

# ***Light Years: an Anthology on Sociocultural Happenings (Multimedia in the East Village, 1960-1966)***

Edited and with an Introduction by Carol Bergé

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"These chronicles are as relevant to the economic collapse, protracted war, stifling social conservatism, and potentials for a new arts scene of the end of the first decade of the new century as they were to the beginning of the 1960s." - multimedia artist and author Karl Young

"In some ways *Light Years* is a heady prose poem of names. Some are familiar to the world at large. If you were there, if you share the nostalgia, if you're an underground poetry fan... Each memoir amplifies the chorus of praise and provocation... Bergé heartily confirms that this was a life worth living, filled with outsized personalities." - lecturer and author Lucy Lippard

## **Over 650 pages re the nascent beat poetry scene in 1960s Manhattan.**

### **Memoir chapters by 36 artists who were "there", including:**

**Jerome Rothenberg:** I was given a poem in the dream... a poem I read aloud... where I could feel the words coming in bursts but couldn't salvage them... I only knew the poem's name was "Seedings" & that it followed after a performance of "cokboy" in which I had to improvise the final lines, unable to remember what they were... Between poems I made a comment about Duncan's peculiar way of reading, knowing he was dead but seeing him sitting in the audience & nodding at me when I started reading...

**Ronald Tavel:** Then one November evening in '64 while I was reading, Andy Warhol appeared with a small entourage, in search of voices he would need now as he shifted from the making of silent to sound films. Gerard Malanga, at that time the artist's right-hand man, had asked him to fall by at my reading. Andy listened to me with patience and when I was finished sent the proverbial embossed card to my table asking me to join him at his. When I made my way through the crowd to where he was sitting, he smiled, suddenly shook my hand and, without further ado, popped the time-tested, Wanna be in movies?

Later he explained it was a certain voice-over-sound he was looking for, someone to read, preferably the telephone directory, while his "screenography" of Jean Harlow, to be christened HARLOT, unreeled. He told me that whatever I chose to read or perhaps improvise should not be even indirectly related to what was to be seen, but that my hushed underbreath would function instead as the appropriate accompaniment to the whatever on-screen. It was as an actor of sorts then that I entered underground cinema and not a writer: that was still several months off. And so my serious involvement with the Manhattan poetry scene came to an end and my days of acting, directing and scripting began. My writing of poems fizzled as well as the pressure on me to produce more scripts more and more rapidly and often lengthy essays documenting them increased. I tried to keep up my attendance at the readings, and my friendships with the poets to whom I was now rather close, but when in the summer of '65 and as a direct spinoff of my involvement with film, I opened The Theatre of the Ridiculous, there was no longer much time. Writing this right now in the midst of furnishing extensive aesthetic notation and biographical material to the estimated-will-take twenty years

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Andy Warhol film project being conducted jointly by MoMA and the Whitney Museum of American Art, I am beginning to feel like some species of barely breathing archeological dig. But, then again, forking over the facts of one's life in the guise of creative enterprise, along with the making of this very subordinate clause, is formula-perfect postmodern impressionism, no?

**Carol Bergé:** The Tenth Street Coffeeshop opened and began readings. One night I went in, with poems I'd written in Mexico and Europe. Ed Kaplan was in process of selling his share to Mickey Ruskin, a darkly handsome New Jersey lawyer who was drawn to the arts. His partner was Bill Mackey. Unlike the West Village coffeeshops, this was a tiny space, divided by a trellis-like barrier into two sections; at the far end was a coffee-bar. A barrier meant they could fit a few more tables into the space. It was warm and well-lit. People were reading their poems aloud; the M.C. was another lawyer manqué, Howard Ant, who also wrote poems and was a gambler, a bespectacled gent who lived in the West Village in a cellar apartment and whose poems sounded surrealistic to me. He and poet Ree Dragonette started the readings. I kept going back, not reading, just listening. One night there was a reading unlike anything I ever experienced: Jackson Mac Low was apparently mumbling words that had no sense or order and called them poetry. I and others were very upset; Howard asked Jackson to leave. He did, with his small coterie of friends. I took a strange feeling away from that night's events; it haunted me as I fell asleep in the tiny room upstairs from my Gallery. The classic ground under my feet shook-- something was being presented that felt threatening because it didn't meet my preconceived standards of "poetry." I decided to force myself to be open to what Jackson was doing.

**Jackson Mac Low:** Some of the earlier readings included music, as did some of mine. (I remember one in which I performed some of my Asymmetries with the clarinetist Nicholas Roussakis, subsequently a professor of music at Columbia University.) I also remember one reading organized by La Monte Young, during which he read, among other things, "acognitive poems" [or was it "noncognitive"?] by the philosopher and [despite his avoidance of the term for himself] artist Henry Flynt, the originator of "concept art"--art in which concepts themselves are the artworks--to be distinguished from "conceptual art," in which concepts are embodied or conveyed but are not themselves the artworks.

**Judith Malina:** Rochelle Owens' *Futz* was in rehearsal on the set of Ken Brown's *The Brig* when the feds came in and shut down the theatre on October 17, 1963. A spectacle ensued, the poets and artists surrounded the theatre - their theatre. The police set up lines with horses. Julian called out from the second-story window that there would be a performance that evening for those who could make it past the police barricades. Ladders were brought from other off-Broadway theatres and thrown up to the windows. The public climbed up over the roof as the police tried to pull them down. We gave our final performance on 14<sup>th</sup> Street and at the end of the play, the police carried us from *The Brig* set into the paddy wagons and the downtown lock-up.

**Rochelle Owens:** Enter Fee Dawson, a beer-bellied w.a.s.p. who was one of the most viperish misogynists that ever slung a scrotal sac between hindquarters. At some point that summer evening, Dawson focused his oyster-colored eyes on me and began to scream about how I represented all that was wrong with the mid-West, how 'bourgeois' I looked, critical, unsexy, that I reminded him of his old-maid aunt or sister. Drunk and shittily obnoxious, he howled a demand that I pull out a checkbook and buy a painting of his. At the time I thought it was because I was wearing horn-rimmed glasses, a black and white cotton polka-dot dress with a full nylon crinoline slip that created a graceful umbrella effect, black patent-leather pumps and a wide red patent-leather belt. After all, I worked in an office as a typist-clerk, and it would not have been appropriate

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for me to dress 'arty' by wearing a leotard, and Indian paisley skirt and viscous brown leather sandals, the bohemian look that was de rigeur at the time. Besides, that look was not me. Judith Malina had also objected to my taste in clothes. She had ridiculed me for dressing like a suburban housewife.

As Dawson ranted, Hettie came to my defense, saying that I came from Brooklyn, and not the mid-West, and that I was a wonderful poet whom Roi was publishing in his magazine Yugen. Dawson grumbled something about wanting more beer and sandwiches, and scuttled off like a fat crab towards the Jones' refrigerator, opened the door, pulled out the food, baby bottles belonging to the two baby daughters of Hettie and Roi, beer bottles, apple juice bottles, cranberry juice bottles, date juice bottles, eggs, frankfurters, grapefruits, honey bottles, ice-cubes from the freezer, feta cheese, jam jars, ketchup, kaiser rolls, lemons, marmalade and matzoh, nutcake, oleomargarine, peanut-brittle, quince-jam, rugala salad, salami, tiny carrots, ugly fruit imported from occupied Palestine ordered specially for Roi, virgin olive oil, waxy yellow beans, X-tra rich unpasteurized cottage cheese, yellow yams, and zucchini bread, laid them out on the floor, ogled an 'earthy-looking broad' built like a brick-shit-house named Margaret Randall, and on fat buttocks and calves inched stalwartly through the foodstuffs towards the openmouthed surprised girl.

**Margaret Randall:** The connection between the New York City coffee house poetry scene of the sixties and *El Corno Emplumado* remained vivid, intense. The journal introduced William Carlos Williams, Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Elaine de Kooning, Cid Corman, Ed Dorn, Susan Sherman, Ted Enslin, Denise Levertov, Walter Lowenfels, Robert Creeley, Carol Berge, Jackson Mac Low, Paul Blackburn, Diane Wakoski, Al Young, Robert Kelly, Jerome Rothenberg, Roberts Blossom, Larry Eigner, Gary Snyder, Rini Templeton, Kenneth Patchen, Thomas Merton and some two hundred others to a Latin American (and to some extent a world) audience.

**Kirby Congdon:** In the new poetry scenes on the East and West coast, there were few power-hungry doers and shakers. There were individuals who got readings going, sometimes got posters made, and who negotiated for time and space at the coffee houses. No person, however, could claim authority or other control in any social or literary way. Those who did have control were involved with scholastic publications, none of which could afford to recognize the more democratic plateaus of the great unwashed. A definition of the professionally-recognized literati could be: those who can only afford to admit you exist when they are sure you no longer need such recognition. I find this is still true some thirty years later. This attitude, of course, comes from a fairly long tradition of competition peculiar to America. Fostered first by the advertising business in the late Victorian era, this approach consisted then, as it does now, of blandly asserting that their academic product superceded any other. This tacit assumption was transferred to academia by our acceptance of rank: good, better, best. The schools require this approach to prove their financial standing for any inquiry from the public. Everything must be graded, charted and classified.

The Coffee-House Movement and the Mimeograph Revolution were necessary antidotes to this narrow, egotistical and paternal tradition that was so much in power in setting literary standards in the two decades after World War II.

I am not opposed to standards, taste, and sophisticated judgments, but if, in getting these, overall literary activity itself is ignored or denied, it keeps us culturally provincial. Yet well-established literati still hang on to the competitive hierarchies in literature as though the habit were a security blanket. The result is that they cannot give a kind word toward the activity of non-academic poets unless that word enhances their own position of divine authority and personal glory. The fear inherent behind their reservations only helps set that cement of provincialism which we have been trying to chip off since the early nineteenth century.

We who read at the coffee houses were keenly aware of scholastic skepticism, if not antagonism, toward our grass roots movement. I remember Jack Micheline deriding a poet who read his poem from a magazine in

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which the poem had been printed. He felt it was not only playing it overly safe in one's exposure to public reactions, but that it was pretentious for the poet to assert that he had had work accepted under professional auspices.

It doesn't matter who was correct; what matters is that we all cared about poetry, whatever our private opinions about this incident may have been. Our concern connected us directly to the history of literature because we knew what it consisted of, what its sources were, and how it survived. No one had more than tiny proof that we, too, were the history of literature. But we were there. Timid, uncertain, insecure in ourselves, but certain in the cause, we will always be there. Those who find it convenient, in their self-satisfied definition of success, to dismiss the avant garde as irrelevant or as embarrassing, dismiss themselves, for they have forgotten that the word, spoken or written, is spirit of the culture as a whole.

**Philip Corner:** That was a decade full of demonstrations.... : and every cause was just . Also great the singing that went with---a sure lesson to us all in relevance. The power of music that we sometimes had to search for. So both pleasure and duty combined to make almost any political street scene come-on by-chance., irresistible A few times I was able to add my own voice: the candlelight peace walk with the chimes from Carroll Drum Service sounding with voice unissons; the *New Style March (for a Free People)* keeping a strong beat yet avoiding banal riffs, alone on a snare drum because Max would not help me ( but said I could do it and I did)down Broadway at the head of a procession (for some good cause) and running into an old buddy from the Army Band--. A cop on-duty. A veteran's group (might as well get some benefit for being one) and the pacifists (Jackson of course withthem) made common cause. Aesthetic quality brought to the cause. We even teamed up with the BREAD AND PUPPET THEATER - PETER SCHUMANN's CentralEuropean-type "Passion Plays" proving highly adaptable to New-World Big-City uses. Although his fundamentally conservative conception prevented my being of use to him, a piece of mine was integrated into their performances. *Message Prelude* where, after a countdown with a (toy) rifle trained on the audience, is thrown away and roses instead thrown out. (Which in turn was protested by the leader of UpAgainstTheWallMother-fuckers "seize power now" revolutionary group who screamed at me "Next time a real rifle! Mu thuh Fuck kuh!!)

Impotent gestures too.... : deduction of a protest percentage from incometax returns. When (ofcourse) the IRS catches up, in the form of a nice-enough man just doing his job "Now that you've made your statement...." I told him I would not play games with him; so I told him where the bank was; "But **you** have got to go over and take it.

After the big march on Washington, where they/we failed to levitate the Pentagon...or stop the War. although an unbelievable popular success (and was not the Peace Movement grown so big basically because America was losing?) and every pop singer was getting off on "protest"..... I stopped going.

**Fielding Dawson:** Hubert Selby Jr. Anybody who knows him calls him Cubby. Gil called him that from the beginning. Gil being Gilbert Sorrentino. You'll notice that Last Exit to Brooklyn is dedicated to Gil... there's a good, unwritten story in all this.

...That very interesting gentleman named Fritz, in their youthful, Brooklyn friendships, where Fritz told some of the escapades in Last Exit to Cubby, and Cubby had the genius to write them down, and went to Gil for help because Gil had been to college and was married to Cubby's ex-girlfriend, Elsene. She knew Fritz, too. But once Cubby and Gil began on the book, Fritz, insofar as history was concerned, was out. The closeness established between Cubby and Gil or Gil and Cubby, rather, only admitted Elsene, and Cub's wife Tiny. Cubby wasn't gay, nor was Gil, but Cubby was explosive and, we gather from that feature story in The Voice a couple of years ago, he still is... those freakouts something to see. He doesn't hurt anybody, but

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he carries a message. Few can beat him at The Dozens. So, the book carries this power. I asked him how his mother liked it (Last Exit) and he said, "She loved it." Quote, unquote. Looking right at me. He was a deep cynic, and enjoyed no end watching how people reacted to him saying things like that: he loved telling me she loved it to shock me (it did), as if he was Mister Hyde, and she Doctor Jeckyll. They were very close. Gil treated Cubby, at home in his living room or in public, like the tamer treats the lion: a close, even profound but not too close, respect. Cubby's attitude toward Gil, in those days (but no longer), was Gil was educated, in that college way: Gil knew how to write. Gil knew what was good and why and he was married to Elsen. Gil had been virgin before her, and there was that edge, too, as Cubby and Gil drew close, working on the book, and became deep friends. Deepest friends, in truth. Was only natural Cubby dedicate it to Gil, as the lion would to the tamer. Cub's mom may have loved it, and Fritz may have been his pure source, but like Cub's dad (in the background), none of them did what Gil had done. Gil was the next primary factor in the book to Cubby himself. Other binding truths: Gil, like Cub, was an only child. Gil and his mom were very close, like Cubby was with his. Both fathers allowed their sons to be raised by the mothers. Gil's father had left and, as Elsen told me in confidence, not to mention to Gil (I didn't): that Gil would tell me his father left home for a secret involvement with the Mafia, shh, well, Gil did tell me that. One more fantasy for one more Italian boy without a father, which the last pages of Steelwork reveal, that honest portrait of a forlorn and isolate child.

Gil is a year older than I. I'm 64, and you can believe he's not gonna open up with the truth at this point. Although, as the shrinks say, it's never too late. But for men like Gil, it was too late for him after his mother died, what, 1960? And he discovered his friends including me had doublecrossed him with Elsen. So Gil closed the door. In regards to the article in The Voice (on Cubby), I didn't ask the guy who wrote it, I told him: Gil would not talk! He agreed, and Gil didn't. So that article on the Cub is missing Gil, and me, because he saw me after the fact. Also Maxine, she's out, too. She had gone with Cubby, and she won't talk, either. Cubby has a way with him, maybe people are afraid of him (Gil's afraid of something else). All parents are gone and, in brief, you could say that besides other not very perceptive persons who happened to be around in those days, there's no one to give any real insight, except Cubby, Tiny and Fritz.

Cubby says today of the characters in Last Exit, that there are people who live like that, and that's true, but Cubby downplays his brilliance, and originality (note his use of the diagonal, slash mark (/) instead of an apostrophe throughout, in his contractions: don't, won't, wouldn't, etc., giving to his writing a modern surface, kin to Hammett's use of colons, and Robert Duncan's spelling through: thru).

Last Exit is the classic descent into the hell of forbidden dreams. The American academic elite, in link with homophobic, religious, rightwing fanatics, are the dreamers, longing to live the scenes in these pages, that are deeper than their haunted midnights. This is where it's real. My students at Bowling Green University (1972) - freshmen - were outspoken for the death penalty, but thought Last Exit was immoral, and repulsive. The reporter who wrote that article, and who quotes Cub, didn't know the rich, inner, cynical laughter he got out of the response to his book. Cub was impressed, also, with the big academics who reviewed it, with praise, talking about his great ear. What a joke, in their high, ivy towers, creaming in their robes over the book, come on. Cubby had a complicated deadpan, yet vicious down-in-the-basement style laughter, in those days, for the joke was, from his point of view, on anybody who read it: he wasn't queer! See his wife and kids? Hey, Gil wasn't either! (ditto), and Fritz was out. Fritz had fulfilled his fate for the arts, so, where did the intensity, as we have a chance to reflect, where did those mad crazies come from? Gil was always serious, very serious, talking about Cubby's writing, as if Cub was the discovery of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Gil was theatrical, we all were, well not all but it was there, and Cubby (and Gil) were in a drama.

**George Economou:** In the spring of 1960, immediately after the publication of the first issue of *Trobar*, we planned a poetry reading series at the Cafe Cino in Greenwich Village. The magazine had been founded and

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named there, and its owner, the late Joe Cino, was all for the readings. In fact, it was just at that time that Cino was introducing various kinds of artistic programs in the place, a policy which culminated in the Cafe Cino's becoming one of the great Off-Off Broadway theaters for the next few years. As in the production of the magazine, the reading series had an urgency and a sense of commitment to it that was enhanced even more by the belief that what we were doing in both areas was really all of a piece. In retrospect, it seems to me we were answering a serious calling, which is probably true, but it was an exhilarated rather than a somber seriousness.

Among those who participated in that Cino series were David Antin, Clayton Eshleman, Jack Hirschman, Robert Kelly, Jerome Rothenberg, and Armand Schwerner. The ambiance was simultaneously informal and intense, proceeding from the conviction that to read to a live audience was an act that naturally followed the writing of poetry and that such face-to-face communication was mutually demanding and edifying. Speaking for myself, that prevailing sense of *communitas* and its power to incorporate poets and audience into an intimate, interacting group was one of the greatest and most valuable lessons of the experience. It was out of such an ethos that the high point of the Cino readings came. The program of Medieval Poetry and Jazz was a collaborative reading-performance involving a small jazz ensemble, a group of us already associated with the Cino readings, and Paul Blackburn, some of whose translations with the Old Provencal of the troubadours provided the heart of the poetry selections.

**Carolee Schneemann:** Impulse scan: to attack media celluloid hallucination flat linear dimension stream electric light beam. Flesh it paint it draw dimensions from projected imagery into image motion. Actual. That audience in those dumb predictable rows they're going to FEEL us and we're going to feel them. Phoebe and I in wacky coveralls crawling hand over hand over foot on the audience; sticky fingers, grasping hands, knees butting help! spilling candies bubbles ropes balloons damp laundry out of our infinite coveralls. Contact with every person there. Mumble abstractly to them, to each other..... "oww, my arm is caught.... lift my leg out of your lap.... have a candy... Phoebe where are you? ....hold these balloons.... get your hand off of there.... Carolee what do we do next? .... Gerd start the film.... stop the film..... give us light.... too much light" Cathode ray films three screens wrap around us all. Dark. Illuminated. Our bodies stretching into materials.

**Diane Wakoski:** I had a kind of royalty accorded to me from the beginning, because I had come to New York City with a small prize in hand. I had been chosen to read at the YMHA (then headed by Stanley Kunitz) in a series created to introduce new poets. This was the fore-runner of the now-existing series they have, which is known as The Discovery Program. Louis Simpson, who was among their judges, had selected me along with David Ignatow and Robert Hazel to give a program together in March of 1961. I had not yet published a book, though both Hazel and Ignatow had, so it was truly a wonderful opportunity for me, and it carried with it a little of the luster that I had experienced in Berkeley as one of the more celebrated student poets.

I was writing constantly, but unlike many writers, while willing to try many different styles of writing, I never abandoned my old poems for new ones. I still continue to feel that my earliest poems were as good as my newest ones are. Different, not better or worse. On New Year's Eve of that Year, a momentous thing happened to me. I had gone to LeRoi Jones' (now Amiri Baraka) New Year's Eve party and been rather unhappy for personal reasons. George Stanley, a San Francisco poet now living in New York, on whom I had a crush and referred to as The Pony Express Rider in my poems, was flaunting his homosexuality at me, making fun of me as a woman with an interest in him. So, I was forlornly wandering through the crush of people when I ran into Diane di Prima who asked me if I wanted a pill. Now, I am simply one of those anachronisms of my generation. I am not a drug taker or user. I had a weird kind of Puritanism in those days,

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which made me feel that beauty, and inspiration could only be natural. So, I didn't wear make-up (never have), and I didn't take any drugs, even aspirin. I didn't drink coffee and I hardly drank alcohol in those days. I had no idea what this pill that Diane was offering me was, but I felt so wretched that I said "yes," and instantly swallowed it, wondering if like Alice in Wonderland I'd shrink or fall through a hole or what. In fact, nothing seemed to happen, but in retrospect I believe it was some kind of speed, the kind that makes you friendly, talkative, though not particularly high. Right after this crazy act on my part, I ran into Howard Ant, and he asked me and another woman from Berkeley whom I had run into, if we would like to go to another party. Gratefully, I said yes, and he took us to the apartment of Armand Schwerner. I did not know Armand, or any of the other guests. But they were all going to become important people in my life. They were Jerome and Diane Rothenberg, George Economou and Rochelle Owens, Robert and Joby Kelly, David Antin and a few others who I do not now remember. In those days Jerry, who had a Masters degree from Ann Arbor took freelance editing jobs and taught English part time at places like The Mannes College of Music. The bulk of their living expenses were earned by Diane who was a Special Ed teacher in the New York public school system. Rothenberg edited a little magazine of primitive poetry called THE FLOATING WORLD, and along with Robert Kelly, he had just started Hawk's Well Press to publish books of poetry that they felt embodied their theory of the Deep Image in poetry. That was the beginning of his bigger career and evolution into an ethno-poetics expert, a maker of unusual anthologies, and a pioneer performance poet. George Economou was working on his doctorate in, I think, medieval literature at Columbia. He was the unlikely combination of being from the cowboy world of Montana, of Greek parents, and now studying arcane English and literature. His partner, Rochelle Owens, was a pale white redhead from Brooklyn who worked at the Parke-Bernet Galleries and always acted as if the rest of us were too vulgar for words. Robert and Joby Kelly each weighed about three hundred pounds apiece and had animal fetishes, which included collecting hundreds of stuffed animals. They were among the most erudite people I've ever met; yet like the big minds that they were, they also loved the world of common things like orange soda or comic books. Kelly taught at Wagner College in Staten Island, and Joby was a librarian at the Brooklyn Public Library. David Antin was startling because he had had alopecia, some kind of disease that made him lose all his body hair. He had no eyebrows and was young and bald without attempting to disguise it in a way that in 1961, before our current fashion for baldness, made him look quite extraordinary. He is the most verbally precocious person I've ever met, a trait that he's turned into an interesting art, the extemporaneous poems that he generates orally on the pretext of giving a lecture. In those days he worked as a freelance editor and translator for Pergamon Press, owned by the same Captain Maxwell who owned the British Book Centre that I worked for. Armand Schwerner, at whose apartment this party was held, was already an academic, though I can't remember where he was teaching. He loved music and played jazz clarinet. He was the person who found avant-garde music and poetry the most outrageous, and yet he's the one who was most influenced by it in the long run. They all knew each other from City College days, and they were fascinated to meet someone new, coming from the West Coast, and I (perhaps because of the pill which took away my shyness and made me unusually talkative) spent the evening regaling them with stories of Berkeley and the San Francisco poetry scene, as I knew it. I was later to introduce these people to the Tenth Street Coffeehouse, though none of them except the Kellys really became regulars in the scene. I believe it was also I who introduced Jackson Mac Low, an avant-garde musician and poet whom I had met through La Monte, to the Coffee House scene. What I realized later was that New Yorkers were very suspicious of public readings in places like bars and coffeehouses. That is, the serious poets. There had always been street poets, the drug people, etc, involved in the scene on MacDougal Street, but most of us didn't think they wrote very good poetry. We were an odd bunch that started the Tenth Street Coffee House scene. We were academic, in that we had all been to college, and had been thoroughly educated in Modernism. So, while we did represent new things in poetry, not the academic poetry that was being written by college professors, at the same time we were

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snobs and not really interested in street poetry either. Howard Ant was a lawyer, but he hated practicing law and loved playing chess and poker. He was a bachelor and lived on a shoestring, so that he could spend all of his time at chess or poker, both of which earned him some money through betting. He often used as his persona in his poems a riverboat gambler. Mary Mayo, who became his girlfriend, was the daughter of a Midwestern college professor and poet, though she only aspired to some white collar job, or perhaps she too had the bohemian bug --

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*This anthology illuminates the Light Years coalescence of largely unknown poets and artists and other investigative types experimenting in the new art, multimedia. Collectively these memoirs sing a definitive anti-establishment song about the most insanely zany decade of last century. Nowhere else has the human struggle to cope with the evolutionary leap from industrial to high-tech society coupled with war and peace tension and the resultant fallout been blueprinted with such intensity and in such flat-out intimate and shifty, perhaps universal, terms. Did these pioneers get what they deserved? Who all was involved? What actually happened? Find out! within these pages.*  
- James Beach of AWAREing Press

"With the completion of the *Light Years* manuscript, Carol Bergé passed away in February 2006. Her last years can only be described as heroic as she continued her life's work in the face of an encroaching illness that left her weakened and debilitated. Yet her passion for life and her work sustained her far beyond the prognostications of her doctors... What is most remarkable is that although the individual artists and writers made their personal impact, it was the group support for each other that created and sustained the creativity of the period. As with every movement which depends on the historical moment, the group energy dissipated at the end of the sixties." - Carl Ginsburg, publisher, AWAREing Press

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( page 8 of 8 )