



OUT THERE ON THE BARRICADES
titles

mine was Fuck You/ A Magazine of the ARTS
among d.a.'s were the MARRAHWANNA QUARTERLY
and later the
Buddhist Third Class Junk Mail Oracle

He described it:

"It was February '63 when I had enough money
to buy a 6by9 letterhead hand press & type. Spent
almost a year at my aunt & uncles printing, some-
times 8 to 16 hours a day for days and days (playing
'the man with the golden arm' & some old 78s: peggy
lee, jack teagarden, dexter gordon, etc. over & over
while i worked)

Some of the hippie highschool shits who think i'm
hip don't realize i've worked my ass off for the past
3 years trying to change the literary reputation of
Cleveland."*

**The Mary Jane Quarterly*
Volume 2, Number 1 1966

Three years he designed, adorned and printed
from his letter press—

In early 1964 he wrote me in New York
asking for a manuscript.

I was overwhelmingly excited.

"If you want a book done," the letter said,
"I'll do it -- the wilder the poems —the more
I enjoy printing them and thus better
printing job."

Few publishers there are
in infinity
that ask for
poems, the wilder the better

Wow! I thought,
as I jogged around our little three room pad
on the spot, pulling from file folders
the poems
for the book he published on his hand press



with the title, "King/Lord Queen/Freak"

He asked me to send him some
copies of *Fuck You/ A Magazine of the Arts*
and I did.

His own poetry
arose toward greatness.

He was relentlessly
honest
He refused to be
hypocritical
& he called it like he
saw it.

His message
was
freedom
freedom to write
& to read aloud
freedom for the soul to soar
& freedom
from poverty.

"All I want to do is
write poems, say what
I want to say and be
able to turn on once
in a while. Is that
asking too much of
your country?"
(d.a. to *Plain Dealer* 1-13-67)

He had an eye as sharp
as the Eye of Horus
He seared through the fluff
into the sempiternity.

He was spiritual
Believed in
soul-talk
& sequences of lives

I used to adorn my verse
with Egyptian glyphs and images
and he too
knew that the



A Biography of d.a. levy

WOODSTOCK Journal

visual
in our century
was in the ascendancy

We both
sensed that
the ability
to differentiate
& analyze
fine points
in the
visual gestalt
was on the
rise -- in fact
it was
one of the most powerful
forces of the era

He had a highly developed
visuality
in his verse
Artist
Painter
Collagist
Typesetter
he had a Good Eye
for visual array

did important work
in concrete poetry

He was
good w/ scissored shapes
good at
positing images
among one another
good at gluing
and fashioned a museum quality
series called "Zen Concrete"

I called
these visual images "glyphs"
A good
glyph
in a poem
thrills the sky.

I used the Eye of Horus
renamed Peace Eye



as a symbol for the
Ascendency of the Visual
in Poetry.

Levy studied Buddhism
as Kerouac
also studied
Two troubled
American artists
in the ascendency

He loved
those
ancient
texts

All of us were searching
for DIRECT TRANSMISSION OF MIND

that writers have to mill around together
search across the electric forests
like hungry deer

He wanted
to do it
in his home city

so he reached
out and roped together
the best minds
in his
poet-region

though it's so hard
to get your compatriot best minds
to study
the same things you study.

The great fear
so endemic to America
rinsed over his
23 year old soul

"Have you read 'The Sacred Mushroom--
Key the Door of Eternity'" — he
wrote me in January of '65.
"It is a bridey murphy thing in egypt.
How aware are you of yr Egyptianish



poems. I am not finished with the book
but turn on like a light bulb cosmic high
when reading it.

"...I still get paranoid... think cia & fbi
are going to get me for something (burn
this letter) many people here becoming
very sensitive and perceptive...

New coffee house opened THE WELL — could
be a Le Metro in cleveland... it is backed
by a christian, leaving the church &
going back to god...

Everyone sez it is unhip to talk about
it... what is it... do you know?"

Two sea-line threnodies
roiled our generation:

d.a. felt their swell—
the threat of the bomb
& the threat of the Vietnam war

to which you could
have added two more:
the lack of economic justice
& the threat

of the secret police & the CIA
plus the rinse of, the rinse of 'noia

He drifted toward trouble.
Ginsberg and I helped
set it up.

In 1963 I called for legalization
of marijuana
in an editorial in
Fuck You/ A Magazine of the Arts

that many poets read.

In early '65 we formed LEMAR
The Committee to Legalize Marijuana
Ginsberg and I and others
at Peace Eye Bookstore in N.Y.C.

The photo of Allen Ginsberg



A Biography of d.a. levy

7

WOODSTOCK Journal

holding a POT IS FUN sign
at a demonstration
outside the courthouse

was in the newspapers
and it made the cause seem safer.

We put out The Marijuana Newsletter
off of the Peace Eye Mimeograph
I sent it to d.a.

On April 19th, 1965, he sent a post card
to LEMAR:

"Please put me on your mailing list & I will
sign petitions... wd distribute the
Marijuana Report if I could afford..."

d.a. jumped to the cause
with the same tenacity
that glued him to the
letterpress the past three years

He thought he'd bring it to
Cleveland
and started the MARRAWANNA QUARTERLY

after which he was an early
casualty
—one of the first—
of the drug wars.

On January 1, 1966
the police raided Peace Eye
and I was arrested

They hauled away a squad car full
Fuck You's, and they seized
and marked for evidence
such publications as W.H. Auden's "Platonic Blow"
and d.a.'s Renegade Press edition
of "Farewell the Floating Cunt."

The police
killed my magazine
The ACLU
recommended
I not publish



A Biography of d.a. levy

8

WOODSTOCK Journal

till after th' trial
and even though I won the case next year
I never resumed it
such a crimp was placed
in my Mind.

d.a. began to bring
poetry to the coffee houses & bars
in the University Circle area--
near Case Western Reserve University--
a resumption of the
beatnik bardic oral tradition.

Just the word "beatnik" in those
days had the power to inflame,
enrage or bemirth.

He granted an interview with the Cleveland Plain Dealer
in January, 1966, which was published on page one
under the headline
BEATNIK LEADER
WANTS MARIJUANA
LEGALIZED IN AMERICA

To say the least, it caused a stir.
"I felt that someone had to come out in the
open and challenge the hysterical arguments and
myths spread by the police, the press and the
government," he told an interviewer at the time.

The police put him on their list.

First issue of Marrahwana Newsletter
from Cleveland came out in early '66
Price listed: 10 cents
The second issue out in the
summer of '66, with part 5
of d.a.'s *North American Book of
the Dead*

The publication d.a. continued as
The Marrahwana Quarterly,
with an emphasis on poetry
and d.a.'s comments on the cleveland
police & psychedelic scene

(acid had just been made a federal crime)



Levy wrote an editorial, "the first time i discovered the cleveland public library wasn't worth a shit was when i wanted to read bks of contemporary poetry... they were mostly academic poets/only a few of the 'beats & post beat generation'"

d.a. announced he'd "recently presented over 40 books of poetry to the library... included were books by Gary Snyder, Charles Olson, Antonin Artaud/Clayton Eshleman/Diane Wakoski/Jonathan Williams/Charles Bukowski/Kenneth Rexroth/Jacob Glantz/Bob Kaufman/Denise Levertov/Frank O'Hara/Paul Valery/Ludovico Silva/Roger Taus/Charles Reznikoff/George Oppen/Robert Creeley"

Attention from the Establishment

He stood on the spiral staircase of risks
and sang how RE-CREATION
was his
mythopoeia:

- Recreational
buddhism
- Recreational
poesy & collage
- Recreational
letterpressing
- Recreational
fucking
- Recreational
pot & music
- Recreational
telepathy

He was a victim
of the cold vectors of war-mind
and the sound of the sloshing waves
by Plymouth Rock.

I've never been fully able to understand it
but somehow a few powerful people
thought Levy
with his pot manifestoes, verse and beatnikery
was somehow a detriment to the
local real estate market



Maybe it had to do with
keeping prices up
for urban renewal deals,
new apartment houses and parking lots....

d.a. covered the real estate
manipulations
in his underground newspaper *The
Buddhist Third-Class Junk Mail Oracle*

It was the eery drone
of the police state
that began to unnerve him

Cops with body wires
monitored the poetry readings
levy attended

they hated the MARRAHWANNA QUARTERLY

There was a reading at The Gate,
the coffee shop in the basement
at Trinity Cathedral
on November 16.

Police were there in secret,
looking for pot,
but settled
for taping the reading
and voila! a poem was
read with the word "cocksucker"
in it

That same month a grand jury indicted
him for obscenity.

On December 1 of that year, narcotics officers
raided the Asphodel Bookstore
and in some geeky twist
seized 9 crates of d.a.'s publications
on the grounds that they
advocated the legalization of hemp.
Jim Lowell, the Asphodel's owner
was arrested.

Also seized, as if it
were the era of Dostoievsky,
was a mimeograph machine.



1-9-67
establishment
CLEVELAND
PRESS HEADLINE:

"Grand Jury Named Beatnik Poet
in Secret Indictment on Filth"

That about says it all
about Cleveland in '67

The press
dripped deprecation
with such ditties as:
"Levy is a widely
know figure around
University Circle beatnik
haunts."*

**Cleveland Press 1-9-67*

The squares did not know
that in just a few weeks
the word "Hippie" would
blow the word
"Beatnik" away as a pejorative
in the pejoracracy.

d.a. went into hiding
but on January 16, 1967
turned himself over,
and was released on bail.

Then, on March 28, d.a. was rearrested,
and charged on five counts
of contributing to the delinquency of minors,
in that, at the famous reading
in the basement of Trinity Cathedral
last November 16,

he had read obscenity
to a fifteen year old girl and
a 17 year old boy. The lad's parents
had discovered a poster
in his room,
and complained to the police.



"Specifically," the Plain Dealer intoned,
"Levy is charged with accepting immoral
and indecent poetry from the boy and
publishing it, as well as reading and
distributing it at the coffee house."

d.a. gave beautiful interviews
in those few days—

"I am part of a movement
trying to make this planet
more civilized."

Case Western Reserve Law Students
and professors picketed
the Criminal Court Building

Poets made legalize
d.a. levy stickers
and sprouted them onto
the buildings
of Cleveland

Known beatniks
gathered to
howl verse in public protest.

There was a claw-hammer crudeness
to his arrest

No attention
to the 1st Amendment

They seized his mimeo
and it leaked ink
on the desk at
the police station.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment
of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;
or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press
or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and
to petition the government for a redress of
grievances."

THE BILL OF RIGHTS: Amendment One

Pot was easy for the police
to pick on



for there were no guns
no capos with hit lists
just poets and love lists

In court on January 17
there was a legendary colloquy with the judge:

The judge, to levy: "You write poetry... do you
sell it?"

Levy: "I sell poetry for 89 cents a day."

The judge: "Bail of \$2,500 is not excessive for a
a great poet. Maybe you should charge more than
89 cents."

The great fear
rinsed through Cleveland
and d.a., already
prone to fear
was battered in the fear-foam.

The prosecutor
in both cases
was
George Moscarino

(& in 1989
21 years later
had trouble
recalling the case
or levy's name at all

but in '66 Moscarino
bedeviled him.)

d.a.'s poem "Kibbutz In the Sky"
traces the arrests.

Friends published a huge anthology
about levy and his work
a classic act of solidarity,
titled *UKANHAVYR FUCKINCITIBAK*.

A bunch of us— Allen Ginsberg,
and the Fugs
flew to Cleveland to do a benefit for d.a.



at Case Western.

The day of the benefit
we tried to do a preliminary poetry reading
at the Gate
in Trinity church
but the fuzz broke it up.

1967 was a year
in which you didn't give up
and d.a. was no exception.

He began publishing
a post-beat newspaper:
The Buddhist Third Class Junk Mail Oracle.

After all, why give up.
It was the year all the beatniks (those young
enough, anyway) became hippies,
and the year they put flowers
down the barrels of rifles
when we exorcized the Pentagon.

There were Love-in's
at the Cleveland Museum
the summer of '67

I had written asking for
a poem to publish,
he wrote back frazzled,

"cannot possibly sent you manuscript
in time and that i should let you know/
everyday for the next two weeks are
shot/ my trial has been detained again/
best of luck & many prayers for you'

It doesn't take that many years
to scorch a psyche—

America broke his heart
when he realized
as did Allen Dulles
that few actually read

& that



"the people want blood."

The Great Fear
of the era
was giving its
final soul-rinse

"the people want blood."

You have to
hang on to
a controversy
with the passion
of a fanatic

Attacks
wear you down
The hatred
of officialdom
officiates
at your
erasure

Attacks ate Debs
They ate
Norman Thomas
& Emma Goldman
They ate
Martin King

It finally wore d.a. down
Controversy
is like roadway
on tires—
you wind up with metal.

His poems were riven with death:
he wrote about it
in a Poe-like
surge of work—
tombstones, epitaphs
and thanatonia
filled his fingers with ink.

After his arrest in '67
he described an incident when he was 17

"Unable to find competent leaders or teachers,



unable to discover intelligent persons in
places of authority, unable to find anything
other than pseudo-christian bigotry &
ignorance - i decided to commit suicide at
the age of 17. Changed my mind at the last
minute & started to read everything & write
poems."

Death was always
a crow's wing
in his eyes.

He lived very quickly
for about five years
He was stunned
He was in the end overwhelmed
He was a loner lover liver & giver
He liked to help his friends
d.a. levy was his name

1968

'68 cracked the bones of America.

The Tet Offensive in February
The My Lai Massacre in March
MLK murdered in April

Robert Kennedy in June
the Riots in Chicago
the Birth of Nixon

what a horrid year.

d.a. kept up the
Buddhist Third Class Junk Mail Oracle
but money was difficult.

Early in '68 he made a deal
that sealed his anger and depression--
His lawyer says he was very afraid of jail
and he was facing something like 5 years
so he pleaded *nolo contendere*
to the charge
of contributing
to the delinquency
of minors



in exchange for probation
& the dismissal of the obscenity charge,
& a \$200 fine.

He sent his beautiful manifesto on
verse and the poet in
the American capitalist milieu,
PROSE: on poetry in the wholesale education

& culture system

with a note:

"Ed--

this was printed
last night -- it is
already out of
print -- please
read it if you get
a chance to breathe—
a different bag—
john scott just got two
years in the county
workhouse & we can't
do a damn thing except
wait send the motherfuckers
bent love rays—

yrs

d.a. levy"

Vol. 2, Number 2 of *The Buddhist Third Class Junkmail Oracle*
was published in July 1968

Volume 2, Number 3 August-September '68

with d.a.'s editorial:

"At this point, I am left with no choice other than discontinuing this paper. The rumored 'hip' community is either incapabl or unwilling to support this paper so fuck it. The spiritual corpses of the 'hip community' can continue to learn where it's at from Life Magazine and the Cleveland Plain Dealer as they have in the past. A section of the Cleveland Underground would like to leave & go to areas where there is a more constructive community, where there is less talk, less apathy & a little more constructive psychic action. We are tired of being Eunuchs for the local Christian Death Cults, We are tired of being kept humble by (...)hic businessmen, We are tired of being forced to worship the power of the American god, the \$, or starve. DON'T SEND MONEY - all mail received after



OCT. will probably be burned unopened... piece/peace&
awareness d.a. levy c/o The Asphodel Bk Shop
306 W. Superior Ave Cleveland 44113 THIS IS A MAILING
ADDRESS ONLY."

August '68 wrote the 24 page *SUBURBAN MONASTERY DEATH POEM*
printed by ZERO EDITION

E. Cleveland Ohio

U. \$. \$. A - 1968

with its periodic outcries, such as

"William Burroughs - rescue me!
forget that!
Michele Ray - Yael Dayan - rescue me!"

and

"Ingrid Swanberg, Aileen Goodson, HELP!"

and

"Vajra Yogini Help!
Papa Legba — open the gates
I don't want to die in Ohio anymore!"

He inscribed the cover:

"to ed sanders

KOSHER

musical joint
for Peace

d.a. levy - 1968"

Perhaps a sign he sent it around
the Jewish New Year in the fall of '68,

and maybe also a reference
that I left the "STRICTLY KOSHER"
sign on the outside of Peace Eye Bookstore
in place when I opened it
(It had been a Kosher meat market before)

In October of '68 he was invited to
Madison



to be "Free University Poet in Residence"
in the alternative school
associated with U. of M.

d.a.'s course was one on telepathy
and he did not attend.

The class grooved with it,
and continued to gather,
focussing on levy from afar.

Levy created a series of collages in Madison
— someone gave him some old Greek texts
which he turned in a half hour
into startling electric Greek collage poems

and then October was over, and he returned
to the Cuyahoga—
the first week of November Nixon was granted to us

He was
an organism
that
sometimes
longed for
death.

He was thinking about moving to California
He was thinking about staying
He hated to be driven from Cleve'

On November 24, he shot himself
in the forehead
with his childhood 22
sitting lotus,
and once again
pled *nolo contendere*.

It's always difficult
to make sense
of a poet's
brief florescence

Hart Crane
d.a. levy

the chaff of
genius



blown
up above
harsh Cleveland.

It may take centuries
to sort him out
It often does
with poets

The issues of
economic justice
and personal freedom
which wore out the good bard levy

have not yet
been addressed
in America

& we need a way
that a
shyer
yes even more
timorous
and fearful
genius
flourish
their proper span.

and darryl allen levy lived not his span
but his poems:

“The Bells of the Cherokee Ponies”
“Kibbutz in the Sky”
“North American Book of the Dead”
“Cleveland Undercovers”
and a big series
of concrete books

find their measure

Shine on
oh d.a. levy
rinsed in the American dream!!

—Edward Sanders
Boulder, Colorado
for a d.a. levy celebration