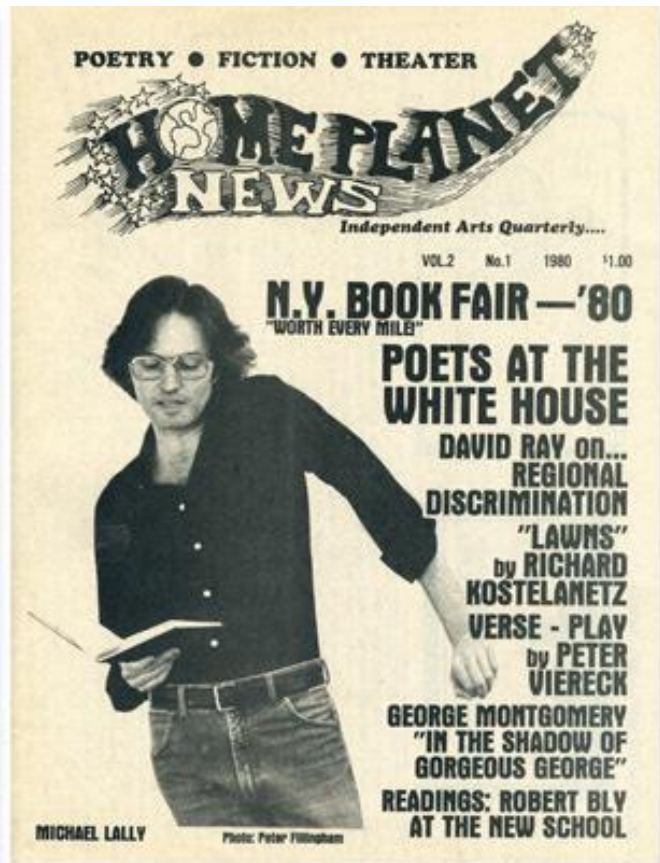


## Michael Lally Archive

The archive contains extensive material documenting the life and work of poet, small press publisher, and actor Michael Lally. It is particularly strong in correspondence related to Lally's involvement with the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets during their formative years and the poetry communities in Iowa City, Washington, D.C., and New York City. The diversity of the material in the archive is a reflection of the wide arc of Michael Lally's life and is also the archive's strength.



Michael Lally on the cover of *Little Caesar*, no. 11, 1980. The issue also includes poetry by Michael and an interview with him conducted by Tim Dlugos.



Michael Lally on the cover of *Home Planet News*, vol. 2, no. 1, Summer, 1980.

*As a poet, a fearless, edgy poet, Michael Lally has been giving readers his version of history for the past 35 years. He has done so with the political forthrightness and performance punch of Ginsberg, with the wit and language skills of O'Hara. But because of the place of poetry in this country, a bard like Lally, while a member of the Pantheon to all manner of poets, remains unknown to the public at large...*

— Bob Holman

*The François Villon of the 70s.*

— John Ashbery

*Michael Lally is a fine poet and looks straight into your eyes.*

— James Schuyler in "The Morning of the Poem"

*The Cosmic Jitterbug! He's all appetite.*

— Ray DiPalma

*A damn good poet, man.*

## Brief Biography of Michael Lally

Michael Lally was born into an Irish American South Orange, New Jersey working class family. He attended the University of Iowa where he quickly bonded with Ted Berrigan who was teaching at the Iowa Writers' Workshop (Berrigan would later in 1977 address his "New Personal Poem" to Lally). In 1968 Michael came in second in his run for sheriff of Johnson County, Iowa on the Peace and Freedom ticket. While in Iowa he also became friends with with Etheridge Knight of the Black Arts Movement, as well as classmates Ray DiPalma and Alice Notley.

In 1969, Michael moved to Washington, D.C. to teach at Trinity College and became involved in the poetry scene there. He started the Mass Transit poetry reading series (1971–1974), considered an important incubator for Language Poetry and launched Some of Us Press (SOUP) with Lee Lally, Ed Cox, and Tina Darragh. SOUP was a collective that published his *The South Orange Sonnets* (1972) as well as first books by Bruce Andrews, Tim Dlugos, Terence Winch, and Lynne Dreyer. While living in a lesbian feminist collective commune with his wife and children, Michael began to explore his own sexuality with both men and women. He chose to call himself a "revolutionary faggot" rather than "bisexual" causing him to lose a job and friends. His lifestyle and the sexual openness of his poetry led to his inclusion in gay publications.

In 1975 Michael separated from his first wife, the poet Lee Lally, and moved to New York. In New York he started O Press, which published Bruce Andrews, Terence Winch, and Diane Ward. In an attempt to unify what seemed to be distinct communities of poets he edited the important anthology *None of the Above: New Poets of the USA* (The Crossing Press, 1976) which included Language poets (Ron Silliman, Bruce Andrews, and Ray DiPalma), New York School poets (Alice Notley and Joe Brainard) as well as poets working outside any particular community association such as Patti Smith. Lally and John Ashbery were the inaugural readers for the Ear Inn reading series (organized by Ted Greenwald and Charles Bernstein) in fall 1978.

Michael left New York for Los Angeles in 1982 to pursue opportunities in film and television as a writer and actor. He was in numerous movies, television episodes, and plays. In addition to writing screenplays and plays, he was also a script doctor and helped with the narration for *Drugstore Cowboy*. Shortly after arriving in California his *Hollywood Magic* (Little Caesar, 1982) was published by Dennis Cooper (who had already published Lally in *Little Caesar* magazine). Cooper encouraged his involvement in the Beyond Baroque reading series. Later Michael would co-found with Eve Brandstein the Poetry in Motion series (1988–1996) that garnered much media attention with its mix of Hollywood celebrities (Alec Baldwin, Robert Downey, Jr., and Ally Sheedy) and poets (Jack Grapes, Hubert Selby, Jr., and Wanda Coleman).

His remarriage and move back to New Jersey in 1999 is told in Michael's poem "It Happens" in *It's Not Nostalgia* (Black Sparrow, 1999), a collection that received the American Book Award. In 2006, Lally began the blog [Lally's Alley](#) where he writes daily reflections on matters ranging from his personal life, movies, and politics to poetry.

## Selected Highlights from the Archive



Letter from Bruce Andrews, Sep. 20, 1971, 4 pp.; Letter from Joe Brainard, Mar. 16, 1973, 3 pp.; Letter from Joe Brainard, July 21, 1975, 1 pp.



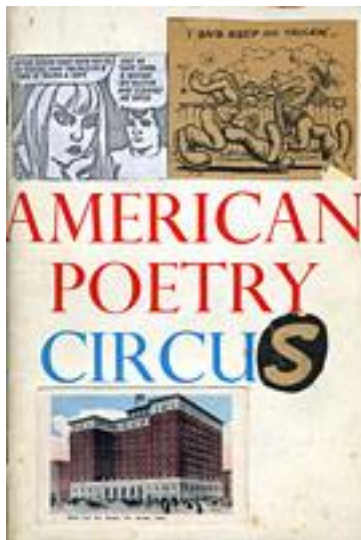
Inside of wedding invitation for Michael Lally and Penelope Milford. Each unique card was lettered by Brainard. Cards were placed in colorful folded hand made paper; Manuscript with corrections and additions for 'The Gift or 'Out of Joint', a collaborative essay between Charles Bernstein and Michael Lally, 1977-1978; Letter from Ray DiPalma, Sept. 26, 1968 2 pp. 'Tomorrow is my birthday (birfday) and I'm twenty-five (25), single, and relatively unpublished.'



2nd page of Sept. 26, 1968 letter from Ray DiPalma, includes 'A poem from this summer'; Letter from Bernstein explaining his 'substitution process' for working with Lally's sections of their collaborative essay that reflected upon the then current state of poetry. Bernstein also shares his thoughts concerning how Clark Coolidge, Ron Silliman and other writers are dealt with in the essay; Tim Dlugos manuscript of 'If We're So Smart Why Aren't We Rich / For Michael Lally,' Aug. 5, 1982 with letter postmarked Aug. 6, 1982.



Letter from K.K. (Kim) Merker concerning the publication of Lally's *Dues* by The Stone Wall Press, Mar. 10, 1975; Letter from Ron Silliman, Apr. 4, 1972, 2 pp.; Letter from Terence Winch, Oct. 12, 1975, 1 p.



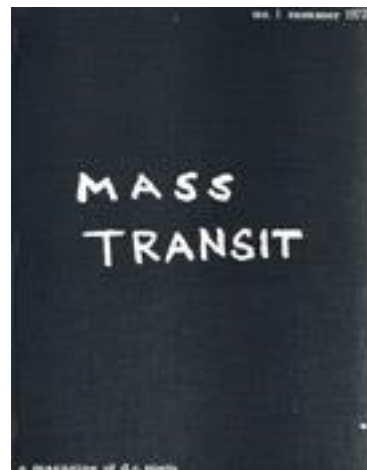
First and second page of a letter from George Mattingly, reflecting on the chaotic last days of Something Else Press, Jan. 7, 1974, 2 pp.; Michael Lally. *American Poetry Circus*, artwork with original collaged materials for an unpublished book; Michael Lally. *The South Orange Sonnets*, by Some Of Us Press, 1972. Edition of 500. Upon receiving a copy of *The South Orange Sonnets*, Jerome Rothenberg wrote Michael a postcard, Dec. 6, 1973, (in the Archive) that said: 'South Orange Sonnets came to me as a complete & happily completely happy surprise – a real knockout of a poem.'



*Grok*. vol.1, no.2, Feb./May 1966. Edited by William MacNeil. With poem by Michael Lally; Micheal Lally, ed. *None of the Above: New Poets of the USA*. The Crossing Press, 1976. This important and inclusive anthology presented Language poets (Ron Silliman, Bruce Andrews, and Ray DiPalma), New York School poets (Alice Notley and Joe Brainard) as well as poets working outside any particular community association such as Patti Smith; *Middle Earth*. vol. 1, no. IV, 1968. Bi-weekly underground newspaper. Published in Iowa City from 1967 to 1968, and edited by David Miller. Included Michael Lally's 'Preface to the Ballical Lyrids.' There are '57 typographical errors' in the printed poem according to a marked up version elsewhere in the archive.



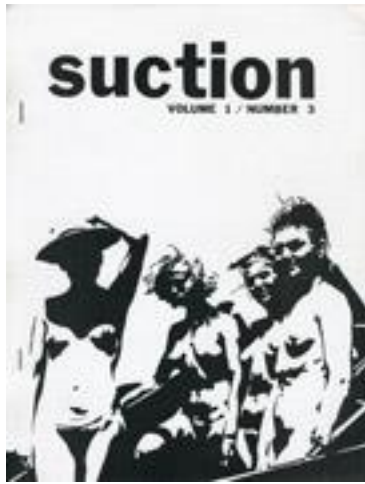
*Poems of the People*. no. 1. Quincy, Illinois. 'Poems of the People is a press service (something like LNS) – it distributes poems, stories, reviews from the alternate culture to underground/movement/community papers all over the country, free.' Including poems by Robert Bly, Vincent Ferrini, and Michael Lally among others. Eight issues of the mimeo were published between 1969–1971; *Hey Lady*. no. 3, 1969. Published by Morgan Press in Milwaukee 'in an edition of 300 copies using hand set type and a hand fed press.' Including Dave Margoshes, Anselm Hollo, Michael Lally and others; *Blue Suede Shoes*. no. 9, 1971. Edited by Keith Abbott. Including work by Keith Abbott, Michael Lally, Tom Clark, Paul Violi, Anne Waldman, Anselm Hollo, and Bruce Andrews, and others.



*Buffalo Stamps*. no. 3/4 (double issue), 1972. 'Poem magazine' edited by Simon Schuchat and Mat Stoner. Front and back covers by Gregory Corso. Issue includes work by Theresa Stern (Richard Hell and Tom Verlaine), Ted Berrigan and Ron Padgett, Andrei Codrescu, Ray DiPalma, Allen Ginsberg, Alice Notley, Mao Tse-Tung, Bruce Andrews, Tom Raworth, and others; *Matchbook: magazine of 1-word poetry*. no. E & H (double 'Veterans Administration' issue), 1972? Edited by Joyce Holland (Dave Morice). Including James Schuyler, Paul Violi, Allen Ginsberg, Bill Berkson, Keith Abbott, Aram Saroyan, and others. Michael Lally contributed to the 'H' issue; *Mass Transit: A Magazine of D.C. Poets*. no. 1, Summer 1973. Edited by Terence Winch. Including P. Inman, Tim Dlugos, Michael Lally, Terence Winch, and others.



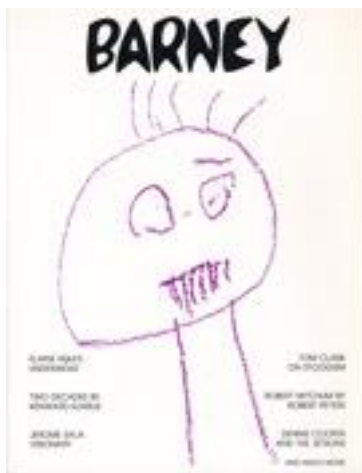
*Mass Transit: A Magazine of D.C. Poets*. no. 2, Fall-Winter, 1973. Edited by Michael Lally. On the cover is Michael Lally, Lee Lally, Terence Winch, Ed Cox, Ed Zhanizer, Peter Inman, Tim Dlugos, and others. Lally started a weekly open reading series called 'Mass Transit' in the Washington, D.C. Community Bookstore that he helped run. *Mass Transit*, the little magazine was a product of that series. There were five issues published; *Fag Rag*. no. VI, Fall-Winter, 1973. Includes Lally's 'It Might Begin Anywhere.' Staff included Steven Abbott, Charley Shively, Jon Wieners, and others; *Strange Faeces*. no. 12 & 13 (the last), Apr. 1973. Edited by Opal and Ellen Nations, London. Front and back covers by Ben Vautier. Including Opal L. Nations, Ron Silliman, Tom Veitch, Michael Lally, and others.



*Suction: The Magazine of the Actualist Movement*. Vol. 1, no. 3, 1973. Edited by Darrell Gray in Iowa City. Including Gerard Malanga, Ted Berrigan, Ray DiPalma, Octavio Paz, Joyce Holland, Alice Notley, George Mattingly, Andrei Codrescu, Anselm Hollo, Michael Lally, and others; *Clown War*. no. 5, March 1974. Edited by Bob Heman. Including Ray DiPalma, Allan Kornblum, Michael Lally, and others; *Everybody's Ex-Lover*. no. 1, January 1974. Washington, D.C. Edited by P. Inman, Lisa Shea and Doug Lang. Including Terence Winch, P. Inman, Lynne Dreyer, and Michael Lally among others.



An advertisement for Some of Us Press on the back cover of *Everybody's Ex-Lover*; *Bad Breath / Stage Ax / Emily Likes the TV*, 1975. Published in Portland. This issue includes: Kathy Acker, Bruce Andrews, Ho Chi Minh, Allen Ginsberg, Anne Waldman, Opal L. Nations, Paul Violi, Maureen Owen, John Giorno, Michael Lally and others; *End of the World Speshul Anthology*. Vancouver: Blewointmentpress, 1977. Including bill bissett, Jeremy Adler, Michael Lally, and others. Blewointmentpress was a press of bill bissett.



*Garvin's Poetry Show*, 1980. Published in Washington, D.C. A white double pocket folder with 17 photocopies of handwritten poems, other poets in the publication include Joseph Brodsky, Louise Glück, George Starbuck, and Diane Wakowski. Shown: 'Yet & Still' by Michael Lally; *Barney: The Modern Stone-Age Magazine*. no. 1, 1983. Edited by Jack Skelley. Published by Fred & Barney Press; *Hollywood Review*. no. 1, Spring 1991. Only one issue of this journal was published by Poetry in Motion with editors Eve Brandstein and Michael Lally. It reflected the mix of poets (Lewis MacAdams and Jack Grapes) and Hollywood celebrities (Ally Sheedy and Robert Downey, Jr.) that participated in the Poetry in Motion series. Includes 'Last Exit to L.A.' an interview conducted by Lally with Hubert Selby, Jr. (the original full recording of the interview is included in the Archive).

## Summary of the Michael Lally Archive

### Correspondence

Correspondence related to his literary activities includes many manuscripts and a range of ephemera from poets, friends, and colleagues including: Kathy Acker, John Ashbery, Paul Auster, Bill Berkson, Charles Bernstein (including a "collaborative essay"), Ted Berrigan, Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, Jim Brodey, Rudy Burckhardt, Tim Dlugos, Kenward Elmslie, Elaine Equi, Merrill Gilfillan, John Godfrey, Darrell Gray, Ted Greenwald, Robert Grenier, Barbara Guest, Lyn Hejinian, Leland Hickman, Anselm Hollo, Christopher Isherwood, Etheridge Knight, Kenneth Koch, Doug Lang, Phillip Lopate, Bernadette Mayer, Dave Morice, Eileen Myles, Gerald Nicosia, Alice Notley, Marjorie Perloff, Tom Raworth, Jerome Rothenberg, Jerome Sala, Harris Schiff, Peter Schjeldahl, Simon Schuchat, Hubert Selby, Jr., Ron Silliman, Lorenzo Thomas, Tony Towle, Paul Violi, Diane Ward, Lewis Warsh, Barrett Watten, and Jonathan Williams. Correspondence is especially rich and extensive with Bruce Andrews (includes collaborative manuscripts), Max Blagg, Joe Brainard, Gerald Burns, Tina Darragh, Ray DiPalma, and Terence Winch. (See also publishing correspondence below.) Also included is correspondence with friends and colleagues related to ML's career as an actor and screenwriter in Hollywood such as Alec Baldwin, Carrie Fisher, Ralph Bakshi, and Sharon Stone.

### Publishing correspondence

Correspondence related to his publishing activities includes: Steve Abbott, Michael Andre, Victor Coleman, Dennis Cooper, Bill Corbett, Michael Friedman, John Giorno, Jim Haining, Robert Hershon, Vincent Katz, Allan Kornblum, Annabel Lee, George Mattingly, John Martin, Douglas Messerli, K.K. (Kim) Merker, Opal L. Nations, Aram Saroyan, Charley Shively, Jack Skelley, Morty Sklar, and Bill Zavatsky.

### Publishing

There are approx. 4 linear feet of material related to ML's published work including manuscripts, drafts, some publicity, and proofs. There are an additional approx. 900 pages of assorted manuscript pages for both published and unpublished poems; approx. 2400 pages of unpublished manuscripts, including short fiction, novel, essays, and poetry; 5 spring bound manuscript books with poems in chronological order, approx. 1500 pp.

### Other writing

Manuscripts for essays on poetry, gender and sexuality and other topics, approx. 1 1/2 linear feet.

### Journals, calendars, daybooks, scrapbooks, and address books

3 Scrapbooks, 1942 – ca. 1986; 32 calendar books and daybooks, 1982 – 2010; 13 journals, approx. 1000 pp.; and 13 address books.

### Magazines, newspapers and books

Approx. 350 newspapers and magazines containing work by Michael Lally, including alternative press newspapers such as *All You Can Eat* (1972), *Fag Rag* (1973), *The Great Speckled Bird* (1970-1971), and literary magazines *Blue Suede Shoes* (1971), *Bad Breath / Stage Ax / Emily Likes the TV* (1975), and *Buffalo Stamps* (1972). There are also approximately 20 anthologies with work by Lally and approximately 20 books by Lally.

### Hollywood

Screenplays and play scripts written by ML, contracts and other items related to ML's acting career.

*The archive comprises approximately 44 linear feet (33 boxes, plus oversize).*

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