

Poets House, NYC (revised)

by Roberto C. Garcia

1

Finally I'm home,
The poets welcome me too,
Such decorum,
Considering they are,
So many,
Soon my arms, hands are tired,
From hugging—shaking hands,
Ears ringing, from French and Italian lips
Kisses on each cheek,
It's a good time, until they ask me to leave,
Oh, you can't stay, your poetry
Is out in the world, when you die
Your volumes will make their way
Not just here but everywhere

2

So I stretch borrowed time,
Except for the English,
Checking Lépine watches,
No poet is rude—
Old rabbis brood on shelves, reciting
Holocaust poems, psalms, odd
Them sitting next to Light Verse,
Lyres metrical, lyrical, next to Critics, frowning
“Firstly, a poet, is to be, a technician”
Poo!—today's technicians are academics first,
Then are they crowned poets, right or wrong,
Frenchmen double in drunken laughter,

Merrymaking to African poets, who keep a trust
For being Bards, in their palms

3

O Beatniks, freedom raunchy,
Each line of verse a flag
Waving, over liberated country,
I want to sit with them
The smoke is too much, too early
To drink, the men hitting on me
A Mr. Norton extracts me from, a tricky conversation
So now, the Anthologies,
Yes, this is nice
Hors d'ouvres are served, Tea
A fireplace even, we sit making civility,
O *African*-American poets, spy us
Out the corner of their lives, tucked away
Near poems on Art, Asia, Austral Asia, Ballads

4

Theirs is a quiet corner, the Anthologists
Clear throats, as if to say,
"What? Well, don't look at me."
After dinner I toast the "Parting Glass",
Leave through the back, a line of poets
Greets me, some on a stage of books, performing
Waiting to get in, dead poets unrecognized,
Obscure poets slamming—Dionysian,
Rimbaud with a pipe, a bottle of Absinthe,
All waiting to get in, through clouds of Buddha
More hugs, more handshakes, kisses,
A long chat with Bukowski,
Offers me his girlfriend, offers me a swig
From his flask, and after, I begin to dream

