



*Divers to Dive:
A Pandemic
Dream
Journal*

#7

*David Keenan
Eleni Avraam*





Sunday 10/5/20

This just in from my favourite Mexican poet:

David

Where you been?

Tijuana

We must go

Haunting.

Monday 11/5/20

I'm thinking of lonely musicians. I remember taking the legendary free jazz avant garde vocalist Patty Waters out for a kebab in Stirling, she had never had one before. We ate it on a bench and she said, what an exquisite combination of flavours! Patty was lonely, and she would often call me from her home in Hawaii and reverse the charges. After her show, which I presented as part of a festival I curated, she told me I had to sign a paper that would mean I would never allow anyone to hear a recording of it.

But the loneliest musician I ever met was Conrad Schnitzler. I interviewed the German musician for *The Wire* and he had a player-piano in his living room. He met me at the station and his wife returned from her job as a teacher to cook us the worst vegetarian meal, scratch that, the worst food, I have ever eaten, then left to go back to work. Schnitzler had a studio in his basement that was like a space capsule where he would spend all day making non-musical electronic sounds. He was so lonely. He would create scrolls for the player-piano by randomly punching holes in sheets of thick paper. Then he would sit

around drunk listening to them. He begged me to stay for just one more drink, as this discordant music circled of its own accord. But I lied and said I had another appointment in town and made my escape. That kind of lonely is like a drowning man dragging you down with him.

See Appendix B for a Patty Waters discography w/commentary.

Tuesday 12/5/20

“I have never profited from being away from men I have truly loved, for more than a few days,” writes M.F.K. Fisher, the loneliest of food writers, who John Updike called “Poet of the appetites”. “I think that when two people are able to weave that kind of invisible thread of understanding and sympathy between each other, that delicate web, they should not risk tearing it. It is too rare, and it lasts too short a time at best...”

I was at my loneliest when I lived in London, especially after I took voluntary redundancy from XFM, where I worked as a producer. I remember crying from loneliness in St Patrick’s Church, in Soho Square, I was also going through one of my periodic religious manias, but it was so rare for me to cry, back then, I’m told that when I was born I didn’t cry for the first six months of my life, but now I’m old I cry all the time, I expect I will cry constantly for the last six months of my life in return, but normally it’s poetry, these days, memories, and music, that set me off, so I’m crying a lot in this journal, as you can imagine, but back then it was so rare that I remember it like a trauma. I was working at the PRS, just inputting data, mindless, listening to music with my headphones on while I did it, everyone was much younger than me, I was so unhappy, and that’s when I made the decision to move back to Glasgow. And I’ve never been lonely since.

And I have come to love what was unthinkable to the me that I was back then. Silence.

Robert Kelly, in *An Alchemical Journal*, writes: “It is only those who are in some way in love with death to whom the Queen’s agents come. Silence as instruction. Two kinds of Silence. Negative: silence as abstention from utterance [how to teach poetry]. Positive: silence as a shape to ram down their throats. In their ears. Their bodies. Eyes. Shaped silence, against time. Harpocrates is the Aion too. Silence of Hokhma. Silence of Binah. Michael Angelo’s grieving women. Tomb of Giuliano de’ Medici, my initiation into the sphere of Binah, into the urgency of poetry. Trey of Spades. Pique-Dame. Prick this woman. Grief. Something held to the lips. Aion. Eis aiona. No time. Silence is the instruction.”

Wednesday 13/5/20

I have been re-reading my favourite books about cities this week. Franz Hessel’s wonderful portrait of 1929 Berlin, *Walking In Berlin: A Flaneur In The Capital*, Jean-Paul Clébert’s hypnotic *Paris Vagabond* (much praised by my main man Blaise Cendrars), *The Book of Airdrie*, Luc Sante’s *The Other Paris*, Jan Morris’s *Trieste and the Meaning of Nowhere*, Olivia Lang’s *The Lonely City*... I’m a city flaneur all the way, I rarely visit galleries or museums or go shopping in cities. I’ve always loved the Situationist idea of the *dérive*. I think walking is magical. I think the shapes we make can be seen from other vantages.

In *Paris Vagabond* Jean-Paul Clébert describes the best way to steal fish at a market. “None of this proceeds without its perils, without shouting matches or the exchange of blows, but everyone has to eat and it is the work of an instant to escape into the throng, or even from the

grip of a policeman, leaving him holding the corpus delicti, which will never be returned to its true owner.”

Thursday 14/5/20

The half-Scottish/half-Swiss author Blaise Cendrars called himself The Astonished Man. He realised who he was during a terrible battle in World War One, when a comrade in front of him was literally blown to smithereens by a shell, appearing to rise into the air and disappear. Cendrars' fighter-pilot son Rémy would be killed in the Second World War and Blaise would write a book, *Sky: A Memoir*, that recounted all of the stories of the miraculous flights of saints, but most especially, saints who flew backwards. Cendrars claimed that he composed poems for himself all the time, and so there was no need for him to write them down. He claimed to have countless unreleased novels in bank vaults all across South America. He claimed he had read every book. He was a racing car driver with one arm, after having his right arm blown off in the First World War.

“Such is the abyss,” he writes, in *Sky*, “the abyss of the sky... this stain, this damp mildew... A living sponge. The sky is a blackboard. Not a single algebraic formula, written in frost-rimed chalk, not star dust in suspension, not the faintest sparkle remains on its surface. All is effaced. I have seen this sponge, seen it with my own two eyes. It is an enigma.”

Colette said it was “the greatest injustice” that “certain creatures contain wings”.

I should like to call myself Astonished, too, at the end of my life.

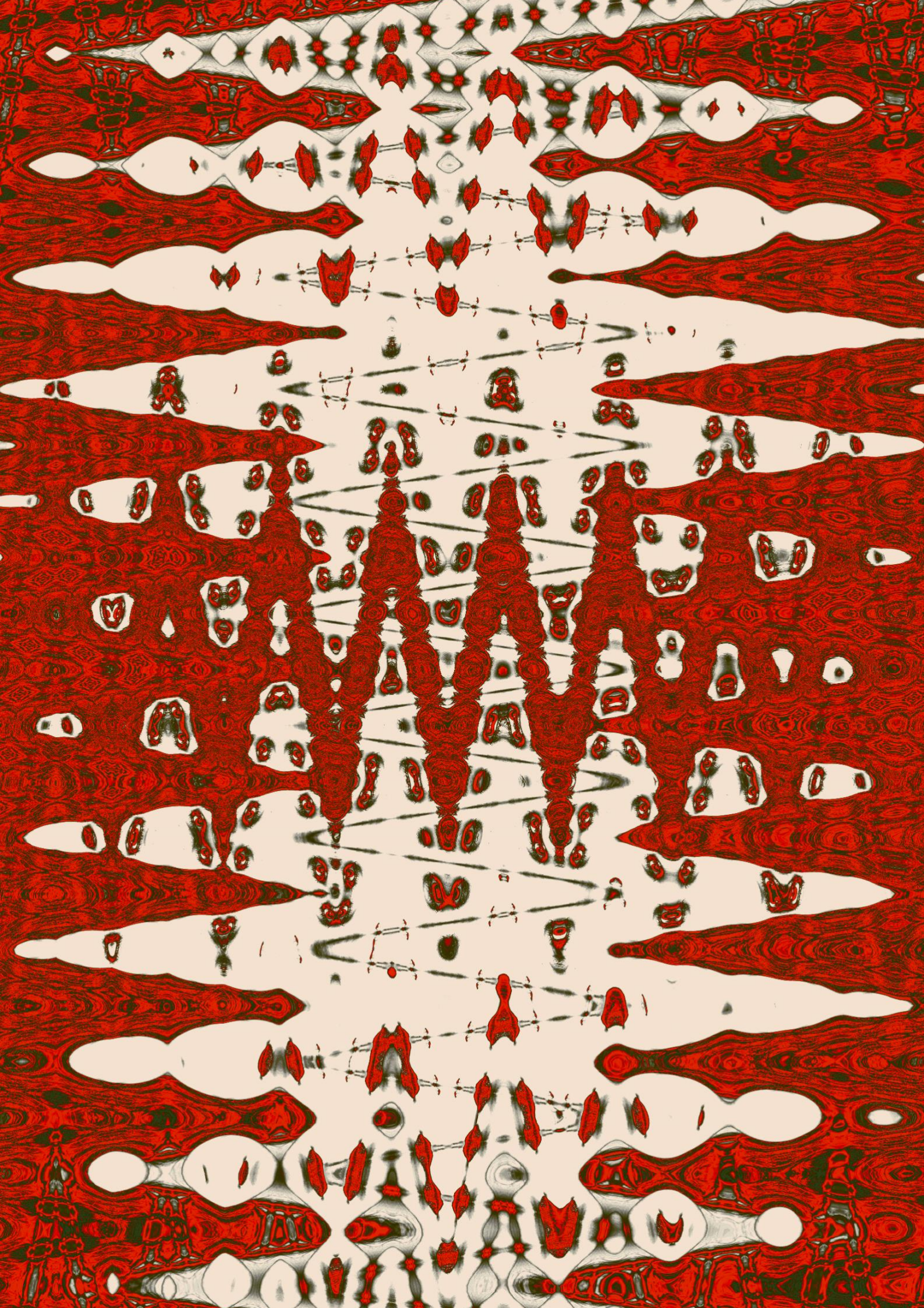
Friday 15/5/20

Lonely. I'm thinking of when my wife and I were holidaying in France over Christmas and on Christmas day we went to a beautiful nature reserve, I had just bought her a new camera, and when we entered one of the hides there was a young man in there set up with a battery of cameras and binoculars, on his own, painting all of the birds out there on the lake, in watercolours, in the late afternoon light. I often think of that guy, and am so glad of him.

Saturday 16/5/20

About to start on my annual re-reading of *The Maximus Poems* by Charles Olson, only this time I just got a copy of George Butterick's *A Guide To The Maximus Poems Of Charles Olson*, so will be reading them together for the first time. I used to correspond with another fascinating Olson disciple, the late Ralph Maud, who died in 2014, he sent out an Olson journal, *Minutes Of The Charles Olson Society*, free of charge, to fanatics all around the world. I am an Olson fanatic. His Word changed my Brain. He thinks in ways it never occurred to me it was possible to think. He revealed unnoticed vectors of my brain to myself, by pointing out to sea, and talking of voyages there, and back. There is something about Olson, about Cendrars, that makes me think of Douglas Harding, that visionary naivety, is how to see, here, right in front of you. What is it? Ask yourself. Then write.

See Appendix C for a gallery of the *Minutes Of The Charles Olson Society* + *Olson: The Journal Of The Charles Olson Society*.



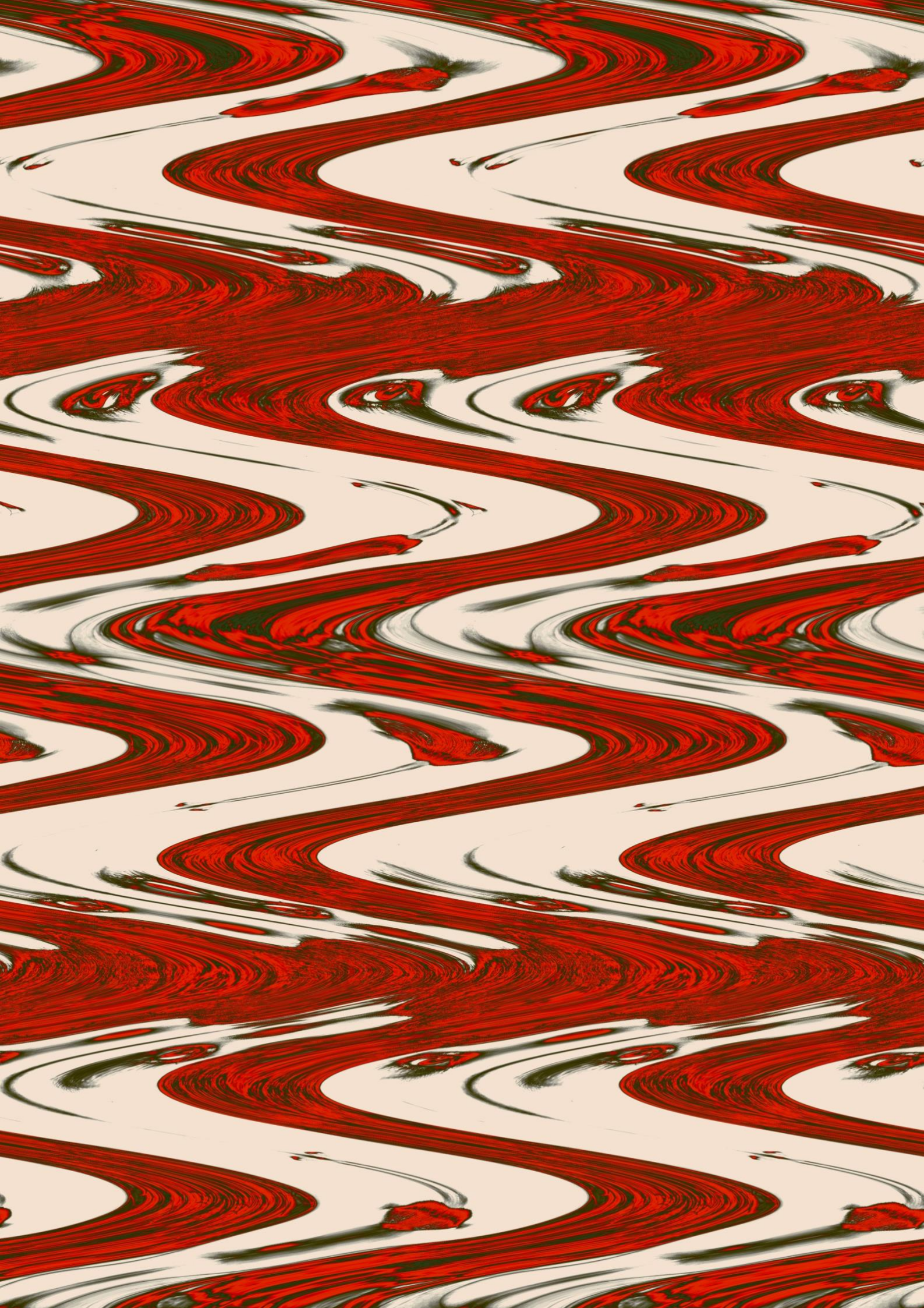
Appendix A

Choronzon Club
Headquarters
Daath

The microscope & the telescope are their inventions. The deception lies in the fact that no matter what realms are opened up to human consciousness by these means an abyss separates them from the true spiritual world. But there is a danger due to the fact that the guardians can only cope progressively with the Ahrimanic attacks that man can attain to pictures of the truth without surrendering his free will. If then his initiation does not keep pace with his knowledge he is liable to do somebody damage. The coiled serpent then springs upon earth & a lot of duty must be abandoned in the higher spheres. Well, I must close this little lecture now.

93-93/93
yours fraternally
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Appendix B

A Patty Waters Discography

Patty Waters

Sings

ESP Disk 1966

LP

This record is an absolute masterpiece, from the weirdo black and white what the fuck is it cover, through the first side of immaculate late night alien balladry, with Patty sounding utterly bereft on heartbroken masterpieces like “Moon, Don’t Come Up Tonight” and “Why Can’t I Come To You” peaking in the unparalleled 14 minute vocal freak of “Black Is The Colour Of My True Love’s Hair”, one of the most bewitchingly out vocal performances ever, as Patty tears black to pieces. Highly recommended for serious heads.

Patty Waters

College Tour

ESP Disk 1966

LP

Perhaps even more recommended for serious heads, Patty’s second album has an even better, weirder, more mysterious cover, and might be my favourite sleeve of all time, with Patty looking like an out-of-focus Manson girl, complete with a third eye (there are so many differently-blurred variations of the first two albums, I probably have more copies of these two albums in my collection than any other record, maybe except for *Psychedelic Sounds* and *Easter Everywhere*) and pictures on the back and on the label that are stills from a film of Patty tripping on LSD at Tim Leary’s Millbrook estate up a tree. What the

fuck happened to that film? Here she is playing with a big band and pushing the expansive post-“Black Is The Colour” vibe deep into space, alongside players like Burton Greene, Ran Blake, Giuseppe Logan, Dave Burrell and Steve Tintweiss. Recorded on a tour where Patty was supporting the Sun Ra Arkestra, she was married to an Arkestra member at the time. Masterpiece.

The Marzette Watts Ensemble

s/t

Savoy 1969

LP

Unbelievably rare, unbelievably heavy free jazz summit from stone cold killer Marzette and this time with two vocalists, Patty joined by the equally amazing Amy Sheffer. The version of Ornette’s “Lonely Woman” on here, complete w/lyrics, is jaw-dropping, but don’t bother looking for it as it has never been reissued and probably never will. Me and a mate back in the day were planning on bootlegging it, but we heard the mafia were involved, so we backed the fuck off.

Then, nothing. Until:

Patty Waters

Love Songs

Jazz Focus 1996

CD

This is a pretty average set, I have to admit, but when I stumbled across it in Ray’s Jazz back in 1996 I nearly shat myself. All I had were the two ESP Disk LPs, and not a lot more information besides, I didn’t even know if she was still alive, so I grabbed this straight away and ran

home to play it, and tried to love it, but couldn't, honestly. Patty's voice sounds fine, she sings a bunch of standards, but the piano accompaniment (and synth) by Jessica Williams is pretty humming.

Patty Waters
You Thrill Me
Waters 2004
CD

You Thrill Me is the first recording outside of her 1996 comeback album, *Love Songs*, to attempt to fill in the blanks, collecting a raft of unissued studio performances that bookend her stint with ESP.

The set kicks off with a surreal beer commercial, with Waters singing the praises of “mellow” Jax Beer. It's a fantastically surreal find, but the most revelatory tracks here are the three songs Waters cut as a demo for Columbia in New York in 1964, right before saxophonist Albert Ayler recommended her to Bernard Stollman for ESP. They're engineered by the legendary Tom Wilson, whose credits include stints with everyone from Sun Ra and Cecil Taylor through Bob Dylan and The Velvet Underground. In the liners Waters describes him as being “quite the gentleman to me” but the recordings tell a different story, with Wilson interrupting takes, slurring stoned into the headphones and then suggesting they simply splice two takes together and call it a day. Waters sounds great here though, attempting two tracks that would later turn up on *Sings*, “You Thrill Me” and “Why Can't I Come To You”, and although she's repeatedly frustrated, this particular slice of audio verité makes for compulsive listening.

There's a good run of tracks taken from a date in San Francisco in 1970 that features a version of Waters' own “Love Is The Warmth Of Togetherness” that vibrates with the kind of space whisper that

characterised the short songs on the first side of *Sings*. However, this particular section is marred by the inclusion of a recording of an original, “I Love You Honey”, which is noticeably sped-up. The tracks where Waters sings with a separate pianist are inevitably the least interesting, with a disconnected pair of hands unable to fully keep up with the elastic nature of her phrasing. “Touched By Rodin In A Paris Museum” is a great showcase for her own playing, a piano instrumental from 1970 where strings of languid notes bob and sink like tiny ships. Weirdest of all is the closing “Spring Is Here”, a home recording from 1960 that sounds like it’s soaked in the rust of centuries.

While *You Thrill Me* is a confusingly assembled package, it still functions as an illuminating piece of the puzzle, even though there’s little here that hints at the kind of destructive personal form that marks out both of her ESP Disks.

Patty Waters

Happiness Is A Thing Called Joe: Live In San Francisco 2002

DBK Works 2005

CD

Happiness Is A Thing Called Joe marks Patty’s first new recording since her return to live work in 2002. It’s a document of a live set recorded in San Francisco with bassist Seward McCain and pianist Leonard Thompson in and besides a reading of her own “Moon, Don’t Come Up Tonight” from *Sings*, it’s made up entirely of standards along the lines of “He’s Funny That Way”, “Loverman”, “Fascinating Rhythm” and “St. Louis Blues”. Waters herself bills it as a tribute to Billie Holiday and her music. Given the historical weight of the material and the limited palette of her accompanists, there’s little opportunity for Waters to navigate the furthest syllabic reaches of the music in the way she did on those massively dislocated early

recordings. Instead we get some fairly faithful, pleasantly atmospheric readings of some of Waters favourite songs. Her voice is a little throatier and huskier than it once was, but there's still tons of spirit to her readings and that beautiful space whisper remains instantly identifiable. But the biggest snag lies with her backing musicians, the same problem that blighted her previous album, 1996's *Love Songs*. The pianist is particularly wretched, mugging cocktail shapes and daintily pearled runs into every breath, with the result that Waters is left with little space to roam and comes across as merely an accomplished jazz singer. Although Waters seems to have lost confidence in her own delicately spooked piano playing, she was always her own best accompanist and we can only hope that she returns to the instrument at some point. As it stands, this is an inoffensive stop-gap but the more committed Waters-devotees will be disappointed at the lack of real meat.

Patty Waters

6.12.17

Otoroku 2018

Download

This is a digital file only, so unfortunately I will never listen to it.

Patty Waters

Live

Blank Forms Editions 2019

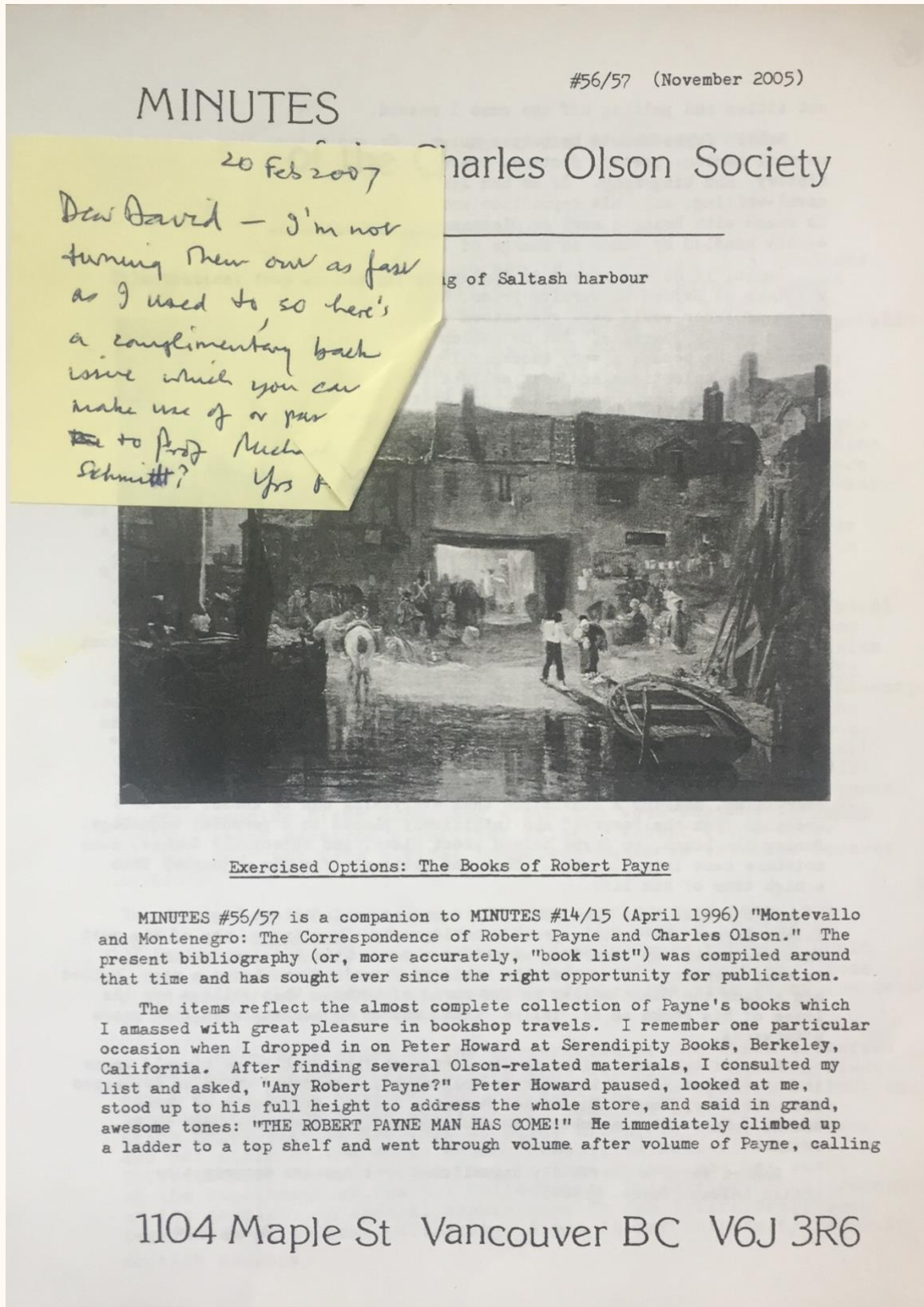
LP/CD

Honestly, this sounds a lot worse than the concert that Patty insisted I never allow anyone ever to hear. The message is, sadly, avoid.



Appendix C

Minutes Of The Charles Olson Society + Olson: The Journal Of
The Charles Olson Archives



MINUTES #62 (July 2007)
of the Charles Olson Society



Renate und Ezra Gerhardt (März 1952)

Featuring the
fragmente
connection



Freiburg, Stadtstraße 7.
Wohnung der Familie Gerhardt zwischen 1949 und 1952

Robert Creeley zu Besuch in Freiburg, 1952 (Photo: Ashley Bryan)
Renate mit Ezra Gerhardt, Creeley, unbekannt mit Titus, RMG

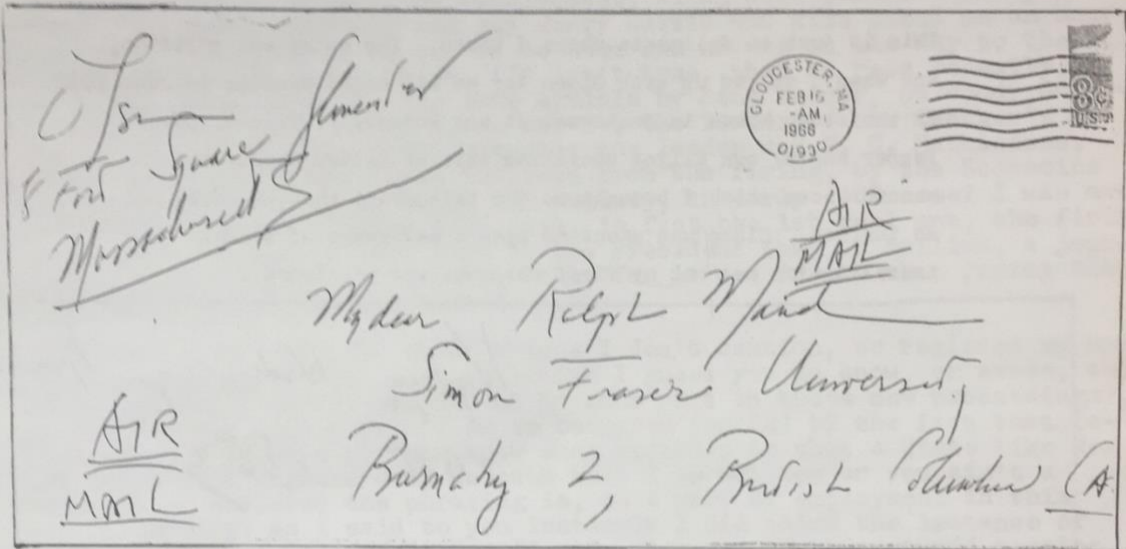


1104 Maple St Vancouver BC V6J 3R6

MINUTES

#67 (March 2012)

of the Charles Olson Society



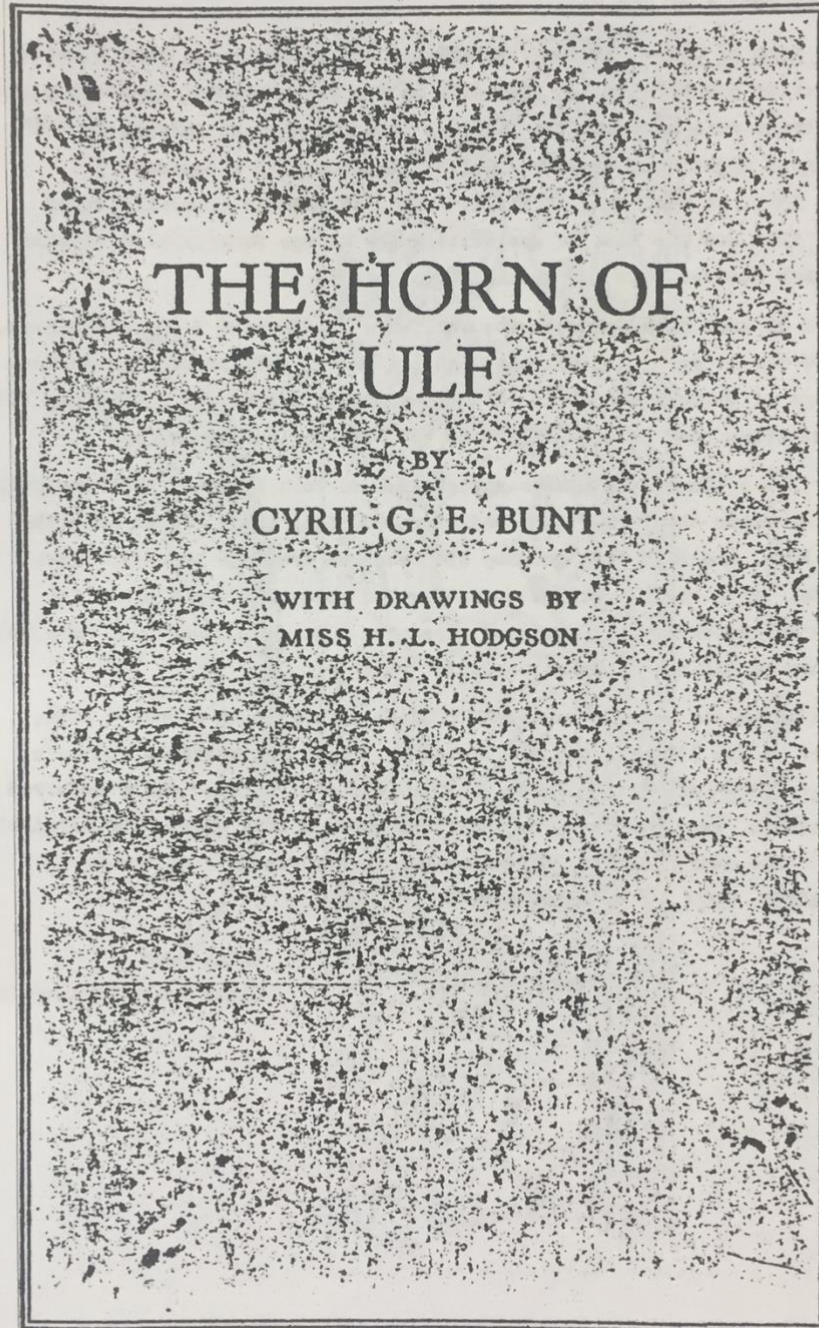
CHARLES OLSON LETTERS

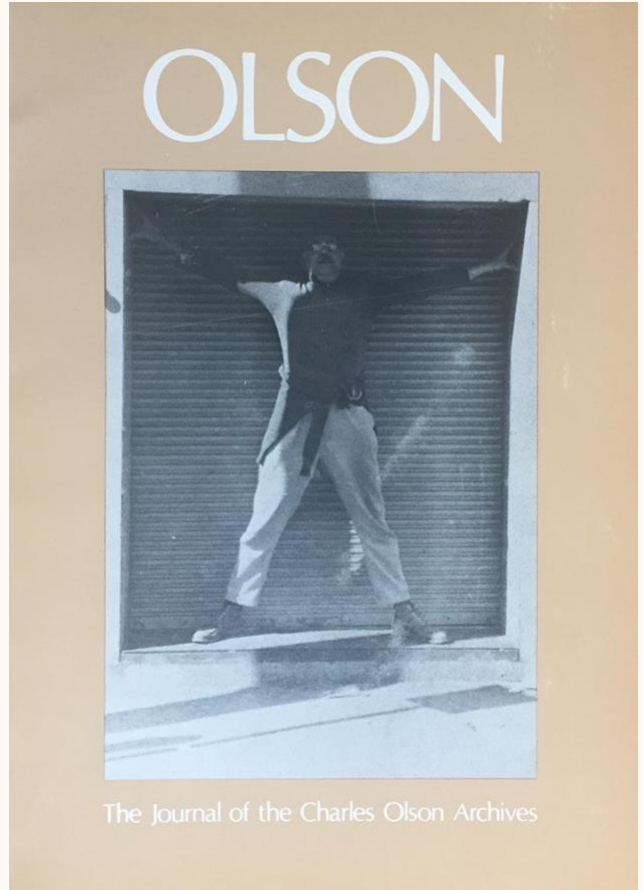
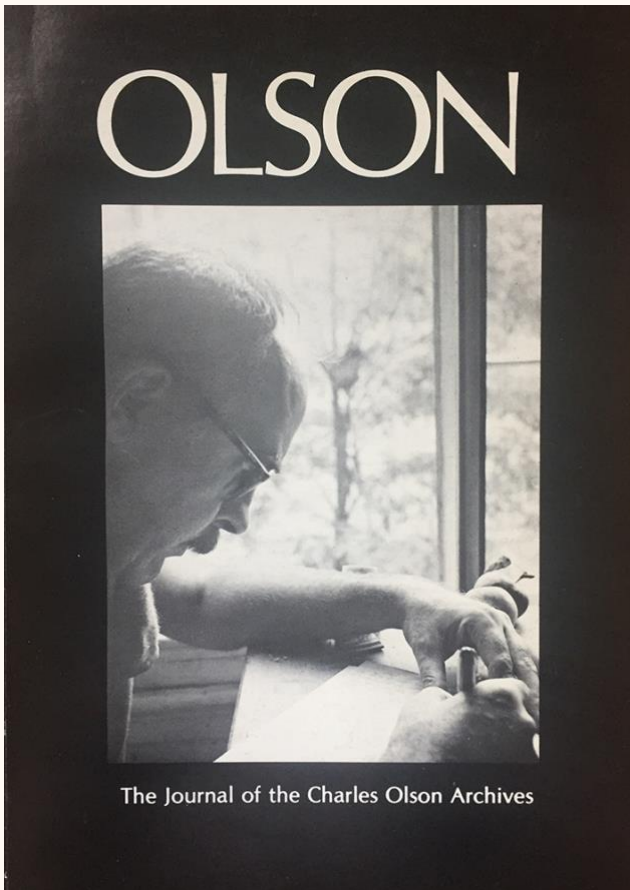
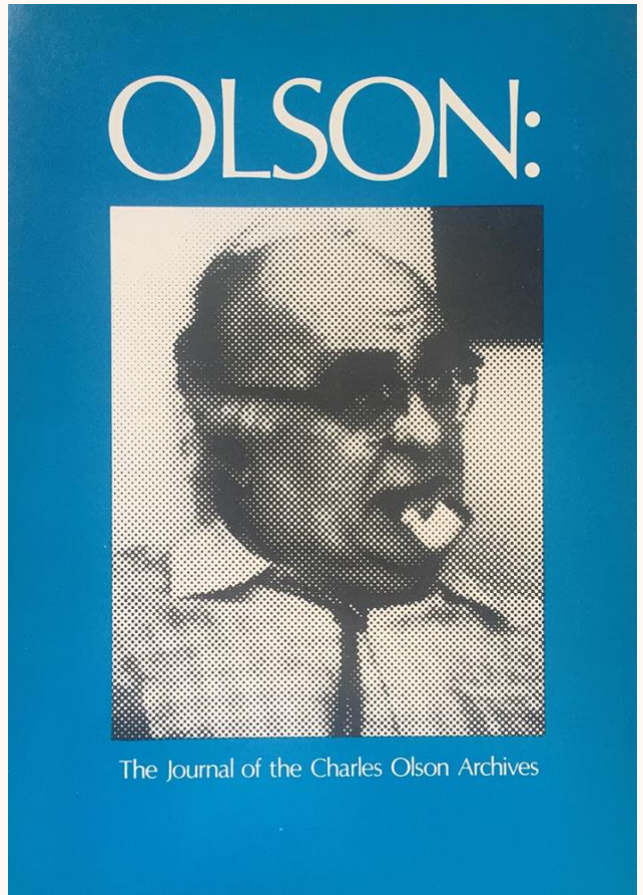
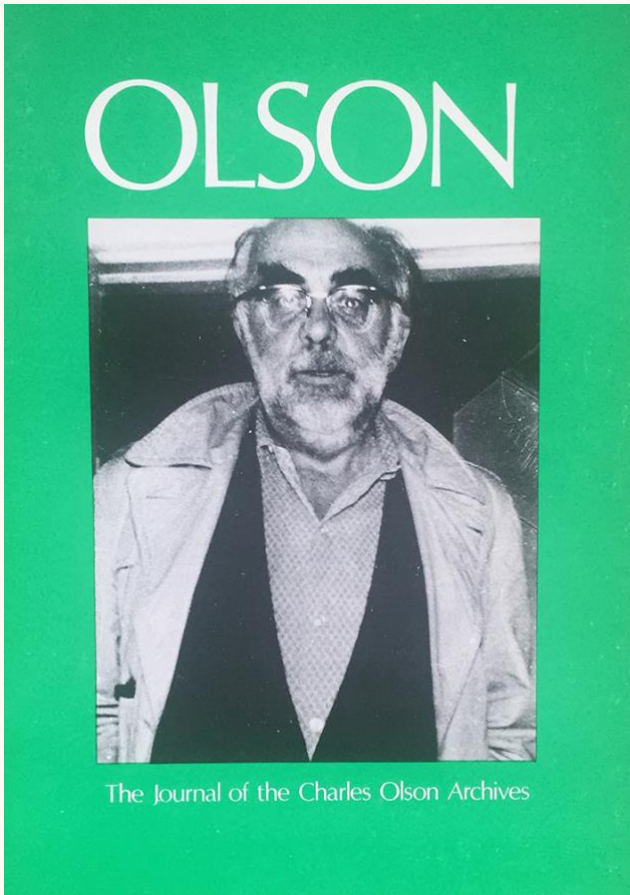
narration by Ralph Maud

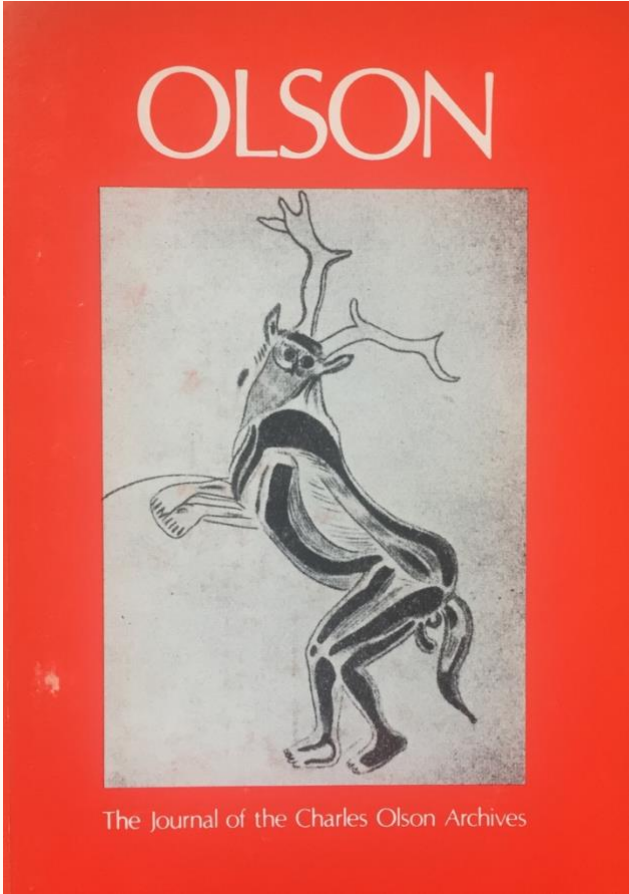
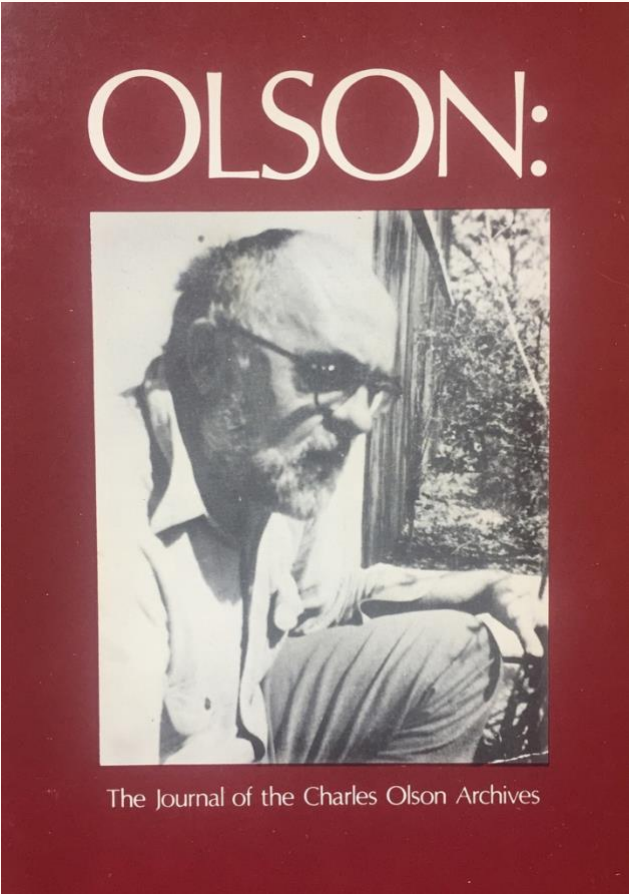
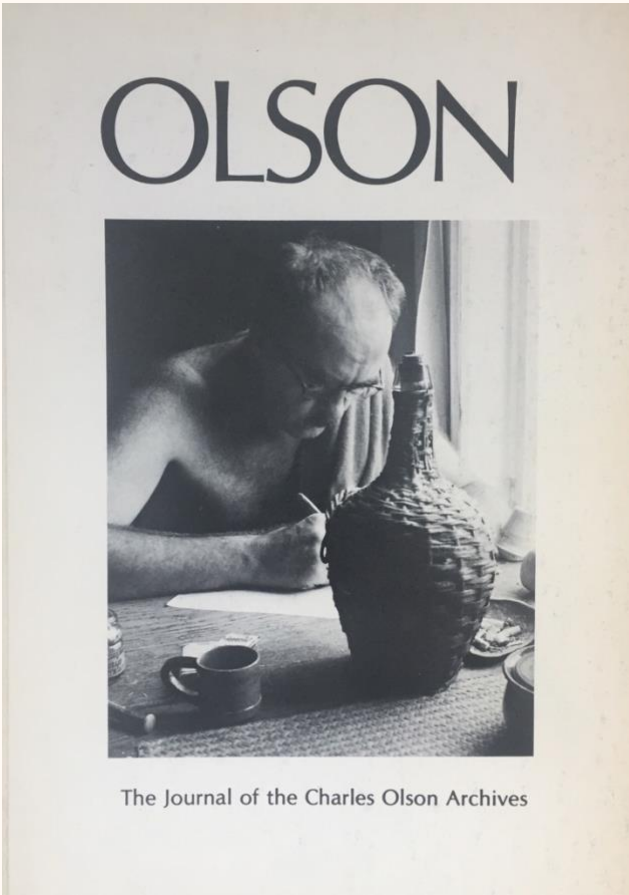
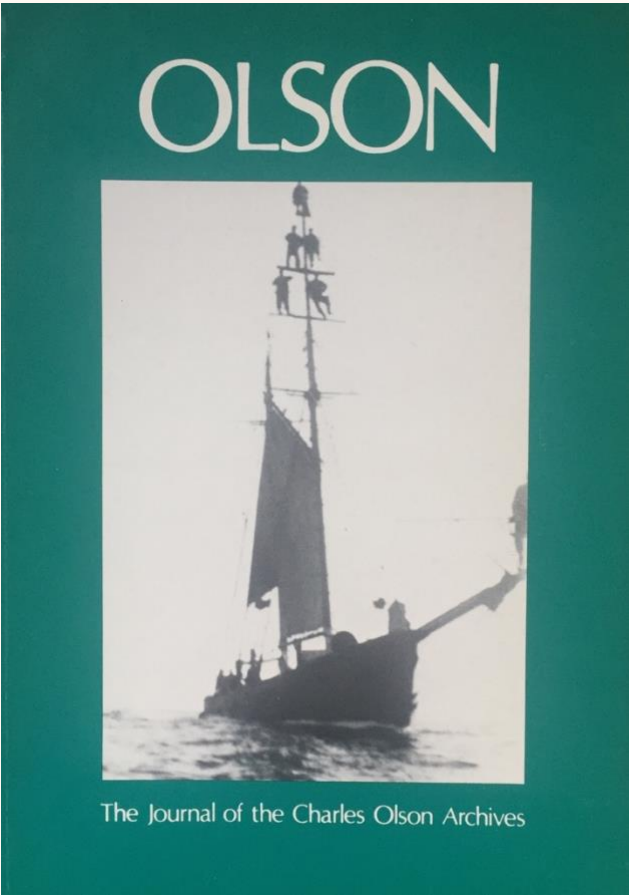
Bitterman's Tavern, Fall semester 1963 at the University of Buffalo, and my friend Harry Keyishian saying come over and meet the new Professor, and the enticement: "He knew Woody Guthrie,"-- with all the implications such might have for the attack we were launching against the newly imposed Feinberg Certificate (ancient history now, but we did take it to the U.S. Supreme Court, Keyishian v. the State of New York, and did win). Harry showed me Pete Seeger's "Remembering Woody" just out in Mainstream (August 1963) and stuck his finger on the name Charles Olson:

. . .I once had a job as a cook in 1938 when I was a Harvard student. The man I was cooking for was a bachelor living on Beacon Hill. And one night we

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Divers to Dive

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