

lost? u r not alone

By Linda Ball

All sorts of people—beards, catalog types, teenagers, middle aged, get together from time to time to listen to poetry.

Sometimes they crowd into The Gate. This is a small dark basement room at Trinity Cathedral. It gets hot and there aren't any more chairs but still they crowd in and stand and wait.

At the entrance to the Gate is a poster with a quote from John F. Kennedy:

"Healthy controversy is the hallmark of healthy change."

The room is clean. The tables and chairs are painted bright orange, green, yellow. There is a bar lighted with red bulbs. It sells T-shirts and Galt posters.

THE GATE is a coffee house opened last September by the University Christian Movement. A five 100 seat, up to you entry stage. "If you are lost the gate is the place you will not be alone."

We sit waiting for the reading to begin. It's a Cleveland State University student, asks if anyone else would like to read who hasn't signed up yet. He waves a yellow sheet with a list already long.

A high school boy opens the brown manila envelope he is carrying and spins pages and pages of poetry onto the table in front of us. "Which one should I read?"

poetry is happening more and more these days in attics, garages and even church basements this is the story of a poetry happening. P.D. SEP 23 '66

X Pato - Chris
 Harry up I need three. Hey, has anyone seen d.a.?

There is a lot of discussion about d.a. levy. "Is he here?" "Will he read?" "Did you know he read some of his poems in a third grade class?"

d.a. levy is the reigning poet of The Gate.

The poetry begins. There is a specified arrangement for the readings. Four poets read for five minutes each, followed by a ten-minute intermission.

Many read almost shyly, tentatively and hurriedly return to their seats. Others read exuberantly with anger, hate or compassion. Poems are written on scratch paper, notebook paper, cardboard and in elaborate little books with abstract covers.

THE AUDIENCE forms black silhouettes against the lighted platform where the poets read, and the candle on the podium throws dark shadows against the faces of the speakers.

Some of the better poems are sparks of insight. Others are only rough-edged expressions of anger, but everyone is moved to attention and respect.

d.a. levy is introduced with a flourish. He is bearded and compellingly small.

"The Support Your City's Poets act has collected only \$2.45," he raves. "This may be the last time you see me here. I'm going to start begging." A quarter thanks in the floor beside him and he picks it up. "100," says d.a. levy.

He reads several of his poems. One, "The Para-Olympic Manifesto," is an exposition of the poetry he writes:

Our concrete poems are written in poetry not words and intention of all Western sophisticated ignorance . . . each poem . . . a child playing in a sandbox in the middle of a race riot, each poem—a thing of momentary for the eyes of an observer, each poem . . . a new death of Words As Art each poem—a death, each poem—a part.

A POET named Randy Rhoady walks to the front of the room. He is wearing a red woven sweater and a gold sash. He is tall, thin and has long, well combed hair. He reads:

Close your suitcase and to the rain then Harry like a mosquito and crawl into the night, run faster, faster until you're free where you can be simply whatever you choose they say you are lost but what they really mean is that they can't bury you relatives take care of paralytics and dainties all the grinning time bingers with their backs to the rainbows

The heat sits heavily in the room, but few leave and more keep coming. Twenty-three poets read poems of Cleveland, politics, political protest, despair, love and of their thoughts.



Poets at the Gate include (front) r/a and d. a. levy, (middle) J. E. Wagner, Walter Keller and Kent Taylor, (back) John Carl Miller.

"I couldn't sleep one night, so I thought of this, and I remembered," one shaggy haired poet says softly.

NEARLY all The Gate's reading poets are poetry journalists—the 300-page Quarterly, the Beginning, The Word, The Night Paper, The latest copy of The Night Paper comes wrapped in a Wonder Bread six-pack bag. The journals and little mimeographed books of poems are on sale at one of the tables.

Programs at the Gate include panel discussions and folk singing as well as poetry. A big poetry reading is well mediated with one or more of the poets peeling out verses on the duplicating machine that he usually uses for news and stirring stuff.

The cathedral is on Euclid at E. 12th Street.

The Gate is for Friday-night people and according to d.a. levy it is not recommended for teeny boppers.

perpendicular porpoises

*vitalness, viet-vacuumed age
 formed for to aspirin-coated at window
 time of voice box curatulations
 and soul inertia*

*distastfully, diabolic age
 stamped with a modern imprimatur
 time of careful box love promises
 and leaf boys*

*petrid, pluperfect age
 programmed as thin dingbats
 time of perpendicular porpoises
 once called men*

—cccc



Randy Rhoady



Grace Bricker