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## Don Byrd Archive

Featuring Charles Bernstein, Clark Coolidge, Guy Davenport, Ed Dorn, Robert Duncan, Susan Howe, Gerrit Lansing, Nathaniel Mackey, Paul Metcalf, Jed Rasula, and Ron Silliman

The Don Bryd Archive is especially rich in correspondence with such poets as Charles Bernstein, George Butterick, Clark Coolidge, Guy Davenport, Ed Dorn, Robert Duncan, Clayton Eshleman, Robert Grenier, Richard Grossinger, Susan Howe, Ken Irby, Robert Kelly, Gerrit Lansing, Nathaniel Mackey, Paul Metcalf, Jed Rasula, Ron Silliman, and Barrett Watten and as such offers the opportunity to explore ideas animating the world of poetry during the 1970s and 1980s with particular emphasis on Language Writing.



Photograph by Don Byrd of Susan Quasha and Robert Duncan being photographed by George Quasha at Olana, Frederic Church's estate in Hudson, N.Y., ca. 1984.

“At a time when poetics—especially that of the difficult sort dealt with here—has been increasingly pushed to the margins of academic discourse, Don Byrd has come forward with a tour de force that both argues and enacts the bearing of poetic knowledge upon the issues and debates tending to displace it.

He not only offers astute, illuminating readings of work by Stein, Zukofsky, Duncan, Olson, and others, but goes to great lengths to map the ground—intellectual, historical, technological, phenomenological—that makes these works matter. Such ground makes his own undertaking on behalf of poetic knowledge purposeful and necessary, and his mapping of it is not only informed, sophisticated and intellectually stunning but passionate and compelling as well.”

— Nathaniel Mackey  
on Don Byrd's *The Poetics of the Common Knowledge*

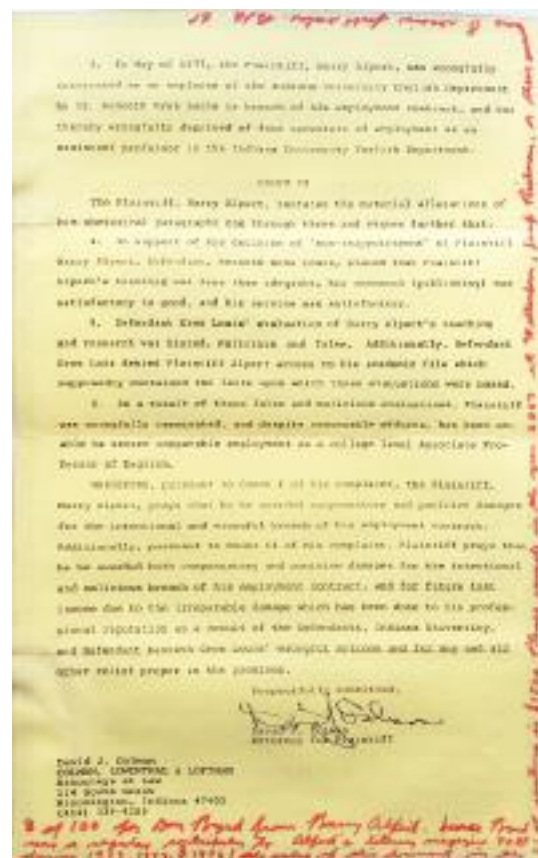
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## Don Byrd (1944– )

Donald J. Byrd is a poet, sound artist, scholar and Professor Emeritus of English at the State University of New York at Albany. In addition to his poetry, he is known for his scholarship and theoretical work in the fields of philosophy, literary analysis and information theory. Byrd's engagement with an extended circle of writers who were exploring the nature and meaning of writing itself is reflected in his correspondence with: Charles Bernstein, Robert Berthoff, Richard Blevins, George Butterick, Clark Coolidge, Guy Davenport, Robert Duncan, Clayton Eshleman, Robert Grenier, Richard Grossinger, Lindy Hough, Susan Howe, Ken Irby, Robert Kelly, Gerrit Lansing, Nathaniel Mackey, Paul Metcalf, Jed Rasula, Ron Silliman, David Levi Strauss, Barrett Watten, and Douglas Woolf, among others.

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## Selected Highlights from the Collection



Barry Alpert, "Day of Atonement for Indiana University, Yom Kippur 1977."

Legal size sheet printed on both sides with a copy of Alpert's suit against Indiana University for breach of contract. Barry Alpert is a writer and poet, perhaps best known for the literary-critical magazine *Vort*. He has written on the edge, "8 of 100 for Byrd from Barry Alpert. Since Byrd was a regular contributor to Alpert's literary magazine VORT during 1973, 1974, & 1976 / the value of this document in the 21st century is \$1500...."

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3 June 1979

Dear Don Byrd

I wanted to write to you about your very kind response to my letter to the University of Wisconsin. I am sure you will be pleased to see that I have responded to your letter and that I have also responded to your letter to the University of Wisconsin. I am sure you will be pleased to see that I have responded to your letter and that I have also responded to your letter to the University of Wisconsin.

First off, though, I am sure you will be pleased to see that I have responded to your letter and that I have also responded to your letter to the University of Wisconsin. I am sure you will be pleased to see that I have responded to your letter and that I have also responded to your letter to the University of Wisconsin.

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Charles Bernstein, 1st of 2 pages, June 8, 1979.

Bernstein writes asking Don Byrd for a contribution for an upcoming "symposium" in  $L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E$  and also comments on Don Byrd's "The Shape of Zukofsky's Canon" in *Paideuma* (Winter 1978), "What struck about 'The shape of Zuk's canon' was first off yr grounding of the work in an epistemologic tradition (though I cdnt quite follow the Pierce citations, & thought 'intersubjectivity' was too vague a term for the general preciseness of yr discussion)--wch then leads to see LZ as early in understanding that language [sic] itself was the alternative to the mythos and the logos excursions even of Olson & Williams...."

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

21 January 1976

Dear Don,

Your letter just arrived, and because of a clerical error that the letter got stuck about 10 days ago, I'm writing right back to you with the news. You're a good fellow with Don.

There is another letter coming to you about the ~~idea~~ of contemporary poetry which will take a little longer to get going. I am certain now that what you think is the only remaining glory will be to watch the turns and loops that Duncan and Dorn make in the final resolutions of their art. Oppenheimer is now turning to the minimal art too, and line of one phrase only--the string poem, a perhaps not so much. The last, though I need to define the line as the first two books of *ORGANON*, where it fits better, but the other version runs like the last two of *ORGANON*. Seeing is that other poem leads more directly to what we think of as the final resolution of their art. Oppenheimer is now turning to the minimal art too, and line of one phrase only--the string poem, a perhaps not so much. The last, though I need to define the line as the first two books of *ORGANON*, where it fits better, but the other version runs like the last two of *ORGANON*.

There is a last ~~idea~~ in the process of the University of Wisconsin which will take a little longer to get going. I am certain now that what you think is the only remaining glory will be to watch the turns and loops that Duncan and Dorn make in the final resolutions of their art. Oppenheimer is now turning to the minimal art too, and line of one phrase only--the string poem, a perhaps not so much. The last, though I need to define the line as the first two books of *ORGANON*, where it fits better, but the other version runs like the last two of *ORGANON*.

I've got to go now but I'll be right back with you.

The center of Don's poem is a ~~very~~ professional anxiety.

If you find anything like feeding off one another, I find something like the work of an ~~epistemologic~~ language.

Now later,

BA

Robert Berthoff, 1st of 2 pages, January 21, 1976.

"I am certain now that whatever Black Mountain poetry was is now over, and the only remaining glory will be to watch the turns and loops that Duncan and Dorn make in the final resolutions of their art. Oppenheimer is now turning to the minimal art too, and line of one phrase only—the string poem. A poetics but no metrics."



Richard Blevins, 1st of 2 pages, October 24, 1977.

"Just as our dreaming connects sleep and wakefulness, any conscious perception must link things with emotions and ideas?"

Because things, like emotions or ideas, are perceived to be, they enter our poems -- as into a field of vision -- without primacy. One perception, while it may prove more apt or timely, is no better than any other: until the poet relates Everything to the poem in him."



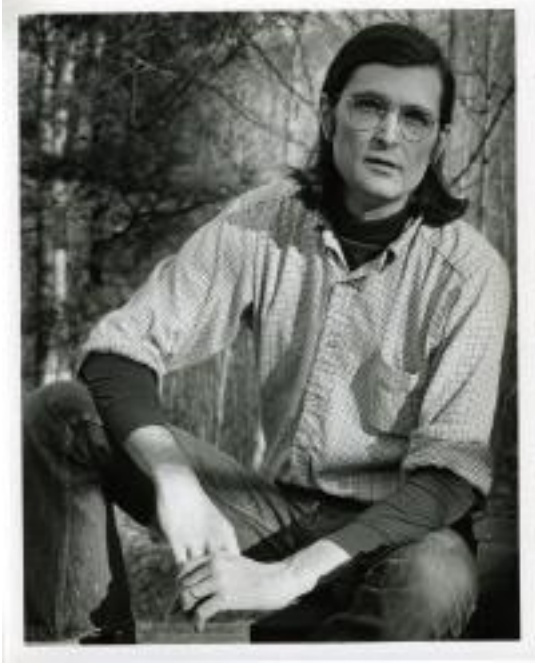
George Butterick, 1 page, October 1, 1976.

"You're right. I've had it with dead men's lives. I had a dream last night that instead of poets' papers we had the poets themselves to care for, like an old-age or nursing home, and what woke me up was trying to lift Muriel Rukeyser (!) in a hospital gown and heavy, flesh loose upon bones, very limp, dead in her legs (I worked my way through college as a hospital orderly), out of bed to take her for her morning walk! She kept slipping and twisting out of my arms, and I was afraid I was going to hurt her. Agh!"



Clark Coolidge, 1st of 2 pages, February 28, 1974.

"I also feel my stuff as 'traditional' too, in the sense I think you mean the word. Not 'abstract', 'experimental', & all that evasion. I recall once telling somebody that, given such a choice, I'd rather my books be published in the Modern Library (Random series), not as an ego-shot but from the feeling that there they would properly reside in the stratum they come from & relate back to."



Portrait of Clark Coolidge by Don Byrd, ca. late 1970s.



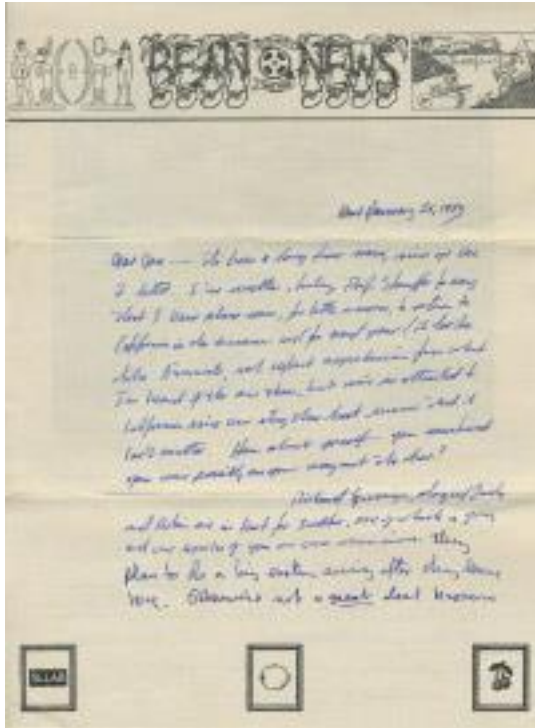
Guy Davenport, 1st of 2 pages, January 9, 1977.

“I would be very eager to know what poets are for. To give us courage to live, said EP. To purify the words of the tribe, said Steve Mallarmé. To legislate, said Shelley. To misrepresent reality, said Plato. One should not look at the poet (invisible, anyway), but at the use of poetry by the people who read. Most poetry thereby evaporates from view. It is, as M. Barthes says from the Sorbonne, writerly but not readerly. You can’t sell the stuff. I, personally, can’t keep a map of it in my head. Nobody seems to believe anymore that ‘one map will do it’ (id est, make you famous). Theory passes for performance.”



Ed Dorn, “Ed Dorn Reading,” A Space, Toronto, February 2, 1973.

8 x 17 inch poster with hand-written letter by Dorn to Don Byrd.



Ed Dorn, 2 pages, January 25, 1973.

Two-page letter from Ed Dorn written on Zephyrus Image's Bean News stationery.



Ed Dorn, manuscript with 2-page hand-written letter, April 10, 1981.

In addition to his poem (a version of which was published as "God Creates Man!" in *Captain Jack's Chaps/Houston MLA*), Dorn writes "Anyway your letter strikes the anvil, for sure. Thinking along the same lines here we're starting Rolling Stock, a newspaper w/ practically no 'poetry' so if you'd care to 'expand' on your anger & fears (a little loathing perhaps) send it on."





Robert Duncan, 1 page, January 18, 1978.

“But I am more immediately interested in having some time with you. Not only do I remember pleasantly indeed the brief time we had years ago--an island of fellow concerns in the midst of a tour among the aborigines; or of fellow aboriginal concern in the midst of a tour of house-broken English departments--and not only have I over the intervening years kept up with Byrd publications in poetry as well as in prose, but I would like to sound out some Olson approaches.”



Photograph by Don Byrd of Robert Duncan at Olana, Frederic Church's estate in Hudson, N.Y., ca. 1984.



Paris, 1975 2/5 Salisbourg, 133 rue Parbery  
St Denis, Paris 10eme

Dear Don,

Thank you for your letter of the 15th November. We have just gotten out of the mid-70s race we were living in (it was free but somewhat uncomfortable) and are in a pleasant 3 room apt which belongs to a Belgian analyst currently in Mexico. The address for GRACE is Casiers de Collectif GRACE, Salisbourg/Boulevard, 6, Place St. Salisbourg, Paris 75006. The last issue, called "le 1 International," is JN 92, the editor is Jean Pierre Sags. Butterick wrote me a long letter about the Iowa Olson conference, less positive than yours: he felt that not enough attention was shown Olson himself by such as Creeley, and Dorn... If there is a slump etc., it certainly has to do with the failure of that generation to connect with my generation (and subsequently yours) in some sort of monolithic way that would lead to a strong magazine and other methods to drive all of us out of the perennial underground. But I have the feeling that Duncan, say, like the freese-- his commitment to not publishing all 1943 is positive and implies that there is no reason to publish until then. It is a shame that the post at your place went to Weber--the I want say that the only news I have ever had of the man is the edition of Grace's letters which he handled. We have no idea as to where or what we shall be or in what time we return, and I try not to think about it, tho I must. For the situation is so irrational all I do is depress and anger myself. If you hear of anything in NY State worth applying for for next year please let us know. We will leave for Germany the 15th of January, but the Czech address is ok after that, for forwarding. I have finished, with some very useful help from Charles himself, a translation of his great GAMER--

Clayton Eshleman, 1st of 2 pages, December 25, 1978.

"Butterick wrote me a long letter about the Iowa Olson conference, less positive than yours; he felt that not enough attention was shown Olson himself by such as Creeley, and Dorn... If there is a slump etc., it certainly has to do with the failure of that generation to connect with my generation (and subsequently yours) in some sort of monolithic way that would lead to a strong magazine and other methods to drive all of us out of the perennial underground."

NOTES TOWARD TALK LARRY EIGNER & THE TASK OF AMERICAN LETTERS

THESE ARE TRUE APPARENTLY IN YOUR MIND IF MAKE MAKE IT KNOW

SUGAR IS THE WORLD FOR OUR LOVE

[Notes / numbers] - [what is / finally then?]  
 [mode / numbers] - [you / this way]  
 (numbers) thing you are

THE WORLD IS THE SAME AS THE WORLD TO THE ME  
 destroy the world / recreate it // be it was  
 [REMAIN / HOLD / WHAT SUPPORTS / DREAM]  
 [CURE /] [CURE /] [CURE /]

[DREAM] to 'sugar off' / BRAD SKIN / [DREAM]  
 [INTERPRET / TRANSPARENT]  
 [it's / applied / with / words / a / reality / of /] [DREAM]  
 [it's / (leaves) / in / disintegrated /] [DREAM]  
 [it's / for / page / during / sleep / through /] [DREAM]  
 [it's / the / field / / / / / / /] [DREAM]  
 [it's / / / / / / /] [DREAM]  
 [it's / / / / / / /] [DREAM]

[it's / / / / / / /] [DREAM]  
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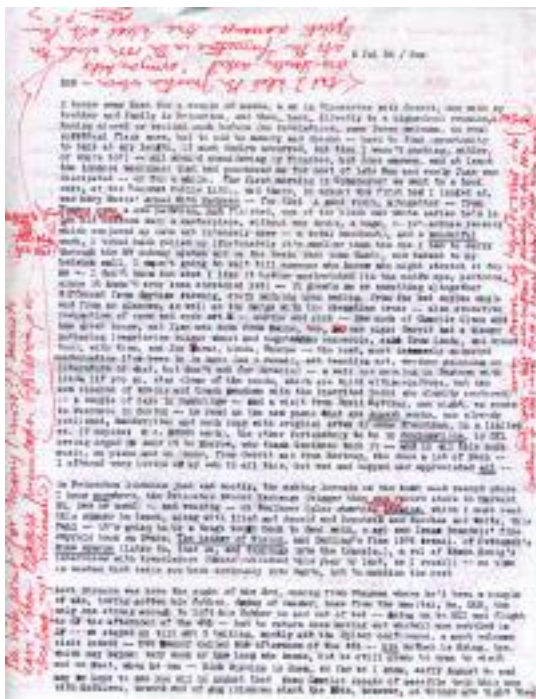
Robert Grenier, "Notes toward a talk, Larry Eigner & the task of American Letters — SUNY/Buffalo, Oct. 6/94," 1 page.

Grenier sent a copy of notes for his SUNY/Buffalo talk, along with a 1-page handwritten letter to Don Byrd, January 24, 1995.



Susan Howe, typewritten and handwritten postcard, November 10, 1983.

“I just read Derrida’s SPURS and loved it. Worry if I mis-read it. I cant [sic] figure is it anti-women or radically interesting about the feminine? I think the latter but it is hard to put Nietzsche who so clearly HATED women suddenly in this position. I wonder. I adore N. And Spurs is beautifully written. But is the Devil writing?”



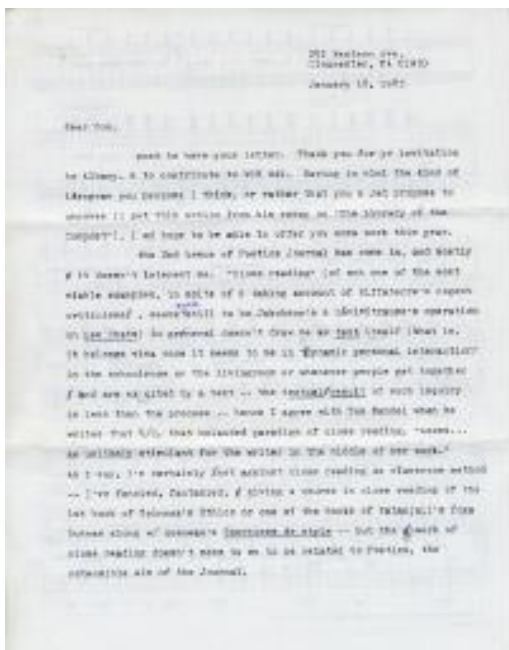
Ken Irby, front and back of 2-page letter, July 6, 1986.

“Saw much of Charlie Olson and his great house, and Jean was down from Maine, too, one night Gerrit had a dinner gathering (vegetarian bulghur wheat and vegetables casserole, salad from Linda, and bread too), with them and Joe Burns, Linda, Thorpe -- the best, most intensely animated conversation I’ve been in in ages (as I recall, abt teaching art, whether painting or literature or what, but don’t ask for details) -- a walk one morning in Dogtown....”



Robert Kelly, 1st of 4 pages, February 13, 1974.

"...and it must be clear that I understand poetry, as a field of human working and conversation, to be that process whereby Saying comes into the world, thus making the world. I insist on the poet as one who hears-and-says."



Gerrit Lansing, 1st of 2 pages, typewritten on the back of sheets of music, January 18, 1983.

"the 2nd issue of Poetics Journal has come in, and mostly it doesn't interest me. 'Close reading' (of wch one of the most viable examples, in spite of & taking into account Riffaterre's cogent criticisms, still seems to me still to be Jakobson's & Lévi-Strauss's operation on Les Chats) in general doesn't draw me as text itself (that is, it belongs viva voce it seems to me in 'dynamic personal interaction' in the schoolroom or the livingroom or whenever people get together and are excited by a text...."



Photograph by Don Byrd of Gerrit Lansing at Stage Fort Park in Gloucester, Mass., ca. 2004.

18 August 1989

Dear Tom, [unclear]

As you must know, your Department recently asked me to supply them with an evaluation of your work, as a guide to their deliberations about your future promotion. It is therefore perhaps a little out of order for me to be writing to you in this way. But I had to do so, simply to tell you that your new book, THE HISTORY OF THE COMMON KNOWLEDGE seems to be a work of uncommon strength and importance. And I couldn't tell you that without being up front about where I stand (and of it). I spent the better part of three weeks reading and rereading it, taking notes, thinking, arguing, etc. I know how much you put into this book, and for all your work, which I guess spent the last several years, you

I believe you gave of more than possible without because you say every thought, what you really care to say is in it, genuine commitment between what you do and what I do. This seems to be the truth.

Anyway, I could praise many things in your book, but because I am more interested in poetry and writing than anything else, I found your readings of the poets -- always extraordinarily -- and the ease with which you think in these ways. I have spent almost twenty years, since the Vietnam madness was winding down, trying to fight out of my bad education, trying to read 'naturally' (through common knowledge, as you would say). It would seem quite to me a way of living with poetry and called the best

Jerome McGann, 1st of 2 pages, August 29, 1989.

"Anyway, I could praise many things in your book [*The Poetics of the Common Knowledge*]; but because I am more interested in poetry and writing than anything else, I found your reading of the poets -- simply extraordinary. And the ease with which you think in these ways. I have spent almost twenty years, since the Vietnam madness was winding down, trying to fight out of my bad education, trying to read 'naturally' (through common knowledge, as you would say)."

V.S.P., P., Box 16  
Georgetown, Mass. 02155  
May 22, 1976

Dear Tom,

When I read your book, I was struck by the clarity of your analysis and argument. It is clear to me that Jonathan Williams, based on what you say, is a very good man.

Jonathan Williams is a very good man, etc. I have a few questions about your book, etc. I have a few questions about your book, etc. I have a few questions about your book, etc.

Well, I'm not sure, but I think you have a very good sense of the value of your work. I think you have a very good sense of the value of your work. I think you have a very good sense of the value of your work.

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Paul Metcalf, 1st of 2 pages, May 22, 1976.

"I've had an interesting discussion lately with Ted Enslin and Jonathan Williams - well, a discussion with Ted, anyway, Jonathan hasn't deigned to answer me - starting out with me going on the attack (I'm turning into a mean old man!) against tendencies toward elitism, i.e., however few our readers may be, we should never write just for our friends, there should always be the implicit assumption that someone out there is listening: the Exxon tank driver, reading poetry aloud, at the truck stop. Ted pretty much agreed with me (and I don't feel he's too guilty on this score), said he'd argued this particularly with Kelly, or Kelly's myrmidons (who don't think anybody exists but each other). With Jonathan, however, the situation is more complex..."

Paul Metcalf, 1st of 3 pages, November 6, 1980.

In discussing Don Byrd's *Charles Olson's Maximus*, Metcalf writes, "But what you view in Volume III as some sort of religious synthesis - 'the first religious poem to have been written since the seventeenth century' - I see as the collapse of his world - a collapse precipitated in part by personal disaster (Betty), but more importantly by his own life-long commitment to dynamics, to motion, to growth, to process, to change; and those dynamics, once generated and in command, become an independent force, which, in the blink of an ant's eyelid, can turn to sudden deterioration and collapse.

Olson once said to me: 'You have been more commodious to yourself.' Yes - I have paced myself, I have not plunged, as he did - for better or for worse. I am the safe yankee, if you wish."

Paul Metcalf, 1st of 3 pages, November 6, 1980.

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Olson once said to me: 'You have been more commodious to yourself.' Yes - I have paced myself, I have not plunged, as he did - for better or for worse. I am the safe yankee, if you wish."



Photo of Paul Metcalf and Mitzy at their home in Becket, Mass., ca. late 1970s.

For  
Don Byrd  
A Country Western  
Performance.

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Whenever you feel  
the need:

1. Dress so that you  
are a Country  
Western Star —
2. Go to a natural  
or unnatural  
setting —
3. Sing a Remembered  
or Imagined Country  
Western Song  
or ~~Feel~~ Feel

Like A  
Country Western  
Star, until  
you are  
Satisfied.

Repeat this  
Process or a  
Variation ~~whenever~~ when  
ever necessary.

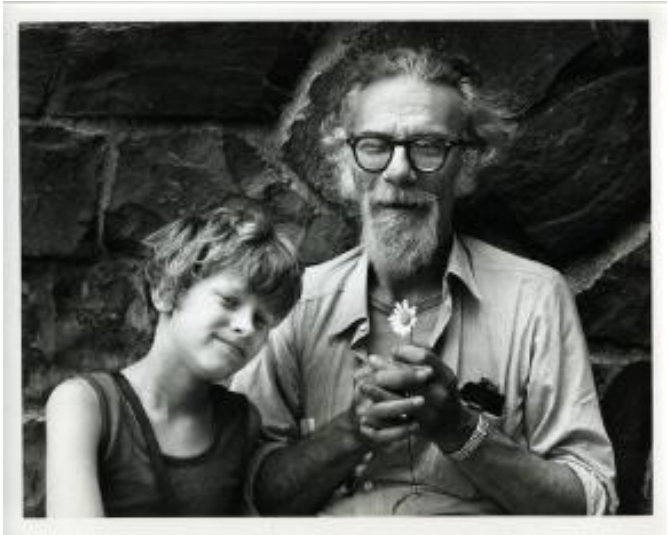
July '80  
Linda Montano

Linda Montano, "For Don Byrd: A Country Western Performance," written on both sides of 3 x 5 inch index card, July 1980.

"For Don Byrd / A Country Western Performance. / Whenever you feel the need: / 1. Dress so that you are a country western star — / 2. Go to a natural or unnatural setting — / 3. Sing a remembered country western song or feel like a country western star, until you are satisfied. / Repeat this process or a variation whenever necessary. / July '80 Linda Montano."



Joel Oppenheimer, "ars longa / vida blue," 2 1/4 inch poetry button, 1979.



Don Byrd portrait of Joel Oppenheimer and one of his sons in Albany, ca. late 1970s.

Gift from Joel Oppenheimer to Don Byrd. Oppenheimer called this his "shortest poem."



Jed Rasula, 1st of 4 pages, December 16, 1978.

"In that distinction between myth as reference or as language, the few whose prowess with myth enables them to speak it as a language are relatively few: Pound, Olson, Duncan, Kelly, one straight line there. There are people who are simply incapable of comprehending myth as language & therefore admit an inability to read these guys (Steve McCaffery is one such, who told me that in conversation).



Jed Rasula, 2nd of 4 pages, January 19, 1979.

"Did you see Bertolucci's '1900'? Most provocative film I've seen in along while. I kept trying to imagine Pound in there somewhere -- of course he was, literally -- and what the fuck did he think the blackshirts were up to anyway? And anyway, where then within Pound's texts to connect the broadcasts with the writing? Not in opinions, I think, but in desires. In the desire to formulate a science of literature, a science of writing -- in other words a closure, a certainty, a determination in the shape of a prediction. Pre/before/dictare/speaking. Knowing before speaking, that bastard desire, coupling without fucking, living without dying."



Jed Rasula, 1st of 4 pages, May 9, 1988.

"I had just turned this juice on this morning, set to write you about your Olson talk ... Anyway: seems to me the audience at Buffalo should've bolted out of their seats & either fled, directly, or stood up & cheered. No middle ground was permissible as response. But Marjorie told me, last weekend in Santa Cruz, that Susan Howe was livid with rage at your talk. You want to tell me more about it???"

Maybe she, and others, were horrified by having what Olson was about--by being up against--revealed to them at last, without the usual hocus pocus of literary history, with its subsidiary stories of the ghetto-blastor beats, Swamp Fox & the black mountain boys, head-in-oven confessionalists, and way over "tother end of the bog, poet laureates of each & every state in the Union."



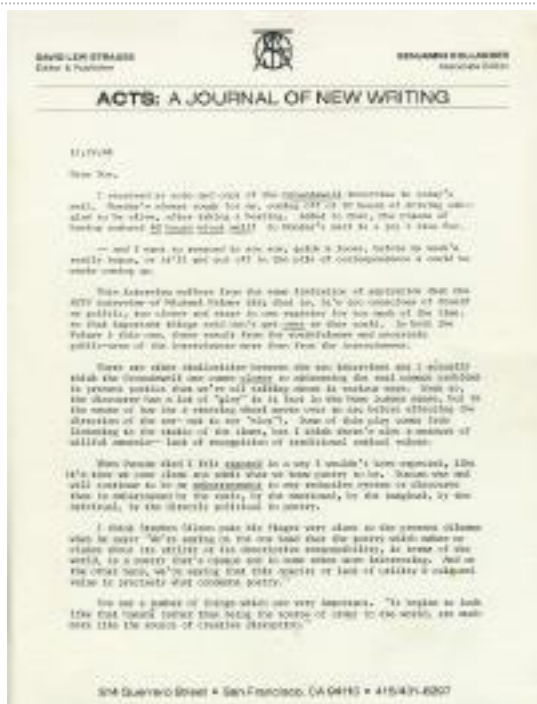
Ron Silliman, 2nd of 4 pages, April 16, 1979.

"You use in your letter certain terms whose meaning I suspect is not identical to the ones I would use for them. For example 'theory.' To say that 'poetry as an act of language has never had a legitimate place in theory' (Plato? Croce Jakobson?) proposes a very different model of what a theory wld be than any I'd adopt. For me it is fairly simple: an articulation of what one can see of one's own work to date & that of others. I wld certainly say that theory always follows & to some extent serves just that cleanup purpose, to lower the need to repeat the tried already. Who now needs to invent collage techniques for poetry?"



Ron Johnson, "Words as Objects: Three Undergrounds," sent by David Levi Strauss, ca. 1988.

Handout "put together for Small Press Distribution" by Ron Johnson. Sent by Strauss to Don Byrd in a packet with other items. He has added his notes to the list: "Ron Johnson, Michael Palmer, Myself" to the "Objectivists--syntax as music"; Mary Ellen Solt to "Concrete Poetry--syntax as picture"; and Ron Silliman to "Language Poetry--syntax as intellect."



David Levi Strauss, 2 pages, April 11, 1988.

“When Duncan died I felt exposed in a way I wouldn’t have expected, like it’s time we clean and admit what we know poetry to be. Duncan was and will continue to be an embarrassment to any reductive system or discourse that is embarrassed by the vatic, by the emotional, by the imaginal, by the spiritual, by the directly political in poetry.”

At the end of the letter, Strauss shared that he had read Byrd’s “Technics of Travel.” “And halfway through the poem I realize I’m crying. I cried reading this poem and I was not embarrassed to cry. I cried at the clarity of the poem in contrast to the obfuscation of the discourse and I realized all over again that I am one of those who needs poetry.”



Barrett Watten, 1st of 3 pages, February 15, 1986.

“Many and complex responses to the particulars of your letter, probably to[o] many to actually write. You do seem somewhat overwilling to apply ‘end of history’ frame over ‘the troubles,’ as you say. That’s depressing as it seems to feed the ‘cosmic judgement’ motif that underlies the terror of the event. Later you corroborate this with a remark that Duncan, as a great shaman, planned this all out. This seems a default to the mythic at precisely the point where the reader, however unwilling, should keep his head and try to see what is being said.”







**Top: Snapshot by Don Byrd of Jonathan Williams, Clark Coolidge, and Paul Metcalf in front of Paul's daughter and son-in-law's restaurant, The Restaurant, in Lenox, Mass., ca. late 1970s.**

**Bottom: Snapshot by Don Byrd of Paul Metcalf in front of The Restaurant, ca. late 1970s.**



**Nancy Metcalf (with back to photographer), Margie Byrd, Paul Metcalf, Jonathan Williams, Adrienne Metcalf (Paul's daughter), Clark Coolidge, and Tom Meyer. Photograph taken by Don Byrd at Adrienne Metcalf and Alan Weinman's The Restaurant, Lenox, Mass., ca. late 1970s.**



Bernadette Mayer in her and Lewis Warsh's apartment, ca. 1979. Photo by Don Byrd.



Gary Synder reading in Albany, ca. 1973. Photo by Don Byrd.

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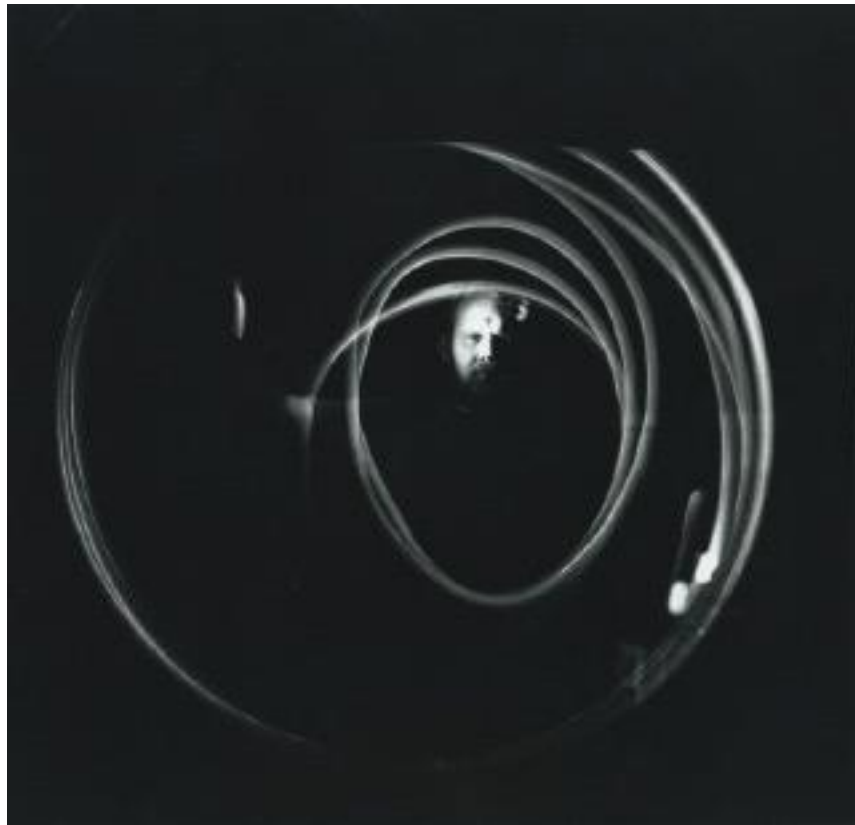
## Don Byrd (1944– )

Donald J. Byrd is a poet, sound artist, scholar and Professor Emeritus of English at the State University of New York at Albany. In addition to his poetry, he is known for his scholarship and theoretical work in the fields of philosophy, literary analysis and information theory. Byrd's engagement with an extended circle of writers who were exploring the nature and meaning of writing itself is reflected in his correspondence with: Charles Bernstein, Robert Bertholf, Richard Blevins, George Butterick, Clark Coolidge, Guy Davenport, Robert Duncan, Clayton Eshleman, Robert Grenier, Richard Grossinger, Lindy Hough, Susan Howe, Ken Irby, Robert Kelly, Gerrit Lansing, Nathaniel Mackey, Paul Metcalf, Jed Rasula, Ron Silliman, David Levi Strauss, Barrett Watten, and Douglas Wolf, among others.

His chapbook, *Technics of Travel*, was published by Zealot-Tansy press in 1984. *Aesop's Garden*, his first book-length poem, was published by North Atlantic (1976) and his second book-length poem, *The Great Dimestore Centennial*, was published by Station Hill (1986). His *Charles Olson's "Maximus"* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1980) is considered essential reading for the understanding of Olson. Byrd's *The Poetics of the Common Knowledge* (SUNY University Press,

1993) is a “call literally for a new poetry, a new making, that manifests the possibility for sense-making in a postmodern condition without universals or absolutes.” In his lifetime, he proposes to complete one-hundred volumes that will produce a set which he refers to as *The Nomad’s Encyclopedia*.

In 1982, Don Byrd helped his friend Jed Rasula bring the literary magazine *Wch Way* back from an extended hiatus. The two would co-edit *Wch Way*, no. 4 and Byrd would continue to participate with the little magazine until its final issue in 1985. Don Byrd’s scholarship and poetry have appeared in numerous little magazines and journals, including *Artforum*, *Aux Arcs*, *Boundary 2*, *Cottonwood Review*, *Creedences*, *Hambone*, *Io*, *The New England Quarterly*, *O.ARS*, *Sarcophagus*, *Sagetrieb*, *Stanford Humanities Review*, *Sulfur*, *Sun & Moon*, *Tansy*, *Vort*, and *Wch Way*.



Don Byrd, untitled self-portrait, ca. 1986.

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## Summary of the Don Byrd Archive

### Correspondence

Correspondence with his fellow poets and writers, including Charles Bernstein (2 folders), Robert Bertholf (3 folders), Richard Blevins (3 folders), George Butterick (2 folders), Clark Coolidge (2 folders), Guy Davenport (2 folders), Edward Dorn (2 folders), Robert Duncan, Clayton Eshleman (4 folders), Robert Grenier (2 folders), Richard Grossinger (4 folders), Lindy Hough, Susan Howe (2 folders), Ken Irby (12 folders), Robert Kelly, Gerrit Lansing (4 folders), Nathaniel Mackey, Paul Metcalf (24 folders), Jed Rasula (17 folders), Edward Sanders (2 folders), Ron Silliman (2 folders), David Levi Strauss (4 folders), and Barrett Watten.

### Audio Visual

Don Byrd avidly recorded and made copies of recordings of the spoken word. These recordings were often shared with his friends. There are recordings of John Ashbery, Bruce Andrews, Charles Bernstein, Paul Blackburn, Robin Blaser, Don Byrd, Clark Coolidge, Fielding Dawson, Edward Dorn, Robert Duncan, Robert Grenier, Christer Hennix, Anselm Hollo, Ken Irby, Gerrit Lansing, Jackson MacLow, Paul Metcalf, Charles Olson, Edward Sanders, Gary Snyder, John Yau, and Louis Zukofsky among others. Over 100 recordings.

### Photographs

Color snapshots and black and white photographic portraits of poets taken by Don Byrd in the 1970s and 1980s. Subjects include William Bronk, Clark Coolidge, Robert Duncan, Gerrit Lansing, Paul

Metcalf, Bernadette Mayer, Joel Oppenheimer, Gary Synder, Lewis Warsh, and Jonathan Williams, among others. Approximately 50 photographs.

### **Publications**

A complete set of publications, in addition to his books, in which Don Byrd appears, including *Action/Image* (1984), *Acts* (1989), *Athanor* (1976), *Aux Arcs* (1972–77), *Creedences* (1975–82), *Hambone* (1984–94), *Io* (1972–89), *Mulch* (1975), *O.ARS* (1982–89), *Sarcophagus* (1977–80), *Sagetrieb* (1983), *Tansy* (1970–72), *Truck* (1974), *Vort* (1973), and *Wch Way* (1982–85).

The archive comprises approximately 17 linear feet (13 boxes).

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