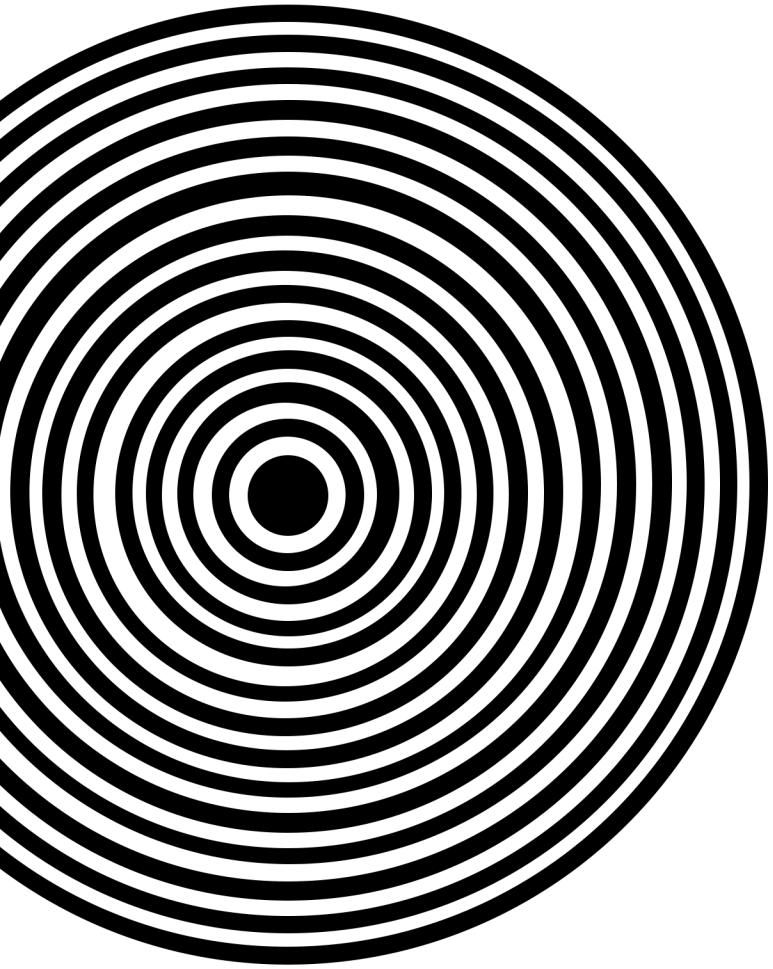
15

David
Grundy



AMONG THE NEIGHBORS

Umbra magazine (1963-1974)

An Introduction and Bibliography

Umbra magazine
(1963-1974)

An Introduction and Bibliography

David
Grundy

AMONG THE NEIGHBORS 15

The Poetry Collection of the University Libraries,
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York
Buffalo, New York
2021

AMONG THE NEIGHBORS
a pamphlet series for the study of Little Magazines
The Poetry Collection of the University Libraries, University at Buffalo

Edric Mesmer, series editor
esmesmer@buffalo.edu

This series is supported by
The Mildred Lockwood Lacey Fund for Poetry

This issue © David Grundy

cover design by Patrick Riedy and Edric Mesmer

Contents

Introducing Umbra: A Short History

Chronology

Sources Consulted for Introduction and Chronology

Bibliography of *Umbra* Magazine

INTRODUCING UMBRA: A SHORT HISTORY

In 1982, the poet and scholar Lorenzo Thomas compiled a never-published "Annotated Bibliography of the Umbra Workshop, 1962-1982." In his "Prefatory Note," authored in 1984, Thomas noted: "Umbra appears to grow out of a unique combination of Civil rights activism, artistic ambition, community cultural activities, and interest in local and international politics. A strange mixture." (Thomas 1984, n.p.) Thomas continued: "The journal functioned as a nexus for a particularly talented, serious, and dedicated group of young writers who, almost coincidentally, were brought together in New York City in the early 1960s." While Umbra had effectively disbanded by the time Thomas compiled his bibliography, as he noted: "many *Umbra* artists still manage to work together as a network of individuals who, without subscribing to a single ideology, share a specific American cultural agenda: the re-evaluation of the role of people of African descent in the United States on social, political, personal, and intellectual levels of participation." For Thomas, following Umbra's bibliographic traces might thus "suggest interesting approaches towards an understanding of the dynamics of transmission of various (and sometimes antagonistic) traditions in a multicultural society." The following volume, and the wider project from which it is drawn, aims to complete the task Thomas began nearly fifty years ago. The introduction provides a short history of the Umbra Poets' workshop, its activities, and its publication history. This is followed by a chronology which breaks these down in further detail, and a listing of the contents for each of *Umbra* magazine's five issues, including editorial and front matter.

The Umbra Poets' Workshop, also known as the Society of Umbra, or more often simply Umbra, was a workshop, publication, and network of predominantly African-American poets that emerged on New York's Lower East Side at a time of tumultuous political, artistic, and social change. From summer 1962 to late 1963, Umbra carved themselves the place denied them in both the literary mainstream and the Caucasian-dominated avant-garde, through lively, weekly workshops, in which work was ruthlessly critiqued and ruthlessly

encouraged, collective readings on the Lower East Side, and the publication of *Umbra* magazine. While the group collapsed due to internal disagreements after the appearance of the magazine's second issue, it exerted an influence with far-reaching effects that persists to this day, just now beginning to be acknowledged in the scholarship.

Umbra's membership was diverse in terms of personal background, and of formal and stylistic concerns: founder Tom Dent aptly calls Umbra "many individual quests woven together." (Dent, 105) Most—though not all—of the group's members were African American, and much of their writing was concerned with the injustices of living in a white supremacist society. Attributed to the magazine's editors (Dent, Calvin C. Hernton, and David Henderson), the first issue's foreword states that "UMBRA has a definite orientation: 1) the experience of being Negro, especially in America, and 2) that quality of human awareness often termed 'social consciousness.'" (Hernton, Dent, and Henderson, 1) A few paragraphs later, this statement seems to be qualified: "We are not a self-deemed radical publication; we are as radical as society demands the truth to be." Meanings of the word "radical" are hotly contested in almost any context: the foreword's phrasing negotiates this thorny territory by emphasizing socio-political commitment while not delimiting ideological or formal content. Umbra was opposed to racialised injustice across the board, but the ideological forms taken in opposition were not unanimously shared. Umbra's members expressed a range of political views and affiliations, ranging from the non-violence resistance espoused by organisations such as the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to Pan-Africanism, Black Cultural Nationalism, and Marxism. First and foremost, Umbra was a group of poets, and radicalism should also be understood in formal terms, as a refusal of the various modes of pigeonholing, tokenistic acceptance, or, most often, silence and dismissal which African American poets had hitherto faced. The Umbra poets drew from—and extended—the full range of African-American cultural

expression; indeed, for that matter, the full range of expression found in world history beyond the Americas.

Umbra has two main points of origin, one poetic and one political. Firstly, a stirring of African-American poetics in New York in the late 1950s and 1960s, largely set in motion by poet, teacher, and organiser Raymond R. Patterson. In 1957, Patterson and Calvin Coolidge Hernton—a teacher, writer, and social worker raised in Chattanooga, Tennessee—gave a notable reading at Patterson's apartment; and in 1960, Patterson organised a series of readings at the Market Place Gallery in Harlem, using a contact list provided by Langston Hughes's secretary Raoul Abdul. Hughes is a key background figure in the Umbra story: Patterson and Hernton were both in contact with the respected older figure, and he acted as a kind of mentor, offering advice and hospitality to younger poets who were as yet little-known and little-published. Hughes was also in correspondence with Thomas Covington Dent, a young journalist, activist, and aspiring poet originally from New Orleans. Dent had attended the 1957 reading and the 1960 series, which he called "a revelation," and excitedly told Hughes of his plans to form a new African-American literary magazine. While Hughes was sceptical—"those things never work," he told Dent—he was always encouraging, and posthumous work by him was published in tribute in the third and fourth issues of *Umbra* magazine. (Dent, 105) Two other names merit mention here: journalist, bookseller, and publisher Paul Breman, and writer, editor, and translator Rosey Eva Pool, who both hailed from the Netherlands. Having begun a dissertation on African-American poetry while studying in Berlin, Pool had returned to Amsterdam following the rise of the Nazis, where she taught Anne Frank and was involved in Popular Front activism and the German Jewish Resistance group Van Dien. Following the War, Pool moved to London. Breman had likewise become interested in African-American music and poetry and moved to London in the late 1950s. In 1957, Pool and Breman co-edited a bi-lingual anthology published in the Netherlands as *Ik Zag Hoe Zqart Ik Was: Poezie von Noordamerikanische Negers* (*I Saw How Black I Was: Poetry by North American Negroes*), its title derived from Raymond Patterson's poem

"Black All Day"; the anthology also contained work by Calvin Hernton. Pool and Breman then separately planned further English-language anthologies, visiting New York and corresponding with hundreds of poets to seek out contributors. The results—Pool's *Beyond the Blues*, presenting short selections and biographical statements from sixty poets, and Breman's *Sixes and Sevens*, in which six poets provided longer statements and selections, with seven others represented more concisely—contain many of the poets who would become part of Umbra, and Lorenzo Thomas suggests that these—along with Patterson's "genially energetic organizational efforts, provided the initial impetus" for the group. (Thomas 1984)

Umbra's second point of origin was primarily activist in nature. When he moved to New York in 1959, Tom Dent began working for Harlem-based weekly newspaper the *New York Age*, alongside activist and journalist Calvin Hicks and artist Tom Feelings. In early 1961, Hicks and Sarah E. Wright co-founded the internationalist, leftist On Guard Committee for Freedom, a group in which Dent also played a key role. Wright, a member of the Harlem Writers' Guild and author of the novel *This Child's Gonna Live* (1969) and the poetry collection *Give Me a Child* (1955, with Lucy Smith), had featured in both Raymond Patterson's Market Place Gallery reading series and *Beyond the Blues*. A staunch Left activist, she had published in the *Daily Worker*, visited Cuba with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee along with Baraka, Harold Cruse, and Robert F. Williams, and was in correspondence with ANC radical Oliver Tambo, among others. Though she was never a part of Umbra per se, Wright's role in the currents that led to Umbra is a vital one, and deserves greater acknowledgment than it has previously received. A group with a central committee, On Guard was established on Marxist-Leninist principles, largely due to Hicks, even if not all members were Marxists. Largely through Wright, the organisation made contact with members of anti-colonial movements in South Africa and the Congo; its first major action was protesting the murder of Patrice Lumumba at the UN building in New York in February, 1961. Also present at the demonstration were members of Amiri Baraka's Organization of Young Men (OYM), an activist and discussion group constituted to a large extent by artists

and intellectuals, with which On Guard had some overlaps. Its membership included Hicks, Joe Johnson, Archie Shepp, Alvin Simon, and Leroy McLucas—all future members of Umbra—along with Steve Cannon, Harold Cruse, A.B. Spellman, and Walter Bowe. The OYM met every Sunday at Baraka's apartment on East 14th Street, and participated in a successful protest against welfare distribution in Newburgh, New York. Disagreements led to the group's dissolution and essential merger with On Guard soon after the protest. Alongside the participants in OYM, members of On Guard also included Nora Hicks, Nanny Bowe, Bobb Hamilton, Virginia Hughes (Aishah Rahman), Max Roach, and Abbey Lincoln. Other overlaps included participants in Rosa Guy's Cultural Organisation for Women of African Heritage (CAWAH), such as Lincoln and Wright; members of CAWAH who did not join On Guard included writers Paule Marshall and Maya Angelou, and folk singer Odetta. On Guard produced two newsletters in early 1962, with Hicks listed as editor and Dent as managing editor, but the group had dissolved by the summer, partly, as Dent suggests, because many of its members sought a publication with a more literary orientation. Following On Guard's dissolution, Dent got in contact with Calvin Hernton, who'd returned to New York after a brief period back down South, and Hernton's friend, the precocious poet and organiser David Henderson, who'd been attending the workshops held by Belgian-Jewish labour organiser and poet Henri Percikow. The three put out a call for a series of workshops to be held at Dent's apartment, to which many of the artist members of On Guard and the currents around Patterson's Market Place Gallery series responded with enthusiasm. Thus the Umbra Poets' Workshop began.

From August 1962, the group met every Friday night at Tom Dent's East Second Street apartment, where a core of poets passed around jugs of wine and read their latest poems, which would be subjected sometimes to effusive praise, sometimes to stinging critique, by the whole group. Following the workshops, the poets would go to their regular hangout, Stanley's Bar on the corner of Avenue B at Twelfth Street. Run by Stanley Tolkin, Stanley's was a reliable bohemian hangout: Charlie Parker had frequented it in the 1950s, playing Polish

polkas on the jukebox, and the bar was frequented in the early 1960s by the likes of Beat writers Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William Burroughs, singer Odetta, painter Jack Whitten, and the cast of Jean Genet's *The Blacks* (Lou Gossett, Moses Gunn, Cicely Tyson) during its 1961 run at the St Mark's Playhouse. The name Umbra was taken from a poem by the *sui generis* Lloyd Addison. It refers to the darkest part of the shadow cast in an eclipse: a statement on racialised and other forms of obscurity; on the carving out of a place in the shadows, the underground, that might in turn "eclipse" the bright light of both the literary and societal norms. In Dent's words, "a sort of poetic, core black" (Dent, 108, fn.1); in those of Lorenzo Thomas, riffing off the title of a Sun Ra composition, "the shadow world that is black life in the united states." (Thomas 1978, 67)

Dent identifies two waves within the group's membership. (Dent, 106-107) In the first sessions, held in Summer 1962, the regulars included Dent, Hernton, Henderson, Joe Johnson, Askia Touré (then Rolland Snellings), Al Haynes, Lorenzo Thomas, Leroy McLucas, Archie Shepp, and Charles Patterson. During the Fall and Winter of 1962-1963, a second wave included Art Berger—one of the group's only white members—Oliver Pitcher, Lennox Raphael, James W. Thompson (Abba Elethea), Ishmael Reed—within a few years to be one of the most acclaimed novelists in the United States, but then freshly arrived from Buffalo and yet to write his first book—and N.H. Pritchard—despite his obscurity, one of the most distinctive and original writers in the group. (Steve Cannon was never officially a member of the group, though often named as such in existing histories, but was nonetheless very much a part of Umbra's Lower East Side milieu and was close to Reed in particular; as he recalls, Reed would visit his apartment after Umbra meetings, and would try in vain to persuade his friend to join the group. (Cannon, 48)) There were many more: not least poet Rashidah Ismaili, artist Tom Feelings, and poet-musician Cecil Taylor. The group hosted visiting writers; some members were more frequent attendees than others; and some frequent attendees, such as Jane Mackenzie (subsequently Jane Logan/Jane Poindexter) were not poets. A full list of members and attendees may never be available: Umbra's looseness and ephemera-

lity—not to be equated with a looseness of purpose, but with an improvisatory openness that is in itself political—mean that individuals fall through the cracks. Such are the absences in the historical record to which underground activity is prone.

Whatever the precise details of membership, Umbra as a whole made a defiant collective statement, not only in the workshops at Dent's flat, but socially and in terms of readings on the Lower East Side scene at large. Umbra emerged from the milieu documented in Steven Clay and Rodney Phillip's *A Secret Location on the Lower East Side* and Daniel Kane's *All Poets Welcome*. As such, they were a vital African American presence within scenes too often seen as almost exclusively white. Yet, as Ishmael Reed asserted in 1988: "We get left out of history […] They excised us out of the whole East Village history […] The story of black bohemia has not been told." (Reed 1995, 277) The Umbra poets took full advantage of the coffee shop reading scene at venues such as Café Le Metro and Les Deux Megots, whose combination of open readings and invited guests drew large audiences, and which allowed writers who, in Dent's words, "had no national or formal literary reputation" to be heard and encountered. (Dent, 106) The group became particularly noted for their collective readings of up to ten members, which made a defiantly racialised statement within a multicultural community. Umbra also gave readings at more formal venues, such as Columbia University, Vassar, Hofstra, and Brooklyn Colleges, and for Paul Blackburn's poetry show on WBAI.

As a group of predominantly younger poets, few of whom had more than a handful of magazine publications to their name, Umbra also adopted an ethos of self-publication, the assemblage of a collective identity in print as well as in person. Within a few meetings of the Friday night workshop, Dent and others realised, as he put it later, that "if we wanted to publish we had to publish ourselves. The surfacing of one black writer at a time in the white literary world, like a long chain of single black voices, was not an acceptable situation." (Dent, 106) So *Umbra* magazine was born, its first two issues appearing under the auspices of the three editors, Dent, Hernton, and

Henderson. Decisions were arrived at by a majority vote; Dent notes that Hernton assumed responsibility for selection, section titles, and arrangement. (Dent 108, fn. 2) The selection of these first two issues is a mixture of material from attendees of the workshop and material sent in from outside, and fascinates not only for its documentation of the group itself, but for presenting virtually the only poetic appearances of those who would become major figures in other fields. The first "Winter 1963" issue appeared in March 1963, featuring work by the three editors alongside Addison, Raymond Patterson, Leroy McLucas, Joe Johnson, and Askia Touré—all figures in the pre-Umbra activity previously described—the older experimental writer Oliver Pitcher, historian Lerone Bennett, activists Robert Brookins Gore, Julian Bond, and Robert F. Williams, Jay Socin, the (white) publisher of Interim Books, Patricia Brooks (Eldridge), activist and poet, and the astonishingly talented young poet Lorenzo Thomas, who had attended Henri Percikow's workshops alongside Henderson.

That July, Art Berger secured a feature for the group in the Communist magazine *Mainstream* (formerly *Masses and Mainstream*), a few months before the magazine folded. Including work by Julian Bond, Robert Brookins Gore, David Henderson, Calvin C. Hernton, Herbert Woodward Martin, Charles Patterson, Ishmael Reed, and Askia Touré, the feature led off with Berger's essay "Negroes with Pens," which linked the group to Robert F. Williams's avocation of armed resistance, *Negroes with Guns* (1962), and described them as "the first major outlet for Negro poets since the days of *Opportunity*—except for the few college reviews such as *Dasein* at Howard U., *Phylon* at Atlanta and *Free Lance* at Wilberforce." (Berger, 5) Thus positioned as a magazine of national importance, *Umbra* here emerges out of a context of African-American literary and political publications as much as the little magazines of the Mimeo Revolution, and can be seen to act as a bridge to the radical magazines of the Black Arts Movement to come: *Black Dialogue, Liberator, The Journal of Black Poetry, Negro Digest/Black World, Soulbook*, and the like. A second issue followed in December 1963 with a larger cast of writers: Henri de Chatillon's photographs of Senegal, shot on an assignment with the

French government, sat alongside work by workshop regulars Berger, the dancer Asaman Byron, Al Haynes, Reed, Charles Patterson, Pritchard, Maryanne Raphael, Touré, Thomas, James W. Thompson, and others, including: Ree Dragonette, a Lower East Side figure who was close to Hernton and who had collaborated with Eric Dolphy; Dudley Randall, later founder of Broadside Press; Conrad Kent Rivers, co-founder of Chicago's OBAC before his untimely death in 1968; Clarence Major; and Charles Guenther's translation of Aimé Césaire. The issue included a section dedicated to Richard Wright, who had died at the beginning of the decade.

Umbra's second issue is arguably the most impressive collective document of the workshop phase. Yet by the time the issue appeared, the group was on the verge of collapse. Umbra's origins were, in part, political, and political disagreements were also in large part responsible for its demise. On November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. While some greeted the news with a shrug of the shoulders—Malcolm X famously proclaiming that "the chickens had come home to roost"—others who had seen Kennedy as a symbol of hope were devastated. Amiri Baraka, who the following year would call for "the destruction of America," recalls being in tears when he heard the news; Lorenzo Thomas published an elegy in a collection of poems on Kennedy's death. (Baraka 2009, 241; Baraka 1997, 293-4; Thomas 1964) Meanwhile, *Umbra*'s second issue was in preparation. The editors had previously agreed to publish "A Decoration for the President," a prose poem by Ray Durem. Living in Mexico and California, Durem had been a radical from an early age. In 1938, he had fought with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain and been involved with Communist labour activism, but, following the end of the Second World War, he and others such as Harry Haywood and Nelson Peery became disillusioned with the CPUSA's stance on the issue of race. During the 1950s, Durem worked part-time as a television repairman, continued to organise, and began to write poems, while his politics shifted towards Revolutionary Black Nationalism. Pithy, often satirical and direct, the ethos of Durem's poems is encapsulated by the title to his posthumous collection *Take No Prisoners*: little else like

it had been seen in American letters, and the work was not widely printed, though he corresponded with Robert F. Williams and Langston Hughes, appearing in early issues of Williams's newspaper *The Crusader*, as well as Rosey Pool's *Beyond the Blues* anthology. Likely through either Hughes, Paul Breman, or Rosey Pool, Durem came into contact with the Umbra poets (though he never met them in person) and sent work for the next issue. Amongst this work, "A Decoration for the President," written in 1961 in the wake of the Bay of Pigs invasion, took the form of an epistle addressed to Kennedy, from the fictive parents of a Cuban child killed by an American bomb. Following the Kennedy assassination, Calvin Hernton called an editorial meeting to debate whether including the poem was still appropriate. The issue was ultimately published without the poem in December, though three other texts by Durem were included. This decision was seen by some on the Nationalist wing of the group—notably, Askia Touré and the brothers Charles and William Patterson—as an act of betrayal, and soon disputes over the poem spilled over into broader and increasingly hostile arguments about Nationalism and integration within the bohemian, intercultural artistic communities of the Lower East Side.

The exact sequence of events is still unclear, but the consequence was that the group was essentially split apart by political disagreement after just over a year of existence, having published only two issues of the magazine. Plans to reconcile, arguments over money, changes of editorship, and the repeated failure to publish the third issue dragged out through 1964, 1965, and 1966, by which point two of the editors had left New York—Hernton for England and Dent for New Orleans. During this interim period, Umbra still seems to have provided a kind of loose network, socially and at readings, and to a nourishing milieu for new poets on the scene such as Clarence Major, Victor Hernandez Cruz, and Julia Fields. Dent transferred editorship first to Lennox Raphael and folk singer Len H. Chandler, then to poet James W. Thompson. In February 1965, on letter-paper headed with an Umbra logo and the editors listed as Raphael and Chandler, Thompson wrote to Pool:

> I have been asked to take over the editorial duties of the magazine. I have been fighting this for months because I know that once I do I will have little time to develop my own work […] UMBRA it seems may be the only place that I will have to publish since America is again involved in another resurgence of black artists to relieve its guilts. Once this is over, if we artists have not significantly created an atmosphere and a place in Amer. ltrs. we may see another forty years of omission. This is why I have been fighting to keep UMBRA alive. It is needed for all the American poets who have something vital to say something that the Establishment can not accept. And it isn't strange that those fine voices who gain their eminence by criticizing the establishment lose themselves later in idealizing it. They lose their connection with the soil that produced them and have no place to turn for nourishment—this UMBRA can and must be. (Thompson to Pool, 19 February 1965)

In April, Thompson reported to Pool that he was working on a review of a new book by Derek Walcott for the magazine, and that "I have been struggling to get UMBRA to the printers with no real staff. I am the editor, president, treasurer, secty., production mgr., layout man etc. I have worked at three different printing firms to learn the techniques of mag production." (Thompson to Pool, 14 June 1965) An advertisement for the new issue—which was to have included an interview held with Ralph Ellison by Thompson, Raphael, and Steve Cannon—appeared that summer, but Dent, on a return visit to the city, transferred editorship back to David Henderson, with the type reportedly already set. It was not until 1968 that Henderson, now sole editor, published the third issue in altered form as *Umbra Anthology, 1967-1968*. (Ellison had by this time grown frustrated with the delays in publication and placed the interview with *Harper's*.) Henderson published two more issues, *Umbra's Blackworks* and *Umbra Latin Soul*, in 1970 and 1975 respectively. These issues serve more as diverse anthologies of currents from the Black Arts Movement, the Lower East Side scene, and, particularly, the Afro-Latin aesthetic exemplified by Cruz, than as documents of the original group: they can be seen as constituting something of a third stage in, or an afterlife of, the Workshop as it existed from 1962 to 1963. The focus in these final three issues lies in the currents now coalescing into the Black Arts Movement—with the appearance of writers such as Jayne Cortez,

Nikki Giovanni, Toni Cade (Bambara), and Amiri Baraka—and the multicultural aesthetic developing in California, also exemplified in Ishmael Reed's editing and organising practices. Even more than the first issues, the focus is cross-cultural and global in its reach, with the final issue, co-edited by Henderson, his then-wife, the pioneering scholar Barbara Christian, and Victor Hernandez Cruz. The issue contains as its centrepiece a feature on Cuban poet Nicholas Guillén, as well as work by Cesar Vallejo, Pablo Neruda, South American "Guerrilla Poets"—including Roque Dalton, Ernesto Cardenal, and Violeta Parra—Lower East Side artists Pedro Pietri, Langston Hughes, Barbara Chase-Riboud, Thulani [Davis], and an interview with Original Last Poet Felipe Luciano. (Of the original Umbra group, the only remnants are Henderson, Hernton, Ishmael Reed, and—as translators of Guillén—Lennox Raphael and Maryanne Raphael.)

Whether or not acting under the "Umbra" banner, the poets remained active: Umbra members were key players in Amiri Baraka's Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School (BART/S) in 1965, and subsequent Black Arts initiatives across the country. Umbra's collective ethos flowed into enterprises such as the Free Southern Theatre in New Orleans (Tom Dent), the Before Columbus Foundation in Berkeley (Ishmael Reed), and the New York-based Nuyorican Poets Café (David Henderson) and A Gathering of the Tribes (Steve Cannon). Umbra also continued as a current of friendship, with a number of reunions and events over the years bringing together the poets in a spirit of reminiscence and continuing shared concern. As Eugene Redmond noted of this spread in 1978, "the dispersion of [Umbra's] staff actually had a positive effect on the black literary world." (Redmond, 565)

As this brief summary has aimed to suggest, Umbra's history is a complex and entangled one. Given this, a clear and succinct guide to and bibliographic resource for Umbra's activities would seem an important resource for future scholars, poets, and other interested parties. Thus far, no single, reliable reference account of this kind exists, though useful histories are supplied by Michel Oren, Lorenzo

Thomas, Tom Dent, and others. (Oren 1984, 1986; Thomas 1978; Dent; Hernton 1985, 1993, Ismaili; Kane; Wood) I have provided some archivally-supplemented criticism in my recent book on Umbra, *A Black Arts Poetry Machine* (the first chapter details Umbra's formation out of On Guard for Freedom); and Jean-Philippe Marcoux's forthcoming book on Umbra will prove essential on this front, promising a more detailed explication of the contents of the magazine. Tonya Foster, Marcoux and I are also co-editing a two volume set entitled *The Umbra Galaxy*, which will provide essays, creative responses, and source materials in order to further illuminate Umbra.

Following this introduction, the present volume provides a chronology of key events in Umbra's existence and a full table of contents for each of *Umbra* magazine's five issues, including preliminary and editorial matter for these issues. Given that copies of the magazine are extremely rare, for the most part accessible only in university special collections and libraries (some of which only have incomplete runs), it is to be hoped this will be of use to scholars and readers interested in Umbra, the Black Radical Tradition, the Mimeograph Revolution, and various other areas of relevance. It is to be stressed that this is only the tip of the iceberg: in the full bibliography from which this work is taken, I also provide biographies and bibliographies of over forty individual members of the workshop, along with shorter biographies of other figures associated with, but not bona fide members of, the workshop.

David Grundy,
Lewisham, London, UK
May 2020

CHRONOLOGY

Pre-Umbra Activity: Early Readings (1957-1960)

- June 16, 1957: Raymond Patterson and Calvin Hernton read at Patterson's apartment, East 6th Street, Greenwich Village: Patterson's first public reading and Hernton's first New York reading.
- 1958: Publication of *Ik Zag Hoe Zqart Ik Was: Poezie von Noordamerikanische Negers* (*I Saw How Black I Was: Poetry by North American Negroes*), anthology co-edited by Rosey E. Pool and Paul Breman, named after a poem by Patterson. Breman and Pool would be key correspondents and anthologists for Umbra members.
- 1959: Tom Dent moves to New York. Works with Calvin Hicks and Tom Feelings at Harlem-based weekly newspaper the *New York Age*.
- Summer 1960: Raymond Patterson, encouraged by Harold Jackman, organises a reading series at the Market Place Gallery, Harlem (run by Adele Glasgow and Ramona Lowe), using a contact list provided by Langston Hughes. The readers included Lloyd Addison and Hernton (whose work is read by actor and poet Roscoe Lee Brown), along with Phil Petrie, Robert Abrams, Sarah E. Wright, and Hilton Hosanna. It is also likely that Oliver Pitcher and James Thompson attended. Patterson: "The series showed us that there was an audience for young Black poets, and it gave some of us a chance to meet each other for the first time." (Patterson to Michel Oren, 4 September 1984) Dent also attended the events and calls them "a revelation"; here he met Patterson and Lloyd Addison, and encountered Hernton's work.
- Fall, 1960: Ree Dragonette and Howard Ant begin a reading series at the 10th Street Coffee House; in Summer 1961, the series moves to Café Les Deux Megots. It is at the Deux Megots series that Hernton meets David Henderson, and where Umbra writers meet Amiri Baraka.

On Guard for Freedom (1961-62)

- Early 1961: Calvin Hicks and Sarah E. Wright form the On Guard Committee for Freedom. Overlapping with Amiri Baraka's Organization of Young Men and Rosa Guy's Cultural Organization for Women of African Heritage, members include: Hicks, Wright, Tom Dent, Nora Hicks, Harold Cruse, Archie Shepp, Walter Bowe, Nanny Bowe, Joe Johnson, Bobb Hamilton, Alvin Simon, Virginia Hughes (Aishah Rahman), Max Roach, and Abbey Lincoln.
- February 1961: On Guard participate in a protest against the murder of Patrice Lumumba at the UN building in New York, and produced the first issue of their newsletter.
- May 1961: On Guard produce the second and final issue of their newsletter.
- Summer 1962: dissolution of On Guard.

Formation of Umbra and the Workshop (1962-63)

- 1962: Publication of Rosey E. Pool's anthology *Beyond the Blues* and Paul Breman's anthology *Sixes and Sevens*, featuring future Umbra members Lloyd Addison, Julian Bond, Ray Durem, Calvin C. Hernton, Raymond Patterson, Oliver Pitcher, and James W. Thompson.
- January 1962: Dent moves to the Lower East Side. Aldo Tambellini organises several meetings of Lower East Side avant-garde artists "to protest the policies of the artistic establishment." (Dent, 106) Dent, Calvin Hernton, David Henderson, Askia Touré, Joe Johnson, and Charles Patterson attend but find his objectives "too broad and vague." (Ibid)
- August-September 1962: Umbra founded by Tom Dent, Calvin Hernton, and David Henderson as Friday night workshops at Dent's apartment. Dent lists the "regulars" at the first sessions as Calvin Hernton, David Henderson, Joe Johnson, Askia Touré, Al Haynes, Lloyd Addison, Charles Patterson, Lorenzo Thomas, Leroy McLucas, and Archie Shepp. (Dent, 106-107)

- Fall 1962-early 1963: Dent lists a second wave of writers attending the workshop, including Art Berger, N.H. Pritchard, Ishmael Reed, Lennox Raphael, James W. Thompson, and Oliver Pitcher. (Dent, 107) The group holds a fundraiser at the headquarters of Communist Youth Organization Advance, 80 Clinton Street, with music provided by Archie Shepp and Bill Dixon. (Dent 108, fn. 2)
- March 1963: Publication of *Umbra* magazine, issue 1, in a run of 1,000 copies. Dent notes that layout was by artist William E. (Bill) Day, and typing by Mildred Hernton. Nora Hicks and Jane Logan Poindexter act as secretaries, Marjorie Doswell of the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund as bookkeeper. (Dent 108, fn. 2)
- May 4, 1963: Umbra poets Dent, Hernton, Henderson, Touré, and Pitcher read at Vassar College.
- July 1963: Feature on Umbra published in Communist magazine *Mainstream*, including Art Berger's essay "Negroes with Pens."
- August 1963: Umbra members attend the March on Washington, Washington D.C.
- Circa late 1963: The Umbra poets record a group discussion and reading for Paul Blackburn's show on Pacifica, New York radio station WBAI.

The Split (1963-1964)

- November 1963: Assassination of John F. Kennedy. At an emergency meeting, the editors decided to remove a previously-accepted text by Ray Durem attacking Kennedy's Cuban policy.
- December 1963: *Umbra* magazine issue 2 is published, without the Durem poem.
- Late 1963-early 1964: Fallout over the Durem decision leads to a split within the group. Exact events remain contested: Michel Oren's 1984 essay on Umbra presents several perspectives, though it has been criticised by Umbra members such as Ishmael Reed. Reed's own account appears in the introduction to the anthology *19 Necromancers from Now*.

Interim Period: Changing Editorship, Dispersal, Lower East Side Poetry, and the Black Arts (1964-1966)

- 1964: Publication of Langston Hughes's anthology *New Negro Poets U.S.A.*, featuring Umbra poets Julian Bond, Tom Dent, Ray Durem, David Henderson, Calvin Hernton, Raymond Patterson, and Oliver Pitcher. Umbra poets publish in magazines such as *Liberator, Revolution*, and *Freedomways.*
- December 1964: Hernton and Henderson read alongside Amiri Baraka, Allen Ginsberg, John Keys, and Peter Orlovsky, sponsored by the Columbia Chapter of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) and the Independent Action Committee for Social Progress on the Lower East Side.
- 1964-1965: Though Umbra had effectively collapsed the previous year, Raymond Patterson recalls workshops being held at Len H. Chandler's apartment, though he does not give dates. (Chandler is listed as editor on an Umbra letter-head in early 1965.)
- Feb 19, 1965: James W. Thompson, Ishmael Reed, and Lorenzo Thomas read at the Ligoa Duncan Gallery, Eightieth Street. Editorship of Umbra magazine transferred to James W. Thompson.
- February 21, 1965: Assassination of Malcolm X.
- March 1965: At the Café Le Metro reading series, proprietor Moe Margules and others attack Tom Dent at an event attended by Umbra poets, leading to a boycott of the Metro which indirectly leads to the formation of the St Mark's Poetry Project (May 1966). David Henderson founds the Bowery Poets Co-Operative on a loft on Second Street and the Bowery with Allen Hoffman, Bob Ernstal, Paul Prinsky, and others.
- April 1, 1965: Julia Fields reads for a group of Umbra poets. James W. Thompson writes to Rosey Pool: "It seems that Julia was quite a hit at the Umbra reading on April first […] She is quite overwhelming and she has certainly gained an audience here, and I think that's great." (Thompson to Pool, 19 April 1965) Fields appears in *Umbra*'s third issue.

- April 12, 1965: Umbra poets Hart LeRoi Bibbs, Al Haynes, David Henderson, Calvin Hernton, Charles Patterson, Ishmael Reed, and Lorenzo Thomas read at the launch for Amiri Baraka's Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School (BART/S), Actor's Playhouse, New York.
- April 1965: Tom Dent leaves for New Orleans to work with the Free Southern Theater.
- Circa Summer 1965: Lennox Raphael, Steve Cannon, and James W. Thompson conduct an interview with Ralph Ellison for publication in *Umbra* magazine (previous, unsatisfactory interviews had been conducted by Dent and others).
- Summer 1965: An advert for *Umbra* magazine's new third issue appears in the Spring/Summer issue of *Massachusetts Review*, listing "Ralph Ellison, Interview [and] Calvin Hernton, The Masculinisation of James Baldwin, along with work by Allen Ginsberg, Joel Oppenheimer, Ray Durem, Ishmael Reed, Conrad Kent Rivers, David Henderson, Lorenzo Thomas, Julia Fields, Art Berger, Steve Cannon, Jaimes [sic] Thompson, Thomas C. Dent & others."
- September 1965: Calvin C. Hernton moves to London, England.
- October 1965: Ishmael Reed, Walter Bowart, Allen Katzman, Dan Rattiner, Sherry Needham, and John Wilcock found counterculture newspaper *The East Village Other*. The first issue runs Reed's short piece on the March 1965 Café Le Metro incident, "Poetry Place Protest."
- November 1965: Dent returns to New York, transferring editorship for Umbra magazine back to David Henderson.
- March 1966: Dent returns to New Orleans and becomes Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Free Southern Theatre.

Final Phase: *Blackworks, Latin Soul*, and Multi-Cultural Aesthetics (1967-1974)

- February 14, 1967: "Sweetheart's Day Poetry Reading" under auspices of Society of Umbra/Janus Associates featuring

Umbra poets Hart Leroi Bibbs, Steve Cannon (MC), Len Chandler, Tom Dent, David Henderson, Ishmael Reed, and Lorenzo Thomas, alongside Amiri Baraka, Paul Blackburn, Allen Ginsberg, Allan Katzman, Denise Nichols, Ray Bremser, Peter Orlovsky, and Ronald Stone.

- 1967: *Umbra* magazine issue 3 published as *Umbra Anthology 1967-1968* by editor David Henderson.
- 1968: Umbra writers appear in Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal's landmark Black Arts Movement anthology, *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing*.
- 1969: Umbra writers appear in Clarence Major's anthology *The New Black Poetry*.
- 1970: David Henderson publishes issue 4 of *Umbra* magazine, *Umbra's Blackworks*, from New York. Planned as a regular series of broadsheet magazines to come out that year, only one is ultimately published.
- 1970: Prose by Umbra writers appears in Ishmael Reed's anthology *19 Necromancers from Now;* Reed's introduction gives an account of the Umbra split.
- 1973: Umbra writers appear in Arnold Adoff's and Paul Breman's anthologies *The Poetry of Black America: Anthology of the 20th Century* and *You Better Believe It: Black Verse in English from Africa, the West Indies and the United States*.
- 1974: Publication of *Umbra* magazine issue 5, *Umbra Latin Soul*, edited by David Henderson, Victor Hernandez Cruz, and Barbara T. Christian from Berkeley, California. This is the final issue of the magazine.

Umbra's Afterlives (1975-present)

- 1978-1984: Michel Oren conducts interviews with Umbra members Art Berger, Tom Dent, Calvin C. Hernton, Joe Johnson, Jane Poindexter, Ishmael Reed, Lorenzo Thomas, Askia Touré, and Brenda Walcott. These contribute to Oren's article on Umbra printed in *Freedomways* in 1984.
- 1980: Tom Dent edits an "Umbra Poets" feature for *Black American Literature Forum,* featuring Dent's own essay

"Umbra Days," workshop photographs by Alvin Simon, and poetry.

- 1982: Lorenzo Thomas assembles an unpublished "Annotated Bibliography of the Umbra Workshop 1962-1982." Thomas's published essays on Umbra appear from the 1970s onwards.
- Umbra reunions continue to take place, including:
    - Fall 1991: Forum and exhibition "African-American Literary and Arts Movement, 1960s, Lower East Side" held by Cultural Dimensions and the Henry Street Settlement Arts Center, New York, featuring members of Umbra and On Guard, and leading to a Lower East Side Feature in *African American Review*, 1993.
    - November 1, 2013: *Celebrating the Umbra Workshop*, The Center for Humanities, City University of New York. Organised by Tonya Foster, and featuring discussion with Steve Cannon, David Henderson, Rashidah Ismaili, Joe Johnson, and Ishmael Reed.
    - March 29, 2014: *Maintaining Cultural Legacies: The Black Arts and Umbra Movements*. Sonia Sanchez, Ishmael Reed, Askia Touré, Steve Cannon, Tonya Foster (moderator), 12th National Black Writers Conference, Center for Black Literature, Medgar Evers College, City University of New York.
    - December 2016: *Giant Night—Umbra: A Living Archive*. Poetry Project, St Mark's Church in the Bowery, New York, December 2016. Organised by Tonya Foster and Simone White, and featuring David Henderson and Rashidah Ismaili alongside Ammiel Alcalay, Genji Amino, and Jace Clayton (D.J. Rupture).

SOURCES CONSULTED FOR INTRODUCTION AND CHRONOLOGY

Baraka, Amiri, *Home: Social Essays* (New York: Akashic Books, 1997 (1966).

—*The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1997 (1984)).

Berger, Art, "Negroes with Pens," *Mainstream*, Vol. 16, No. 7 (July, 1963): 3-6.

Breman, Paul (ed.), *Sixes and Sevens: An Anthology of New Poetry* (London: Breman, 1962).

Breman, Paul and Rosey E. Pool (eds.), *Ik Zag Hoe Zqart Ik Was: Poezie von Noordamerikanische Negers* (*I Saw How Black I Was: Poetry by North American Negroes* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 1958).

Cannon, Steve, "You're Never Too Old to Blush: An Excerpt from a Memoir by Steve Cannon," *Black Renaissance,* Vol.19, Issue 1 (Winter/ Spring 2019): 46-61.

Dent, Tom, "Umbra Days," *Black American Literature Forum* 14.3 (1980): 105-108.

Dick, Bruce, and Amritjit Singh (eds.), *Conversations with Ishmael Reed*, (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1995).

Foster, Tonya, David Grundy and Jean-Philippe Marcoux (eds.), *The Umbra Galaxy* (2 vols.) (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, forthcoming (2023)).

Grundy, David. *A Black Arts Poetry Machine: Amiri Baraka and the Umbra Poets.* London: Bloomsbury, 2019.

Hernton, Calvin C., Tom Dent and David Henderson [as "The Editors"], "Foreword," *Umbra* 1 (Winter [March], 1963): 1-2.

Hernton, Calvin C., "Umbra: A Personal Recounting," *African American Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter, 1993): 579-84.

—"Les Deux Megots Mon Amour" [1985], in Carol Bergé (ed.), *Light Years: An Anthology on Sociocultural Happenings (multimedia in the East Village, 1960-1966)* (New York: Spuyten Duyvil, 2010): 291-308.

Ismaili Abu-Bakr, Rashidah, "Slightly Autobiographical: The 1960s on the Lower East Side," *African American Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter, 1993): 585-592.

Kane, Daniel, *All Poets Welcome: The Lower East Side Poetry Scene in the 1960s* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003).

Oren, Michel, "A '60s Saga: The Life and Death of Umbra," *Freedomways*, Vol.24, No.3, 1984, 167-181 and Vol.24, No.4, 1984: 237-254.

—"The Umbra Writers' Workshop, 1962-1965: Some Socio-Literary Puzzles," in Joe Weixelmann and Chester J. Fontenot (eds.*), Studies in Black American Literature Vol. II: Beliefs vs. Theory in Black American Literary Criticism* (Greenwood, FL: The Penkevill Publishing Co., 1986): 177-223. (Expanded version of the above).

Patterson, Raymond R. Letters to Calvin Hernton and Michel Oren. Umbra Poets Workshop collection, Sc MG 538, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library.

Pool, Rosey E. (ed.), *Beyond the Blues: New Poems by American Negroes Selected and Introduced by Rosey E. Pool* (Lympne Hythe, Kent (England): The Hand and Flower Press, 1962).

Redmond, Eugene, "Stridency and the Sword: Literary and Cultural Emphasis in Afro-American Magazines," in Elliott Anderson and Mary Kinzie (eds.), *The Little Magazine in America: A Modern Documentary History* (Yonkers, New York: Triquarterly/The Pushcart Press, 1978): 538-573.

Reed, Ishmael (ed.), *19 Necromancers from Now* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970).

— *Conversations with Ishmael Reed*. Eds. by Bruce Dick and Amritjit Singh. (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1995).

Riley, Clayton, "Living Poetry by Black Arts Group," *Liberator* 5, No. 5 (May 1965): 19.

Simon, Alvin, "Dear FREEDOMWAYS: Letter to the Editors," *Freedomways* (First Quarter, 1985): 48-50.

Thomas, Lorenzo, 'Not that Hurried Grief'. In Erwin A Glikes and Paul Schwaber (eds.), *Of Poetry and Power: Poems Occasioned by the Presidency and by the Death of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Basic Books, 1964). [Released with companion LP on Smithsonian Folkways with recitals by actor Martin Donegan.]

"The Shadow World: New York's Umbra Workshop & Origins of the Black Arts Movement," *Callaloo*, No. 4 (Oct., 1978): 53-72.

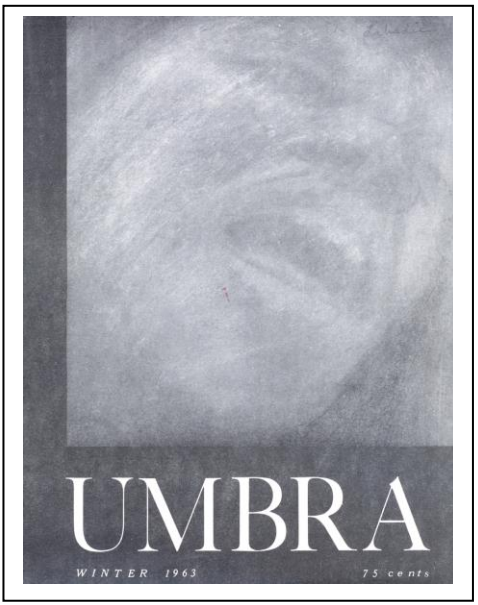
—"Annotated Bibliography of the Umbra Workshop, 1962-1982," [with 1984 'Prefatory Note'], 1984 Umbra Poets Workshop collection, Sc MG 538, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library.

—"Alea's Children: The Avant-Garde on the Lower East Side, 1960-70," *African American Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter, 1993): 573-8.
Thompson, James W., Letters to Rosey Pool, 1965. Rosey E. Pool Collection (1945-1974), University of Sussex Special Collections.
Umbra Poets Workshop collection, Sc MG 538, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library.
Whitten, Jack, "The 1960s" [2015], in *Notes from the Woodshed* (New York: Hauser and Wirth, 2018): 13-23.
Wood, Eben Y., *Black Abstraction: The Umbra Workshop and an African-American Avantgarde*. PhD dissertation, unpublished, University of Michigan, 2004.
Wright, Sarah E., "The Lower East Side: A Rebirth of World Vision," *African American Review*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter, 1993): 593-596.

Bibliography of *Umbra* Magazine

UMBRA, ISSUE 1 (WINTER 1963)[1]

Editor: Thomas C. Dent. *Associate Editors:* Calvin C. Hernton, David Henderson. *Production Editor:* William E. Day. *Circulation Manager:* Rolland Snellings [Askia Touré]. *Secretary:* Nora Hicks.



Members of the Society of Umbra: Mildred Hernton, Albert Hayes [Haynes], Joseph Johnson, Tom Feelings, Oliver Pitcher, Florence Squires, Brenda Walcott, Bill Beachum.

Cover illustration by Tom Feelings.

From the Foreword by the Editors [Dent, Hernton, Henderson]:

UMBRA exists to provide a vehicle for those outspoken and youthful writers who present aspects of social and racial reality which may be called 'uncommercial', 'unpalatable', 'unpopular', 'unwanted' – but cannot with any honesty be considered nonessential to a whole and healthy society. Because UMBRA is not preoccupied with monetary or prestige considerations it can afford to offer a platform to writers who are young, unknown, or too hard on society. The subject matter of accepted journals is too often dictated by the fears of backers, and the view of readers whom those journals fear to lose.

Part One: FIGURINE OF THE DREAM SOMETIMES NIGHTMARE
Tom Dent, "Nightdreams – Black"; Julian Bond, "#3", "Langston Hughes"; Joe Johnson, "Hiroshima Otra Vez"; Jay Socin, "Hello, Goodbye"; Robert F. Williams, "An Ocean's Roar of Peace"; Oliver Pitcher, "So How're You Wearing Your Straitjacket – A Play…"

[1] Dent notes that the actual publication date was March, 1963 (Dent, "Umbra Days," 108, fn.3)

Part Two: BLUES AND BITTERNESS
Lerone Bennett, "Being and Nothingness", "Somethin' Blue"; Robert [Brookins] Gore, "We Shall Overcome"; Calvin C. Hernton, "The Long Blues."

Part Three: TIME AND ATAVISM
David Henderson, "Time and Atavism"; LeRoy McLucas, "Bana"; Julian Bond, "Ray Charles", "Miles"; Tom Dent, "Ode to Miles"; Lloyd Addison, "The Poet Talks to a Face", "The Love Moves In"; Raymond Patterson, "Resurrection Bay."

Part Four: UMBRA THROUGH ETHOS
Rolland Snellings (Askia Touré), "Floodtide"; Calvin C. Hernton, "125th Street", "Street Scene"; Joe Johnson, "Linda You Can't Drive"; Lorenzo Thomas, "South Afrika", "A Tale of Two Cities"; Robert [Brookins] Gore, "Black Reincarnation"; Leroy McLucas, "Negotiation", "Kicks", "Graph"; Patricia Brooks, "Poem"; David Henderson, "The Ofay and the Nigger", "Black is the Home."

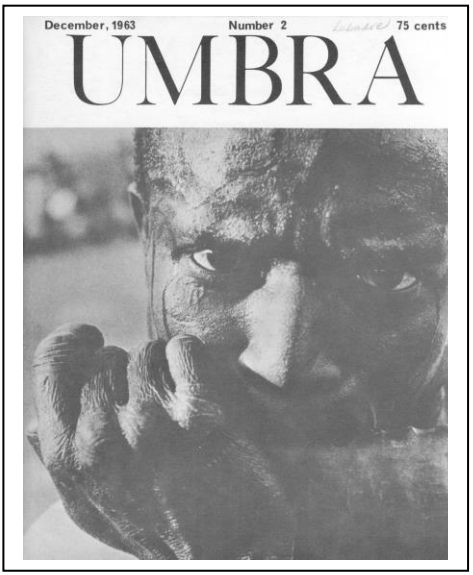
The issue concludes with advertisements for Calvin C. Hernton, *The Coming Of Chronos To The House Of Nightsong: An Epical Narrative Poem*, forthcoming from Intermin Books, and Robert F. Williams, *Negroes with Guns*, published by Marzani & Munsell in 1962.

UMBRA, ISSUE 2 (DECEMBER, 1963)

Editor: Tom Dent. *Associate editors:* Calvin C. Hernton, David Henderson. *Production Editor:* William E. Day. *Circulation Manager:* Charles Patterson. *Secretary:* Nora Hicks. *Treasurer:* Norman
Pritchard, Jr.

Members of the Umbra Workshop: Alvin Simon, Art Berger, Albert Haynes, Joseph Johnson, Tom Feelings, Norman Wilkerson, Oliver Pitcher, George Hayes, Ishmael Reed, Rolland Snellings, Jane Logan, Mildred Hernton, Lennox Raphael, Maryanne Raphael, Lorenzo Thomas, Ann Guilfoyle, Asaman Byron, Rashid d'Phrepaulezz, Charles Underdue, Brenda Walcott.

Editors' note: "All the layout, typography and mechanicals of this magazine were prepared by members of the Umbra Workshop on a cooperative basis."



Section I: THE COMING STORM

Ishmael Reed, "Time and the Eagle"; Charles Patterson, "Listen"; Nanina Alba, "Counter-stroke"; Jan Triggs, "A Song for Charlie"; Charles Anderson, "Black Mother Alone After Midnight", "Complaint on Passive Resistance"; Ann Allen Shockley, "A Far Off Sound (Story)."

Section II: RICHARD WRIGHT MNEMONICON

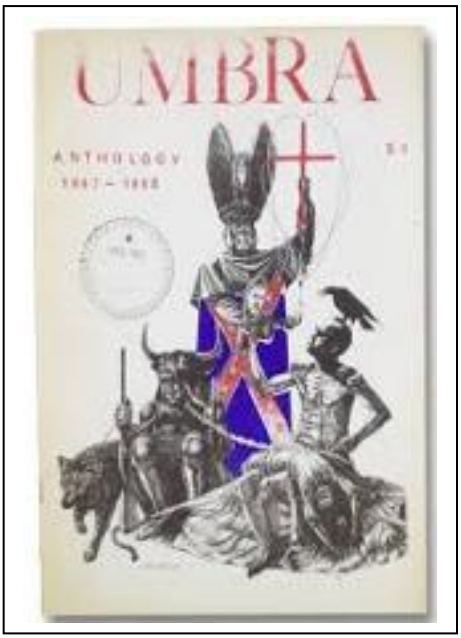
Rolland Snellings, "Song of Fire"; George Coleman, "Saga of the Bull"; Asaman Byron, "Listen"; George Hayes, "Biography of a Guy I Know"; Phil Petrie, "The Blues Singer", "We March"; Clarence Major, "Paragraph for English-Speaking World"; Ray Durem, "Night Prowl", "Murder on Filmore", "Sweet and Sour"; Don Johnson, "Uhh"; Susan Johnn, "The Weaker Sex, Disgusted"; Maryanne Raphael, "Into Iron Cages"; Gil Jackofsky, "Bad"; Ishmael Reed, "Patrice"; Conrad K. Rivers, "For Richard Wright"; Lorenzo Thomas, "South St. Blues"; Art Berger, "Bedford Avenue"; Albert Haynes, "The End"; Will Inman, "The South Is A Dark Woman."

Section III: THURSDAY'S COLLECTION

Ree Dragonette, "Buffalo Waits In The Cave of Dragons"; Robert Wood, "Strawberries"; Norman Pritchard, "Alcoved Agonies", "From Where The Blues"; Aimé Césaire (trans. Charles Guenther), "Viscera of a Poem"; Hillel Schwartz, "A Metaphor on Plastic"; Dudley Randall, "The Lily Ward"; James Thompson, "What Will Be The Price", "Thursday's Collection."

The issue concludes with advertisements for the *National Guardian, Freedomways* and *Liberator* magazines.

UMBRA ANTHOLOGY, 1967-8 [ISSUE 3]



Editor: David Henderson. *Consulting editor:* Thomas C. Dent. *Editor-in-exile:* Calvin C. Hernton. *Associate Editors:* Art Berger, Len H. Chandler. *Production director:* Rashid Brown. *Editor Emeritus:* James W. Thompson.

Members of the Society of Umbra are: Asaman Byron, Steve Cannon, Nancy Rose Chandler, Walter Ellison, Mildred Hernton, Jane Logan [Poindexter], Joe Overstreet, Raymond Patterson, Lennox Raphael, Maryanne Raphael.

Cover drawing by Billy Morrow Jackson.

Photographs by Bob Fletcher and Sheyla Lima; photograph of Sun Ra by Peter Yates; photograph of Calvin C. Hernton by Aldo Tambellini; photograph of Yusuf Rahman by Irene Fertik. Drawings by Joe Overstreet. Paintings by Gerald Jackson.

"All the layout, typography and mechanicals were prepared by the members of the Society of Umbra on a cooperative basis."

Sun Ra, "The Disguised Aim", "The Garden of Eatened", "The Invented Memory", "Of the Cosmic-Blueprints", "Primary Lesson: The Second Class Citizens", "The Myth of Me", "The Plane: Earth", "Precision Fate"; Marilyn Lowen, "Everything's Peaceful in Mississippi"; Bob Fletcher, "A Love Dirge to the Whitehouse (or, It Soots You Right)"; Worth Long, "Arson and Cold Lace (or how i yearn to BURN BABY BURN)"; Langston Hughes, "The Backlash Blues", "Bitter Brew" [printed as a tribute to Hughes, who died in 1967]; Edmond Krasnow, "hello"; Art Berger, "Requiem for a Beer Commercial"; Calvin C. Hernton "The Masculinization of James Baldwin—or, what killed 'Blues for Mister Charlie'" [essay], "from *The Yield*" [excerpt

from an early draft of Hernton's novel *Scarecrow*], "An Unexpurgated Communique to David Henderson, London – 1966" [poem]; Oscar Brown, Jr., "Forty Acres and a Mule" [song lyric]; David Henderson, "Walk with the Mayor of Harlem"; Len Chandler, "I would be a painter most of all (for Peter Lafarge)"; John Harriman, "Julio's Song", "From The Hashish Poems"; Saul Gottlieb, "Times Square, March 3rd, 1962"; Anne Fertik, "Black Man"; Amiri Baraka (as LeRoi Jones), "Answers in Progress (March 1967)" [prose]; Gerald Jackson, "Drunk", "[Untitled]"; Henry Dumas, "America", "Distances"; Grigsby Hubbard, "Run Back"; D.L. Graham, "the west ridge is menthol-cool", "november 13", "tony get the boys"; Victor Hernandez Cruz, "Page Five from *Square Business*"; Bob Kaufman, "Unhistorical Events", "A Busy Shirt Died Last Night", "Afterwards: They shall Dance in Empty Fortune Cookies" [poems marked "NYC, 1961"]; Lorenzo Thomas, "The Subway Witnesses"; Alice Walker, "The Hair-Do"; Margareta Olisa, "Return"; Julia Fields, "Poem for Three Men Dead within Three Years in the Land of Nod", "Harlem in January"; M. Younger Roberts, "Looking Back On It"; Norman Pritchard, "Aswelay"; Gary Youree, "Eleven Deuce SixtySix"; Conrad Kent Rivers, "On the Death of William Edward Burghardt DuBois by African Moonlight and Forgotten Shores"; Ray Durem, "Problem in Social Geometry – The Inverted Square! (for Ferlinghetti)", "Hipping the Hip", "The Snake"; Yusuf Rahman, "Four Poems"; Allen Ginsberg , "Dreams Deferred in Bangkok and Saigon while India Burns Ghandi's Children (pages from the journal of Allen Ginsberg)" [prose]; David Henderson, "Paintings and Drawings by Five Young Artists Currently Working in New York City, recently shown at the Countee Cullen Regional Branch Library, Harlem, N.Y.C." [review] The artists in question are Mark Fisher, Luther Van, William White, Gerald Jackson (whose work also appears in the issue), and James Thompson.

UMBRA / BLACKWORKS (SUMMER, 1970) [ISSUE 4]

Editor: David Henderson. *Design:* J. Daniel Johnson. *"Occasional Help":* Mel Herring, Susan Brown, Barbara Christian. *Art* by Glenn Myles, Ronald Dahl, and Joe Overstreet. [Publisher listed as "The Society of Umbra in cooperation with The Black Galaxy Corp."]

Unlike the other issues of the magazine, *Umbra/Blackworks* was printed in broadsheet format, and was apparently intended as the first of a promised "total of four issues to be published Summer Fall Winter Spring of 1970-1971, that is for a period of one year."

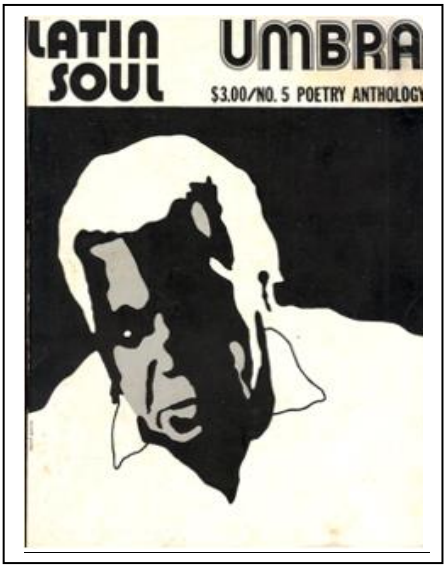
From the note by D[avid] H[enderson]:

Whether or not we continue to publish or not depends on our ability and your response. We hope you will buy directly from us. That way we get the most return. We offer Umbra*: Blackworks/Black Galaxy at select outlets across the American continent and elsewhere on the planet. As we come with the first issue out of New York City we reflect New York City. We believe this issue to be the most together thing happening in American letters. We will take anybody on.*

Roger Riggins, "[Untitled]"; Nikki Giovanni, "Woman Poem"; Al Young, "The Dancer"; Amiri Baraka, "Blue Roi"; Victor Hernandez Cruz, *passing*; Cecil M. Brown, "Pickninny poem"; Larry Neal, "Poppa Stoppa Speaks From The Grave"; Lionel F. Scott, "A Rats Pleas"; Jay Wright, "The Drums"; Toni Cade [Bambara], "4 by Bullins" [review of plays by Ed Bullins]; Calvin C. Hernton, "Fantasy for a Lady", "In Ghandi's Room"; Ishmael Reed, "catechism of d neoamerican hoodoo church"; Langston Hughes, "Mama of the Blues"; Norman Jordan, "Sinner"; David Henderson, "Poem for a Pinter (For/with/to Joe Overstreet)"; Jayne Cortez, "Love"; N.H. Pritchard, "[Untitled]"; Ron Welburn, "Stances", "V'ortex"; Bob Kaufman, "Gone Far On", "Out Of It"; Quincy Troupe, "A Day in The Life of a Poet"; Tom Weatherly, "autobiography", "first monday scottsboro alabama."

Hart Leroi Bibbs, *Diet Book for Junkies* printed as supplement.

UMBRA: *LATIN SOUL* (1974) [ISSUE 5]



Editor-in-chief: David Henderson. *Associate Editor:* Dr. Barbara T. Christian. *Editorial Assistant:* Damali Cruz. *Contributing Editors:* Victor Hernandez Cruz, Jorge Jimenez Aguirre. *Art* by Adal (photo), Isabel Alegría (woodcut), Carmen Alegría (drawing), Arthur Fletcher Jr. (drawing), Rupert García (poster/cartoon), Hector Gonzalez (photo/collage), Yvette Guerrero (photo), Ralph Maradiaga (wood-cut), Arthur Monroe (painting), Joe Overstreet (painting), and Alejandro Stuart (photo). Printed from Berkeley, California.

From the Introduction:

*"*LATIN-SOUL*," the term, has been in use for a while, mainly in the Black and Puerto-Rican areas of New York where both groups often jam to the same music: Latin and Soul. In the East you will often hear the words Black and Puerto Rican in connection with progressive coalition politics. In the West the Chicanos are the major Latin entity. The Mission district of San Francisco, California is totally Third World. Blacks, Chicanos, Jamaicans, Samoans, Okinawans, Japanese, Chinese, Nicaraguan, Chilean and even a small colony of Puerto Ricans. The Puerto Rican, of African and Caribbean-Indian blood, is the living link between Black and Latin cultures. So there is a special blend of unity that is displayed in the Mission in everyday life that could just as easily be formalized in terms of social justice.*

Nicolas Guillen: Retrospective.
["Poet laureate of Cuba. This retrospective has been culled from Guillen's several volumes published over half a century." ("Note from Table of Contents/Biography," *Umbra Latin/Soul*, 5)]

"The Mocking-Bird sings in Turouino", "That You Might Win Truth", "Madrigal I", "Madrigal II", "Students", "How To Become a Southern Governor", "I, Juan, Negro" (trans. Lennox & Maryanne Raphael), "The Ballad of Two Grandfathers", "Guadalupe, W.I." (trans. Paul Blackburn), "Cities", "Three Chinese Songs" (trans. Al Young), "Arrival", "Last Night" (trans. Margaret Randall), "The Musical Night" (trans. Jay Wright), "Soul Brother" (trans. Tana de Gamaz), "The Neighborhood House" (trans. Jay Wright), "*Papier Peint*" ("Paper paint") (trans. Editorial staff).

Cesar Vallejo, 'Nine poems from *Trilce*' (trans. Jorge Jimenez Aguirre and Gerry York, 1973). ["Cesar Vallejo remains one of the least known of the major poets in this century. *Trilce* was written in a time of intense literary and political turmoil, leading to his imprisonment and subsequent exile. He left for Paris in 1923, where his attention focused not only on the events of his Peruvian homeland but expanded to included the socialist development of Russia, where he was on three occasions, and above all the Spanish Republic, whose struggle deeply affected his life and his poetry." ("Note from Table of Contents/Biography," *Umbra Latin/Soul*, 5)]

"Guerrilla Poetry of South America – Compiled by Carmen Alegria"
Statement: The Artist; Statement on Guerrilla poets; Otto Rene Castillo, "Even in the Most Bitter Hours"; Antonio Cisneros, "Of a Soldier"; Otto Rene Castillo, 'Satisfaction"; Juan Gelman, "Eyes"; Marco Antonio Flores, "The Visitor"; Roque Dalton, "Unknown Soldier"; Otto Rene Castillo, "Apolitical Intellectuals", "The Oldest Ancestor"; Victor Manuel Escobar, "Epitaph (for Otto Rene Castillo)"; Ernesto Cardenal, "Squirrel of the Tunes of a Katun"; Fernando Alegria, "Third World", "Acknowledgments"; Violeta Parra, "Because the Poor Have Nowhere."

Luis Pales Matos, "A prelude"; Pedro Pietri, "The Broken English Dream"; Roberto Vargas, "carta/poema pa ernesto cardinal", "Contradictions"; Ishmael Reed, "Poem Delivered Before Assembly Of Colored People Held At Glide Memorial Church, Oct. 4, 1973 And Called To Protest Recent Events In The Sovereign Republic of Chile"; Pablo Neruda, "Las Satrapias", "United Fruit Co"; Alejandro Murguia, "O California"; Eno-Khadre (Don Raizell), "Rasta, Rasta"; Kaye McDonough, "Bob Kaufman Reading At Vesuvio's, 1973"; Carmen Alegria, "Headline"; Cecil Brown, "Words use up"; Calvin C. Hernton, "Hate Poem"; Sam Cornish, "Community Worker", "Marcus: A Student Who Writes Backwards and Sits Close to Me Even If I Am Reading Dr. Seuss", "After Teaching My Students Fill Me With Images", "i love eating with", "For My Students About To Be Bussed or Sent to a

Regular High School"; Victor Hernandez Cruz, "El Party"; Al Kirland *(*Tarabu Betserai), "*Black Poets*"; John Henry, "Between your Legs"; A.M. Ortiz, "Puertorriquenos en Nueva York"; Stephany, "You are a New Day"; Thulani, "letters from prison", "the white folks closed our"; David Henderson, "Lee Morgan Jazz Beau", "El Hajj Malik's Audience"; Langston Hughes, "The Prize"; Conyus, "a poem for culture hip black fakers"; Barbara Chase-Riboud, poems from *Paris-Peking-Hong Kong* (Random House) [ultimately published as *From Memphis & Peking*, 1974]; "A Black Puerto Rican in China: An Interview with Felipe Luciano"; Avotcja, "Cuando Baila Ramon."

AMONG THE NEIGHBORS SERIES

1 Poetry in the Making: A Bibliography of Publications by Graduate Students in the Poetics Program, University at Buffalo, 1991-2016
by James Maynard

2 In Search of Blew: An Eventual Index of *Blewointment* Magazine, 1963-1977
by Gregory Betts

3 *TISH*— Another "Sense of Things"
by Derek Beaulieu

4 *Skanky Possum* Press: A (Personal) Genealogy
by Dale Smith

5 A Commentary on *El Corno Emplumado*/*The Plumed Horn*
by Sergio Mondragón
translated with an additional commentary
by Margaret Randall

6 A Bibliography of John Bennett's Vagabond Press, 1966-2005
by Christopher Harter

7 Migrating Ears: Kris Hemensley's *The Merri Creek, Or, Nero* and *H/EAR*, with some brief comments on the earlier publications *Our Glass*, *Earth Ship*, and *The Ear in a Wheatfield*
by Tim Wright

8 Editing *O.ARS*, 1981-1993
by Donald Wellman

9 Cultural Shape-Shifters: *Cartonera* Publishers
by Ksenija Bilbija

10 Teaching the Little Magazine
by Michael Leong

AMONG THE NEIGHBORS SERIES

11 Washington, DC Poetry— Mass Transit and Folio Books Reading Series
by Tina Darragh, with an appendix by Edric Mesmer

12 Reading Piglets: *Westerly* Magazine, metadata, and the play of digital access to literary publication
by Catherine Noske

13 To Breath Poetry Among the Neighbors: Two Essays on *Anerca*, a Journal of Experimental Writing (1985-1990)
by Adeena Karasick & Kedrick James

14 On *The Doris*
edited by Tamas Panitz & Billie Chernicoff

15 *Umbra* Magazine (1963-1974): An Introduction and Bibliography
by David Grundy

This consciousness within her
uncurled itself upon the rollers of objective experience
printing impressions
vaguely and variedly
upon Ova
in place of the more formulate education
coming naturally
to the units of a national instigation

—Mina Loy
from "Ova, Among the Neighbors"

This pamphlet series seeks non-academic and academic contributions of 10-30 pages on the subject of little magazines, generally or on specific magazines, published from 1940 onward.

We invite proposals along the lines of:

- case studies of a single little magazine;
- publishing networks in and among little magazines;
- studies of the materiality of small press publications;
- contexts of association and sociability upon the pages of magazines; and,
- bibliographies, including bibliographies of poets or groups of poets or "schools" among little magazines.

Please send proposals to the series editor at
esmesmer@buffalo.edu