had an interesting conversation with Castro in the last seven years? He used to have conversations with interesting people like Sartre.

I was in my hotel room one morning toward the end of my stay in Cuba when three uniformed, olive-clothed, mute soldiers came in with an officer. He said he was head of immigration, that I had to pack my bags, and that I was being deported on the next plane to Prague. I asked if they had informed the Casa de las Americas, and the answer was, no; there will be time enough later. They wouldn't let me make a phone call to the Casa which was my host, and they took me downstairs. I shouted in the lobby to Nicanor Parra [Ed.: a leading Chilean poet] that I was being deported and they should get in touch with the Casa de las Americas and warn them. I was driven out to the airport. On the way, I asked why I was being deported. The officer said, "For breaking the laws of Cuba." And I said, "What laws?" He responded, "You'll have to ask yourself that." And that answer, I thought, was

Photo: Tom Mascher

like the answer I got from Dean McKnight at Columbia University when I got kicked out for staying overnight in my room with Jack Kerouac. And we had n't made love at all. We just slept there because Kerouac had no place to sleep that night.

I didn't go round screaming to *Time* magazine that I'd been unjustly kicked out of Cuba. I just gave them the benefit of the doubt, understanding that I was like a pawn. It was a fight between the liberal groups and the military bureaucracy groups. I realized also that the more the United States put pressure on Cuba, the more power the right-wing military, police bureaucracy and Party hacks would get. The real problem was to relieve the pressure in America, to end the blockade rather than to "blame" the Cuban Revolution, Castro, or Marxism — although I don't think Castro was very tactful on the question of homosexuality. There was an excessively macho thoughtlessness on his part, and insensitivity.

YOUNG: When I was there in '71 at the journalists' conference, there was a reception, at the side of a big swimming pool. Everybody was crowding around Fidel. He was loving it and getting involved in lively conversation with different people. I was feeling very out of it. I was the only male that didn't have short hair, a suit and a tie, except for some Africans in African dress. The whole idea of pushing into a crowd to talk to a famous man was something I wasn't exactly into.

I decided to get involved in conversation with some other people. I spoke with a very important comandante, a black guy, who had fought with Fidel in the hills and was on the central committee. Karen Wald, an American who was with us, asked him what he thought about machismo. And he said, "Oh, man, that's good!" I can't figure out to this day whether he was putting her on or whether he was simply expressing his very gut reaction — which is that machismo is an important thing for a Cuban man to appreciate.

GINSBERG: The question does finally boil down to machismo, both here in the United States, and there, in terms of revolutionary tactics. Gay lib, in a sense, has a good approach to straight people with smug, middle-class ideas about power coming out of the barrel of anything, actually.

GINSBERG Gay Liberation

YOUNG: I think there's been a certain schizophrenia in the radical section of gay liberation. People have said they're against power. In fact, most of the people I know in the radical wing of gay liberation don't even like and don't use the slogan "gay power" because of the word power.

GINSBERG: Gregory Corso has a great poem called "Power" which I invite you to check out. It was written in 1959: "Power is standing on a street corner waiting for nobody" "A thirst for power is a thirst for sand."

YOUNG: On the one hand people were attacking the whole notion of power, trying to do away with power in personal relationships. On the other hand, there was this desire to be a part of the left, a desire best epitomized by the slogan, "Go left, go gay, go pick up the gun" — a variation of the Panther slogan.

GINSBERG: Though it may serve as a vehicle for machismo among gays, it also serves as a deflating slogan for the pompousness of black or white power slogans that are actually a bit ridiculous sometimes.

The slogan "Power comes out of the barrel of a gun" was irrelevant in the American situation all along. There wasn't enough imagination in terms of tactics and poetry. How do you transform and convert America? It was a sign of the poverty of imagination that finally people fell into violence, when all along the whole problem had been mental violence, blindness and rage. Gay lib really did turn all of the machismo of the left inside out.

YOUNG: Do you feel that gay liberation has influenced you personally in any way?

GINSBERG: I use the word "gay" now which I never did before. And that's important when you change somebody's language. I find myself drifting toward the gay lib group whenever there's a big parade, because it's generally so sincere and interesting. The ideology there, at least is personal. Gay lib has influenced my thinking on a few other things — like junkie liberation.

If you can have gay liberation from the oppression of the macho oppressors, then you can have junkie liberation from the oppression of the macho Mafia C.I.A. fuzz A.M.A., the Truman-Nixon oppression of punitive treatment of junkie illness rather than medical treatment. There should be a Junkie Liberation Front. They're the most oppressed group in America, in the sense that they're hunted down like dogs by people with guns. They're always under the threat of jail. They're sick. They've got a legitimate illness, and they're not being treated with legitimate medical means. But they are thrown over into the hands of the most corrupt police agents in America — narcs who have relations with the Mafia and peddle — as proved by the Knapp Commission and various other documented analyses. They've suffered the greatest image distortion of any group in America. There was never a category of human being in America that was invented as low as the fiend category for heroin addicts. They didn't even say liquor fiends.

And they are the victim of slander. They're called a criminal class, violent murderers when they're not; when it's the alcoholics who are really out of control. Half of the Pentagon generals are alcoholics, too.

YOUNG: One of the quotations that floats around gay liberation ascribed to you is your reaction to the Stonewall riot: "The fags have lost that wounded look." What were the circumstances?



L-R: Orlovsky, Burroughs, Ginsberg, Alan Ansen, Paul Bowles, Gregory Corso, Tangier, garden of Villa Mouneria where Burroughs lived.

GINSBERG: It was an interview in the *Voice*. I wasn't there at the riot. I heard about it, and I went down the next night to the Stonewall to show the colors. A crowd was there, and the place was open. So I said [to myself], the best thing I can do is to go in; the worst that can happen is I'll calm the scene. They're not going to attack them when I'm there. I'll just start a big Om.

I didn't relate to the violent part [of Stonewall]. The trashing part I thought was bitchy, unnecessary, hysterical. But, on the other hand, there was this image that everybody wanted to make that they could beat up the police, which apparently they managed to do. It was so funny as an image that it was hard to disapprove of, even though it involved a little violence.

YOUNG: Did you at that moment anticipate that this might lead to something called gay liberation with organizations, publications and so forth?

GINSBERG: It seemed to have been there all along, somehow. There was already that in rudimentary form with the Mattachine Society and One. They were more sedate, but they did some interesting things in their time.

I published the poem to Neal "The Green Automobile," in 1956 or 1959, in *The Mattachine Review*. Because it was a frank love poem, approving of the [gay] love relationship, it brought forth a rebuke from psychiatrist Karl Menninger of Topeka, Kansas. He wrote a strange letter to the Mattachine Society, denouncing the poem and saying they were trying to "cure" everybody, and here was this terrible poem boasting of these perverted feelings!

I went to a few of Mattachine's meetings and gave a little poetry reading there in San Francisco. But I never got involved politically with them, just literarily. Of course, San Francisco was always more advanced than New York in terms of the acceptance of homosexuality. It's like a Parisian city. There was a historic, famous bar in San Francisco's North Beach (near what was called the Monkey Block), which was maybe the greatest gay bar in America. It was really totally open, bohemian, San Francisco, Viennese; and everybody went there, heterosexual and homosexual. It was lit up, there was a honky tonk piano; it was enormous. All the gay screaming queens would come, the heterosexual gray flannel suit types, longshoremen. All the poets went there.

YOUNG: Martha Shelley has a great first line in "Gay is Good," one of the first gay liberation articles: "Look out straights, here comes the Gay Liberation Front, springing up like warts all over the bland face of Amerika, causing shudders of indigestion in the delicately balanced bowels of the Movement." At the end of the article she says, "You will never be rid of us because we reproduce ourselves out of your bodies."

GINSBERG: There's too much of a conflict there. The point is that nobody's straight. It's like calling someone a pig. Everybody has dreams that have some homo-erotic content. So the problem is to make it safe for "straights" to feel the

to challenge is not sufficiently interesting to maintain for more than ten minutes; it's not enough to sustain a program that will carry love through the deathbed or help out Indo-China. Or even get laid, finally. You have to have something more. You have to relate to people and their problems, too.

I dig baths and orgies. I think orgies should be institutionalized: impersonal meat orgies, with no question of personality or character or relating to people as people.

Anyone who insults Dionysus had better watch out! The leopards come and get them, or else they get turned to vine leaves, in Ezra Pound, [Canto 2] when they practice god-slight, the insult to Dionysus.

YOUNG: The problem with that approach is that as long as your meat is young and attractive, you're doing o.k. But if it doesn't meet the standards...

GINSBERG: When you get to be my age, that's when you really appreciate orgies, in the dark when nobody sees anybody and doesn't give a shit who they're being screwed by. The paranoia in Turkish baths, are you acceptable or not, is another problem. But orgy is one way for people to equalize — for fat people, thin people, handsome people and ugly people, hunchbacks and one-legged people and rachitics all together in the dark.

Peter and I used to get into scenes in San Francisco with girls and boys together, very nice. He liked girls, and that situation would set up a nice vibration when other men would come in. Since Peter and I were already close and making it, that opened the door to anybody. He'd make out with girls and I'd make out with boys. Sometimes I'd make out with girls too. Or we'd make out with each other. We had a two year period in San Francisco where almost every party we went to we took off our clothes and wound up in bed with one or two people. We didn't try to start orgies; we just took off our clothes, wandered around the party, had a good time and didn't make a big scene out of it.

GINSBERG Solomon & Leary

YOUNG: When I saw the dedication of *Howl* and found out about Carl Solomon, I was curious as to your relationship.

GINSBERG: That was never an erotic relationship. I went to a mental hospital in 1948 as the result of a bust involving grass and stolen cars — a typical, college fuck up bust. In the old days when you were from a genteel family they sent you off to a bughouse to get out of going to jail. So I went through that middle-class resolution to my bust. I wound up in the New York State Psychiatric Institute on 168th Street.

The day I walked in with all my bags I met this big fellow [Carl Solomon] just coming up from electric shock. I was waiting to be assigned a room, nervous and strange and wondering what I was doing in this psychiatric institute with all these people supposed to be crazy. And a little worried that I'd lost my grip on reality.

Carl Solomon asked me who I was. He seemed so intelligent and literate that I wanted to see if he had any soul. So I said, "I'm Prince Mishkin" (a saintly character in *The Idiot*.) And he said, "I'm Kirilloff (a hard nihilist in *The Possessed*)." So we had a funny understanding. Then we had a literary time, writing imaginary letters to T.S. Eliot. He introduced me to Genet's work and to Artaud's work. He was very learned in French literature and surrealism. He turned me on to a lot of French literature that I'd missed. Then he took me down to the Village, and I began digging the whole subterranean Village of 1949-50 through his eyes. He's written several little collections of pithy *contes* — stories and aphorisms.

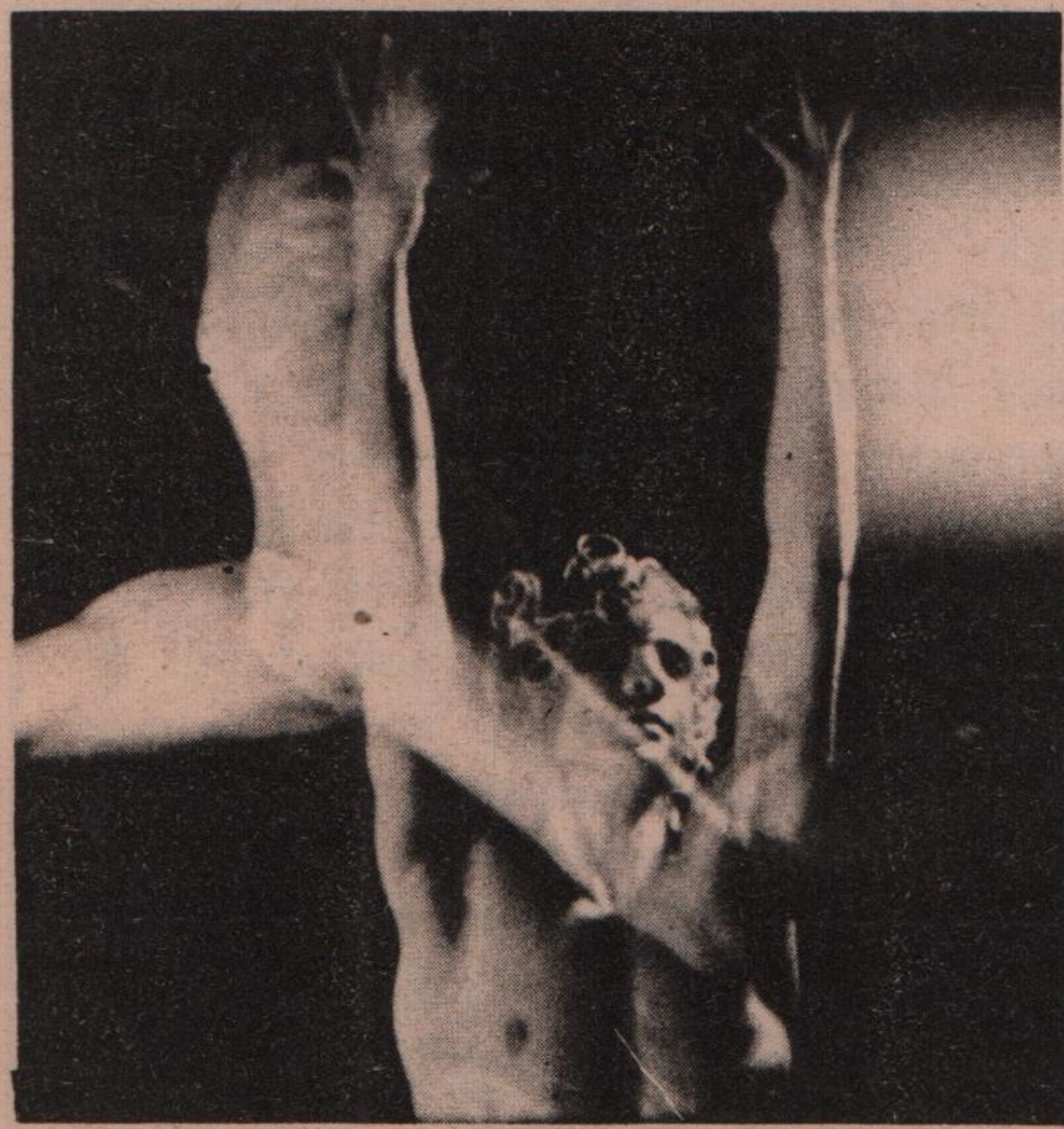
He's still a friend and was here about a month ago. A couple of times a year we get together and spend some time. He was heavily ideologically Marxist at one time and then anti-Marxist. He went through all sorts of chamaleon-like mad changes, searching for a sane way of approaching the fact that everybody in the world is mad, anyway.

YOUNG: I remember hearing that around the time of the original excitement about LSD, Timothy Leary made some statement saying that it cured homosexuality. I recall you said you had a heterosexual experience under the influence of LSD.

GINSBERG: [I had] an emotionally heterosexual fantasy experience in relation to my mother and girls. But everybody has that on LSD. It was a breakthrough of heterosexual feeling/emotion in relation to my mother, and there were so

CINEMA

If a movement of this kind of personal film, cheaply but sensitively made, ever emerged, we could exchange films from various parts of the country, like letters, and begin small, gay film festivals in the community centers and college oriented GLFs. This would open a whole new avenue of communication to gay people, and offer them a way of giving creative form to their experiences. It would be interesting and valuable, for instance, to have a personal film about "coming out" including reactions of relatives, friends,



Dionysius (a film by Charles Boultenhouse)

along with subjective notations of the person involved; First rate examples of this kind of work are to be seen in the films of Peter de Rome, an English filmmaker, working out of New York. David Robinson, in *Sight and Sound*, has the following to say about de Rome's efforts:

"Entirely personal, never until now [The Amsterdam Wet Dream Festival] shown or intended to be shown publicly, it has nothing in common with any ordinary notions of pornography or obscenity, but represents the work of an extremely able, instinctual, private filmmaker who has chosen to work...entirely in sexual themes and images. The best of his films have a strongly romantic and idealistic tendency—*Encounter*, in which a group of strangers meet and make contact entirely through tactile

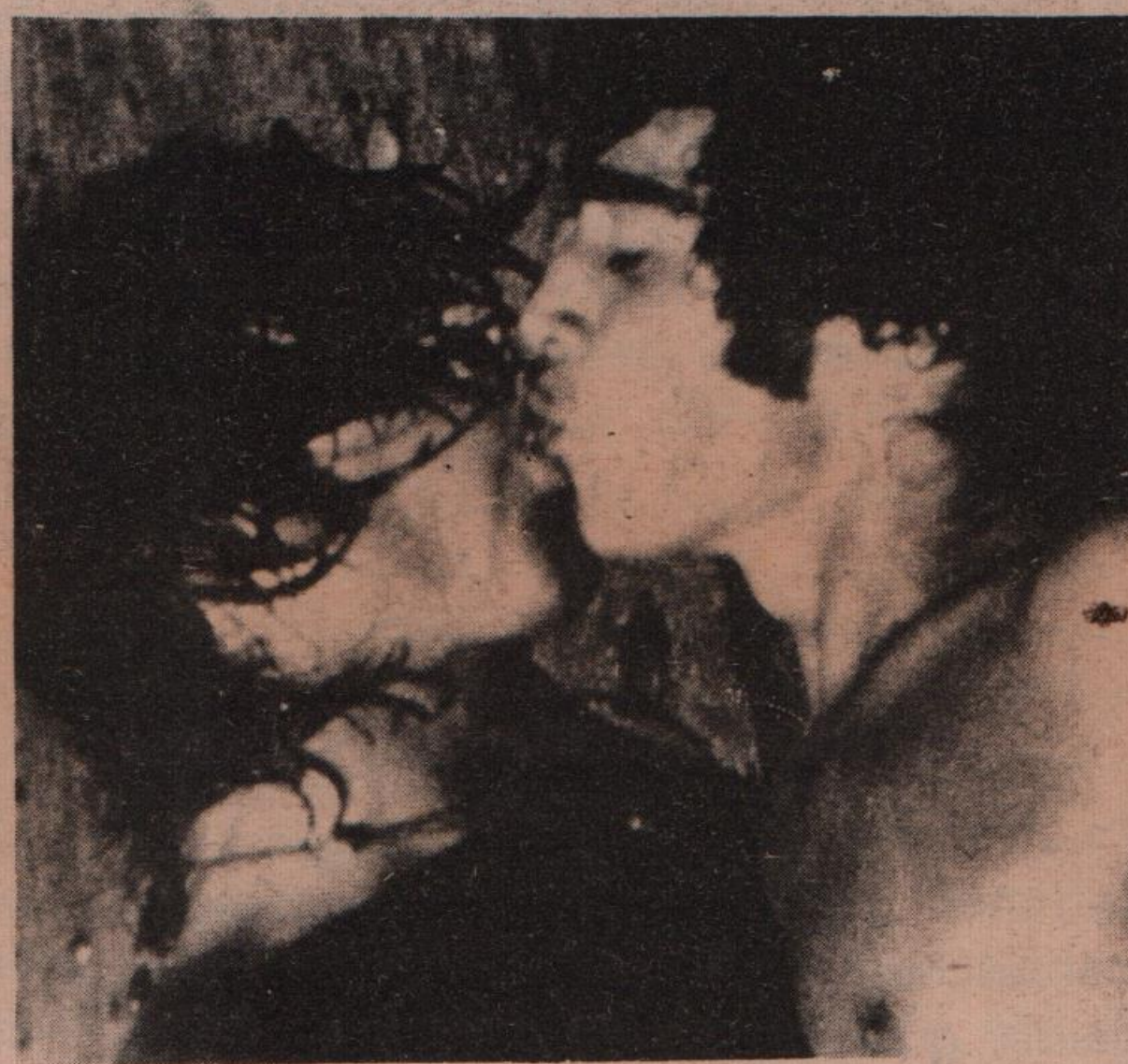
discovery of one another (this was shot as cine-verité); *Exposure*, a rather comstudy of a young man's attraction to his own alter ego; *Fire Island Kids*, an exhilarating, utterly imprudent portrait of portrait of sexual affection (again actuality: the lovers asked that their infatuation be recorded). Technically, the films...have unusual assurance and fluidity; the content is marked by a warmth and delight in the people and their smiles and their pleasure, qualities quite alien to the hard stuff of commercial porn..."

Among the thousands of student filmmakers throughout America there are some gays who are beginning to document the aspirations and achievements of the liberation movement on film. The most imposing of these, to date, is by Ken Robinson at the University of Southern California, entitled *Some of Your Best Friends* (not to be confused with an atrocious campfire feature film called *Some of My Best Friends Are...*). Employing a cinema-verité format, he captured the genesis of the gay liberation movement in New York and Los Angeles, interviewing up-front participants about their feelings and experiences. We see Morris Kight, the Socratic exemplar of gay liberation, speaking outside the Stonewall; Don Kilhefner (now Director of the Gay Community Services Center, L.A.), and a number of other men and women of the community speaking out about their feelings of oppression and liberation. Most memorable, perhaps, is John Platania of Los Angeles, walking through Griffith Park, telling us how he was entrapped by the vice squad and later delivering a speech about his plan to defend himself in court. (He won, by the way.) A gay contingent is seen confronting a psychiatric convention, challenging its oppressive advocacy of aversion therapy, moving into a rousing, spirited debate. A group of people, representing a homophile organization in New York, are shrouded in shadow, to protect their identity as opposed to the liberationists whose bright, shining faces reflect their

pride and integrity.

Beautifully photographed and scored, this 40-minute film is now being marketed for educational purposes by Universal-Kinetic, 2001 S. Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif. 90007. Although it is not currently available for rental (sale price is \$325), preview prints are available. Wide showings in the Los Angeles area have proven the film to be a valuable learning experience for gay as well as straight audiences. As there are no other films in competition with it, *Some of Your Best Friends* is reportedly in great demand by schools, and is bound to effect more consciousness raising than a dozen films like *Sunday*, *Bloody Sunday* or *That Certain Summer*.

This is, of course, only the beginning of what I have called a revolutionary gay cinema. There are, at the same time, some obstacles to this dream. Film is an expensive medium, compared with writing. The cost of Super 8 equipment and quality sound recording are diminishing, however, and more people seem willing to invest in filming equipment. I feel that film-making collectives could be established by gays through service organizations with a pooling of expenses and equipment on more ambitious projects. But money is never any real indication of quality. The makers of *Boys in the Sand* intended to produce a technically perfect, slick, Hollywood pic with quantities of sex thrown in for box-office draw, not a work of any artistic, political message or substance. Even a



Johnny Minotaur (a film by Charles-Henri Ford)

feature length film (without synchronous sound) can be made in Super 8 for under \$1,000, and much less if you are careful and consult handbooks as to means of curtailing expenses.

Another problematical area is: who are you making the film for? Of course, you can make films for your own personal satisfaction. But if you are concerned with film as a tool for cultural revolution and for expressing and communicating with others, you should keep in mind the consciousness level of the recipients of the communication. In his recent series of political films, made on minimal budgets, Jean-Luc Godard explains that he had no intention of showing them to the typical middle-class movie audience, but rather aimed them at the workers, students, the potential revolutionaries. They could take up the challenges presented in his films, which are more like Brechtian satires or essays rather than bourgeois entertainments. In this regard, it might be interesting to do a film or a series of films exploring some of the ideas set down in Wittman's "Gay Manifesto." The important thing, however, is that gay people create these films; otherwise, we will soon end up like the blacks, so long exploited in racist cinema. When the day comes that gays will no longer tolerate being exploited as deviants by the straight thinking Hollywood Establishment, then we can move in and produce our own Movie of the Week.

To my knowledge, there are not more than a handful of films in existence that can truly be labelled "gay radical cinema." My remarks here will hopefully encourage the beginning of such work dealing with political, social and sexual themes, while at the same time showing their relatedness. These small, personal efforts may be influential in leading to more imposing, independent feature films that can take up gay sex and politics in a mature, artistic manner. Meanwhile, I want to encourage any gay film makers to contact me through *Gay Sunshine* about any completed or planned projects, as well as reports of any film-making collectives now functioning.

—Lee Atwell

OPEN LETTER

almost everything. It doesn't help, though, to know that we live in probably the only culture where a person's life is in danger if he says, "I love you."

The part that was even more curious about that affair was the attitude that people took toward me. They talked about me not so much as though I was unusual, abnormal, or crazy for loving or propositioning boys; but as though I was immoral, depraved, or out-of-control. The implication was that I had let myself do what everyone else wanted to do, and that was why I was dangerous. I was, in other words, more to be censured than pitied. Realizing that the censure in such cases tends to be pretty heavy, I decided to head out of town—fast.

About a year after that, those two boys raped a local girl. One of them went to prison. The other one got off, but shortly after killed himself in an automobile accident. I think—I know!—that if my love could have been freely given and accepted, that tragedy would never have happened.

Could you have liberated those boys? Or their fathers and mothers? Would you liberate me from caring about them? I know you will say that the cause of liberation will eventually affect everyone, even those who deny their need for love and turn it into violence. You're probably right; but for me the time has passed. Do you see the irony of asking me to

struggle for liberation? Social causes have little personal meaning for me, now that my personal cause must be accepted as lost.

I am not taking a black, all-is-hopeless attitude. Life has much joy and regrets about how it has been so far. It's just that I have been disappointed too often to continue, especially at my age, to hope that I will find what I have been searching for so long. I know it shouldn't be that way. But it is. I am not denying my own needs and longings. I just see that they lead nowhere. "Getting liberated" isn't going to do anything about that, now is it?

I suppose by now you have made the observation that I seem to be as hung up on youth as the gay culture I was talking about earlier. I suppose you're right. I certainly have noticed it myself: advancing years bringing on, characteristically, an increasing idealization of youth. The patterns are certainly there, from Zeus and Ganymede to Batman and Robin. Isn't it curious how that kind of relationship is idealized in literature, folklore, and even institutions on almost all levels of our society; but yet is absolutely taboo on a personal and private level. It is probably representative of one of our cultures most unspoken, deeply underlying strictures: the denial of childhood and adolescent sexuality. Try unearthing that! Now there is a cause for you!

Well, my friend, what started out as a simple refusal to join your organization has ended up in a rambling and personal diatribe. I want to tell you one more story before finishing this letter.

When I was thirty-six, not so very long ago, I was in love with a sturdy and stoic youth who lived on a farm. He had a father who was as stern as iron, and two wild brothers. When I first met

him he was just turning thirteen. I knew him for three years. On a rapturous day one May we made love in the woods. It was spring and his body was damp from having been swimming. He threw his arms around my neck and clung to me. He was fifteen then, but our love on that day was ageless. That was truly beautiful and perhaps, after all, worth all the rest of it.

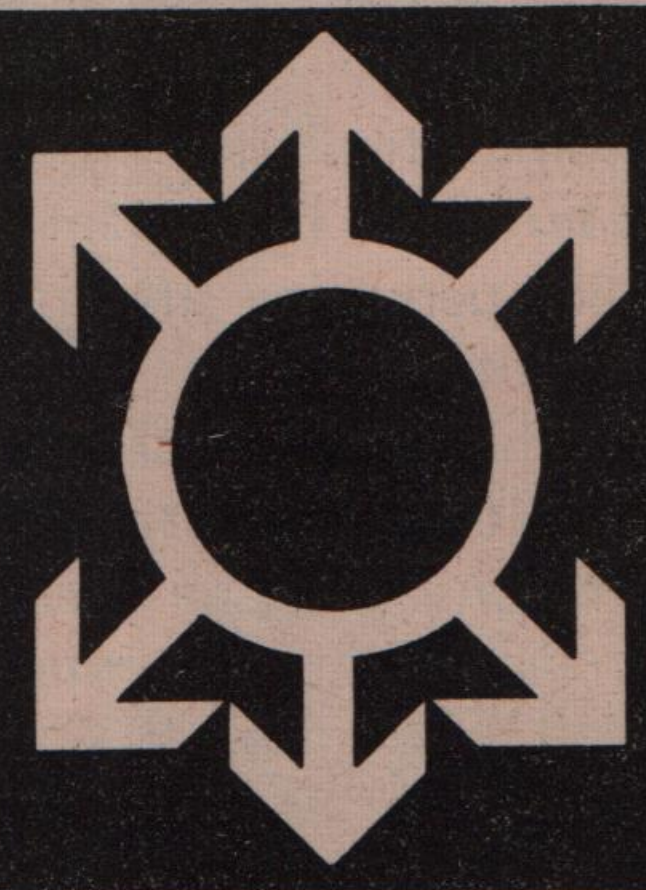
After that day he wouldn't speak to me for a long time; he acted as if he didn't know me. You see, he had let himself go—into that forbidden area. Then one day we finally talked. I asked him what was wrong, what he was trying to avoid. "I can't face it," he said, "I just can't face it." That was it, there was nothing more to be said. Society would support him in his struggle to deny what he felt; but if I continued to try to express the love I needed to give him—well, you know as well as I do what would have

happened. And I don't know what you can do to change that, or his pain, or mine. And that's why I don't feel like "getting involved" in your organization.

So those are some of my stories and some of my reasons for not wanting to be part of "gay liberation." I want to wish you all success and satisfaction in what you are doing. I know how committed you are. I just want now to concentrate my energies on accepting myself as I am, and on aging with dignity and grace.

—Tom Durrie

The preceding letter is fictional but reflects my own experience and feeling. I hope it expresses some of the real feelings of many middle-aged men and women. I also hope it will point out one or two fundamental problems relevant to sexual liberation generally.



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"I got a medal for killing two men and a dishonorable discharge for loving one."
—a Vietnam Vet

FAGGOTS IN UNIFORM

"As long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular"

-Oscar Wilde

The very thought of fags in the uniform of the U.S. Armed Forces makes Uncle Sam quiver and shake with indignation and uprighteous rage. Fags, after all, are spineless, unreliable, untrustworthy, immoral, unstable, sick, perverted, child-molesters. And as such they are a discredit to the integrity, honor and security of the Services and of the Country.

The process of rejection and discrimination against homosexuals in the military begins with the Selective Service System and continues throughout the tour of duty. Draft boards are required to give deferments to identifiable homosexuals; the services are required to discharge them. Sometimes the policies, despite the motivation, can be blessings in disguise for the person involved, but of course not everyone agrees.

The vast majority of gay people do not check the "homosexual tendencies" box prior to induction into the services. At that stage of their lives most of them are still confused about their sexual identity and therefore unwilling to share their doubts with others, least of all an agency of government. Once inducted, it is extremely difficult for a person predisposed toward homosexuality to develop a positive gay identity. This occurs because the military specifically prohibits homosexuals in its midst, thus precluding the possibility of forming gay affinity groups (a right which other minority groups *do* have). The U.S. is the only country in the world which as a matter of policy excludes homosexuals from its armed forces.

Close to 3000 homosexuals are discharged each year under less-than-honorable conditions. This figure does not include the relatively few gays who stand up for their rights and are discharged under honorable conditions, nor does it include the literally thousands of gays who serve their time undetected.

This statistic does not begin to detail the oppression gay people must endure in the service to avoid harassment or imprisonment: the endless "faggot" and "dyke" jokes, the pressure and pain of having to "straight-front" anti gay remarks (that is, to *pretend* to be heterosexual) to avoid the treatment gay people can expect to receive.

Continually hanging over the head of every gay person in the service is the knowledge that even admitting to be homosexual is a crime punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Some homosexual activities even result in severe courts martial. Nevertheless, somewhere between 10 and 20 percent of the people in the military harbor homosexual feelings and thoughts. Some are actually able to defy the military and enjoy their right to loving relationships with members of their own sex. But countless others sublimate their feelings and urges and do their time unhappy and unfulfilled. All of them, regardless of their behavior, live in constant fear of being discovered or reported and having to suffer the harassment, persecution and humiliating punishment for which the military is notorious.

From the moment recruits enter boot camp the military begins its program of breaking down and destroying individual identity and self-expression with the purpose of creating a uniform mass of unthinking servants ready to jump at every command. Every enlisted man must consciously strive to preserve his own chosen life-style and code of values. For homosexuals this is especially true, since most of them are uncertain about their sexuality and receive no reinforcement for their feelings from any other source.

A pecking order emerges which serves to polarize and divide the recruits: instructors, officers, and lifers dump on enlisted men. Enlisted men, in turn, for lack of anyone else, dump on each other: white on black, straight on hip, men on women, everyone on "queers."

The hostility toward queers is promoted and exploited by the military to its own advantage: unaggressive appearance or behavior becomes equated with

fags and sissies, aggressive behavior becomes equated with manliness and a good soldier. One former marine, talking about Navy corpsmen, observed that:

"A lot of them were like prissy. I mean looked on the faggoty-type side. You could tell they were corpsmen. But I mean if that guy was in marine boot camp he'd of got bounced out. Or he'd have so many problems within the system that he fucking wouldn't be able to hack it. He'd go out of his mind. He'd be called a 'faggot'."

To protect themselves from being similarly accused, most servicemen also feel obliged to exhibit hostility toward faggots. Thus, "fag-baiting" (deriding and abusing queers) becomes common practice. This helps to divide the recruits from their real feelings and insures they will cooperate in being remade.

Large numbers of gay people become the unfortunate victims of this anti-gay campaign. Known or suspected gays are frequently beaten, raped or otherwise abused. In at least one case not too long ago (Ft. Lewis, Washington) a recruit was hanged for the heinous crime of faggotry. Who knows how many other untold atrocities against gay people are committed. Military authorities are fearful of 'scandals' which might discredit the services, and therefore they try their best to keep the lid on such crimes.

The less visible gay people—closet cases—also suffer in the military environment—in this case from the psychological pain inflicted by cruel and sometimes ill-considered and thoughtless invective against queers and faggots which comes not only from the lifers but also from their friends and peers. In an atmosphere of intolerance like that, few young servicemen are able to cast off that oppressive mantle and come out. Instead, they must seek that opportunity after they are discharged, if ever.

Moving beyond the ugly reality of the socio-political situation, it is well to analyze just why that situation exists in the first place, why the military is particularly uptight about homosexuality.

Typically, the services identify homosexuals as 'liabilities who cannot be tolerated in a military organization,' that they are 'security risks who discredit themselves and the...service by their...conduct.'

Aside from the outrageous 'moral' pronouncements which any homosexual with a gay consciousness could easily refute, the statement also belies the fact that thousands of gay servicemen and women serve their time honorably with no threat to the 'security' of the service. Consequently, the statement is neither fair nor correct.

Military homophobia stems not from reasons of security but from (a) the anti-homosexual prejudice pervading the culture, (b) the inherent threat to the American male's machismo, and (c) the fear of erosion of military authority and control. The first reason should be fairly evident to anyone gay or straight who has been acculturated in our society. The second and third reasons are closely inter-related and will be lumped together for convenience.

Young men are urged to join up, learn to be a *man* ('the marines need a few good men'), to fight and kill (or to support somebody who does). Since gayness does not conform to the John Wayne syndrome of manliness, it is seen as threatening to military discipline. If you're not a man, if you're not into power relationships, then how can you be expected to

fight, to subdue and kill others? The military seizes upon this sexist philosophy (queer fear) and racism as the major psychological tools to persuade ordinarily decent people to go out and fight and massacre in the name of "liberty and freedom." The logic seems to be that if you don't have the balls to fight, then you're not a man—and besides it doesn't make any difference since they're all gooks and commies anyhow.

Not long ago, Vince Muscari, a gay Vietnam veteran, was interviewed by his college newspaper. He demanded emphatically: "Who is it who tells you being gay is sick and disgusting? The same people who tell you war is cool, the same ones who keep the minority races down, bust kids for smoking dope or demean women."

Vince, who is a member of VVAW, has seen first hand what perversions our straight, male-dominated, sexist society can perpetrate. When he was in-service, he didn't feel he could take a stand against war and fighting for fear of being abused and treated like a faggot. And the pain of conforming to the military ethic is not confined to just gay men, Vince maintained. "I've spoken to many heterosexual brothers who have committed actual acts of atrocity over there to prove their manhood."

In a very revealing article that appeared in *Transaction* under the title "ARVN as Faggots," the author argues that most U.S. Marines considered the South Vietnamese soldiers as homosexuals, a cultural orientation to the contrary notwithstanding. The Marines needed some way to relate the affectionate behavior among Vietnamese men to their own culture. This was possible by defining it as homosexuality, since that was a familiar category inveighed against during training. By categorizing the ARVN in that manner his behavior ceased to be strange. Equally important, the Marines understood what their own behavior ought to be in response:

"I had been in the country a year by this time. We were going back to regiment in Danang. We pulled the truck over and the ARVN engineer stopped us at a roadblock. And they bore you to death. They make you sick. They're trying to be military. So they've got this roadblock up. And they stopped the truck. And the driver is saying, 'Get out of the way, you little slopes.' And they come out and they said, 'We have a wounded veteran.' We said, 'So what?' They said, 'He doesn't have one leg. Could you give him a ride up to the hospital?' So everybody's saying, 'Let him hop.' I was in charge of the detail, so I said, 'Let him on.' I was in the back of the truck. It was a PC three-quarter. So he comes over on his crutches. I said, 'Throw your crutches up.' So he passed up the crutches. And I grabbed him under the arms and I pick him up and I set him on the seat. The little slope grabbed me by the leg. And I had been in the country long enough to know that most of them are queer. They hold hands and stuff. And this sorts of irks most marines and soldiers. And we're told it's a Vietnamese custom. When you're really friendly you should hold hands. So they try to hold a lot of guys' hands. So they end up getting beat bloody. The guy grabbed my leg. So I got mad. I wasn't in a good mood that morning and I wacked him. And my buddies grabbed his crutches. And I said 'Go!' So we took off. We threw his crutches in the paddy one at a time and went about another 150 yards and threw the other crutch and then out he went. He was screaming and crying and begging us. 'Out you go.' We all had a good laugh about that."

[Charles J. Levy, "ARVN as Faggots: Inverted Warfare in Vietnam," *Transaction*, October, 1971]

The brutality of that statement requires little comment. It is a clear manifestation of how the rigid, false concepts of masculinity and femininity prevalent in our culture become distorted beyond belief. And the military has done a masterful job of developing and extending those sex-exploitive, sex-manipulative and sex-role themes to its own advantage. It has created monsters.

Gay people and women pose the most immediate threat to this kind of mentality, although others certainly balk too. The services feel vulnerable when men and women, gay or straight, refuse to conform to roles defined for them by external forces. The military response is to prevent and suppress such activity, for it challenges military authority. But gays and other men and women must be encouraged and supported to pay less attention to competitiveness and hostility and more attention to gentle, caring, equal relationships in order to undermine military discipline and control as it is now applied.

Men and women should be alive and loving, including loving their own sex if they want. When we look at our oppression as servicemen, at our oppression as gays, at the oppression of blacks, of women, of working people, of freaks, we see that we do need an army—an army of lovers, of people willing to work to put things back together in a new and different light. Let's do it!

—Celt Cowdrey Grant

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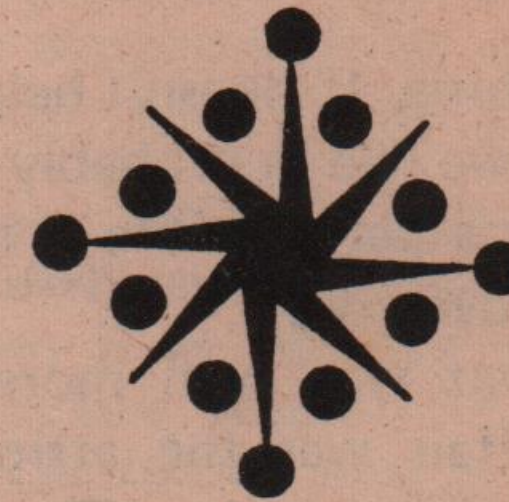
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If you are gay you have something beautiful to say. Submit an article, a poem, a letter, a drawing, a photograph. Add your energy to the community by letting the community in on your creativity. Deadline for the next issue (no. 17) is March 1st. Address all mail to GAY SUNSHINE, P.O. Box 40397, San Francisco, Ca. 94140 Please double space all MSS. We need creative gays to work with us on the paper. Call 824-3184.

SPRING SONG ON THE ATLANTIC

Doubtless with the Boer War in mind,
The self-educated spring
Confronts the coming century.

It may be fought,
Cut short by an outbreak
Of the first all-concrete trees

Whose fortunes derived from
Paintings of a Munich matron.

And now that head is gone,
The images where the mouth had been
May yet conceal her pregnancy.

-David Hirsh

pornucopia

assemblyman neuberg ooh you make me feel like a woman
your big swarthy arms encircling me each time i see you
remember the time we masturbated together in your office
while discussing radio tapes how you felt they needed
sprucing up and you had so much trouble articulating
your ideas because of your protracted climax
remember?

-John Watson

PRELUDE

in the soft evening
she whips me with her hair
little shivers run over my back

waiting for love
I tremble with delight
an open window
admits sharp night air

-Jane Kogan

EXORCISM OF THE STRAIGHT/MAN/DEMON

You are just the kind of man
who has always sucked me
into loving him. The kid kind
unable
to feed me love back.

You stuff me with your need
and say it is my need. You stick
your hardness in my face
and say it is my softness.
It IS my softness; Go away.
I have no more openings
for hardness.

Straight man in me who I never wanted.
Power spoon-fed me that I despise.
to lord over
to judge and not listen
to thrust, not pull
to be hard and never yield.
Look out! I expel you.

And warn you not to shove yourself
into the hands of my mouth.
See how hard your cock is?
That's how strong my jaw is.
That's how fierce my heart is and my love.

I do not hate you
in angry love but in anger.
Not for who you are but how you treat me.
Filling my need to be loved
with your own need to conquer love
Man Man I call your name
in throwing you out.

And reclaim my formlessness
And re-interpret my desires.
And receive the World as made for me, as Gay.

Spirit! I bend to you.
I cross/I bow
I deny the demon and cry for his expulsion!

Oboab Abniob Baiax Ousiri

Spirit

who is alive in me witness
this casting away.
the old threats are leaving me.
I am living.

— Aaron Shurin

telegram

have found
shangri la
finally growing
to know myself
please be
at peace
do not bother
to notify
office
that I will not
return
tell children
father
has gone on
to better things
please forward
my tether ball
to above address
love & kisses
george

-John Watson

To Kelly in Winters

I screwed him! I screwed him! I screwed him! I screwed him!
I screwed him! I screwed him! I screwed him! I screwed him!
I took his gentle asshole and found it loving to my touch.
I caressed it with sweet vaseline and entered.
There was no pain. He wanted more. I stayed inside. I savoured him
Knowing all too well it would not last this way.
I would have done it for days and days and days and days,
No food, no bathroom, no showers. I would have screwed
And screwed and screwed and screwed and screwed and screwed.
I would have found his every inch of skin with my hungry tongue.
I would have ordered time to end to let us grant each other love
Deep into everlasting night.

There were no candles.

He would not settle for a fantasy of love. I screwed him only once.

When he reads this, I shall watch his eyes. He will laugh
At least a moment before the midnight sky begins to flutter down
Unhinged from its deep moorings to blanket us forever
Quite apart.

-John Watson



Arunothai Somskul

TOTAL ASSAULT

for Jim Fouratt a lover and true brother

Between these hips of smoke
this bottle of belly, lost
between the waves of milk
in flesh against my ears my
mouth my, smile I love
where your arm meets your
body I find my nose & chin
and I begin to lose myself
the bamboo knees the tatood
breeze between your palms
when you press them to your
cheeks and almost fall down
over me I have my own bamboo
tree it is growing, replacing
the glass of my ankles, the
curling smoke of my nervous
insides, it is growing straight
into the places where you eat
between our outstretched legs
the glass blowers, the smokey
ring throwers, the bamboo
tow-ers, dont anybody move

-Michael Lally

REVIEWS

John Wieners, *Selected Poems*. New York. Grossman, 1972. \$3.95 paperback.

Reviewed by Charles Shively.

A butterfly inside you died in my dream. It had orange wings.

John Wieners gets down part of the magical quality of his poetry—a quality which has made him virtually the poet laureate of gay liberation, explorer and navigator through the country where we as faggots and cocksuckers have long lived. To us he has been a continuing inspiration since publication of *The Hotel Wentley Poems* in 1958. To the public his *Selected Poems* should come like a discovery, a first book.

John Wieners' work does not repudiate the long heritage of gay ghetto life (as some would—insisting to the man that we're just like him: clean, happy, respectable—unadorned). His work works right out of the bar/park/frustration/life of our/his past/present and through it all; he celebrates and points the way out, through the door of love, gay love, human love. As we see in the celebrated "A Poem for Cocksuckers" (when first published in 1958 the printers straightened the title to read "A Poem for Suckers."):

Well we can go
in the queer bars w/
our long hair reaching
down to the ground and
we may sing our songs
of love like the black mama
on the juke box, after all
what have we got left.

On our right the fairies
giggle in their lacquered
voices & blow
smoke in your eyes let them
it's a nigger's world.
The gifts do not desert us,
fountains do not dry
up there are rivers running,
mountains
swelling for spring to cascade.
It is all here between
powdered legs &
painted eyes of the fairy
friends who do not fail us
in our hour of
despair. Take not
away from me the small fires
I burn in memory of love.
6.20.58

The vein of despair and desperation runs deep through this poetry. "I speak of suicide," the poet sings, "men dropped to tide/sleeping pills that still our aching mind/ lovers murdered because they are too kind." (p. 102) And he can capture the chill stillness of a particular moment at "153 Avenue C":

The night cold
I lie abed,
drugged
the gas heater on.

Ian Young, *Double Exposure*. New York. R.D. 3, Trumansburg, N.Y. \$2

Reviewed by Robert Peters

Ian Young's poems are sensitive, direct celebrations of male love. The title poem is representative; here is the second stanza, direct, lean, straightforward. The occasion is a university party:

I was watching Jimmy—
his hands
holding a towel
and a book of Prevert—
his bare legs
and the curve of his prick
under the cut-down jeans.
The people all looked at us
their mouths open,
and began to fade away
just as our bed drifted out the window.

Young has a marvellous way of suddenly turning his poems inward; that is, they are always more than simple verse

I would it were
Off

To snuff out my life.

Besides despair, John Wieners also perfects that other typically gay vein—camp & ornament—in both his word work and content. Perfume ("can be bought at Patou/ for 12.50 1/8 of an ounce." p.87), "the furs and homburgs," "diamonds," "gowns," and all manner of glamorous accoutrement runs through the poems. And sometimes the poem itself becomes personified camp ("Acceptance"):

Should I wear a shadowed eye,
grown moustaches
delineate my chin

accept spit as offering
attach a silver earring
grease my hair

give orders to legions
of lovers to maintain manhood
scimitars away as souvenirs?

Sooush, beloved! here is my tongue

Beyond despair and ornament there is always love where the poet/soul/self relaxes entirely offering him/her-self onto the floating flux of life and the universe. "In love,"

A simple song
to long for home and him
lounging there under the moon.
What is he? Who is my heart
he should mean this much to me?

Is it sex, or grass stains on my shirt?

night, or sight of flesh
lying on its side in the Pine Grove?
(p.43)

Or the poem "Act 2": "I took love home with me/ we fixed in the night to/ sink into a stinging flash./...I blew him like a symphony." This is not the love of *Love Story* or of sweet-hearts at the prom—those fake facades of orange juice and licorice deodorants we are told to exist; these are the actual lives of us. We can recognize ourselves, our loves and lovers. Long denied, hidden, disguised, despised, hated and fled—our love has at last found a worthy champion, spoke, voice, poet and celebrant.

But John Wieners is more than a ghetto poet; in concentrating so intensely on our ghetto life and love he has created an enduring permanence—a poetry which (like our sexuality) threatens the shallow grave lives of straight neighbors, those on the other side of the fence. We have in John Wieners' poetry revealed magic, deep truths beyond their surface (but found through that surface); they are more than the sperm, jewel boxes, perfume, despair and gay love; they are the lanterns and magic of poetry itself. Lighting paths through and beyond the straight life.

"There is no message more shapely than this/ Who am I but a mouthpiece." The mouth, orifice, sexual organ become oracle. Out of this, "The mind, entirely composed of images, creates a poem." These come out of the mouth, where the love juices of lovers' mouths, vaginas, penises enter; out of these mouths come "associations, mental images, that do not ever exist. The mind composes itself entirely of images, that completely study the mind's way, even tho words written out picture only the mind's flashes."

"It's best not to think too much."
"Best to get away from one's self."

All the butch men mired in their egos and selves, searching for women or lovers to build up their egos, support them, wash their dishes, pick up their dirty underwear, cook their eggs, and darn their socks. These men think all the time. Cogitate, direct great enterprises, command, will. They are psychiatrists, generals, priests, doctors, deans, teachers, admirals, daddies, and other imperialists. Theirs is the antithesis of true poetry.

Out of such sluff poems will never come, only pretensions; poems can come only from the bottomless sea of human juice that most men keep trying to scrub away and deny. While we're all in there slurping it up—not to be manipulated, used, exploited, but just to talk out of the joy/pain, loving that is us. It's not easy or trite or simple or painless or harmless. Nor is it inevitable. As John writes sometimes

I despair of love
ever throwing up
on these shores

enough of a raft for me
to ride upon
out to sea.

But whether achieved or not, our poetry/ our lives/ our existence will not be created, structured, imposed by straightness. "The mind entirely composed of images creates a form, to be flowed through by many particles, entirely composed and transmitted this by many ways, to their life." ("The Magic of This Summer June 23, 1963," 70-75.)

So forget all you've ever known about poetry and go swimming with John Wieners in the broth/brew of images articulated in new forms. You may not "make it," as they say, but for sure, you won't ever return straight.

[Ed. Note: This book will be available shortly through the Gay Liberation Book Service.]

THE FLAME

Oh, fathers we are
in one another
of self-love and procreation
despising the fraternal and mock-
ing the filial, caring of sounds;

one music in the night's fire
engines, going off system-
atically each day.

How can I bring you near me?
Through poetry, paternity or the eternal.
I have tried all three things
Still you stay away.

It may be in despair I shall win
your hands, of all others. So try coc-
aine, come down in the rain, it's all
like one song, Luman you hear at the begin-
ning, knowing it shall wind
within itself at the end.

So I try, friend, these various ruses,
invoke the muses, to land your sleeping
frame next to mine in bed.

[previously unpublished] John Wieners



John Wieners (1970)

reports of encounters with beautiful males. "The Skull," with its obvious overtones of death and its cryptic, humorous ending, is representative:

When the boy undressed,
I saw on his left shoulder
a blue tattoo—
two daggers, crossed
under a skull.
'That's pretty phony,'
he said, and laughed,
uncertain.
Later, I half expected it
to peel off
in my mouth.

One final example, a "Sugar-Candy Bird," handles its central image well. As in most of the poems in the book pain in the love relationship is minimal. There are moments of threat and disjunction, but primarily these are poems of celebration and quiet fulfillment. "A Sugar-Candy Bird" is one of the more starkly physical poems:

In bed
with my friend's young brother,
a boy of sixteen:
his penis
swelled
so big and thick
I thought it would

split

like a ripe pod,
or those glazed
and gaudy candy-birds
from Mexico—

break

suddenly open,
and spill
white sugar dust
over us both.

The Lemon by Mohammed Mrabet (translated from the Moghrebi and edited by Paul Bowles). McGraw Hill, N.Y. 1972, \$5.95

At the age of 12, Abdeslam, a bright Moroccan boy, runs away from home in the Rif Mountains to discover the

marvels of that corrupt and enticing international seaport, Tangier. He earns his nickname, The Lemon, by defending himself against an older man's advances with a lemon into which he has embedded two razor blades.

Abdeslam's efforts to support himself honestly, amid threats and temptations, are rendered with stark realism. The boy takes up with a longshoreman and becomes involved with his friends, mostly prostitutes.

The book's ambiguous theme is the necessity, in a certain world, to protect one's pride. It is powerfully developed, in a harmonious language enriched by humor and poetry.

An earlier collaboration between Tamamani tribesman Mrabet and Bowles, *Love With a Few Hairs*, met with considerable critical acclaim. Bowles is the author of four novels and various other works, including three other translations from the Moghrebi. He lives in Morocco.

HISTORY OF THE WORD "GAY"

The use of the word "gay" has not been limited to its primary meanings of "happy" and "bright" for several hundred years. The *Oxford English Dictionary* traces back to the sixteenth century, an association with "social pleasures and dissipations...loose or immoral life." By the nineteenth century in England, while it retained this general association with dissoluteness, "gay" had acquired a specific slang usage for "living by prostitution." As there emerged from this "gay world," in the late nineteenth century, a specifically homosexual subculture (or, more accurately then as now, the visible commercial appurtenances of one), the euphemistic "gay" seems to have shifted where it was most needed. In any case, Americans have been going to "gay bars," and, by inference or back-formation, deciding they were themselves "gay," for several generations now.

By the fifties the usage was well established, and had, in fact, a certain appropriateness, because the irony implicit in such a glaring euphemism seemed to fit the laughing-to-keep-from-crying lifestyle that too many homosexual people were forced to adopt in a hostile society. Mostly for this reason the early homosexual liberation organizations wanted no part of "gay," and instead found new euphemisms or coined words like "homophile."

Then, in the late sixties, there was advanced the radical concept that being gay *can* be a positive thing—an alternative form of love in a world that knows too little love. Gay people who rejected both the myths and the stereotyped behavior patterns of the past, and the notion that they should feel guilt or shame simply for being different, defiantly reclaimed "gay" (by then a flagrant synonym, rather than euphem-

ism, for "homosexual"). Gays with a positive sense of identity had no more need for euphemisms than women or blacks have felt for such inoffensive (and therefore demeaning) substitute words as "ladies" and "negroes." As for "homosexual," many gays who continued using the adjective rejected the noun usage, since to call a person "a homosexual" is to define him merely in terms of one characteristic, his sexuality—which makes about as much sense as calling him "a left-handed" or "a near sighted."

The story isn't finished. Today, increasingly, the word "gay" implies a consciousness—of our own wholeness and worth as human beings, and our responsibility to educate people and confront prejudice wherever it exists, either in institutions or individuals. Consciousness is inimical to ignorance, prejudice, and hypocrisy—and to the extent that gay consciousness is shared and is spreading, the notion of a revolutionary conspiracy is not entirely without substance.

But it is this consciousness that is spreading today, among gay people, and not homosexuality itself. The recruits we seek are those gays who still feel they must lead lives of deception, pretending always to be something they are not, denying their sexuality to the world, perhaps even to themselves. No one should have to live like that. And since neither our activities, nor any amount of press coverage they may receive, can possibly have a determining influence on anyone's sexual orientation—it just doesn't work that way—there is no reason the press should not report accurately what is happening.

—Jim Hood

[Ed. Note: The word "faggot" has replaced "gay" in certain radical circles. It is used by the Boston newspaper, Fag Rag, and by effeminists in New York and elsewhere.]

Marxist analysis needs to be extended to include an analysis of the concepts of feminism and gay liberation. "The Gay Soul of Socialism" and "Gay Liberation Perspectives" (*Gay Sunshine* No. 15) are certainly steps in that direction.

I feel that Craig Hanson is right in stating, "Should we ask: Is there something inherently anti gay in Marxism?" (*Gay Sunshine* No. 13). From the treatment gay people in socialist countries receive, one begins to wonder why socialist theory when put into practice continually and consistently fails to deal with sexism.

A partial answer is perhaps due to distorted interpretations of Marxist theory in particular stalinism. But the lack of a valid Marxist analysis of sexism accounts for the constant appearance of anti gay trends in country after country within the socialist block of nations.

I agree that we should "listen to women" with regards to this matter. In terms of the struggle against sexist ideology, women are in the vanguard. If one listens, one usually hears our sisters saying that sexism predated capitalism and that sexism postdates capitalism. They say that socialist analysis, as it now exists, and its subsequent application does not guarantee an end to a sexist society. One might even argue that socialism doesn't even create the institutions which are needed to combat sexist ideology. If we listen to women, I believe we continually come across the statement that Marxian analysis is not a feminist analysis, and therefore needs to be feminized and also needs to be extended to include the concepts of feminism and gay liberation.

—Joel Starkey
Delray Beach, Florida.

PAIDERASTY

Dear Gay Sunshine:

Some gays believe paiderasty—the love of teenage boys by mature men—is of no important concern to gay liberation. How wrong they are! The major concern in our culture since the Renaissance has been the "making of men"—the "remasculinization" of teenaged boys who have been subjected to tedious years of clerical training.

Gay Lib Book Service

Box 40397, San Francisco, Cal. 94140

GAY LIBERATION BOOKS

Homosexual Oppression and Liberation by Dennis Altman. \$6.95 Best book to date on the crystallization of consciousness which is gay liberation.

The Gay Liberation Movement by Jack Onge. \$1.95 paper. A history of gay lib in N.Y., Chicago, S.F., L.A.

Lesbian/Woman by Del Martin & Phyllis Lyon. \$7.95 Personal account by two founders of gay women's movement.

Dancing the Gay Lib Blues by Arthur Bell \$5.95 Personal account of author's involvement in New York's Gay Activists Alliance

Homosexual Liberation. A Personal View by John Murphy. \$5.95

Matisse Picasso & Gertrude Stein (GMP) by Gertrude Stein. Includes her "A Long Gay Book." Stein on homosexuality in her cubist style. Paper \$3.45 (1st U.S. ed)

GAY LIBERATION PACKETS

Gay Lib Packet No. 1. Collection of individual articles, papers. \$1.50

Gay Sunshine Packet. Ten back issues of the gay lib paper of the same name. \$5 Also available separately: Issues 6-15, 50c each. Issues No. 2-5, \$1 each.

GAY LIBERATION POSTER \$2

SUBSCRIPTION

Subscription to *Gay Sunshine*, gay lib paper with national circulation. \$5/12 issues (or \$9/24 issues). \$7 overseas. Sample copy 50c. Supporting sub.: \$10

dious years of clerical training.

Effeminacy has been tabooed primarily as a fall-out of this more explosive concern—how to "refine" boys educationally without "castrating" them—cutting off their spontaneity and aggression. The pseudo-Christian war machine we live in is a fertility cult with taboos against men loving their fellow men. Consequently, it has automatically rejected paiderasty as a solution to this educational dilemma—developing literate boys who become aggressive men.

Paiderasty is, of course, the Greek solution to this educational problem. Through paiderastic institutions such as the *gymnasium* (naked exercise) and philosophers (wisdom lovers), it subordinated boys to men sexually and socially, thus training the boy as a "girl-who-will-grow-out-of-it" whose pleasant duty it would be, later, to love a boy of his own.

The cornerstone of gay persecution in our culture is the anti paiderastic fear that a man making love to teenage boys will make the boys "effeminate." That the testimony of ancient history and modern science contradicts this makes no impact on those conditioned by the prevalent fertility cult.

The age of sexual consent must be abolished.

Until paiderasty becomes a wide spread institution in our society, the fear of it will continue to be the cornerstone of the prison which imprisons every gay in this culture—whatever "civil rights" adult homosexuals are lent by the basically hostile, fertility worshipping, war making heterosexual majority.

—Jim Eggeling
San Antonio, Texas.

S & M

Dear Gay Sunshine:

The unusually challenging tenor of *Gay Sunshine* hit bottom in Issue No. 14's article on S & M. I was eager to read about the topic but I feel Craig Hanson was particularly oppressive in the conclusion of his article.

In the first place, an author has a responsibility to write about topics on which he/she is well informed. While I found much information and see his research (clearly a conscientious writer), one signal was clearly dangerous: there is little written to research. The fatal signal:

POETRY

Manroot No. 6-7 (Special double issue \$2.75 paper. S.F. poetry mag. Spicer, Eluard, Codrescu etc.

Sebastian Quill No. 3 paper \$2 'S.F. poetry mag with much gay work. Highly recommended.

Letters to Women by Alta \$1 paper. Poems to women with drawings.

Looking at Women Poems by Fran Winant. 60c.

Personae Non Gratae by Paul Mariah. \$1 Prison poems.

Love Poems to an Army Deserter in Jail (Broadside) by Paul Mariah 40c.

Sappho '71 by Harriette Frances. \$2.50 paper. A selection of gay poems and drawings.

Remember our Fire Magazine of women's consciousness poetry. \$1 paper.

Child of Myself. Poems by Pat Parker \$1 paper.

Playboy by John Wieners (long poem of a journey to Miami to demonstrate at the Democratic Convention, July, 1972). \$1 paper.

Cash with order please. California residents add 5% sales tax. Postage included. Allow 2-3 weeks. Make check or money order payable to Gay Sunshine.

Hanson is apparently not a sado-masochist. With either resource-abundant reading or personal experience—one might justify writing such an article. Neither here.

The problem is reminiscent of how gays got fucked over again and again until only very recently; others were writing about us, not we ourselves. The corollary the commentary was from the outside of the experience, not from within.

Only a few years ago the public looked upon gayness as a warped heterosexuality. Even today only a few see homosexuality as an alternative as opposed to an inferior and failed expression of some ideal (hetero-) sexual response. Often even homosexuals adopt this apologetic line. In his conclusion Hanson is playing that same game, hoping fervently and almost "tolerantly" that sexual liberation will free these victims of their sexual hangup.

Another point reminding us of the old-time het line about gays is that Hanson confuses two very different things: a behavior which is undesirable because of its compulsive nature and a behavior which is undesirable because of its elemental nature. This blur has flawed many heterosexual analyses of homosexuality. Again I do not see what is wrong with sado-masochism except in its compulsively executed (rare?) instances.

My last point of distaste came from Hanson's apparent "My S & M is okay because we all have a tiny bit in us, but your S & M is bad because you are S & M." It is reminiscent of a straight liberal saying, "Sure, we all have some homosexuality, but, my God, you're a queer."

Jack Latham
Gay Lib Arizona Desert
Tucson, Ariz.

OPPRESSION SICKNESS

Dear Gay Sunshine:

I got a letter today from a friend in Atlanta telling me in as gentle a way as possible that two people I'd met there, British and Klaus, had been found naked in bed, murdered. Klaus was a good guy; British was beautiful—beautiful and black, which sometimes isn't cool in the bar world of the blonde, blue-eyed Nordic god. But now they're dead. My numbness has turned to anger. I think about the "straight" men who force "their" women into weak, passive roles and fear that the



GAYS AND SOCIALISM

Dear Gay Sunshine:

I too find myself in agreement with Allen Young's article, "Cuba Si?" (*Gay Sunshine* No. 13) and parts of his letter (in No. 15). I regret that many of Allen Young's arguments were basically humanitarian. However, I disagree that what is needed is a political analysis of the Cuban regime's failure to institute a thorough going sexual revolution. The problem (of which the situation in Cuba is a symptom) is much more basic and such a "political analysis" would be just a white wash of the problem.

The treatment of gay men and women in socialist countries such as Cuba and the Soviet Union makes one heart-sick. I believe the fact that this type of anti gay repression and sexual oppression continually persists in socialist countries can probably be traced to the fact that Marxist economic theory does not sufficiently consider the role of the socio-economic oppression of women in response to earlier feminist movements. But this analysis was only a response and certainly does not do justice to feminist and gay liberation ideology. Nor did it indicate possible socialist solutions to satisfying the basic needs of the people involved within and defined by both these movements. A well documented theoretical analysis of sexism from a Marxist point of view is required. An analysis which lends itself to practical application and which includes constructive criticism of the treatment of gay minorities by current socialist societies is needed. In other words,

feelings they have for other men will turn them into human beings tortured by those same roles and games. They shut their eyes to reality and try to project those roles, guilt and fears onto gays so that they can hate other people instead of themselves. Some of us believe them when they say we're sick. But it's this capitalist society which is sick, and I laugh and cry to see the shallow onesided, perverted role playing they call love. Malcolm X spoke of the difference between "house niggers" and "field niggers." All I know is that we've been pickin' cotton since daybreak.

—Steve Cass
Chicago

GAYS IN SOUTH AFRICA

There are basically two laws affecting gays in the Union of South Africa: 1. an anti-sodomy law; 2. an "improper behavior law. This second law makes illegal any act by men in the presence of a third party which might arouse homosexual feelings in other men. The "third party" is very loosely defined (e.g. could be the next door apartment) and makes gay parties, clubs illegal. Gay Liberation is probably illegal under these laws. Women are not included in this particular legislation. Under present policy the police overlook gay parties, clubs and bars and only rarely harass gays while the latter are cruising or kissing/fucking in cars on the beach. There does not seem to be any entrapment.

In 1968 the Government tried to tighten up the homosexuality legislation. There was widespread harassment and entrapment by the police. Clubs and parties were raided and many gays were arrested. This caused a great deal of protest from gays and liberal sections of the parliamentary opposition and the general public, and caused the Government to drop the proposed legislation.

These events and the policy of apartheid influence gay thinking in several ways. Gays are in a privileged position in society due to apartheid legislation which discriminates in their favor as whites. Gays are generally ignored by the police and usually given light sentences by the courts. As a result of these factors gays are unwilling to challenge the status quo and possibly provoke police response. Thus, while most white gays would like to see a change in the homosexuality laws, they are generally content with the system as it exists.

In each of the three major cities of South Africa (Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg) there is an organized gay community with at least two bars which are gay to varying degrees. The clubs are open to both men and women and may not sell liquor. Their gay managers have working relationships with the police to ensure a trouble free existence. Thus teenagers under sixteen are denied entry, drugs are strictly prohibited. I know of no similar organization in the black gay community.

In South Africa homosexuals are subjected to much the same discrimination with regard to jobs, housing etc. as in

other countries. In South Africa, though, there are no civil rights organizations to whom one can appeal in cases of discrimination. Gays in South Africa can hope for acceptance by a small minority of radical students, tolerance by most liberals (students and others) and hostility from the majority of whites.

Because the majority of whites are Calvinists, they are intolerant of homosexuality, and in fact, any deviation from the norm. All South African whites, whatever their religious beliefs, tend towards intolerance and conservatism. This means that socially gays have a rough time from society. And, as members of a conservative and intolerant society, gays themselves are intolerant and conservative—another difficulty for Gay Liberation.

In the white gay community there are the usual South African racial attitudes. There is little inter-racial contact. Even gays who desire this contact are hampered by the intense black/white polarization. It is difficult for "straights" to conduct any sort of meaningful relationships across the color line, let alone gays.

In April, 1972 I and a gay brother on the Durban campus of the University of Natal each wrote an article for the student newspaper urging the formation of a gay lib group. We received limited support from a few non-students. There was no response from any brothers or sisters on the campus. Later in April, the Arts Faculty Council organized a symposium on Gay Liberation at which my colleague spoke, very badly. The symposium which took place far too early for our new and very weak movement received rather sensational publicity in the local press, and in fact, served mainly to scare away any timid support.

Two weeks later the press announced that the police were "investigating" Gay Lib, after a Government senator had referred to it in Parliament. My friend, who is Rhodesian and feared for his visa, pulled out of the movement. In August, I contacted the people who had shown interest three months earlier. A small meeting, six men in all, was organized. At this meeting there was an immediate split between those who wanted a respectable "non political" reform type organization (to concern itself solely with homosexual law reform with a responsible middle class image) and those who advocated a gay liberation approach. Neither camp could suggest any concrete program to be implemented. There are a number of difficulties:

For reform in the limited sense, there is need for a group of people prepared to stand up publicly and campaign, print literature etc. Nobody will do this in South Africa. If they were to do so, the police would certainly step in and put a stop to it. Liberationists should start by forming some sort of discussion group to work out policy and ideology and should make themselves known in the sheltered atmosphere of the campus through leaflets and talks. However, at present we are too few (two in number!) and too deprived of information to be able to decide on any policy. We have been trying to read as much as possible—books such as Altman's *Homosexual Oppression and Liberation* and a few overseas gay papers, such as *Gay Sunshine*. We will hopefully be able to do more on the campus next year. As far as I know there is no other gay movement existing elsewhere in South Africa.

—Richard Wallace-Terry
Natal, South Africa



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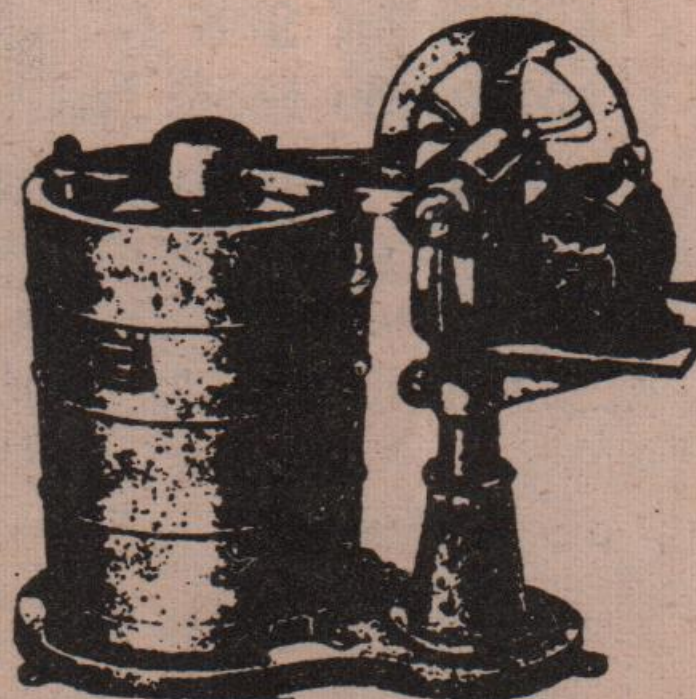
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1738 POLK

(between Clay & Washington)

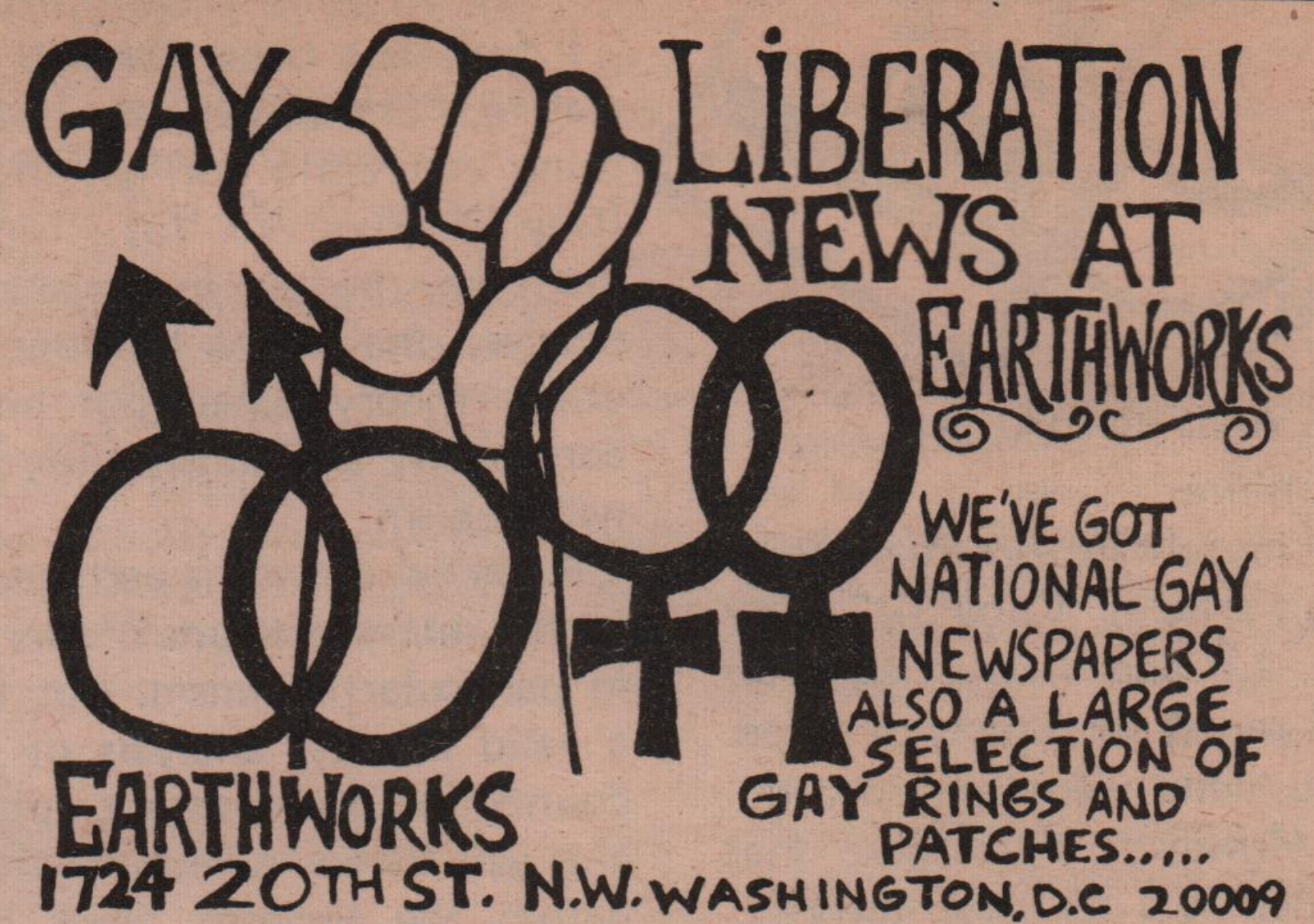
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