

# 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

